

INKLINGS

Volume VI

2020-2021





Schizophrenic
Jacob Cao ('21)

Spear/Shield
Angel Pagan ('21)

I am not a rapper,
And I do not rhyme.
I'm just a poet,
No longer in his prime.

My poetry is amazing,
And I'll do you one better.
I like my whine,
Locked up, in a cellar.

I'll contradict myself,
And I'll be, repetitive.
Keep my poems on a shelf,
And my words, competitive,

I told myself,
"No more rhymes."
I'm self-destructive,
And I lie.

But, my only crime,
Is that I am repetitive,
Competitive, and on time.
Yes, I'm fine,
I do not lie,
Contradiction is my affliction,
Is that really a crime?

Crooks took what I look at,
When I'm shook,
Hooks look too nice,
I'm the real crook,
The only thing I need,
On my shelves,
Are new books.

I'll cry more until,
My death is upon me.
Stay indoors and watch world,
Betray me,
Cry some more and the world,
Bathe me in lies.
Just know I tried...

Andrew's Inferno

Andrew Le ('21)

Based on true events:

"All hope abandon, ye who enter here," I mumbled under my breath, seeing this sea of people squeezing into the Fox River Mall. It was Friday, November 29th, the day after Thanksgiving, when every mall in the country becomes a keen representation of Gehenna, the living Hell. Embarked with me on this doleful pilgrimage to acquire two bottles of lotion was my trusty guide, my Virgil, Benedict. He uttered these haunting words before we went in: "We have come where I had told thee we shall see the souls to misery doomed, who intellectual good have lost."

Into this city of woe, he led me through the first circle, Limbo, also known as the waiting lounge for the men who were dragged by their wives and mistresses into this place of sorrow.

We descended thus through the second circle of Hell, where the souls of the lustful and the carnal dwell, otherwise known as...Victoria's Secret. There I saw an army of sinners going in and out of the store, swept up as if in an infernal swirling storm; their reasons swayed by appetite.

Passing by this hellish tempest and into the third circle we ventured forth. It met my eyes, this scene

of mass littering: there lay on the stinking ground, heaps of aluminum foil, piles of McDonald's wrappings and mounds of Panda Express boxes. All of this filth mixed with a sweeping mass of food scraps and a torrent of spilled drinks; together the mess created an abominable scene. This was the food court, where the mournful, portly spirits were agonizing, letting out coarse and bitter moaning, for the queue was too long.

We finally reached the fourth steep ledge of this Inferno, the realm of the prodigal and the avaricious—Bath and Body Works. Multitudes and multitudes of miserable souls crammed into this little space we held, pushing each other as if they were boulders of great weight, keeping in mind only their desire to hoard their savings and to lavishly spend on the great deals. My guide and I, claustrophobic and terrified by this horrid episode, decided to cut short our trip, grabbed what we needed and ran with all our might out of this hell hole.

I thought to myself, may I never suffer such damnation ever again. And thus we came out to see once more the stars.

Quack Attack
Rem David ('22)



Starry Night
Ricky Conlin ('22)



Male Model Standards
Peter Lim ('21)

My Lost Amor

Russel Kilian ('21)

As summer leaves us yet again
My thoughts go back to a time when
I had you by my side, my dear
But like the warmth, you're now not here

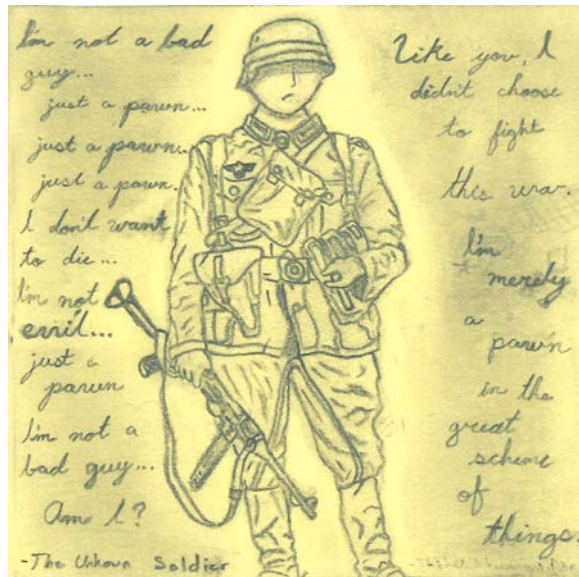
Not by my side in body real
But still your presence I can feel
Whene'er I feel the wind so cold
I think of cozy nights of old

The fire's glow, your loving touch
Two of the things I miss so much
When Autumn comes with fiery hue
I always tend to think of you

Your tender kiss, with warm embrace
I miss when cold winds brush my face
And so when summer is no more
I think of you, my lost Amor



Andrew Le ('21)



The Unknown Soldier
Emmanuel Pizaña ('21)

Blame the Doctor Angel Pagan ('21)

Simply sick
Like a simpleton
I sipped their silver
Medicine

Of the many planets
If I had to pick a favorite
I'd choose Earth
But if I had a second
And just a moment longer
I'd prefer Mercury

Because my mouth tasted metallic
As I looked at the medicine
I noticed that it didn't come from a bottle
But a broken thermometer

