

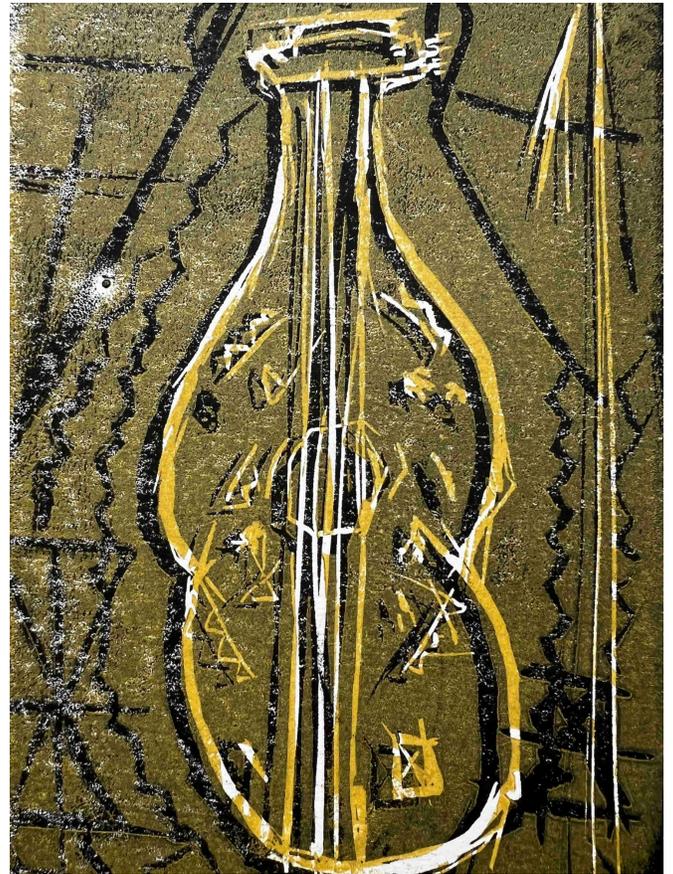
A painting of a landscape. In the foreground, there are rolling green hills with some white flowers. A river flows through the middle ground, reflecting the blue sky. The background shows more green hills under a bright blue sky with white clouds. The overall style is impressionistic with visible brushstrokes.

