

The
Daphne
Review

Spring 2019

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Lost at Sea

I drown in the bombarding thoughts and the ever-growing stress. I always imagined the place as out of worldly, god-like, a place that could only exist in movies. It's not like I'm not prepared or envisioned it previously. It just hit me so fast. I'm on a small boat, getting thwarted with far mightier waves. The murky water clouds my thoughts, making it impossible to grasp that I'm among mature adults nearly prepared for the worst that the world has to offer. Not only is their physical dominance evident, but also the mentality between us is light years away. They're the stars in the sky, proud to be seen, and who am I but the small toddler looking up, thinking how shiny. I need a futuristic telescope to assist me to even begin to comprehend what their mindset is like. The ultra-competitiveness is just mind-boggling. For all the thousand plus people, we're all just a set of numbers and statistics. People glance at us, unaware that they've already categorized us and defined us, using a piece of our past to decide our fates, while mapping us like islands in the middle of the Pacific-islands underneath forests and various ecosystems, struggling to hold up the massive weight. Maybe, I'm just lost at sea.

The Four Faces of Greed



Moonlight Bridge

There isn't enough air in the circle. Each mouth gulps in oxygen and spews out carbon dioxide, and the carbon dioxide coils itself into words. Words and machine-gun laughter that slither around the circle, twining around campfire smoke until I try to breathe but my throat feels cracked, raw.

Humans live on air, not laughter.

The wind shifts and smoke rolls towards me like charred mist. I smile: it's time.

"I can't breathe," I say, and because I've rehearsed these words, my voice doesn't quiver. "I'm going down to the beach."

All I can see of the girl beside me is rosy chiffon and a mesh of bleached hair; she mumbles, "Yeah OK feel better," goes back to flirting with the guy on her right, and forgets who was on her left.

Swinging my sand-streaked legs over the log, I peer across the circle. Smoke bends my vision and firelight drowns my eyes—I can't see her, but I jam my feet into the sand, turn, and stand.

And she's been standing behind me.

"Where're you going?" she asks, her waxy red lips stretched just a little too far.

"Smoke was blowing in my face—I needed some air."

It's funny how a fabricated truth is not always a lie.

My mom tries on a piercing stare, but her mascara-framed eyes are accessories, nothing more. So, as always, she resorts to her mouth.

"Then come sit with me. There're some girls I want you to meet."

"Look, I just want some time alone, OK?"

Mom's friends are watching; her eyes fasten on them, her lipstick grin widens, and she snatches my hand the way a drowning man flails for a lifesaver.

"Come on, Izzy," she coaxes through clenched teeth. Her grip tightens.

"Don't make a scene."

At this point, I usually let Mom tuck me back into the crowd: not because I fear her, but because it's my duty to hide her ugly parts from the rest of the world. But at that moment, all I can think about is how her face stretches, like her skin is a size too small, how the stench of her sweat blends with sickly sweet vanilla. She made herself into this. I won't.

I slip my hand out of her grasp and plunge into the pines.

Ashley Duraiswamy

∞

Waves whisper over the sand. I hear them before I break out of the tree line and see the shore. The moon skims the horizon, casting a line of rippling silver across the ocean. A bridge.

Behind me, heels fling sand into the air and my mom marches out of the woods. I contemplate running, but she softens her step and glides towards the surf. She stands just close enough for waves to kiss her Walter Steiger stilettos, and seeing my mother wiggle her toes in the water, watching as her stray curls ripple in the breeze, I drift to her side.

"I was like you," she murmurs after we stand there for a while, watching the moonlight bridge sway in a soft June breeze. "Quiet."

My mom never uses the word "introversion"—that would be like calling a sin an identity.

"Look, I know it's hard for you to communicate," she continues when I don't respond, "but it will get easier. I swear. It'll take some practice—you'll have to push yourself—but you'll get there. You'll say all the things you can't say yet. That's how you get somewhere. You know what I mean?"

I let my head bob like flotsam, and she flashes her real smile, one that comes more from her eyes than her mouth.

"Head back soon, OK?"