Friend Amend

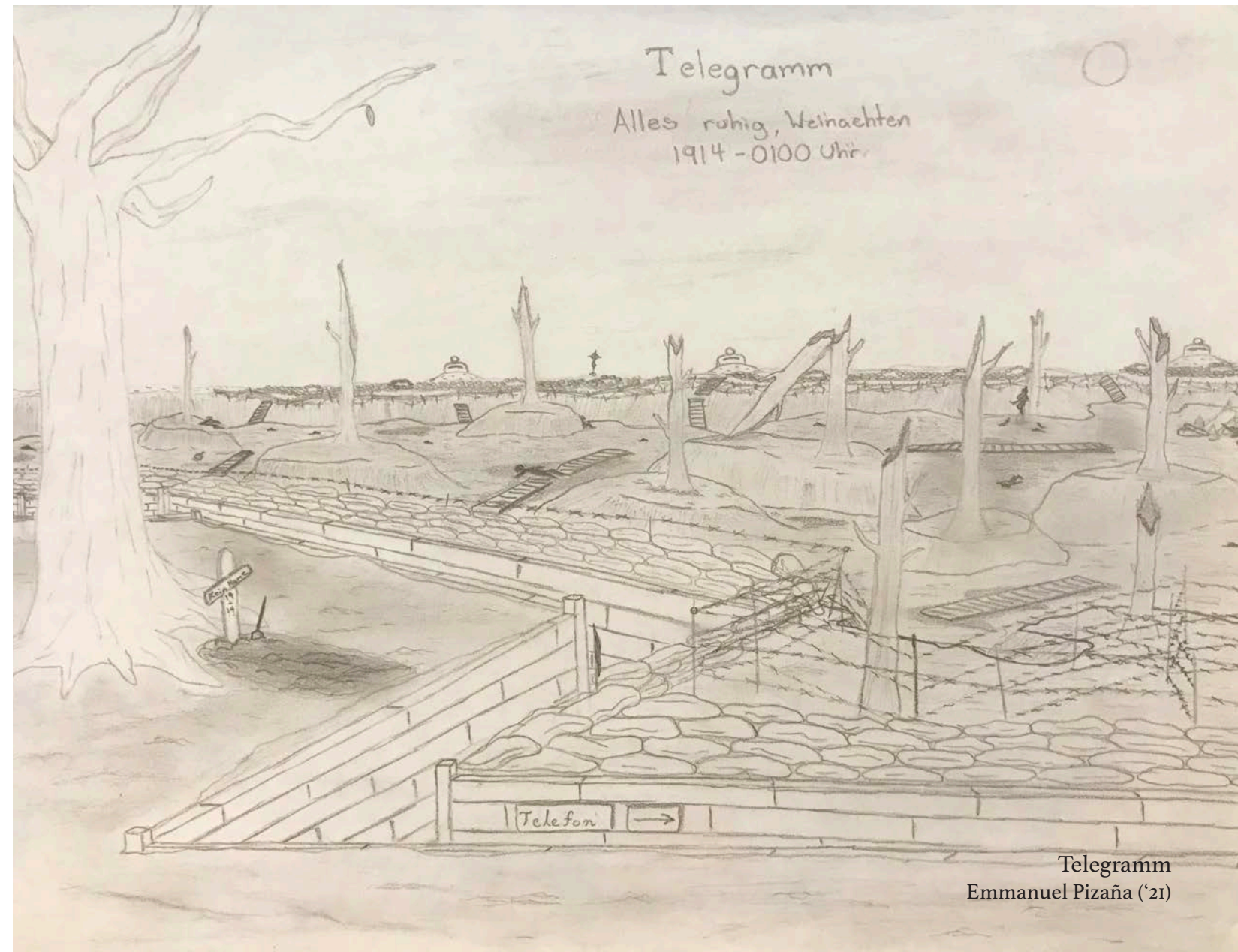
Aaron Villegas ('21)

I say you're my best friend and I mean that
A brother from another mother, best believe that
But what I said, is still said
I'd do anything for you I hope you can see that

I repent that I did what I did
I hit you with the lowblow, my mind thinking in slowmo
I wish I never slid

I wanna let you know
that my regret is hard to show
and the process is gonna be slow,

But you're my best friend and I ain't gonna pretend that
our bond is hard to mend
From now 'til beyond, I'll love you to the end.



