

# Rising Falcons

Literary Magazine

Issue 1  
Spring 2021



# Mission Statement

At Prince Tech, we believe in giving student writers and artists an outlet to reflect and relieve stress from day to day school work. The mission of the Rising Falcons Literary Magazine is to encourage students to express their creative side through writing and art, to inspire and to preserve, and showcase talents. We believe that by giving students an opportunity to publish their work, they will be recognized for their talent, creativity, and growth through the feedback they receive, and that by doing so, we can create a stronger culture amongst students at Prince Tech.

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*Fiction*

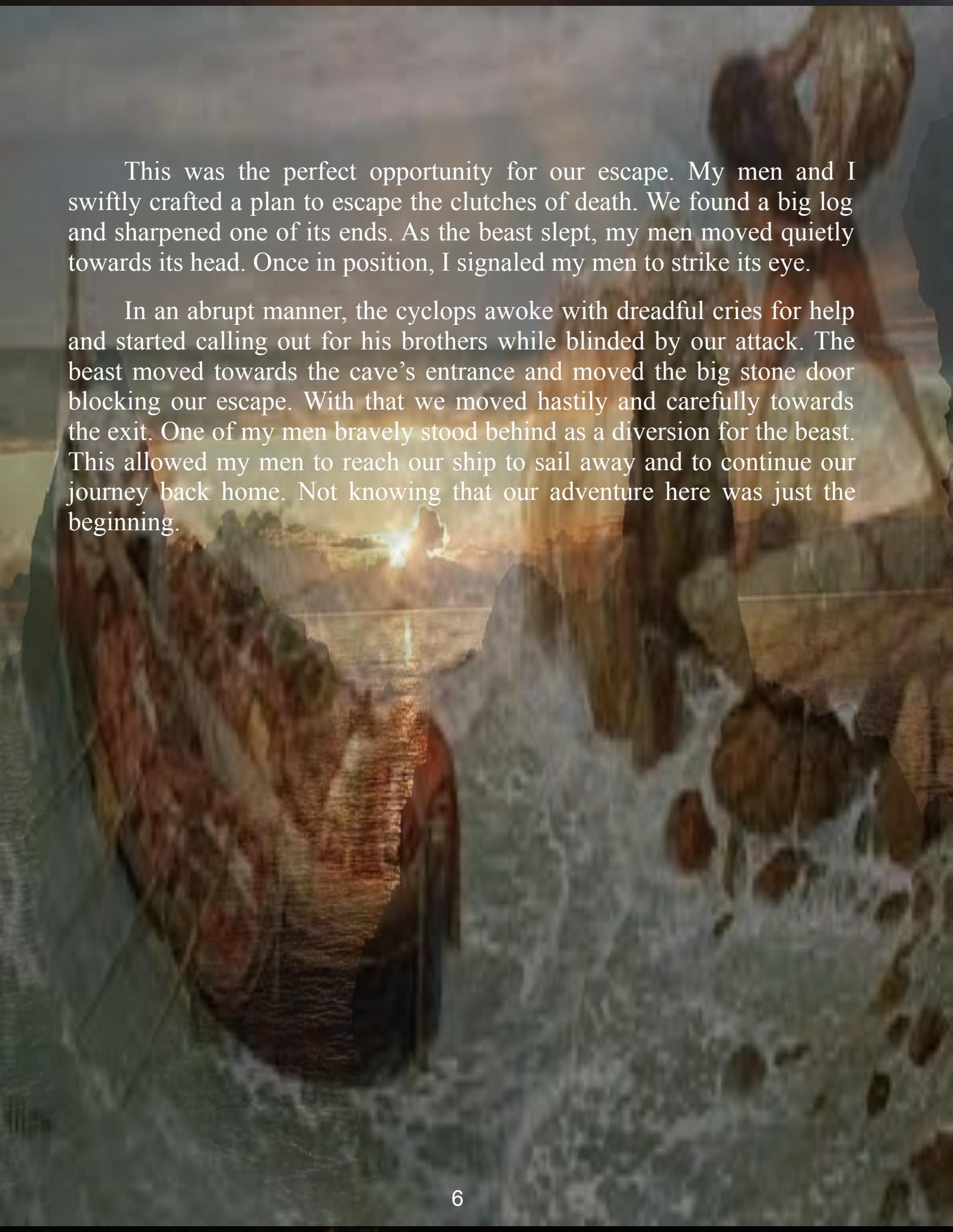
## “A King’s Journey Home” by Luis Amaro, Grade 10

It all started when I received a message from Agamemnon. It was to join his army to battle against the Trojans. I accepted the invite and traveled with my crew to Troy. The war lasted 10 long and exhausting years with our victory at the end of it. In order to ensure our victory, I made a plan of creating an obstacle that can contain my men and hide us from the Trojans. The Trojan Horse came into fruition to trick the Trojans into dropping their guard. After that, it just became a waiting game of when we would start our take over.