CROSSCURRENTS

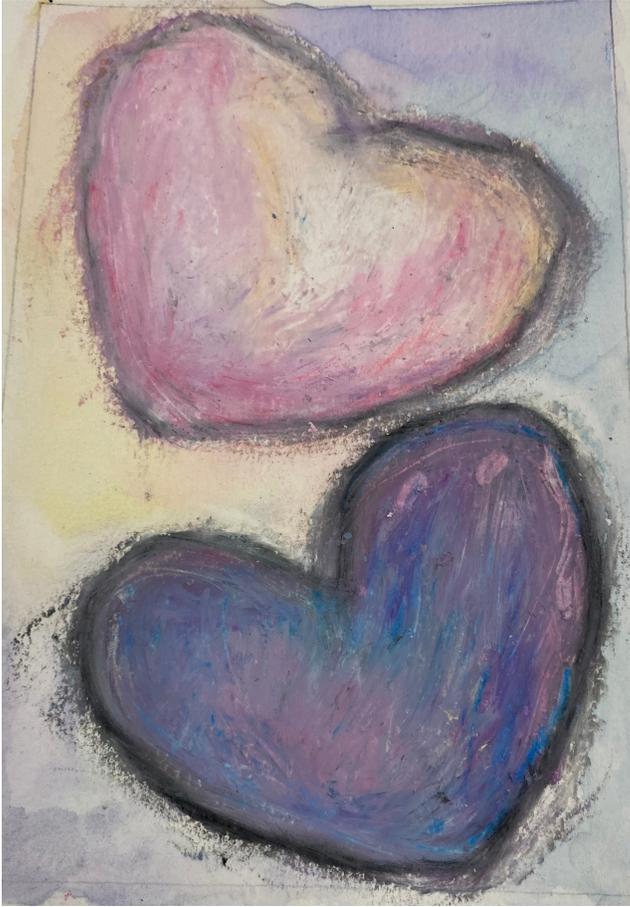
SPRING 2025

Ode to Music by Roxie De Los Santos

Music; It is everywhere you go
It is the chip-chirping
of the birds
as I stroll through the park.
It is a mother singing
to her baby
It is the tip tapping
of of an old man's foot
as he sings to his wife
for he assumes she is
starting to forget him
It is the rhythm and beat of the
music in times square
It is a sailor and
his crew singing about the fish they
successfully caught
It is a escape from reality
It is an angel singing
to his Lord
It is the humming of
a little girl as she skips
It is the modification
on our emotions
It is the powerful
sound that brings people together
It is a choir in an old church
It is a new perspective
It is raindrops falling on rooftops
It is the pounding drums
It is the loud sound of a trumpet
It is the beautiful sound of a piano
It is the calming sound of a harp
It is the strumming of a guitar
It is MUSIC



Leonardo Garcia



Melissa Martinez

Clouds by Elizabeth Pash

When they come, they fill us with a
melancholia that fills the whole sky like
them, and a gentle shade passes us
When they do not appear, they fill us with joy
that we exult throughout the warm and sunny
day

Sometimes, when we stare at them, they
make funny faces or interesting shapes
But maybe, when they feel sad, they stare
blankly back at you, as blank as a white and
unpainted canvas,

And sometimes, if the situation escalates,
they shed their tears in the form of cold and
hard rain, or yelp out into the vast sky, a cry
of booming thunder

You see, clouds are a lot like us
They express their emotions like we do when
they smile or cry

And sometimes, clouds have the power to
control our moods,

Or how our plans for the day change,
Or the temperature of the day,
Or the weather

Clouds are lot like us
They are creative, and can affect people

Just
Like
You

Ode to my Piano by Avery Harris

My piano, my chamber of melodies,
My piano is my singing partner, my friend,
With its freeing keys of ivory and ebony,
When I sit on that bench, I know I am free,
Without my piano, my artistic outlet would be taken away,
I would not have my musical muse,
My piano is beautiful, the noise that comes out is simple,
It's a sound that brings love, kindness and heart,
People say music brings people together,
And this is true,
With the piano in my house,
You've watched me grow, your perception of me changed,
But you've stuck with me, you've asserted your place in my heart
So let us rejoice over this instrument,
This dresser full of every note known to humankind,
Full of any melody you could imagine,
A dimension into another realm,
A realm of joy
So thank you to my piano,
And my mom who brought this into my life,
My gratitude is endless,
Your beacon of light



Alexandra Bellanger

Ode to my Sister by May Vallese

You are
Fun
And Funny
Crazy
And lazy
You are younger
My best friend
Forever
You are
Sporty,
Extremely
Energetic,
Absolutely
Adventurous,
Annoyingly
Adorable,
Secretly
Shy,
Extra
Extroverted
You are like a hurricane
How you leave a messy path behind you,
You are like a puppy
With endless energy,
You check all the criteria for a perfect sibling,
You don't care what people think
So you do what you want,
You easily convey to me
That you are as silly as anyone could possibly be
You make me laugh,
You tell me your secrets
So I tell you mine,
The trust we have is unbreakable
Like a diamond or metal chain,
The memories we have shared are worth
The whole entire world and more,
So I thank you
My one and only sister
Because you make me,
Me
And I wouldn't be me without you.