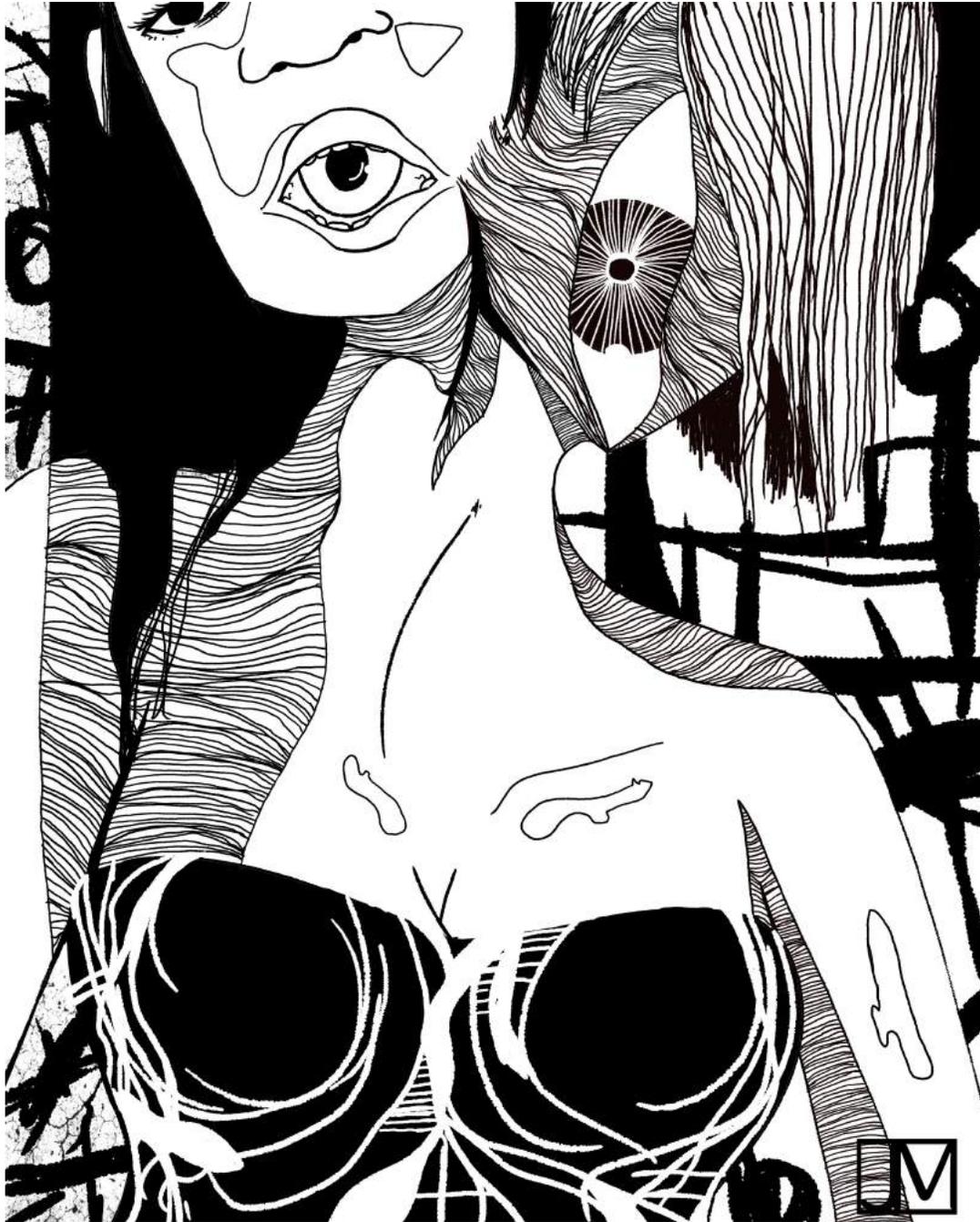
Easing her heels out of the sand, she turns her back on the moon and walks towards the smoke. I can picture her pausing beneath the pines. She smears on lipstick, sucking the life out of her eyes and back into her mouth, before marching into suffocation.