After the war, I readied my men and ship to start our journey back home not knowing the adventure that awaited us. Before leaving shore, I expressed my thoughts of Poseidon. It became apparent that he did not like what was said, for we were soon met with a storm. We traveled the sea for an unknown amount of time, before reaching unknown lands. Once docked, half of my men stayed to guard the boat while the rest got off the vessel to explore these mysterious lands. We came across a cave full of food and goods.

We made ourselves at home because it is custom from where we come from. We do it without any disrespect to the owner and we leave a gift in return for the hospitality given. During our stay, we were welcomed with the owner of the cave’s fearsome presence. Now the pleasant stay was going to become a nightmare. As soon as he entered the cave, he grabbed one of my men and made light work of him by devouring him as if he was an exquisite meal. He grabbed one of our blades scattered on the ground and used it as a flossing utensil. He then gazed upon me as if I was his next snack.

My men were at the ready to defend themselves, but then I quickly and calmly asked them to stand down. I approached the giant cycloptic beast with the intent to gain its trust to escape. I explained to the beast that if he were to eat me, he would lose and destroy knowledge of the Universe. Curious about the secrets stored in my head, the cyclops spared my life and in return I gave him wine, which made him go to sleep.



This was the perfect opportunity for our escape. My men and I swiftly crafted a plan to escape the clutches of death. We found a big log and sharpened one of its ends. As the beast slept, my men moved quietly towards its head. Once in position, I signaled my men to strike its eye.

In an abrupt manner, the cyclops awoke with dreadful cries for help and started calling out for his brothers while blinded by our attack. The beast moved towards the cave's entrance and moved the big stone door blocking our escape. With that we moved hastily and carefully towards the exit. One of my men bravely stood behind as a diversion for the beast. This allowed my men to reach our ship to sail away and to continue our journey back home. Not knowing that our adventure here was just the beginning.

## *“Your Worst Nightmare” by TJ, Grade 10*

You’ve been trying to fall asleep for hours but the thunder out in the storm seems to get louder every time you choose to let your heavy eyelids get the best of you. Eventually you give in to the exhaustion and let your eyes shut. Your mind seems to wander off into an amazing place, your dreamland. It’s full of bright colors and everyone is free to express themselves. One thing is off, there’s a really tall man sitting on a huge chair.

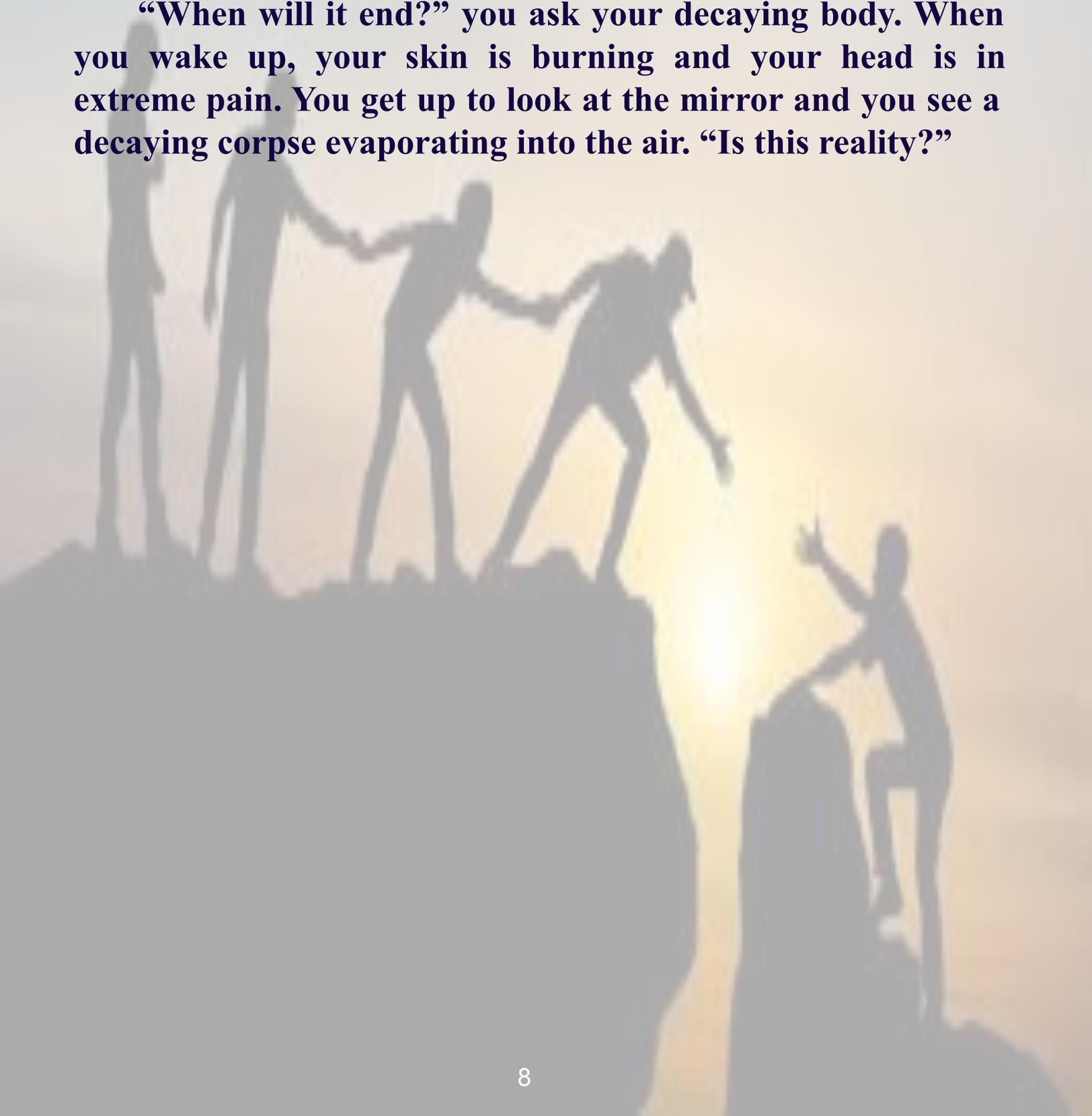
The man has strings attached to his fingers; you trace the strings and see people at the end of them. “He’s controlling them,” you tell yourself. “They are the only ones who aren’t free”. As you start to run towards the people, the space between you and the man becomes further apart and the world around you becomes dark and slow. “Is it worth it?” you ask yourself as you run trying to save people who you don’t know at all, leaving everything behind in your “dreamland”.