Sakara Dale-Taylor



Redeat Gebeyehu

Ode To The Ocean
by Jayden Loza

Oh
Ocean Water
Clashing
In the depths of the sea
You see yourself
Beside me
Sand beside my feet
The feeling of coldness
Below my feet

Ode To Saturday
by Roxy Scarff

Saturday,
A day with endless fun
Time away from school and work
Laughter and giggles fill the air,
As your mind drifts away from all worry
And you find yourself relaxed as stress
Gets replaced with the subtle shine of the sun
When the plans devised throughout the week come
together
And turn into the day you have been waiting for
As it modifies ideas of what the week was made out
to be
And fills people's minds with thoughts
Of ice cream, of summer, of no regret
It is like a warm cup of hot chocolate
In the middle of winter
Taking you mind away from reality for a brief
amount of time
Moving your focus away from things not worthy of
it
Making you life less worrisome
Showing you a new way to find excitement
about the life you live.



Emma Sethi

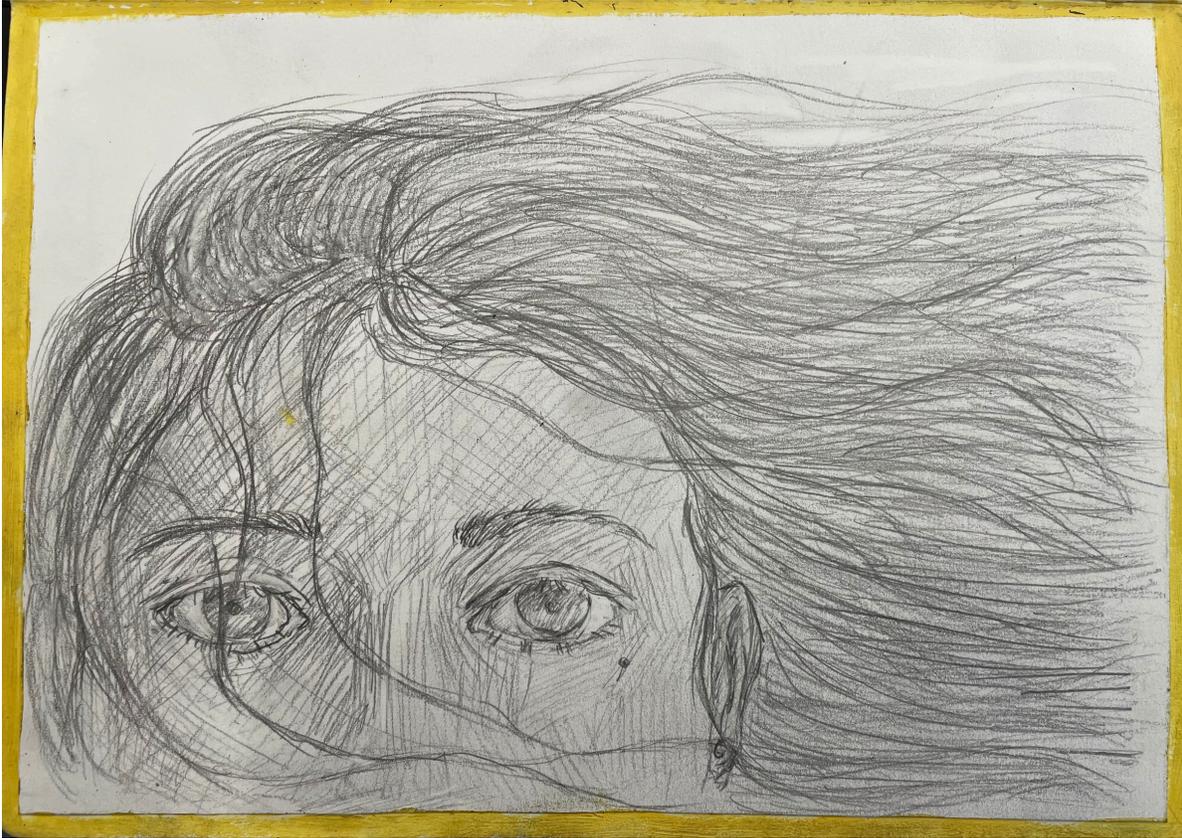


Alexandra Bellanger

**Starry Silence
by Julia Cadena**

Silver starry silence
Watching the sun rise
Wet hair on a pool deck
Staring at the skies
Bare toes against the grass
Chasing dragonflies
Time measured with an hourglass
That ends with the moon rise

Ingrid Hernandez Martinez



Sunset by Andia Bacaj

The sunset brings peace to the human heart. Nothing matters when you see it.

