

# Cabin in the Woods



**Thoreau Middle School  
Literary Arts Magazine  
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***“Go confidently in the direction of your  
dreams. Live the life you have imagined.”  
-Henry David Thoreau-***

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## **Future Me**

By Ashley Bond

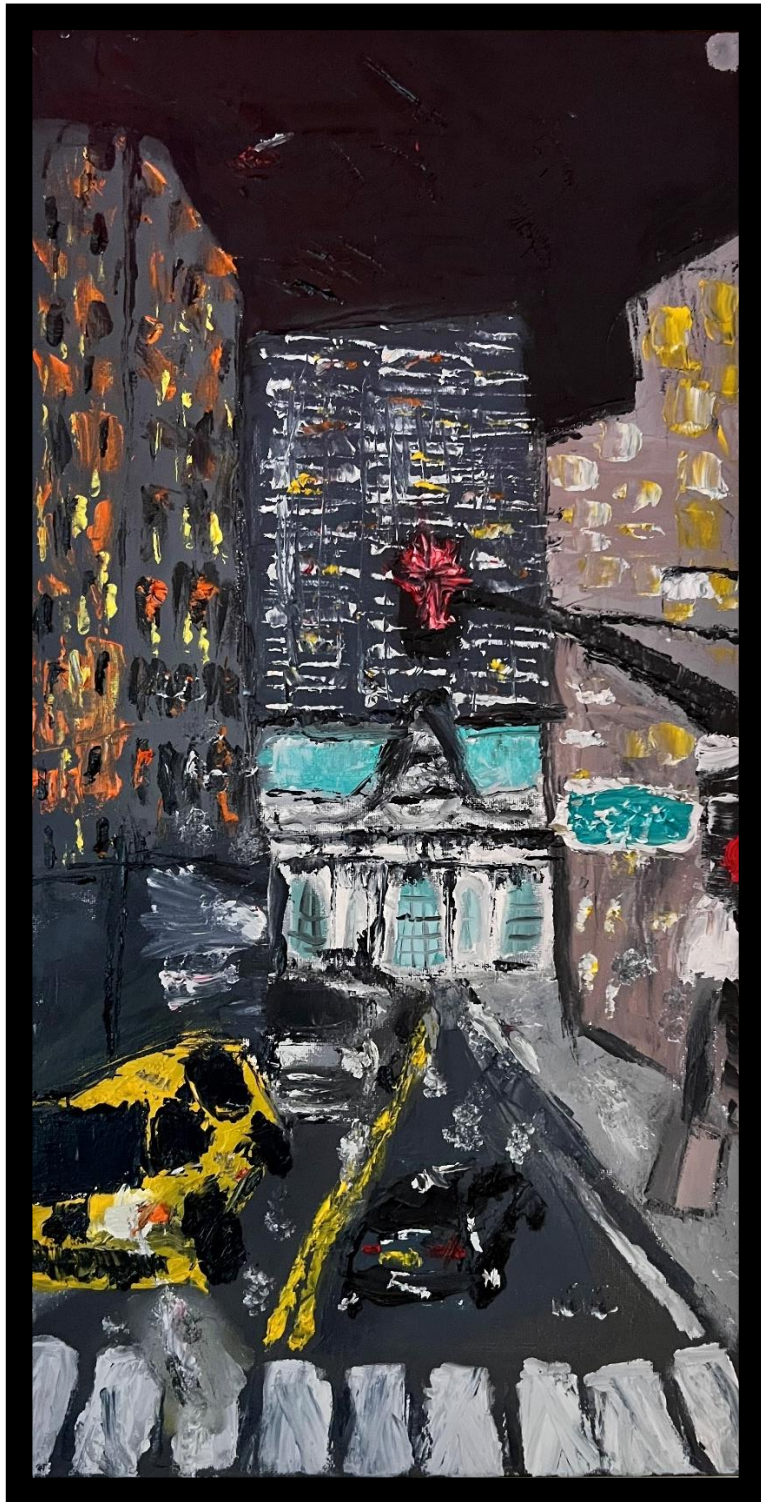
We never know what will happen to us  
Will we even make it to see the next day  
Hopefully this day doesn't replay  
In my head  
Stay present I say  
Focus on  
Today.

Focus on the love  
You gain everyday  
Not the pain you receive from others  
Others who take away happiness from your day  
Today.

Holes in our mind,  
Stopping us from moving on.  
My goal for the future is to become  
Somebody else's sun  
Today.

Don't be alone  
They say to me, but I ask what will happen in the future  
If I do become alone  
In my own habitat of a mind that is shone  
On the outside  
What if I am alone?  
I ask silently to myself  
Today.

Dear future me I say  
I hope you're well  
But please focus on  
Today.