You realize that not everyone lives in a “dreamland” and what you’re running in, this dark and slow place, is reality. Not everything is bright, not everyone is free, no matter how hard you try to run, you’ll be too slow, no matter how much you fight to save those people, you’ll never be in your dreamland. Why? Because there’s no such thing as a dreamland, even though the people you save from the Big Man will be safe, there will always be another Big Man controlling and holding people back.

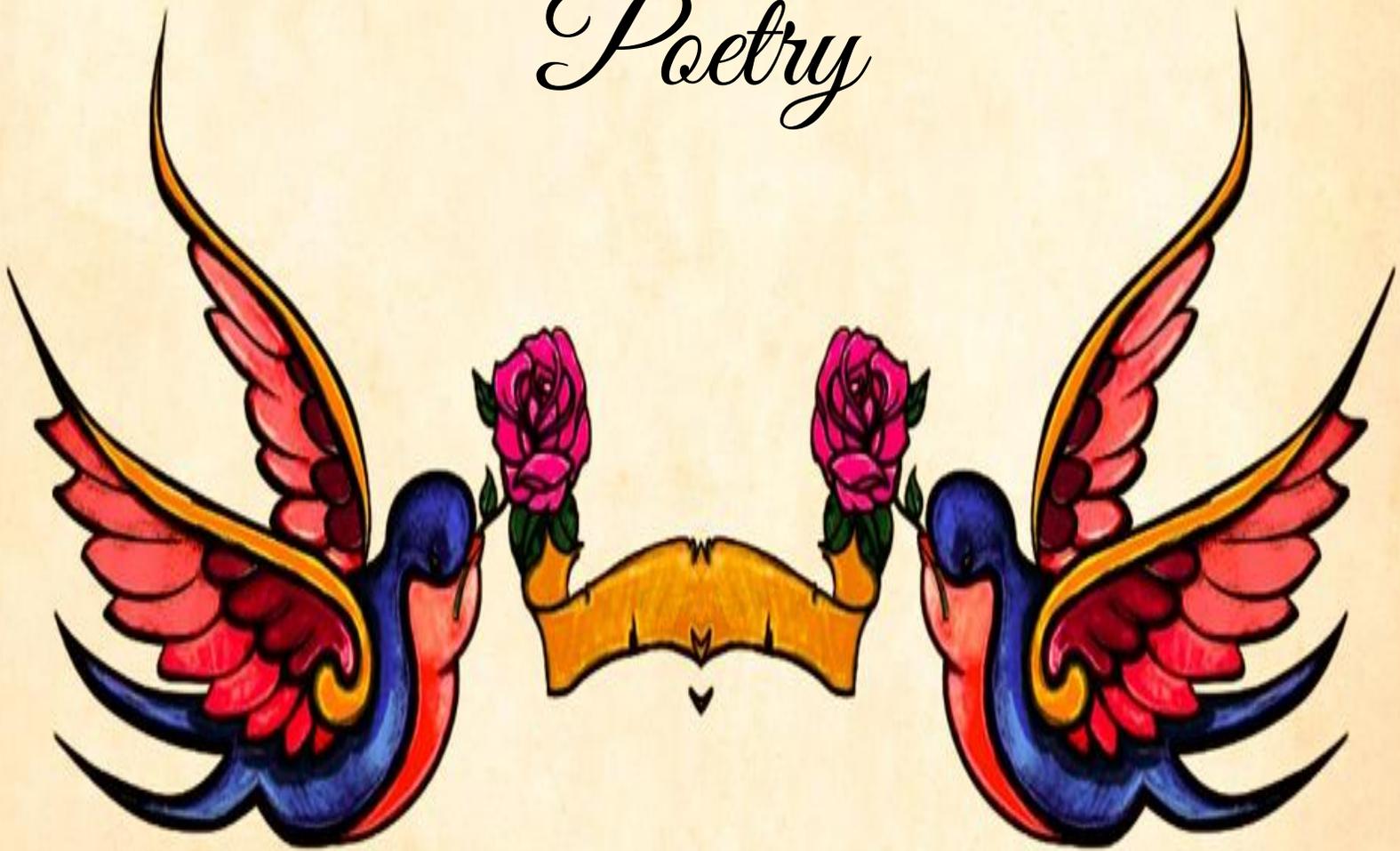
You continue to run and run and run but you never reach the people; instead you fall into a never ending hole in the ground, in that hole you can see everyone else who ran to try and save those people. I guess we all end up in the same place no matter how hard we try. “Was it worth it?” you ask yourself once more.