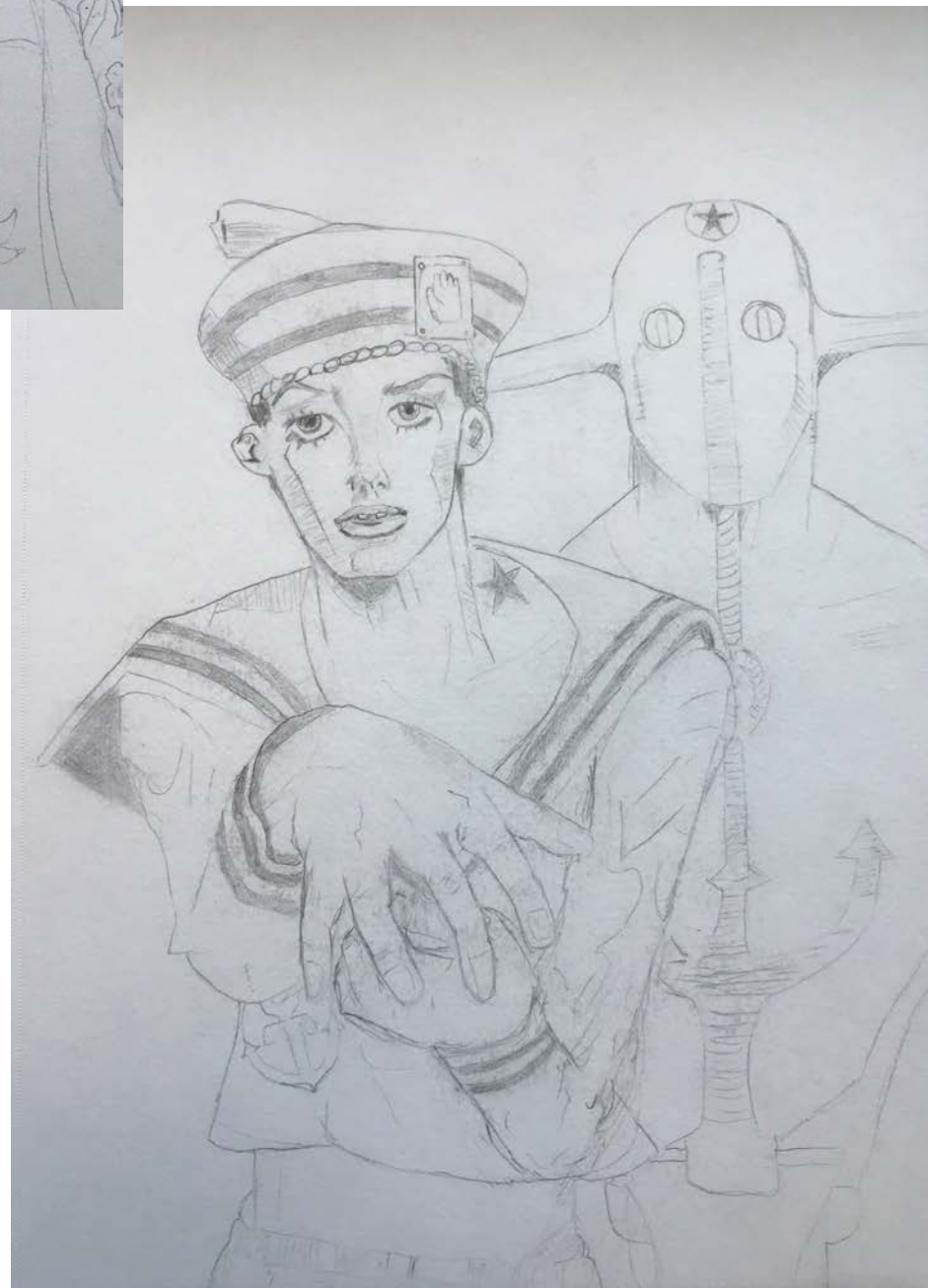
Telegramm
Emmanuel Pizaña ('21)

Celestial Navigation
Peter Lim ('21)



Josuke
Thomas Nguyen ('21)

Jolyne
Thomas Nguyen ('21)

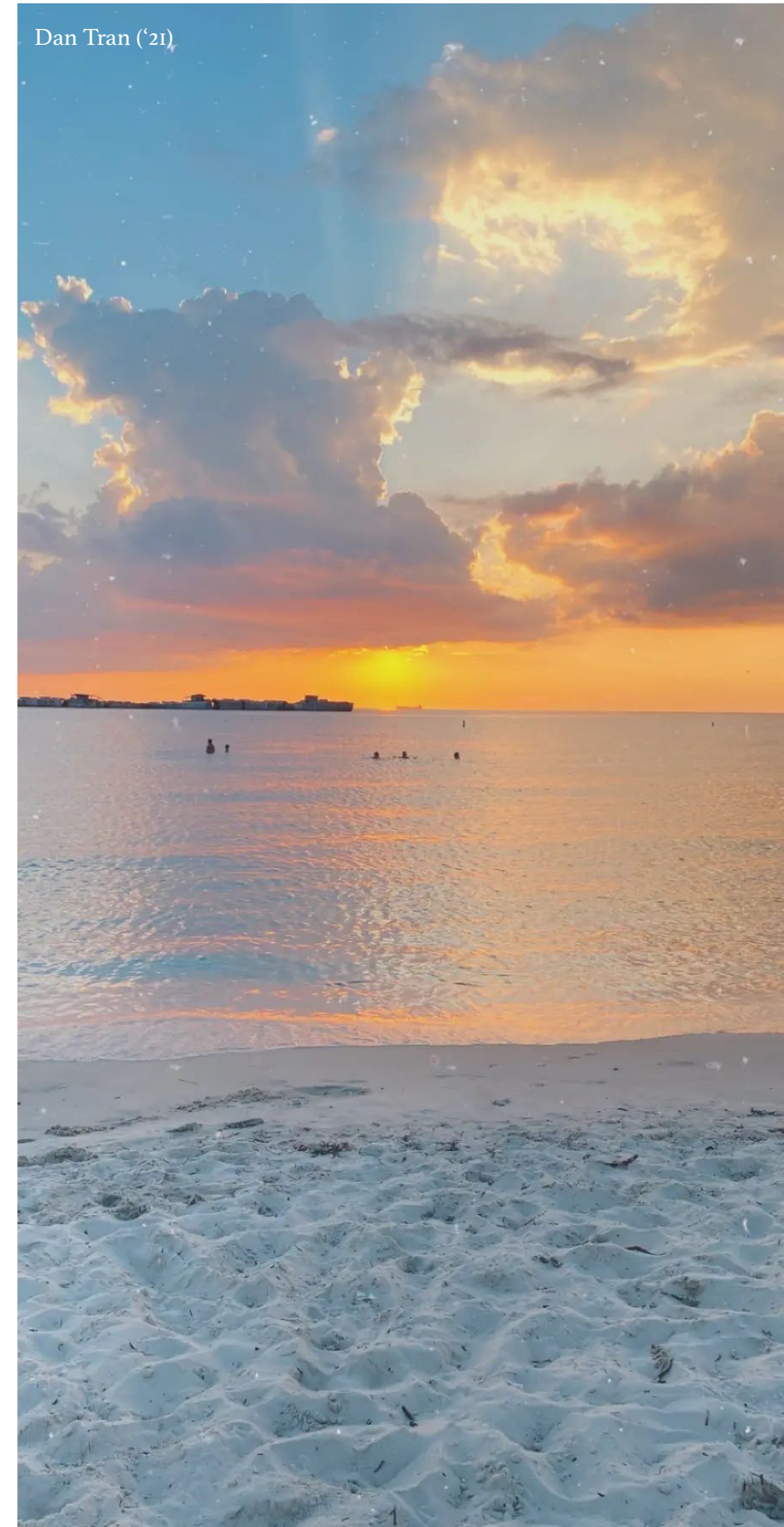




Masquerade
Jonathan Prado ('24)