**Winter in the City**  
By Cooper Paolicelli

**Grandma Who**  
By Jasper Carson

Grandma who speaks like a mentor  
And asks what she will still remember  
Who is love and kindness  
Who is happiness and light  
Whose hair is shining copper  
Is too loving to not stop our crying  
Who tells me that she loves me  
Who tells me that I'm great  
Whose little eyes are the moon in a pond  
Can't remember  
But is helped by my mom  
Who use to like their memory  
Is scared  
Is stuck in her past  
Is persevering through her fear  
Doesn't ever visit here  
Is doing puzzles steadily  
Who weaves throughout my memory  
Is joy, goodwill, and daffodils  
Who loves us, loves us, loves us still  
Is speaking like a mentor  
Asking what will she still remember  
What she still remembers



**Memory Makers**  
By Chloe Kim





**We Are Thoreau**  
By Dina Boules



**Intertwined in Our Experiences**  
By Dina Boules

## Nothing Small Can Stay

By Audrey Munoz

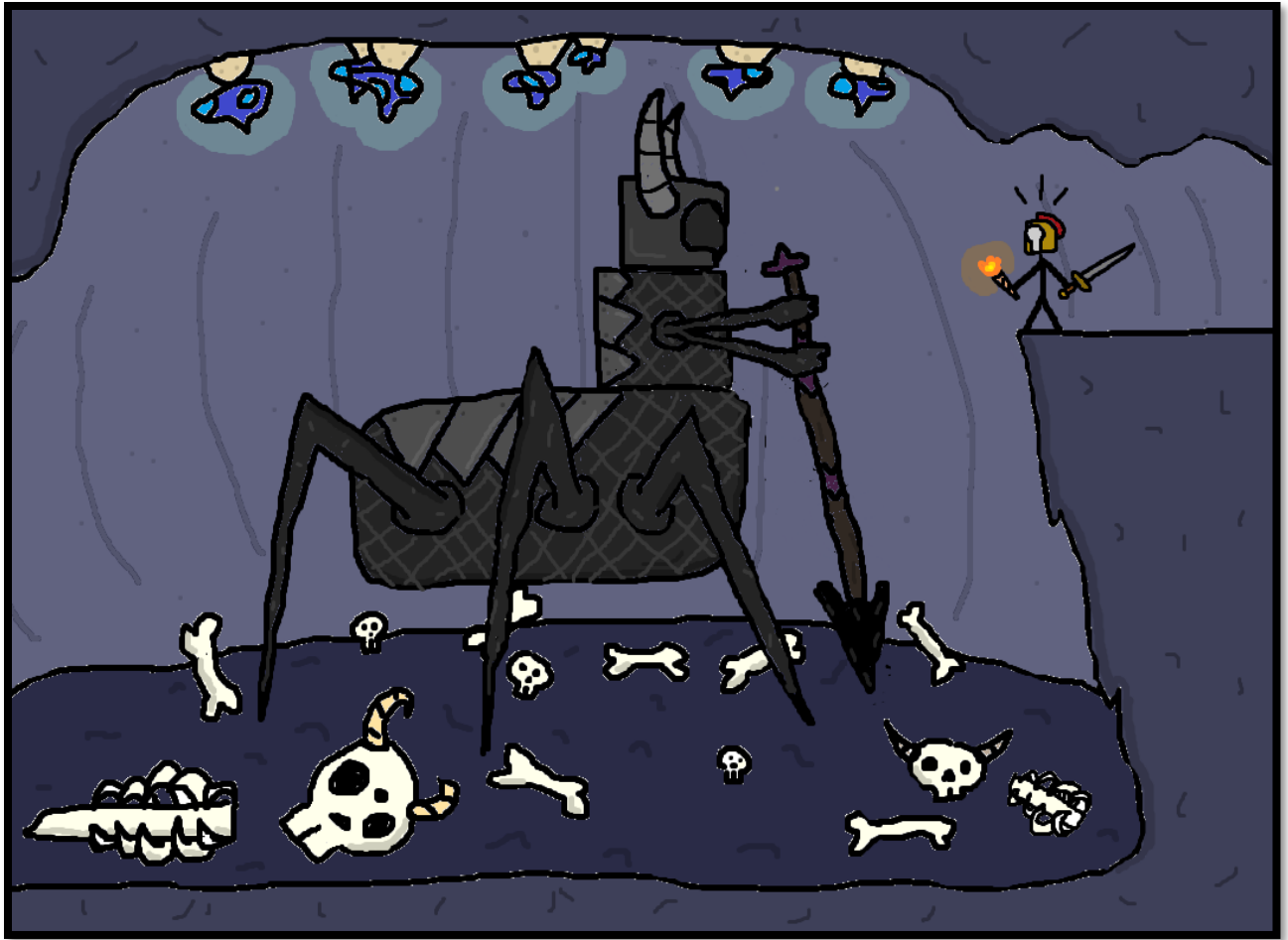
Nothing small can stay,  
A speck of dust gets blown away.  
The colors brown and gray and black,  
Must join our generation's fray,  
Or be brushed away, for nothing small can stay.  
One day we'll all just look the same,  
For nothing small can stay at all.  
The short and tall,  
But never small,  
For, nothing small can stay.  
Brave the cold, in shorts and all,  
Our bodies could be hurt,  
But never reputations,  
For beauty has always been our station.  
Look to the left,  
Look to the right,  
Can't tell the difference with all our might,  
The clothes may stay,  
But wintertime?  
Are we all out of our minds?  
Nothing small will stay again.