**This time you have an answer: “Yes, every time someone tries to save those people this hole becomes smaller, eventually someone will get to them, hopefully before they die.” You sit in that hole for decades, watching each person who wanted change fall into that hole.**

**“When will it end?” you ask your decaying body. When you wake up, your skin is burning and your head is in extreme pain. You get up to look at the mirror and you see a decaying corpse evaporating into the air. “Is this reality?”**



*Poetry*



# "Your Special weirdo"

by Alexander Rolon, Grade 11

Three simple words  
A phrase thrown around like it is nothing  
Yet like bluebirds  
Some people are simply stunning

Love is one of the most beautiful things  
A warm feeling coming from down deep  
To a force that makes you grow wings  
Leaving it impossible for you to go to sleep

From your smile to your laugh  
And all that makes me dream  
You are not riffraff  
For you are my whipped cream

In almost every way  
You have made me happy  
How could I ever betray  
or become snappy

Everywhere I look I am reminded of you  
It is something strange that keeps me like glue  
You are someone that I can look up to  
And make no mistake all I speak is true

You have had my back from day one  
A feat I must thank you for  
with you I am always having fun  
And I can never wait for more

while love can shine brighter than the stars  
Mine burns like an everlasting flame  
Throughout all the pain and all the scars  
I will be there to put it all to shame

with all the torment and suffering left unknown  
You are someone I have grown to care for  
I'll make it so you will never feel alone  
Becoming someone who shall stay forevermore

while this poem is short  
My message is clear  
There shall be no retort  
As I have been sincere

As an embarrassing gift  
That shall always hold true  
You have been my uplift  
Because I love you



# "Amerikkka" by Renee Chambers, Grade 10

Red, white, and blue  
Like the flag that sways in the wind  
Reflecting a "free" nation  
Red for the blood of innocent  
Leaking in the street  
Bleeding heart that could never relate  
Red blood conditioned us it was "just the way it is"  
White for the power that rules us  
White for the system of supremacy  
White fragility  
White rage  
White entitlement  
White equals number 1  
He who challenges this  
Bless his heart  
Oops, I mean stop his heart  
Whatever seen fit  
Because how dare he? Challenge  
Blue for the police lights  
Blue lights taught my brother to run  
Even when he did nothing wrong  
Blue lights said "no hoodies, keep your hands out your pockets"  
Blue lights saif follow my rules  
Don't startle me  
Because blue lights decide if you see red  
Blue like the sea my ancestors sailed across  
Into the land of the free  
Red, white, and blue, the colors that represent a nation  
Amerikkka



*“Seasons”, a prose poem by Madeline Lopez,  
Grade 11*

*Most people are like seasons, once warm, so cold. People break each other's hearts before it was theirs to break. Most people are strangers inside of their bodies, and you are being held hostage for years inside of your own. Like I said, you are being held hostage inside your own body until now you are set free to do what you were told. How sad is it to love someone and not be able to give them everything they want, and so you will hold on. People call you heartless, Robotic. I wonder if they realize how difficult it is to function when you're not sure if they know you even exist. We all put on fake smiles every day to show others you are okay but little by little we are hurting and no one knows. Have you ever wished that someone asks you “Are you ok?”, so you can feel alive again... I know for sure some of us feel that way we tell the people that care about us most to go away, but they should know that we don't mean it.*