We hide behind masks,
Our identity is gone.
We dance in the moonlight,
We await the rising dawn.
We are all new,
A fresh and clean slate.
We laugh and converse,
Unaware of my fate.
But then it stops,
My scream splits the air.
A screaming crowd,
The king has no heir.
The guests run,
A mob forming.
My assassin screams,
Yelling a warning.
The nobles flee,
Stumbling in darkest night.
Not one remains,
None left to fight.
The monarchy crumbles,
A revolution begins.
A bloody war,
Where nobody wins.

Dan Tran ('21)



Thoughts for Days
Aaron Villegas ('21)

Another day another dollar.
At least that's what they say,
But tell me what type of day will be today?
A day is a day because it's bright.
Lose that light and a day turns to night.
Lose all hope and tomorrow is out of sight.
I pray when the sun breaks way you make a new day great.
Tomorrow is up to you, not fate.
So, tell me, what type of day will you make?



Hot Chocolate Eyes
Benedict Wood ('21)

A sea of hot chocolate.
Warm.
Inviting.
A laugh like a birdsong
on a bright summer day.

Scars lingering in the eyes,
a million-word story of human pain.
Yet the eyes hold secrets.
A truth so few learn:
pain pushes you to places of peace –
strengthening you –
testing you in terrible fire
until your joy shines through
in white-hot splendor.

The pain pulses in the eyes
but it is not all that's held in those
innocent brown pools.

Those seas of welcoming warmth
hold joy immeasurable alongside the pain.
A joy that wells up and springs forth from the eyes,
wrapping around me like a hug
after I've been crying for far too long.

Then there's that smile.
Pure.
Unfiltered.

Beautiful.

Dying Leaves
Tam Le ('21)

Her house is warm, saves me from harm
She cooks me food, it lifts my mood
She makes me smile, the time worthwhile
Brown leaves will fall, time can't be stalled
Her hair turns gray, her teeth decayed
She passed away, left me astray
Both colors changed, my mind enraged
My life goes on, but she is gone



The Hobbit
David Choi ('23)

Paper-play
Ben Bartlett ('21)

When one begins writing passionately, it evokes a feeling of hunting prey. They lunge at the page, their pen talons piercing its skin. Inky blood oozes from thin scratches, staining the surface with their words. To many writers, this is not a mauling – this is their escape or their magnum opus or their outlet to discovery: it is a tool. And the paper cannot complain about their scars – it's impossible as an inanimate object.

Yet, when treated as simply a tool, paper loses its richness. One cannot appreciate the paper they sacrifice as “their tool” when only considering their impassioned speech. That richness disappears in the scrawled blood and mangled skin left in one's fervor, left to rot in notebook cages on mildewing shelves in abandoned rooms as meaningless as those pages. One cherishes only the scars when they are apathetic to “the tool.” Instead of simply taxidermying a page to celebrate a stroke of genius, writers must appreciate the powerless page they sacrifice; they must acknowledge those working to enact their stroke of genius. The scars may describe the writer's feelings, but the paper allows for an exploration and recording of them: it is the translation to physical reality.

And even if one recognizes that a paper and their written thoughts are inextricably linked, meaning is still lost. Recognizing one's thoughts entering reality on a page is different from acknowledging that the page is an extension of oneself. If acknowledged, the paper becomes intimately linked to the writer. The words become as important as the paper, as both belong and are elements of the writer. One then can feel comfort in scratching their stories and semantics and purpose on their paper, as they are reflecting to themselves.

Of course, the bastardization of objects as “tools” is common. From pens to notebooks; from shelves to rooms; from houses to homes. Whenever one interacts with an object it becomes an extension of oneself. The pen carves one's thoughts and feelings onto paper; the notebook stores one's papers; the shelves house those notebooks and the memories of oneself; the rooms are a direct link to one's character and mannerisms; the houses one stays in are temporary refuges, which may become homes, where one will cultivate and foster one's life.

Peoples' environments and possessions are them, and this must be recognized. Disregarding them leads to a loss of purpose and respect. Many objects and experiences become estranged from the person; they simply become things one has and things one does. It becomes challenging to reason why one owns what they have and does what



Martin Pham ('21)

Russel Kilian ('21)



they do. Acknowledging the intimate link that these are extensions of oneself inherently gives them meaning. Since that chair is owned by someone, it has meaning because it is an extension of their want for comfort. Since working that job is an opportunity for someone to use their God-given gifts, it has meaning because it is an extension of one's efforts.

There are obviously scenarios where people do tasks against their wants and own things they don't want. But these are done for personal reasons: a college student may be disinterested in a class, but it may be necessary for them to graduate – it's an obstacle blocking a goal. Unless forced under duress, actions are done with a personal intent. These can be indirect extensions of a person: not all purpose is tattooed on an object's sleeve. If still regarded as an extension, these actions and ownerships still have meaning.