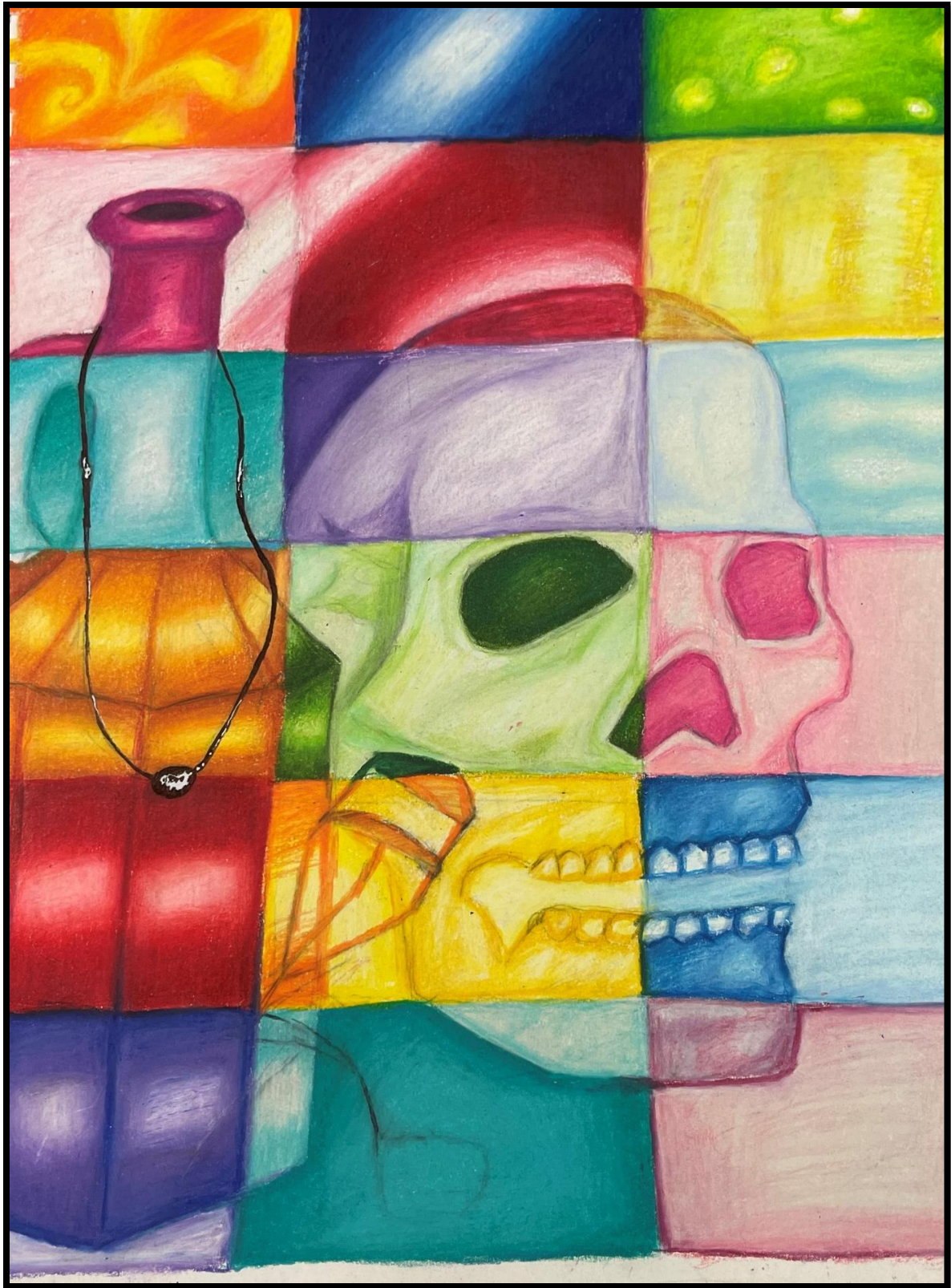
## Welcome to My Fountain

By Dina Boules





**The Mountain King**  
By Kirin Clark



**Still Life**  
By Neva Asan

## **A Suspenseful Tale, an excerpt**

By Jonah Lee

It was a dull, misty night. 16-year-old Charlie Newman was hurriedly walking down the sidewalk. The man was silent and solemn as his footsteps filled the empty road. Trees surrounded both sides of the lone strip of concrete, and nothing but a dark sky devoid of light was all he could see in front and above him. His backpack weighed him down, but he pressed on. Maybe, just maybe, someone would find him, and he would get away. He would get away from this place, and the things that happened to him, or go out trying.