# **“How to Get a Complete Stranger to Smile”**

## **by Okra Gaia, Grade 10**

**This is the complete guide to make a complete stranger smile:**

- 1. Look for someone you don't know so that you can meet said stranger make sure that there roughly the same age as you so that it's easier to talk to them**
- 2. Introduce yourself to the stranger so that you are no longer strangers but now are acquaintances, this will make things easier**
- 3. Pick any type of subject and talk so that you don't say anything offensive to them and ruin your chances to make them smile**
- 4. After awhile start making jokes and getting to know each other better and even once you got them to smile continue to talk to them if both of you and having fun**
- 5. After this point you forgot all about trying to make them smile and are now just enjoying being in each other's company**
- 6. If you two really like hangout with each other, exchange numbers so that you can continue talking**
- 7. Hanging out with each other often if you really want to and realize that you made a friend rather than make a stranger smile, but that doesn't matter now you just know that you are having fun**

**And that's how you make a stranger smile, and even make a new friend.**

**“Black Girl ‘Perfection’”, a prose poem by Loryat, Grade 10**

**“Why does your hair look like that?” I get asked wearing my hair which I thought looked nice. “Is that real?” “Is that fake?” So many questions are shooting at me. Respect? I get none. I wear my natural hair out. Not one complement, not one word about how it looks nice. I decided “Let me put some braids in” will it work? No it doesn’t. I get asked “Is that weave?” I get told “I know that’s not your real hair.” I look for comfort within my own race but what do I find? I find out that supporting each other isn’t a thing. Once I wore my hair, it was like I wasn’t this “perfect” person anymore. People looked down on me for wearing something I was proud of. I wasn’t the girl with braids anymore. No, I was the girl with weird looking hair.**

**What else is there left for me to do? Take the braids out, get a sew in, go bald? I don’t know how to be a part of this world without feeling like I’m really just oil floating on the surface of water. Wearing my hair should be something I’m proud about. It shouldn’t be something I’m ashamed or afraid to do. So what do I do? I take my braids out. I decide not to let these people change how I see my hair. It’s something so controversial that people will always have their opinions about it. But what can I do about that? Nothing. Since I can’t change how people see natural hair I decide that I’ll just have to have the confidence to wear my hair. Not thinking about all the looks I’ll get or the backhanded compliments. But thinking about how nobody is perfect and in one way or the other people will find something to say about me.**

**"AMERICAN HEALTHCARE"  
BY HANNAH BOSSE, GRADE 10**

**IT FEELS LIKE HEALTHCARE IS A JOKE.  
PEOPLE GETTING PASSED BY,  
DAY BY DAY WITHOUT HEALTHCARE,  
WHILE WORKERS FROM HOSPITALS GET HEALTHCARE.  
WHAT IS IT GOING TO TAKE FOR EVERYONE TO GET HEALTHCARE?  
WE NEED CHANGE AND IT HAS TO HAPPEN NOW!  
TOO MANY PEOPLE HAVE DIED OR HAVE SEVERE HEALTH ISSUES,  
WHAT IS IT GOING TO TAKE?  
DYING?  
DECLINE IN POPULATION?  
LOVED ONES HURTING?  
LIFE BEING UNBEARABLE?  
DEEPIER WOUNDS?  
TOO MANY REASONS WHY PEOPLE NEED HEALTHCARE.  
OUR FUTURE NEEDS TO CHANGE STARTING WITH HEALTHCARE.  
THERE SHOULD BE AN EQUAL PRICE ON HEALTHCARE,  
NO ONE RACE ABOVE OR ONE RACE LOWER.  
EQUAL COVERAGE.  
EACH HEALTHCARE PLAN SHOULD HELP WITH THE NEEDS TO THAT PERSON,  
HELPING OUT OUR FELLOW FRIENDS OR JUST PEOPLE  
WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE.  
IT'S SAD SEEING SO MANY PEOPLE SUFFER FROM THE LACK OF  
HEALTHCARE.  
HOW ARE PEOPLE SUPPOSED TO FEEL LIKE THEY BELONG WHEN THEY DON'T  
GET EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AS THE REST!  
LIKE HOSPITAL WORKERS,**