When you are having a rough day look up at the sunset and everything will be better.

Sunset is the meaning of hope.

When the sun is covered up by the clouds of darkness. Everything might feel lost.

Wait till the sunset, the sunset of hope, will rise.

Bat Boy

by Leo Morelli

It was a warm evening riding through the mountains of northern Thailand. I rented a CRF 250 from a shop in the city of Chiang Mai a few days earlier and had been riding from town to town with my mom. The mountain views were beautiful, stretching over fields of rice paddies and lush green jungle. While I was going around a sharp turn I came across this little dog playing in the road. I knew I had to stop to make sure it was ok and I did not hit it. He was a small dusty little dark gray dog with a long snout and a face that resembled a fruit bat. When I stopped the dog came running towards me and looked up with its big eyes. I picked it up to see if it was ok, his fur felt like velvet and he licked my face.

Moments later my mom pulled up behind me to see what I was doing and stopped. She saw me holding the dog and asked what happened. I said "I almost just hit this dog". She looked at him and I handed the soft puppy over. He almost immediately fell asleep in my mom's arms. Looking down at the sleeping bat boy, she realized that the dog was very young and it was not safe for him to be out here at its age. We tried looking around for someone to take the dog but we could not find anyone nearby who seemed interested. Not surprising though as we were way outside of any towns on the side of the road and it is common for dogs to run around and sleep on the roadside here.

It was getting dark outside fast and we still had another 22 miles of riding to our next town, we had to make our mind up fast. It was hard not to quickly fall in love with this little dog who seemed so at peace with us. So as the sky turned orange in the sunset, I placed the bat boy on seat of my bike in front of me and he calmly leaned against me as I slowly took off. We ended up taking the dog with us 22 miles riding along the steep switch backs trying to beat the coming night. I held the dog in my arms the whole way down the mountain and he seemed to trust me. Every now and then he tucked his cold nose into me looking for warmth.

When we finally got into our room he laid on the floor and happily fell asleep. We wanted to give him a bath though so we woke him up and brought him in the bathroom. He was scared of the shower so I filled a bowl of warm water and gently poured it over his body as my mom scrubbed around the bat boy with soap. He looked up with his huge beady eyes and licked my face. He never whimpered or barked, and it felt like he knew we just wanted to help. The water running off of him was brown as it swirled down the drain. His fur had turned from gray to black and he was now very clean! I wrapped him in a towel and my mom took off on her bike to see if she could find a store open to get him something to eat. I had a snack while she was gone and the bat boy stuck his whole head in the bag! I got in my bed and he curled his soft velvet self right next to me. He took a big sigh and started to drift. After a little while my mom came back into the room and he jumped out of bed wagging his tail right to her. She then fed him which he quickly ate and after playing with the bat boy for a while, we all fell asleep.

The next morning we had to decide what we were going to do with our bat boy because we still had a long journey back to go. Over 240 miles left on our motorcycle trip. We didn't want to take him too far from the only place he knew without a plan. There were three options. Take him home, take him back, or find a shelter way out here in the mountains which was very unlikely in this area. We tried to find a way to bring him back home with us. We could give him a good life at home, but we already had two dogs and it was going to be very challenging to bring him home. We were also running out of time.

Or we bring him to a shelter that's a two-day journey from here. Maybe there they could find him a home and he would be happy. But when my mom called the shelter they wouldn't be able to take him because although he was a very cute dog they mostly tried to focus on rescuing animals that have severe injuries or were in awful conditions and desperately needed the help. They suggested bringing him back to the area he was found because that is all he knows in the world and my mom agreed. But we would try to find a home for him back there.