∞

I should follow her, but the moonlight bridge ripples and gleams
and wasn't built for humans,
and there are two kinds of people in this world: people who call that bridge
lonely,
and people who call that bridge free,
and my mom chose,
and I choose.
And I choose free.

Jayda Murray

Double Minded



Sliced Bread

she felt her mind melting away,
while looking above at the ceiling.
irregular patterns barely connecting,
clenching her mind to trace them,
back together.
ticking clocks beneath,
tickling tiny toes.
mayhem in shoes.
watches, right and left,
grabbing both ears, beating them to a pulp.
eyes rolling back like a ferris wheel.
serenity, silence.
pure wind blown into a jigsaw mind,
symphony. crisp and clean.
soaking feet in a bath of ice
cubed.
shadows creeping from the outside,
banging on the garage.
a barrier unlike others.
clocks rumbling the ground
inconsistently.
a lack of fluidity.
and just like uneven batter,
she felt her mind dripping away.

sands

the last hazy dusk of an
elderly man is dragging
through the square, clinking
against the pavement with
an empty bottle

all his memories, all
the wasted days take
their last breaths behind
him before they vanish
with the sands of time

and those moments which
he has born the weight of,
those monoliths whose girth
has shaped the indents of his
spine will live a little longer,
clinging a little harder to life

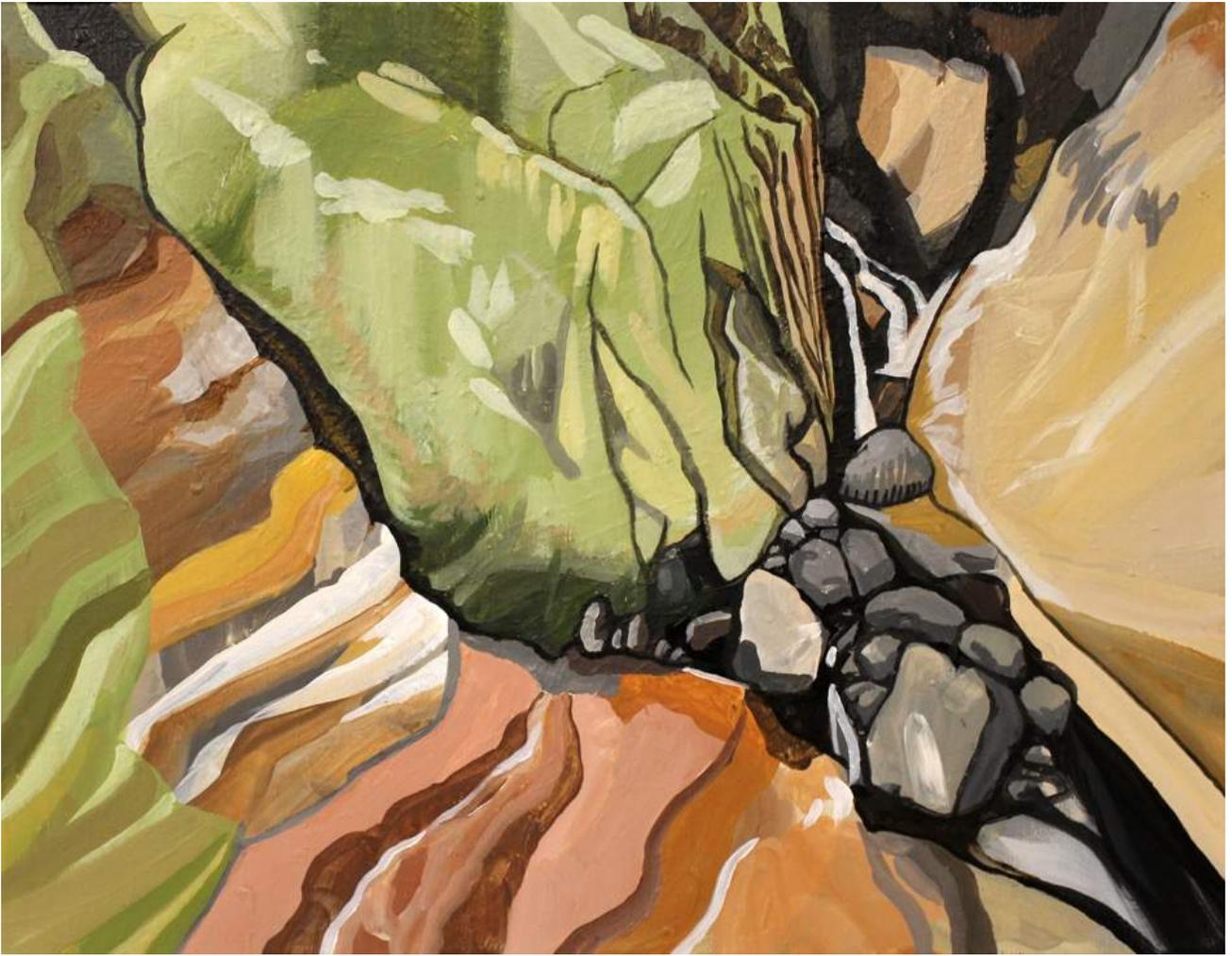
but the man himself in age
he has lost the feeling in his
fingers and does not cling at
anything, only singing poorly
an old lonely tune which travels
around in his heart