**FIREFIGHTERS,  
THEY GET THE COVERAGE NO PROBLEM, BUT WHAT ABOUT THE REST?  
DEATH, DEATH WHY?  
HEALTHCARE, THAT'S WHY!  
AS WE CONTINUE INTO 2021,  
AS WE AS AMERICANS STRUGGLE WITH COVID/19,  
HOW MUCH ARE THESE HOSPITAL FEES GOING TO BE WITHOUT GOOD  
HEALTHCARE?  
HOW MUCH DEBT ARE PEOPLE GOING TO BE IN?  
THERE ARE MANY ANSWERS TO THESE QUESTIONS,  
BUT THERE IS ONLY ONE ANSWER:  
HEALTHCARE FOR EVERYONE.  
IF WE WANT TO MOVE FORWARD AS A COUNTRY WE MUST FACE  
THE ISSUES WITHOUT PEOPLE HAVING HEALTHCARE!**

# "The Fictional Friend" by TJ, Grade 10



**She sat up at night watching her favorite show  
Ignoring her basic human responsibilities  
She was too busy living in her fantasy world  
Then they pop up on the screen  
Her favorite character  
She greets them as if they're in the same room  
She imagines them sitting right beside her  
They talk for hours  
About their favorite places  
Colors  
Their most prized possessions  
They comfort her and she comforts them  
But then it ends  
The show is over and her friend has disappeared  
What does she do now?  
There's no one else she can talk to  
So, she watches the show all over again  
Just so she can talk to her friend  
A friend that she doesn't want to believe isn't real  
It tears her apart every time someone else mentions it  
She knows they aren't real  
She wishes they were  
Because if they were  
Everything would be better for her**

Image credit: *Inside Out* 2015

PIXAR4051.COM

The page features a decorative border with repeating floral motifs and geometric patterns in a light brown color. The central text is written in a black, elegant cursive font.

*Non-Fiction*

# The Social Impact of "We Won't Move"

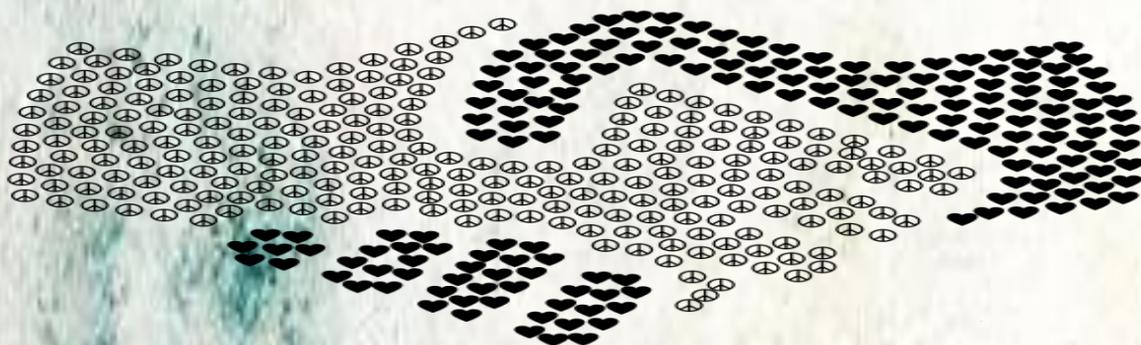
## By Joshua Cruz, Grade 10

The song "We Won't Move" by Arlissa is featured in NAACP's Image Award for Outstanding Actress in a Motion Picture film production called *The Hate You Give* which was released in 2018. The song is culturally relevant because it represents the importance of change. In this case Arlissa wants to see a positive change in the way black people are treated and viewed. Arlissa utilizes both diction and symbolism to create a song that talks about creating change for the black community, a topic that is culturally relevant because racism still occurs today and tragically impacts our society through many challenges which we've faced and continue to face.

The song "We Won't Move" begins by discussing the topic that the only thing stronger than hate is love, and we need a change. The movie *The Hate U Give* focuses on a teenage girl named Starr Carter. At the start of the film, she is talking with her childhood best friend about the meaning behind Tupac's phrase "THUG LIFE" and how many of the problems that the black community faces results from the hate pushed onto them by people who hate blacks. After her best friend was fatally shot by a white police officer, Starr has to learn to use her voice to speak up for what is right and do so in a way that doesn't push that hate back at those who have been dishing it out. Starr and Arlissa are very much alike as they are both two beautiful, powerful colored women who want to make a change, an impact, a new sign of hope as they continue to fight for what they believe is right and won't back down. They both captivate the meaning of change in different ways from protesting, politics, and music. Both women are making a tremendous impact on society as they bring hope, unity, and faith to people who are seeking it. In her song, Arlissa starts by using the terms "Step by step, Brick by brick" in line 13 and 14 to justify the fact that we will do things differently together as a community and we won't back down. "Step by Step,

**Brick by Brick” actively demonstrates unity, which Arlisa portrays in her song by saying in order to make a change, we need to unite and stand together to get the message of violence, police brutality, and racism out rather than ignoring the fact that all these things are still taking place today. Arlisa mentions very important key points to change which is why her song is featured in the hit movie.**