So after feeding him breakfast and spending more time with the velvet bat boy we decided to make the trip back 22 miles. First we stopped at a store and my mom loaded a few large bags of dog food onto the back of the bikes and strapped them down. She then wrapped a scarf around the gentle bat and my waist and tied him to me. We took off. I felt sad knowing that we may have to leave him behind but hoped we could find somewhere good for him. As we passed green fields of rice farms and tall looming mountains I petted his small head and he looked up at me. After some time we made it back to the place where I first found him. My mom found an old woman in a small hut nearby who agreed to take Bat Boy. She looked like she lived there a long time and even though she didn't speak English my mom and her seemed to communicate in a way. My mom went and unloaded the dog food from the bikes to place in her house. The woman then showed us how she was hand weaving fabric. We watched for a while as the Bat Boy played with some other dogs that came into the hut. My mom said it was time we needed to go because now our journey would be farther and it was already afternoon. She bought some fabric from the woman, giving more than needed in exchange for taking our Bat and hoping it would be helpful for her.

Outside we said goodbye and hugged Bat Boy wishing him a happy and good life. I looked into his beady eyes again and he licked my face. When I put him down he ran around with the other dog and seemed happy so I got on my bike, waved goodbye and we took off. After a few moments I turned my head around and the Bat boy was running after us as fast as he could with those little legs down the mountain. We stopped and he caught up to us, wagging his tail and standing up on his back legs to the bike as if he was ready to get back on again with me. It hurt. I felt so sad leaving him there watching the little black bat boy chase after us. He couldn't understand. I didn't want him to get lost trying to keep up so I picked him up and asked my mom what to do. She told me with tears in her eyes to ride him back up to the old woman. I took him back and she held him as I once again said goodbye and took off. I looked back again going down the mountain half hoping to see him but this time he wasn't able to come after us and my heart sank knowing I likely will never see him again.

Once we got a bit further down the road we stopped to collect ourselves. We sat and looked over the stretching mountains and tried to ease the hurt. It was beautiful and it felt painful. In such a short time we met and loved the Bat Boy. Hoping we did the best thing for him in the end. Back home months later we still talk about him often. Sometimes half joking half not that we will try to find him again. And on a desk in the living room where we can see it everyday we have the fabric from the woman who kept our Bat Boy.

Sea Glass Brooklyn S. Bell

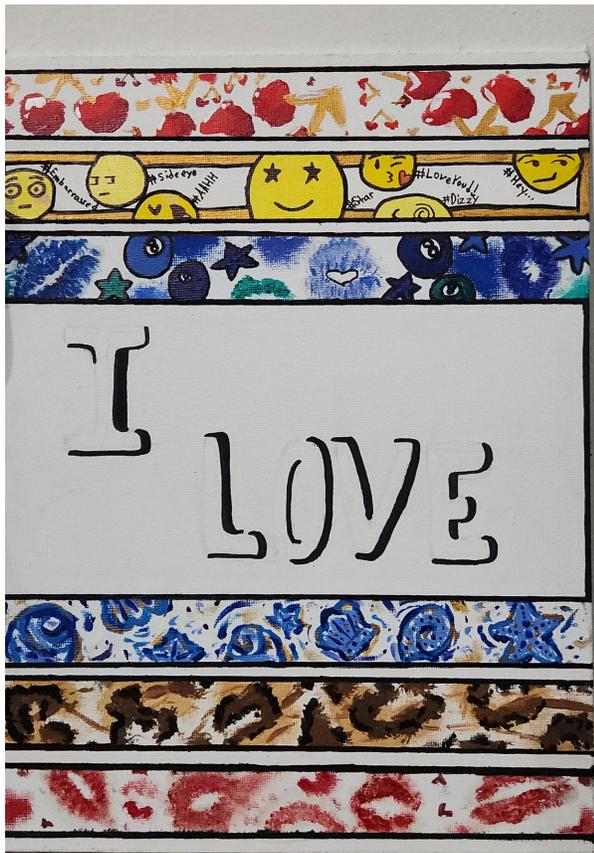
Sea glass is smooth and bright,
Born from waves and kissed by light,
Shaped by time, the wind, and the tide,
A treasure from the ocean made for enjoyment,