which is wrinkled like a raisin
and wheezing with each waning
pump, its hanging by a string
and leaning hard against the brittle
bones of his ribs

while the trail of dead memory
catches up to the man and
nibbles at his feet while his
atoms split and rot and his
blood becomes viscus and
sickly

the lazy hazy dusk descends
on an elderly man
and he succumbs
thinking of nothing
except how sweet it is
to die

The Translation



A mask

A stranger in your eyes, a thriving ocean. But a repulsion set by fear of the unknown keeps you away. The entity longs. Longs for contact. For life. It's a picture different from the ordinary. He doesn't talk. But gleams when he speaks. He shivers in his heart, adapts to his own rise, then comes crashing down. Secretly. Deep down inside.

What you see is different. You see a bewildering image. An image he tries to hold as a fortress to hide his burning gut, his desire to live, his need to survive. The fortress before your eyes is impenetrable. But it is so, solely for those pearls studded between your lashes. A bright smile, a bundle of joy, which you see from a few feet away, reflect from your glassy eyes right back into his. He's the way he is, you think. But you never substantiate your thoughts. He looks back at you. He gets scared. The fortress grows spikes inward. You enter his whirlpool of thoughts from dawn to dusk. His emotions are compromised which he fears to display. His espionage is well fortified. But the wall will fall. It will melt away at a single warm glance of yours. His overwhelmed eyes liquidate sometimes, in your proximity. But he fears they will flood and steer you away.

He looks for one. Just one. A soul he can establish a connection with. As his mask continues to wear off. It must be repaired. But he provides. His soul provides. His time provides. His emotions are exchanged for a fixated smile. His consciousness pays to delay the bulky thoughts. He is becoming hollow. He cannot choose. His resources lie depleted, with only hopes of refill. His need grows by the second. But you forget him in a heartbeat. The fortress will be damaged beyond repairs. The city will turn to ashes.

His masked identity wishes to be rescued. He longs for space under the sun, longs for a simple conversation, needs to shed out his emotions from his eyes. He opens himself like an open book and you can tear away your favourite pages or you could read between the lines. He is not what he shows. He is not what people tell you he is. He is not what you think he is. But he is an ocean, an ocean you can sail through all at once if you permit yourself. An ocean which will never let you sink, but it will never be able teach you to dive first.

He was different but adapted quickly. He failed to do it perfectly. He chooses who come close to him. He decides what each close one can see. Because his true self will extinguish you. He knows his way out of everything. He plays dumb. He becomes the alpha. He gets along. He fails. He succeeds. His failures haunt him, his success is unappreciated. His life has become claustrophobic.

You continue to wonder who he really is, even you wish to explore, but something keeps you away. Because you see the gaps in his mask. You know his perfection isn't true. You see the painful mismatch in his personality. Yet, you do not come forward to peak into the gaps. One speck of light and his parasitic blood sucking fortress will leave him be. He has lost strength battling himself, his emotions, his very own thoughts.