**The song strongly demonstrates multiple ways that we can overcome our challenges by standing up for what we believe is right. Arlisa uses many different key points which has helped her achieve her point on change. The song most importantly focuses on the Black Lives Matter movement and how the protests have turned into something it shouldn't have, which was a brutal riot which was also displayed in the movie. Arlisa then used the following lyrics on lines 38 - 42 “We want all the power in your grief (Can't hold us) and all the hate you give (Won't stop us) We will rise up through the falls, We will make 'em hear it all, We won't stop until they know (About us).” These lyrics briefly examine the topic of change, prosperity, and hope for our communities as we should treat one another with respect and dignity. The song demonstrates Arlisa's point of view on how we should speak up and make them hear our cries for change, make them know they can't stop us and we will fight until the war we are fighting is over and done.**



To sum up everything that has been stated so far, “We Won’t Move” written by Arlissa is in fact a song that is significantly cultural as it’s relevancy symbolizes the need of hope and change. This song will forever be a stepping stone in the music industry as it displays change and why it is needed. People don’t often realize how their thoughts and opinions can impact their community, which is why this song makes it known that you shouldn’t have to be afraid of standing up for yourself, the people you love, or the people in your community. The song fits perfectly with the movie, as together they represent a strong message not only for the black community but every community overall: change isn’t always necessarily a bad thing. There is hope, love and prosperity in every situation. Violence isn’t always necessarily the key, justice should be well deserved, and people should unite and treat each other with respect and love which isn’t given but earned.



## An Untitled Free-Write by Lucia V., Grade 10

I wake up and do my usual routine. Walk downstairs, feed the dog, feed myself, and after I'm done washing the dishes, I get to work. I'm usually already in my classes when doing all of this. I just have to skip doing work for a class or two. I'd wake up earlier but I don't feel like it. It's already hard enough trying to focus on my classes through a computer screen. Even when I do focus my mind tends to drift off. I daydream or start thinking about whatever. I think about a lot of stuff. I'm even thinking right now, having these thoughts in my head as my teacher is talking about the assignment. I should really focus, this could be important. But I don't really feel like doing that either. The only thing I feel like doing is drawing. I have a strong urge to draw. But I'm stuck here, needing to finish any schoolwork of mine before I start drawing. But what's the point anyways? I'd probably get distracted while drawing too. I go to other apps and scroll through my feed or fyp for hours. I just can't seem to focus on anything, I guess.

I'm halfway through my class but I still haven't done anything. It's not like I've had a problem focusing before. I've been a star student since the fourth grade. I was especially good in middle school. I miss those years. Though I think it's best that I'm here now. I don't really like the people from there. It's not like they were all mean to me, it's just that the ones who weren't mean to me were people I didn't really feel close to. It's kind of funny. In my last two years in middle school, I usually became close friends with at least one shitty person. Maybe I would've made better friends if I had identified as a girl back then. Maybe I would've had more girl friends? I'm not sure. All of the guys were always a bit too "Dude, bro" for my taste in friends. Should that have been a sign that I was transgender? I'm not sure. Then again, I never really am sure of much.

I wish I could've been born as a cisgender girl. But I'm not sure I'd take the chance if I ever got it. I get the feeling that I wouldn't be me anymore. I'd be somebody else. I would love to have a feminine body and a higher, more comfortable voice. But I'd have to wait a long time to be able to have either of those. And if I were cisgender, all of my friends and experiences in general would be different. The thought of not knowing the people that I do now is scary, because I like them a lot. I'd never felt more comfortable with a group of friends than the ones I'm friends with right now. This question would've been a lot easier in middle school. Middle school...I missed so much. So, so much. If I'd identified as a girl, I would've felt a lot more comfortable with myself. I would've actually expressed myself and made better friends and so much more. I missed out on an entire childhood and will probably miss out on so much more all because this stupid body I'm in doesn't fit with the one I envision myself in or with the one I'd feel more comfortable in...