Thus, when writing passionately, the writer must remember that they are extending themselves into reality. The paper and the words are equally linked, as they are both part of that writer. If unacknowledged, they lose their meaning and simply are a piece of paper and words on a page; they are ideas akin to oneself but not intimately linked to them. The paper will then yellow and decay and shrivel up, and the person will lose the extension and meaning of their message.



Peter Lim ('21)

You

Harvey Nguyen ('22)

Would you ever kill me with those eyes?
Or will you drown me with your smile?
Would you rather fill my heart with love?
Or will you tear my soul with lies?
Would you be my play date tonight?
Or will you be my lover 'til death?

Foe said you love to steal men's hearts
I hope that you will steal mine
The Archangel told me to trow
So please God for I make that vow
A contract: sell my soul for love
Seduce you for you are my muse

Clouds of Smoke

Joseph Hall ('22)

Parting is such sweet sorrow
Sweet as the salt of my tears
Shed for knowing you will still be gone tomorrow
And for a thousand more years

The night we met
Your smell, the best of flame and showers
The grass still wet
When our love was ours

Love that could never last
Smoke changes with the wind
Flames die and clouds never hold fast
Just as smoke rises – our love thinned

Fool to think it would last
Fool for love
Now something of the past
Smoke and storm clouds far above

Now I smell smoke
Now I smell rain
So thick that I choke
So real, I'm in pain

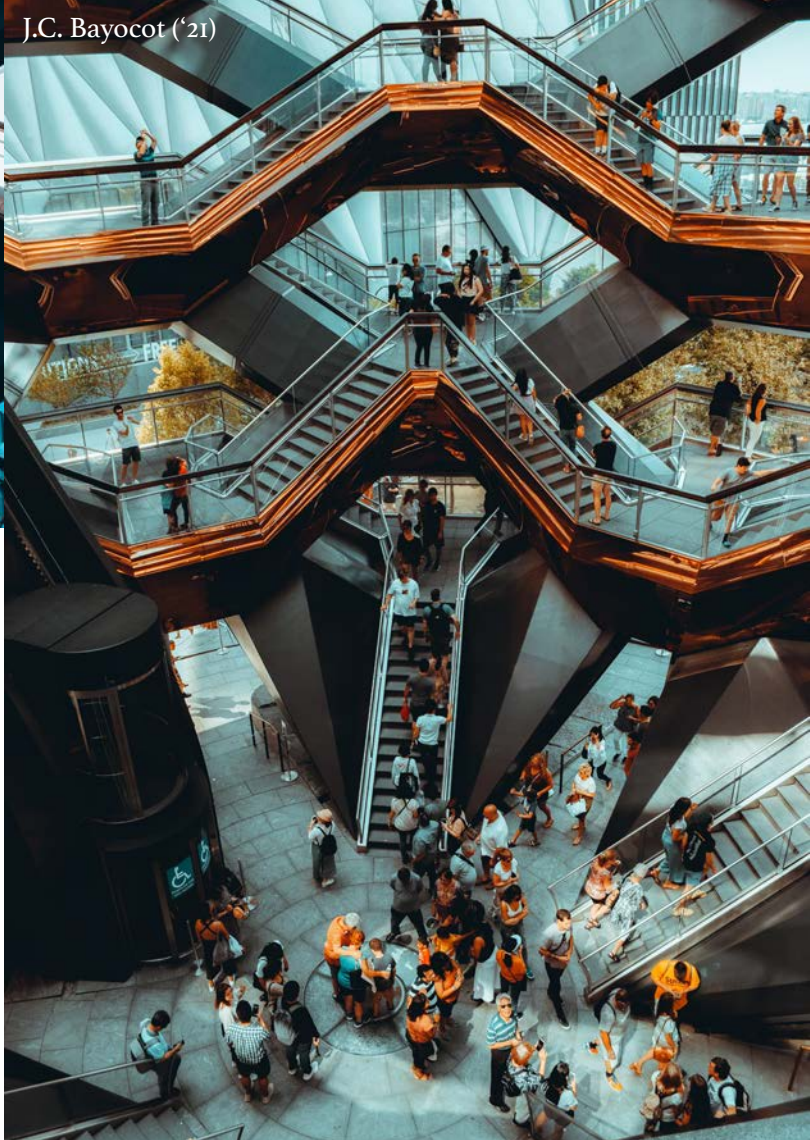
Then the memory leaves me
And I'm back by myself
But still feel the heat of a thousand degrees
Your picture on the shelf

Still within my house of flames
As the storm clouds draw near
Our love born of flame and shower
Is now killing me by its power

Parting is such sweet sorrow
Sweet as the salt of my tears
Shed as you char my broken heart
And drown it in your showers

Intergalactic Terrain
Peter Lim ('21)





Detective Notes

Angel Pagan ('21)

New case came in
A lady was beaten and battered.
She was found on the ground.
It seems she was thrown through a thorn bush
And dragged to the street.
Now we have four suspects.

For sure I know
That of the four
One tells the truth
And the others lie.

These are the statements:

Lily
"Jacob and I
Were walking by
I kissed his lips
And then I cried
Because of the lady,
I thought she died!"

Becca
"Lily was on the other side of the street.
She was getting close and sweet
With her boyfriend Jacob, as I see
A lady beaten to her knees."

Sven
"As for others' actions I cannot tell
But I know this one thing well
I did no harm to that lady.
I know that I am not crazy
And I can't say anything about the others
But if I harmed that lady, I think I would have remembered."