He doesn't have a reason to rekindle his strength. But he hopes. He hopes a reason will arrive. You will arrive. He looks far into the future to find reasons, but his collapsing present reminds him that he will be lost by then. He will never give up, he will try to protect himself for you. But you will walk away. And he will break apart, fall down and melt. His thoughts circle him like sharks. He tries to open up but fails. He receives assurance from some, but it doesn't help. He opens his doors to those, who he thinks can help him, but when they fail him, they build walls around him. He has no one left to confide in, confide in without compromising himself further, without closing the tiny windows through which he breathes.

He is very deceiving. His sharp looks, his laugh, his giggle, his chatter. He goes above and beyond to hide himself and to initiate a conversation with you. He musters the courage for the known, for the ones he can dominate. But he doesn't wish to dominate you, he wants you to help him. He controls others with the power he has gained. But he doesn't let it cast a shadow over you. He wants to share himself, cry his heart out, without hesitation, without regression.

Kindness is so rare for the kind themselves, that they forget how to receive and accept it. He is a giver, but he will not submit to you or to anyone else. But he will listen to you, follow you, unless you do him wrong. Some have read between the lines. Some know that he is damaged. But they do not do anything for the stranger that he has made himself. But he remembers your blank glance coming his way more than their explicit words. He doesn't want to accept the hardships he is going through because he doesn't know how to deal with them, so he continues. Continues to avoid them, while he waits for you.

He continues to feel emotions but has forgotten how to deal with them and express his own. He used to know. But, you are not at fault for this nor are you responsible for keeping yourself away. He can only hope for your help, he cannot request you for it nor can he command you. One warm gesture and he will burst into tears. Tears of joy. Because you will have saved him from going down the road he knew will destroy him. You would've given him a reason to use his potential, which he and you both know presides under his skin.

He reaches out to you by looking back into your eyes. He weeps in the dark, he cannot face the light. But he hopes you will help him adjust to the light he wants to step into. He knows you feel that he is many steps away from you. But you never took a single step into the dark, so you fail to know how far the destination is. But keeping such high expectations from you damage him further. Because he is wise enough to know that you don't understand and do not know how to approach him without others questioning you.

He has reached a saturation point and the emotions are puncturing him to make way for themselves to flow. He can no longer look after himself in his entirety. He needs a companion, a friend, a dependable figure. He can no longer cage himself inside the massive wall he constructed when he felt threatened. His watery eyes contain the fire, but if the fire rages more, the calm water boils away.

He stands helpless, but you do not.

For Everest

Is it enough
to trust the snow to dream?
Warmth laps against my bones
but there is no soot
crinkling the hearth. Instead,
crevasses beckon to me
with the promise of flight,
slanting gently to frost-speckled bodies.
In a storm, the earth husks itself.
Mountains confess to a thirst
they cannot expect returned. I am not out
to get you. I am only here to say
that the ice sings wilder every way I turn
and, for that, I am sorry. Damn this blood.

Lost in the Amazon

A muddy path didn't affect their view, the greatness the Amazon had was mind blowing; rivers, dolphins, unique plants, and the view looking out of the giant trees. It was just incredible.

"After we become rich, I think I'm buying a new stove," said Steven.

"A stove? Seriously? I'm buying a spear. You should get one too," suggested Peter.

It was getting dark, but their legs wouldn't stop moving. The white color of the moon acted like sunshine and guided their path. When they stopped for the night, a noise out in the dark of the Amazon turned on an alarm. Both men stood up and went silent for a few seconds. There was no question of who was responsible for it.

"Jaguar," said Peter, looking worried.

"Jaguar? Are you sure?" Steven asked, completely lying to himself.

"It's a jaguar, I know it," replied Steven.

They could sense the silent moves of the large Amazon animal circling them. Their heart beating like a jungle drum. All of a sudden, a yellow blur caught their eye, but disappeared almost instantaneously. Without a second thought, both men bent down and grabbed their spears; brown sticks with a pointy metal on top. Peter looked at them and laughed.

"What is it?" Steven asked.

"I told you. You should get a new spear," Peter joked.

"Really Peter? Now?"