Its soft colors caught my eye,
A secret life gone by,
A simple shard but full of grace,
A simple piece of nature's face,

Nature's plan devised to make me feel warmth in my
heart

By sending me a piece of ocean's art
Each fragment once a sharp shard
Derived from the cold whispers of the tides.
With time, the edges modify
Smooth and soft beneath the sky

Sea glass...



Aurora Gonzalez

Ode to the Ocean by Charlie Nord

down the street
always there
waiting in blue silence.
it rolls
modifying the sand
washing away the past.
a fresh start
always hesitant, though
rushing to come back.
reaching out a salty hand,
then snapping it away
unwilling to give.
under the seafoam,
a frigid claw
taking your breath.
a fleeting,
harsh
but familiar
embrace,
soft but firm.
pushing away
pushing everyone away
in a churning whorl.
but past the chaos,
there is serenity.
resting on the surface
at ease.
the sun like a yolk,
sliding downwards
melting
its reflection burning brighter and brighter,
the effect, a glimmering, shimmering blanket
that meets the horizon.

Bumble Bumble

By Mia Petrigliano

The majority of my extended family lives on the East Coast. So naturally we visit often. When I was three years old my family and I were visiting New York. This was the first time I remember going to the city. We spent our first few days roaming Manhattan, Times Square, and other popular locations. We created our own customized bags of candy at a popular place called Dylan's Candy™ and saw one of my aunts and her apartment which had a yellow brick road at the entrance.

Family time had come to an end and we said our goodbyes. I received hugs from my aunt and we left. After leaving the city, we took a ferry to an island. While on the ferry my brother and I begged my mom to get a snack from the vending machine.

“Pleassse” I pleaded, “I’m sooo hungry.” Unfortunately, my mom denied us, however, my brother did earn a clam chowder. Which I, of course, didn’t want. The ferry ride was about an hour of playing games, asking for candy, and talking.

Upon arrival at the island, there were different booths and structures for kids to climb on. My brother and I were bouncing off the balls of our feet. I laughed and played games while running free and barefoot. My fun came to a halt when I came across a bee. Fire alarms started going off in my three year old self's head. Due to my youth... I made quite the spectacle. I started to yell “Bumble! Bumbllle!!!”. A sudden sharp pain shot through all four feet and three inches of me. I paused. Then I began to bawl.

Like most injuries that happen to three year old, I got a Band-aid and got over it. However, my last words before getting stung stayed an inside joke in my family throughout all these 10 years. Guests of the Petrigliano residence can occasionally hear one of my parents saying, “Bumble, Bumble!” when a bee is spotted. Although one’s first bee sting isn’t traditionally looked back on fondly, mine most definitely is not.

Ode to Tigerlily by Maya Marrero-Howieson

Tigerlily,
A shining body of wood,
Voice of 1000 notes and compositions,
Music created on her strings
Flowing from her soul to her surroundings,
Her graceful bowing as if a choreographed ballet
Help her create the story of her life,
That she could tell you someday
From the tip of her scroll,
To the bottom of her fine tuners,
Is a mind of music that is heard by any listeners
If you were to spot her,
You'd assume she's a goddess of performance,
Her voice echoing off the walls,
Creating a rawr of a waterfall
Tigerlily,
Though just a instrument,
She could cause the most valuable moment



**Audrey
Thammavongsa**

October By Andia Bacaj

“Please, you have to help me!” My mom wants to kill me and use my ashes in a broth. I was scrolling on the internet and I saw an email that said “ I can solve all your problems” . So I read it all the way. It said please meet me at this abandoned village. So I ran away from home to go to this abandoned village. When I got there I saw a man in shades and a hoodie. He said "I am your savior, I will protect you only if you give me a part of you each month" I agreed.