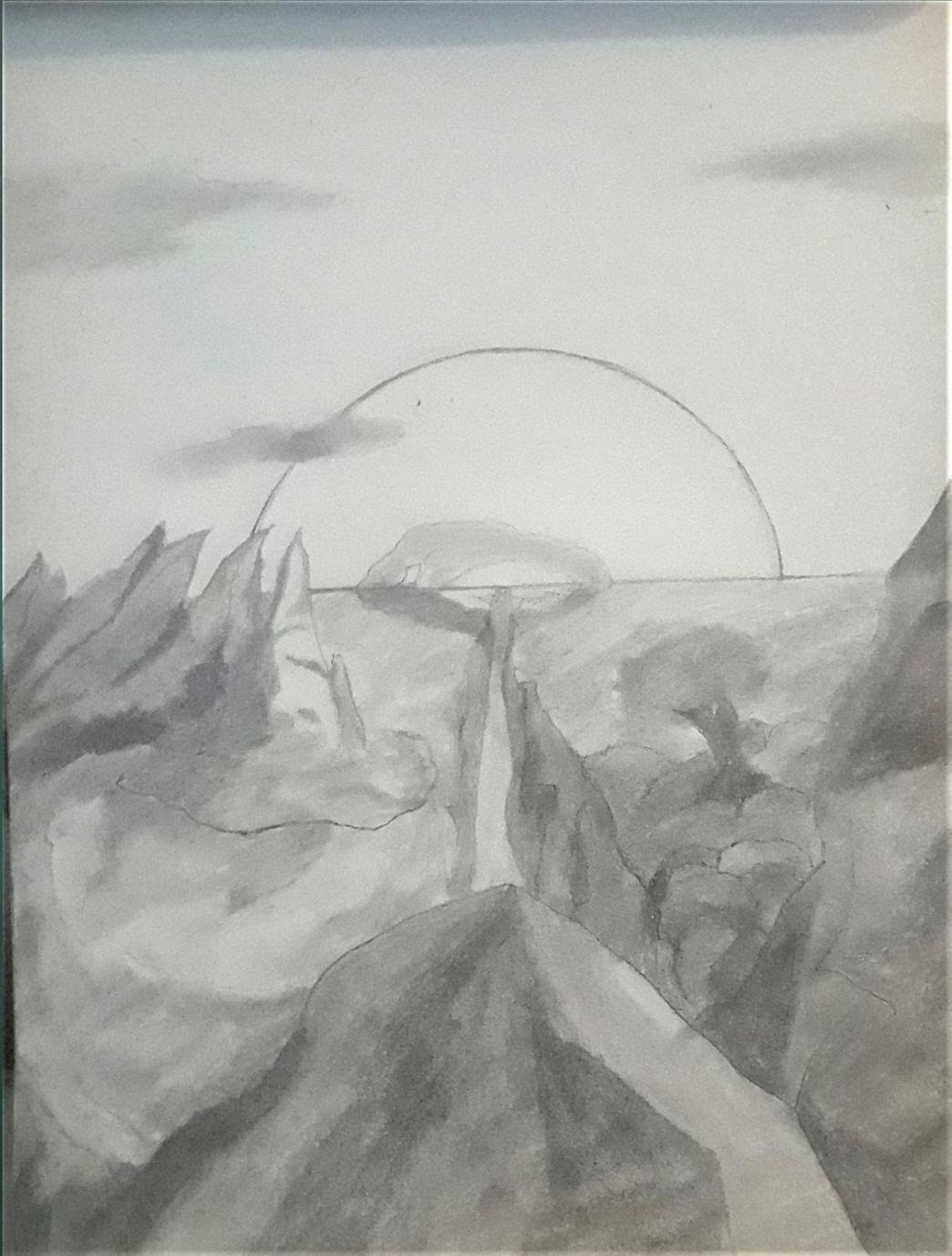
Class is over. I feel like my mind's all over the place. I think I'll scroll through my phone for a bit in my next class.

*Art*



**“Show Stoppin’ Number” by  
Lucia V., Grade 10**

**“Untitled” by August Htoo,  
Grade 11**





**“Untitled” by Giuseppe LaPira, Grade 12**

**“Still Life Self-Portrait” by Ashley  
Pichardo-Sanchez, Grade 12**



# Call for Submissions

want to see your writing or artwork published in the next issue? [You can submit your work here](#) (just make sure you set the share settings to "edit"):

we are looking for the following type of content:

- Slam Poetry (can be recorded as a video and submitted so it can be heard as you intend it to be)
- Fiction & Flash Fiction
- Non-fiction stories on topics like travel, food, culture, family, friends, issues you care about
- Poetry
- Reviews on books, movies, tv shows, video games, and/or music

And specifically for next issue

- writing/Art dedicated to a teacher who made a difference in your life in honor of Teacher Appreciation week (which happens from May 3rd to 7th).

**Deadline for Submissions for Issue 2:**

**Friday, 14 May**

# Rising Falcons Staff Members



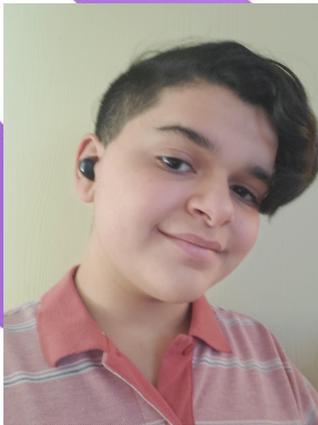
*Luis Amaro*



*Hannah Bosse*



*Tashline Galarza*



*Giankarlo Huaco*



*Amiya Jordan*



*Trevaun Leslie*



*Melnasia Malone*



*Carolyn Rodriguez*