Standing back to back and walking in circles; both men scared and powerless kept their spears close to their body and clenched firmly in their hands. Suddenly, out of the dark of the Amazon, it appeared: the jaguar.

Both men drowning on their sweat as they looked into the jaguar's night black eyes. A beast, six foot long with a weight of about two hundred pounds looking directly in their eyes.

"Don't move... He can smell your fear!" Steven said calmly.

"Really? Does he look like a dog?" Peter asked sarcastically.

Unexpectedly, with no hesitation, with one jump, the jaguar launched itself on Peter. Peter looked up as the jaguar's body flew towards him. With one quick reactions threw the spear right into the jaguar's head, but the animal kept moving.

Suddenly, Peter started screaming. The jaguar's knife sharp teeth were painfully sank right inside Peter's stomach. Peter screamed as the jaguar's teeth entered his body as he miserably fought back knowing he wouldn't succeed. Blood exited his body and pain ran through his veins as he fought the jaguar. Out of the blue, a fast movement made the jaguar stop moving. Peter noticed a large wooden spear sticking out of the jaguar's helpless body. Steven had killed the jaguar.

Standing still, Steven was trying to process all the information trapped in his head. The jaguar's body rested on the floor roaring for help. Steven knew a jaguar wouldn't travel alone during this time of the year. His mate could be seconds away. It would be no surprise if they didn't get so lucky next time. This was a perfect opportunity for Steven, he could leave with the piece without having to go through any trouble.

All he had to do was walk away and let his brother die.

(Untitled)



The Beach was Our Canvas

*Memories fading,
Like paint in the sun,
Recalled on the canvas,
Layers one by one.*

The artist -- standing in his living room with an easel and an unpainted canvas, conjuring up memories of childhood. I had always been an absorbed artist. I recall how she helped me discover that, as the memories manifest gradually on the canvas. I smudge the pencil outline to give the sky a fading effect before filling in the lines with the paints that she had given me.

The sand -- hot and searing. The familiar warmth was carved into my mind like the features of her face. Once shells and enormous boulders, it was now a grainy yellow-brown powder blown about by the wind or stolen by the ocean's waves. I mix orange, brown and yellow paint together to create the gleaming, reflective sand. I paint, but it doesn't look quite right. It needs more texture. I add a tiny bit of white and gray. Sand is not a blanket that hugs the coastline. It is a collection of microscopic boulders stuck between toes when playing at the beach.

The rocks -- gray and somber but cloaked in a hue of orange light and always hosting games for him and her. Rocks with crevices perfect for hiding things -- secrets, memories and treasures. Wading through the water to reach the small mountain rising from the ocean, we pretended that it was our castle and that we ruled as king and queen. I paint the rocks orange and use gray chalk to give them the ashy colour of her eyes.

The sky -- a brilliant blue hue, stretching on endlessly. I use lighter and lighter shades of blue as my paintbrush glides to the horizon. We used to lie in the sand with our heads in the clouds, wonderstruck by the limitless possibilities the sky held.

The shrubs -- lush and green, desperately clinging to the stones. I outline the leaves with dark green and fill them with light green nougat, making the bushes come alive. As I paint, I feel the wind swirling through the leaves, freeing them from the bushes and lifting them up into the air. The rascally wind carries woody scents mixing with the ocean's salty musk to create an aroma like partners dancing. The branches with thorny leaves punctured my fingers as I made her a royal crown, for there were no flowers to be found. She

Penelope Duran

accepted the gift graciously, and we retreated back to our stone castle.

The wind -- barely visible except for the floating motion through her hair. The refreshing wind frees my spirit of doubt and worry. It whispers secrets to me that ring as faint echoes in my mind. As I gazed at her, the wind blew her hair ever so gently over her eyes.