He leads me to this shack, all rusted and looks like it's been uninhabited for at least a century. He takes my coat and takes me to a fireplace. He opens the door to the basement and hangs my coat and seats me. There's a beautiful young woman on the throne. She's dressed in a gown with golden earrings. She looks about a year younger than me. She looks at a tea cup on the counter, and it magically starts heading towards me. I flinch but it gets placed on my hand.

“Now we get to talking.” She says, “I need human body parts to be alive . Since you have gone this far to get here, I say we shall start with the first payment.” The man takes out an ax and starts heading towards me. I can't move. I'm stuck. He takes my hand, looks around my wrist, then BOOM.

I'm crying. There's blood everywhere. And my hand. It's gone. I see the woman take the hand and put in a preservative. I should have thought this through. But then I remembered when I looked at the cup and it came floating towards me so quickly I started staring at it really hard and it came right into my hands. I knew I needed to escape so I did the only thing I could think of. With the only hand that I had I threw it at the creepy guy's head, kicked the girl in the back of her leg, got in my car and drove. I drove so fast to the nearest hospital, ran in and yelled, “Please, you have to help me!”

At the hospital I yelled I should have never joined that cult. I went into the nearest room and waited for a doctor. When the doctor was there he asked, “How did you lose your arm?”

I said, “It is because of a cult.”

Then he said, “That is your lesson to never be in a cult.” The doctor sewed up my arm and I was free to go. I went back to that place and then used my mind to move a chandelier and hit the woman in the head with it, killing her. I got a car and drove as far from that city as I could.

I drove and drove as far away from that place. I can't stop crying. I drove so far away. I will drive until 2024. In a small city in California, Santa Monica. It's October 31st. I plan to get my revenge on all these people who hated me and made me lose my arm. I wait until the night. Go time. Surprisingly, there's thousands of people, kids, walking around the streets with weapons, although they look really funny. I get out of my car. All of the sudden a lot of cars with blue and red lights appear and I hear loud bangs, I tur-