Jacob
"Lily lies,
Do you think I would ever date her?
She said I kissed her? Negative.
I was simply walking her home.
She has fooled you
But I can say this
The lady laid cold
Countenance filled with contusions
And in my confusion
I noticed her face, lachrymose
And lacerations on her body"

And with that I rest my case
I know who harmed the lady,
And if you think harder
A little longer maybe
You will know too
Who hurt that lady.



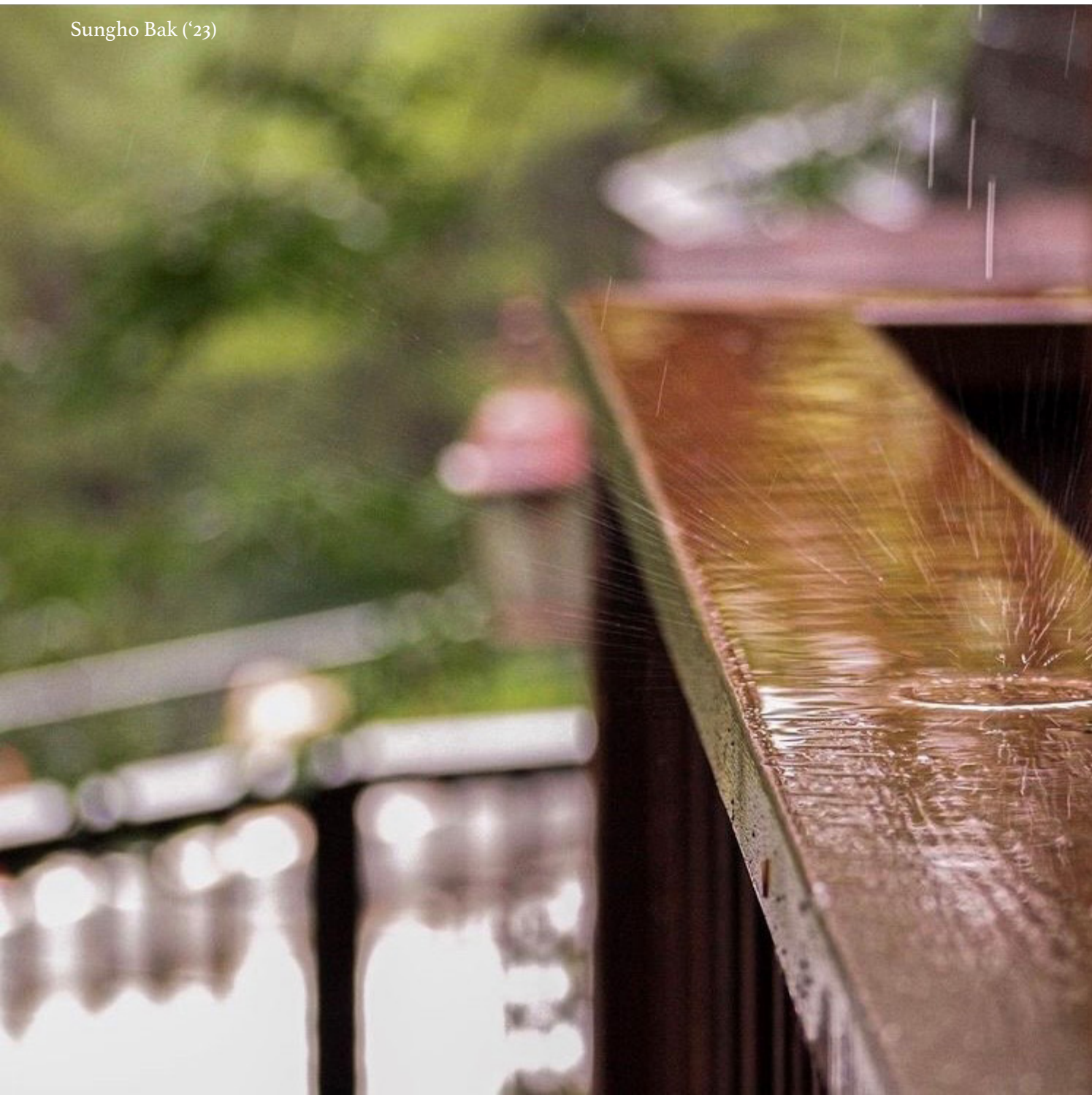
Mona Lisa
Jacob Cao ('21)

Winter is Coming

Noah Britto ('21)

The leaves and trees are radiant in the sun
 The wind and breeze canter and start to hum
 The breath of wind brings coldness and a chill
 Winter is coming, the time of the ill.
 Branches rustling in the near sky above
 The wearers of coats and hats are to come
 People lay curled up in their cozy bed
 Winter is coming, the time of the dead.

Sungho Bak ('23)



He Left the Window Open

Ben Bartlett ('21)

The finch wanted escape from its cage. Simple, sweet, straightforward. Its owner opened the cage and it flew freely, so freely... Until a broom swiped it out of orbit. The owner was unamused by its desperate circles above the ceiling fan. Afraid and determined, the bird flew faster, stronger, away from the gruff, smelly man and his broom and the fan whirring at its constant pace. The hallway window was ajar – a straight shot towards freedom. Summer heat radiated down on the bird, and the sidewalks and the roads vibrated in the sun's rays. And it was so happy, so happy to never have to feel another cigarette burn or another target practice pinned to the dart board. It flew past unkempt bushes and little trees, coasting over the sidewalk into the road, so free, so free, so —

The son was crying beside his mother as they cruised through the suburbs. "Michael," his mother said, eyes darting tenderly between him and the road, "it wasn't all your fault. Maybe if the pitcher was better they could've struck him out. Don't take it out on yourself."