The sea -- a bright and joyful indigo, her favourite colour. I imagine her standing behind me, looking over my shoulder and advising me to accent the ocean with streaks of electric blue. Her smile is as bright as day, and she brushes her bangs from her face. In my mind, she hasn't aged a day as she guides me through the strokes. I lighten the waves toward the coast, bracing as they bound from the canvas and envelop me in their refreshing spray. As the sea spreads out infinitely, I recall her asking what lies beneath. I told her what we had learned: fish, rocks, coral, and sand. She giggled and shook her head, urging me to try again. "Dig a little deeper," she suggested. So I thought and replied, whales and sea anemones or perhaps giant squid and angler fish. I recited further, and she shook her head until I finally realized: not aquatic creatures but something more. I answered again, and she nodded before taking my hand and leading me to the sea.

The hill -- standing vigil by his old home, covered by dainty patches of green. I mix a golden brown, darker than the sand and add it to the wall of greenish stone that lined the hill's path. I think of the little house standing tall beside the familiar beach, so far away and yet close in memory.

The boy -- was so diminutive that he was often mistaken for being younger than he was, ever youthful. The boy always wore a red pullover two sizes too big. I paint him with joyful nostalgia with the recollection of salty winds raising goosebumps on his arms and his bare feet digging into the sand. I smile as I paint the yellow cap of sunshine on his head. The cap bears the marks of play on the beach and of art.

The ball -- red, yellow and blue. The boy loved playing catch with her. Each time the ball soared through the air, his heart grew wings, flew up and caught the ball. They played for hours. The ball was a farewell gift from him to her, as she handed him the paint and brushes. They were gifts of a thousand unspoken words.

The girl -- with a face that the boy could never forget. After the paint dries, I touch her little face forever framed by her glossy brown curls. Her shirt was

Penelope Duran

red, and her ashy gray eyes portended a fierce storm. She was my childhood, my memories. She was beautiful!

The loss -- that is only visible in the dark shadows cast across the sand, a reminder that there had been two children playing at the beach. Then I moved away, flew away like a kite waving off to the sea. I remembered her waving goodbye as she faded into the background of the beach.

The joy -- still visible. It's seen in the smile on the girl's face and the painting's bright colours. Shadows cannot exist without light, without hope. Then, I recall what lies beneath the ocean. I had whispered the answer tentatively in her ears, and she had nodded before taking my hand and leading me to the sea.

The knock -- echoes through the flat as the artist ponders the memories painted on the canvas. Wiping my hands with an old rag, I answer the knock at the door. I open the door and look directly into ashy gray eyes greeting me.

Escapist

Suffocating still better than listening to your prattle,
Your insignificant dreams, no intention of fulfillment?
The disrespect, the disloyalty to that hope—
It deserves better from its host!
Dreamers should chase their future, hunt it down,
To the depths of the Earth and back.
Just as human as the nature of it's pursuer,
To explain, that is the answer, to why it changes,
Breaks, morphs into a hazardous mess;
A shadow that follows you, gripping at your heart like a first love,
Entrancing you with its complexity and convolutedness.
Divine intervention be dismissed—you are drawn,
Because of weak mindedness, that invisible pressure of society,
You or them?
Temptation deflating, malfunction pending,
But no mechanic are you, no Sandman,
Just a perfectly normal dreamer,
Imagining that vision in your grasp...
Reel that universe in with your lasso,
Before I drown, before I've evaporated.

Our Contributors

Daniel Boyko

Daniel is an aspiring 14 year old author from New Jersey who has written more than 325 articles for *Teen Ink*. He was recently selected to have two of his reviews be published in their monthly magazine and has received more than 60 Editor's Choice Awards from the publication. He is also the proud owner of moviereviewer18.com.

Gustavo Caillaux

Gustavo Caillaux is an 8th grader at Maumee Valley Country Day School. He participates in a variety of after-school activities and lunch clubs, and is a student of the Chinese language. Over the winter break, he returned to Peru to visit family.

Penelope Duran

Penny Duran is a global citizen who calls Houston, Texas, home. She was educated in the German school system and enjoys writing in both English and German. In July 2016, she achieved her first writing success with a personal memoir titled, "Happily Ever After Germany." Her poetry has been recognized recently by numerous publications and organizations, including: the Poetry Society of Texas (April 2018), City of Ventura Art Tales Writing Contest (California, April 2017, April 2018), HEBE Poetry Magazine (United Kingdom, October 2018), Berliner Festspiele (Germany, September 2018), Ipswich Poetry Feast (Australia, October 2018), Allingham Arts Festival (Ireland, November 2018) and Texte Preis für junge Literatur (Austria, November 2018). In addition to creative writing, Penny enjoys dance and has performed in ballet productions of *Giselle*, *The Nutcracker*, *Sleeping Beauty*, and the *Wayward Daughter*.