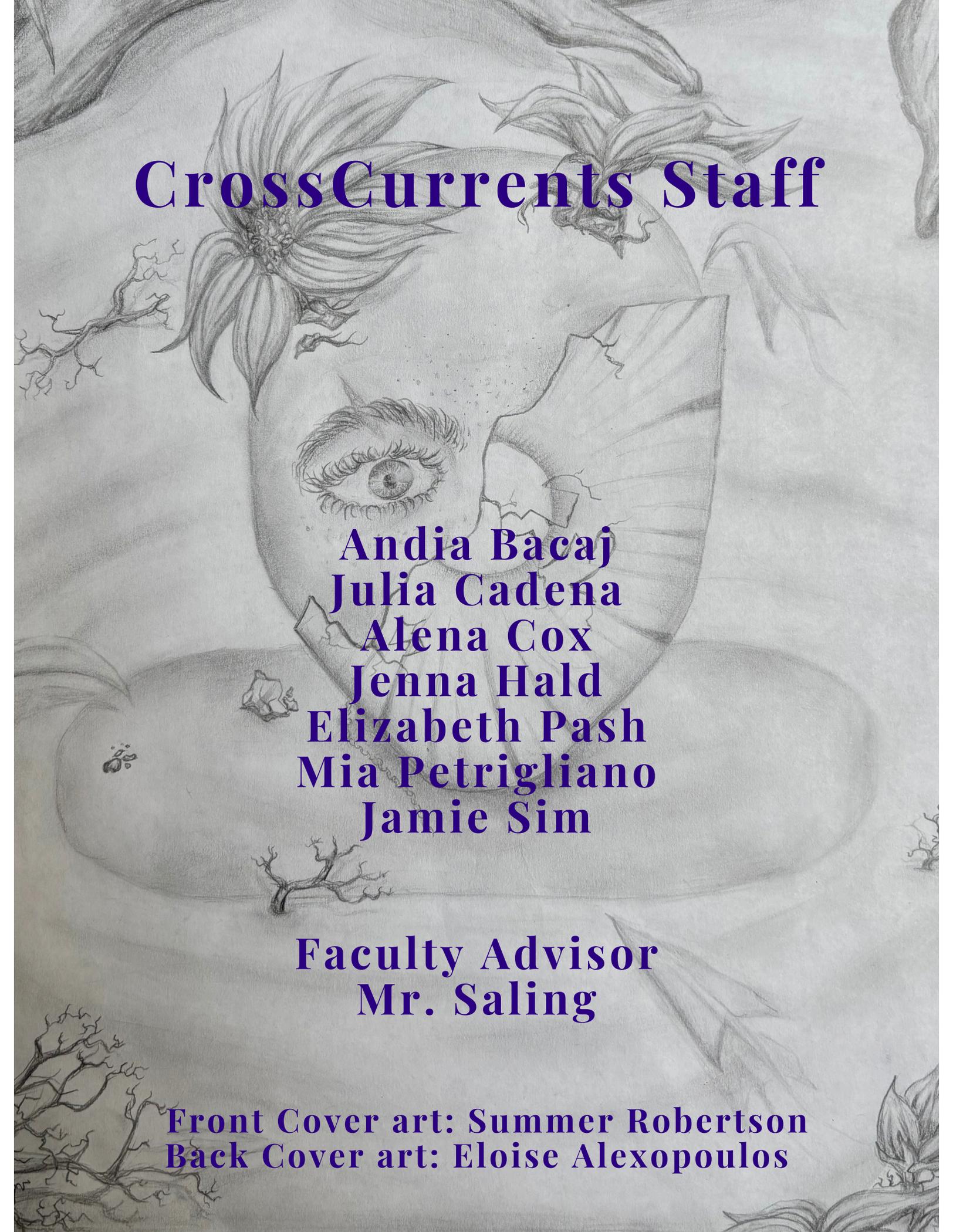
Fear by Jamie Sim

My face is slick with sweat,
And hot tears stream down my
face.
My eyes are adjusted to the
darkness—
Nothing to see but the endless
darkness that seems to swallow
everything in it.
My throat is dry, my heart is
deflated, and my legs are hard and
useless.
My fingers are curled tight around
the rusted metal.
I can feel the hard calluses on my
hands,
And my fingers are so tightly
wound they're a shade of purple.
I still pull, kick, and try
everything to break those chains,
But they defiantly stay in place.
And every time I glance at them,
they're saying to me,
"You'll fail."
"You'll disappoint everyone."
"You'll just embarrass yourself."
I kneel before these thoughts, as a
lowly servant kneels before a king.
I stop trying to fight, let my arms
and legs go slack, and sit down,
defeated.
It's not just me—there are others
in this horrible prison,
But each of them is fighting her
own battle.
We are together, but alone.
The room is silent and dark, like a
winter night with no stars.
But she gets free—the person next
to me—her chain's gone
Like breath floating away on a
chilly evening.
She looks straight into my eyes
and says,
"Believe."

I look longingly at her. I want that freedom,
Need that freedom.
So I gather this fire of determination
And remold my thoughts:
"I can do it."
"It's going to be hard, but I'll try."
"I have support."
And slowly, my chains melt away. I was free—
All because I believed.
I can do it.
You can do it.
Don't even for a minute doubt yourself.
It's hard to believe in the jail of fear,
Trust me I know,
But just try.
Believe.
You can do it.
You can do it.



Cameron Cohen

A detailed pencil drawing of a cracked vase. The vase is the central focus, with a large, detailed eye and eyelashes on its front. The vase is surrounded by various flowers and leaves, some of which are also cracked. The background is a light, textured grey.

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