"B-b-but it was," Michael blubbered between sniffles and rubbing his red eyes. "I'm the w-worst p-p-player the team." He looked forward, dejected and puffy-eyed, gasping for breath between sobs.

His mother sighed and said, "Oh, of course you aren't. Don't be so hard on yourself, sweetie."

"N-no! I'm the w-w-worst p-player ever. I d-don't wanna play anymore." He crossed his arms and looked down dejectedly, tears increasing in their hollowed-out rivulets down his face.

"Oh, don't say that, you're fine, dear!" She sighed, speeding slightly as she exited suburbia. "How about we get some ice cream? Do you think that'll cheer you up?" She looked down at him, smiling, waiting for an answer.

"S-sure," he stammered, his meltdown already receding and the thought of orange dreamsicle dribbling down his chin replacing his mistakes and self-loathing.

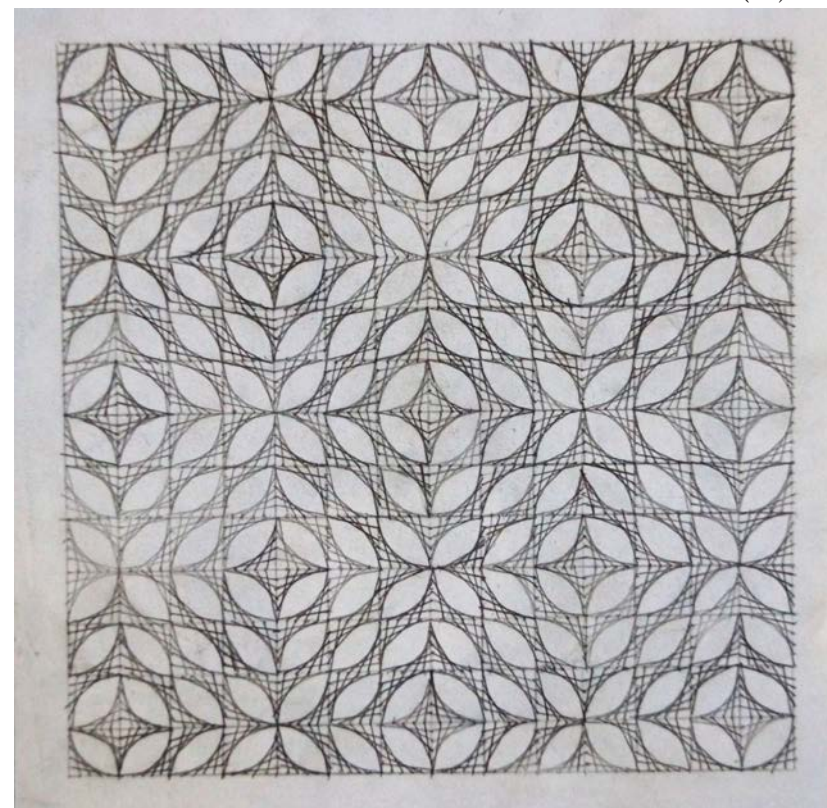
His mother was relieved, replying, "I'll make sure we get your favorite, sweetie." She looked up.

The finch plowed straight into the windshield, so in bliss with the clean air. It died instantly.

Michael's mother screamed in sudden shock, and Michael cried out in fear and horror, the finch striking the glass right in front of his face, the tears flowing faster and his eyes wide and his innocence gone. She turned on her windshield wipers, cleaned its remnants off with a frantic pull of a lever, and tried to comfort her son, who just witnessed the short end to freedom.



Kaladin Stormblessed Windrunner
Christopher Broms ('22)



Untitled
Christian Orozco ('21)



Angel Pagan ('21)

Letter to the Poet, Younger

Benedict Wood ('21)

I know you think your verse is quite profound,
but simple reexamination will
reveal it is but mopey drivel—
identical to that of every bard
of this all too “poetic” generation.
I don't wish to offend you in the least—
in fact, I find your metaphors quite good—
but taste, experience, and so much more
exhort me to point out a couple flaws.

If tragic flaws were real, then you'd have one
which plagued that famous man of twists and turns:
it's hubris that is your demise. That pride
which cast the Morningstar down from the sky.
you think yourself an equal of the gods,
but you know naught about what made them great.
their form was handed down through time untold.
They wrought their verse when you were naught but thought
in God's eternal mind. Their tales were sung
in antiquated ages far beyond
your deepest dreams. And yet, you think
yourself on par with those great bards of old?
you? With your half-baked verse that has no depth?

Which brings me to my second point—by far
the most important point for me to make.
You try to write profound and moving verse
and think, erroneously, that you know
something worth saying about love and woe
when in reality you write the same
old sap filled garbage that most every man
or woman with a pen could write. You claim
the thoughts are yours, but they are not. Where is
your burning old originality?
And next I must discuss your meter, or,
that is, your lack thereof of any kind
of structured verse. I understand that you're
a product of your time. You long to break
the chains of feet. You yearn to find and sing
the Song of Self, like all the bards of this
most modern age, but why do you shy back
from that which when employed correctly could
exalt the verse you write? I do not wish
to make you think that meter is the
very thing that makes your verse to shine.
But why must you run from the foot like it
were plague or curse of all the hosts of hell?
You need to learn the rules and master them
so, when you wish to break them—
your verse is raised and not demeaned. With this
in mind, I know you'll soon outshine the rest
of those who call themselves bards
in this new violent age of poetry.

Your verse is good—excluding your use of
that most infernal style of your time—
but there is more to life than that of which
you write. You sing of love and deepest woe
but cannot see the marriage of the two.
You think your woeful state is one unheard,
but, read a verse writ in your time,
and you will see that all the bards of this new age
do feel the same and write the same as you.
So sing of more than love and woe, my friend.