Connie Gong

Connie Gong is a sophomore from California. Her work has previously been published in the Stanford Anthology for Youth, and her art has been recognized by Scholastic as well as her local and district PTA. In her free time, she enjoys going outside during golden hour, putting together playlists on Spotify, and going on boba runs.

Divya Gupta

Divya is a sophomore in Blue Valley North High School and enjoys writing poetry as well as traveling for new ideas. Divya has won a Silver Key award in the 2018 Scholastic Art and Writing Competition and also received four honorable mentions for poetry. Divya's short fiction and prose poetry have also been published in the 2016 and 2018 publications of IWRITE Fiction.

Ashley Guraiswamy

Ashkey is a sixteen-year-old from New Jersey and a junior at The Lawrenceville School. As well as regularly contributing to her school's two literary journals, she serves as a First Reader for *Polyphony H.S.* Her work has been recognized by the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards, and owes much of her growth as a writer to summer programs at Kenyon College and the University of Iowa.

Foster Hudson

Foster Hudson is a junior in high school and lives in Jersey City, New Jersey. Foster's work has been published in *Rare Byrd Review*.

Sarah Hwang

Sarah spent her early years in Seattle, Washington, and is now an 11th grader at Seoul International School, in Korea. In her free time she likes to read, write short stories, and watch movies. Her favorite book series is the Harry Potter series, but she also enjoys reading other books in the genre of young adult science fiction and fantasy as well as watch movies with thought-provoking messages. She also loves to play and watch soccer, and she is on her school's varsity soccer team. I also have a small pet Maltese named Snowball.

You Young Kim

You Young Kim is a junior at Seoul International School in Seoul, Korea. To Kim, art is the most personal form of self-expression because there are no defined rules to follow. She pours her thoughts on canvas freely and often comes to unexpected

Our Contributors

revelations about herself in the process. Through working with different types of visual art – from paintings to digital media – she aspires to explore how she can best communicate her ideas. Simultaneously, she wants to keep questioning and challenging her limitations of expression as confined by different artistic media.

Harshit Kohli

Harshit is a 16-year-old high school student who is passionate about the expression of the self through writing. Harshit has lived in Singapore, Indonesia, and currently reside in India. Harshit's writing has been published in *NOW! Jakarta* magazine and the *Times of India*.

Jayda Murray

Jayda Murray is a fourteen-year-old artist, computer programmer, and homeschool student hailing from New York. Jayda volunteers her time making art for SheroHub, a non-profit that empowers girls through video games on topics about domestic violence, racism, and inter-racial relationships. She is also making her own videogame titled "Shy Boy," and won both a Gold Key and Silver Key, 2019 Scholastics Art & Writing Awards. To learn more about Jayda's work, you can follow her on Instagram at @strayedtoofar.

Nandita Naik

Nandita is a high school senior at the Proof School. Her work has been published in the *National Poetry Quarterly*, *Polyphony HS* and others. Nandita's work has also has garnered recognition from the regional Scholastic Art & Writing Awards, UK Poetry Society, and the Keats-Shelley Memorial Association.

Grace Pignolo

Grace Pignolo is a high school sophomore who resides in Rochester, Minnesota. She is an unpublished author who has been the Grand Prize winner of the Webster University School of Communications High School Screenplay Competition. Grace also placed in the top three for the Olmsted County MLK poetry contest and has written for her school's online newspaper. She is excited about innovative writing and has started to make her way into the literary world.

The Daphne Review



Founded in 2015, *The Daphne Review* is an arts and literature magazine that features exceptional work by today's high school-aged artists. We accept original written submissions of any format (essay, interview, poem, short plays) and artistic submissions in any media on a rolling basis throughout the year. Share with us what you can create, and we may share it with the world.

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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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