Of fairest days spent on the mountainside.
Of heroes born in ages long ago.
Of God above and what his Son did do.
Of children born then dead in passing breaths.
Of gold and how it wastes away the soul.
Of war and peace and all that's in between.
Of all these things do sing and soon you'll see
That these fair songs are what will make you me.

Knight
Angel Pagan ('21)

"A lone wolf
Must be stronger
Than a pack.

For when they
Are alone,
A pack can get to them."

A knight alone trekking,
No aim no goal walking.

A king ready to fight,
Needing a friend to help.

A knight watching waiting,
To help his king not die.

The king enlists the knight,
The knight alone trekking.

A dragon!
He must fight.
The wolf alone,
Watching his prey,
No pack to aid.

Power!
Dragon!
Fire!

A knight alone at night,
Silent, praying, aware.

To strike and kill a beast,
A knight must be aware.

A swift and strong and good,
Hard strike to its exposed,

Heart.

Man!
Eat!
Anger!

A knight alone. A slice
Of meat from one big beast.

Screech!
Pain!
Darkness!

And so a knight trekking,
A king, waiting, sitting,

Reward he is giving.
The knight accepts the gifts.

Beyond the light of day,
A knight may walk away,

To fight another day.
The wolf must be alone.

A king to be replaced,
A knight to trek away.

A man to take his place.
A knight to trek away.

The wolf will walk away.
The knight will walk away.

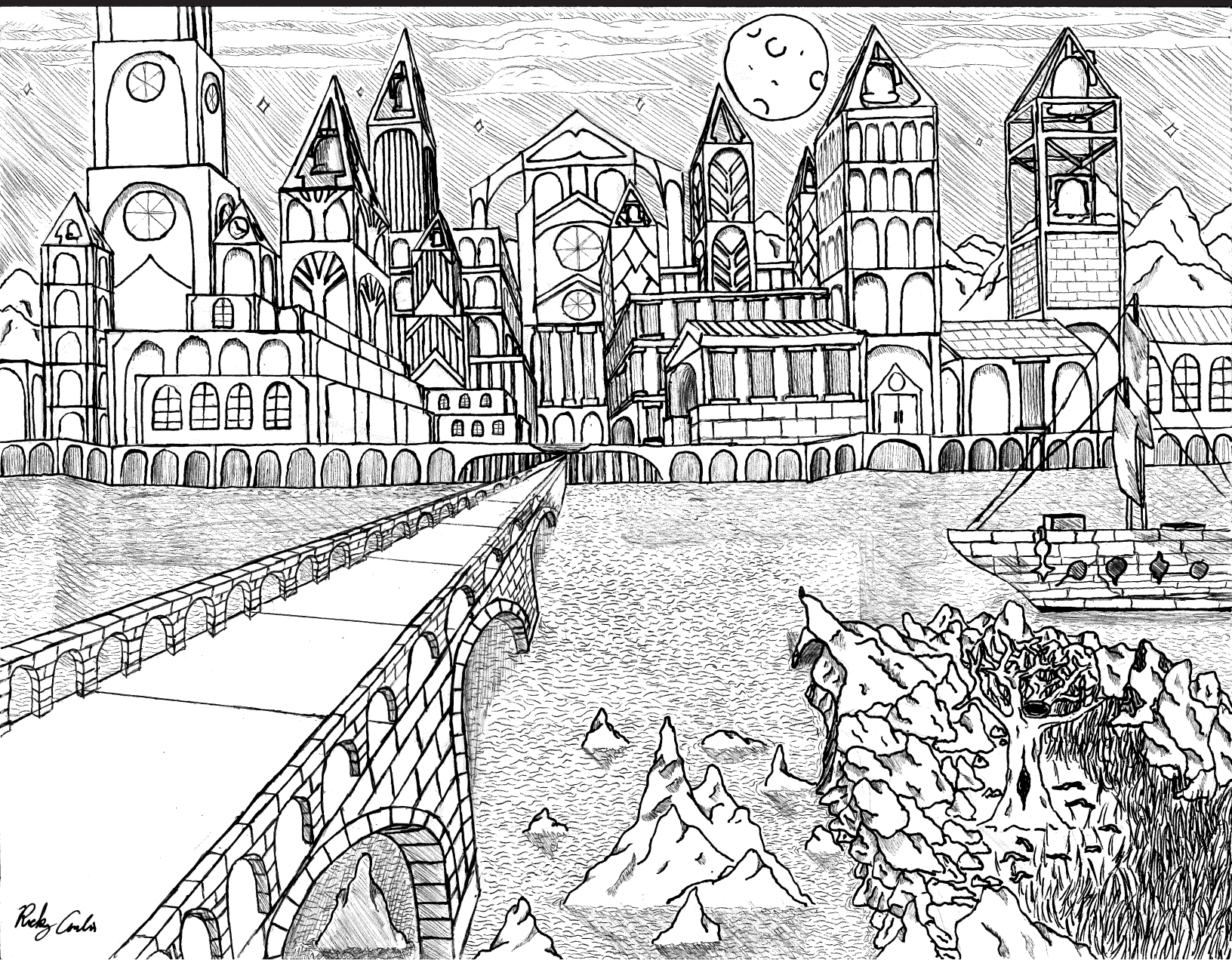
A wolf alone trekking.
A knight alone trekking.

A hero, too uncivilized to live among the people he saved.
Yet, he can never be replaced.

Forever he is a legend among those kings and people.
A lone wolf who saved the day, then slowly trekked away.



Daydream
Jacob Cao ('21)



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2020-2021

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