Barnes and Matt were his two best friends, and he had left them. He wouldn't let his escape be in vain. The police had already found his apartment a few days earlier, something Charlie was actually prepared for. He packed his bags and hightailed it out of there before they could catch him. Now, all he had to do was go somewhere far from the city to relax and catch his breath, at least for a little while. He could see a large cloud of fog in the distance and checked for any oncoming lights. Alas, he saw nothing.

Charlie's focus began to fade, as he slowly started to lose speed. He was bent over in a pitiful slouch, and his ragged breathing was a sign of his discontent. He could feel himself physically losing hope every second he walked down that accursed sidewalk. It had been six whole hours since he left the city. Four hours of nonstop walking. *Walking to what end?* he thought. He was too tired to even talk.

There was a point where he could no longer stand, but he didn't care. Charlie kept on trudging on, but his determination wasn't enough. Another hour had passed, and his buckling legs were on the verge of snapping like twigs. Then, it happened. He collapsed on the ground, on his hands and knees and tried to whisper to himself. "Uuuuhh...just gonna... Hhuuhh.. Just gonna rest for a bit...yeah, yeah."

He gasped on the ground, and then curled up into a fetal position, taking off his backpack and laying his head on it. His breathing became slow and still, as he closed his eyes and faded into the darkness...





**My Life**  
By Chloe Kim



## **Stargazing for Answers**

Eitan Miller

An endless journey through space and time,  
We simply want meaning to find,  
A longing for a simple answer,  
Whose question is phrased in a million ways.  
Why?  
Why is it that no matter how hard we try,  
We are left with crumpled-up paper and a sigh.  
Is our existence just a lie?  
On whom or what shall we rely?  
Is there a purpose to apply?  
Yet we continue to gaze with curiosity,  
At the night sky above,  
Where for answers we push and shove.  
Every star is a new discovery,  
And every discovery is a reminder,  
That we are confined to an isolated planet,  
Where we only have ourselves to ponder and wonder,  
Where we rumble with hunger to create an answer,  
Perhaps based on religion and the subjective,  
Or maybe hard science and the objective,  
Where facts and faith are intertwined,  
A distant paradise, so divine,  
But an illusion we are still far from reaching,  
Even while the preacher is preaching,  
Or while the teacher is teaching.

While people worry about college and careers,  
They should focus on more serious fears.  
On a universal scale, our existence is negligible,  
The cosmos around us is incomprehensible.  
Is our time here pointless if it all ends in nothing?  
Perhaps there's no point in laughing, in crying, in trying,  
But even nothing is something,  
And there's no point in lying.  
Our kind will someday reach its end,  
But life is for now, and we shall continue to dance.  
We've been given a one in a trillion chance!  
A suitable home where humanity's grown,  
A magnetic dome, the goldilocks zone,  
Plants, animals, and freshwater abound,  
Air and minerals all around.  
Our home has all that we'd ever need,  
Our flourishing seems all but guaranteed.

Yet the world seems so separated,  
Seeking to divide, unready to unite,  
Constantly continuing a futile fight.  
Is it meaning we pursue after all we have been given,  
Humanity lives askew, by money and power we are driven.  
We're oblivious to the countless lives that are lost,  
The enigmatic and bewildering hidden cost,  
But we continue to search for an answer,  
Finite but immense,  
Where everything and nothing is explained by common sense.  
An answer whose content leaves us contemplating endlessly,  
Some are thinking mindlessly while others think relentlessly.  
But there is an answer, one deep inside yourself,  
But not an easy answer you can just grab from a shelf,  
To enjoy life, to make the most of it,  
To follow your passion and to simply commit,  
And just be you, try to stay true,  
The answer is the meaning you give to it.



**Dare to Be Different**  
By Alina Isgrigg

**My Stop**  
by Dina Boules

*Hiss.* The train halts to a stop. I grab my bag and head towards the stairs. A conductor with icy hands helps me get on board. *Click, click, click.* The metal stairs I was helped to journey over mimic the click of my seatbelt. It's honestly funny how useless this will all be once it's burned to the ground. This is a creature that breathes exhaust instead of oxygen and hosts a dying fire in its heart. I just know it will all melt into a gruesome lamenting pool with me at the center.

*I just know.*

Once we start tilting the people around me just scream; there's nothing left to do. Instead of horrifying me more or comforting me with shared human emotion, the screams just seem to feed my silent insanity. It grows and Grows and GROWS in my final moments. All to make me feel like I'm frozen.

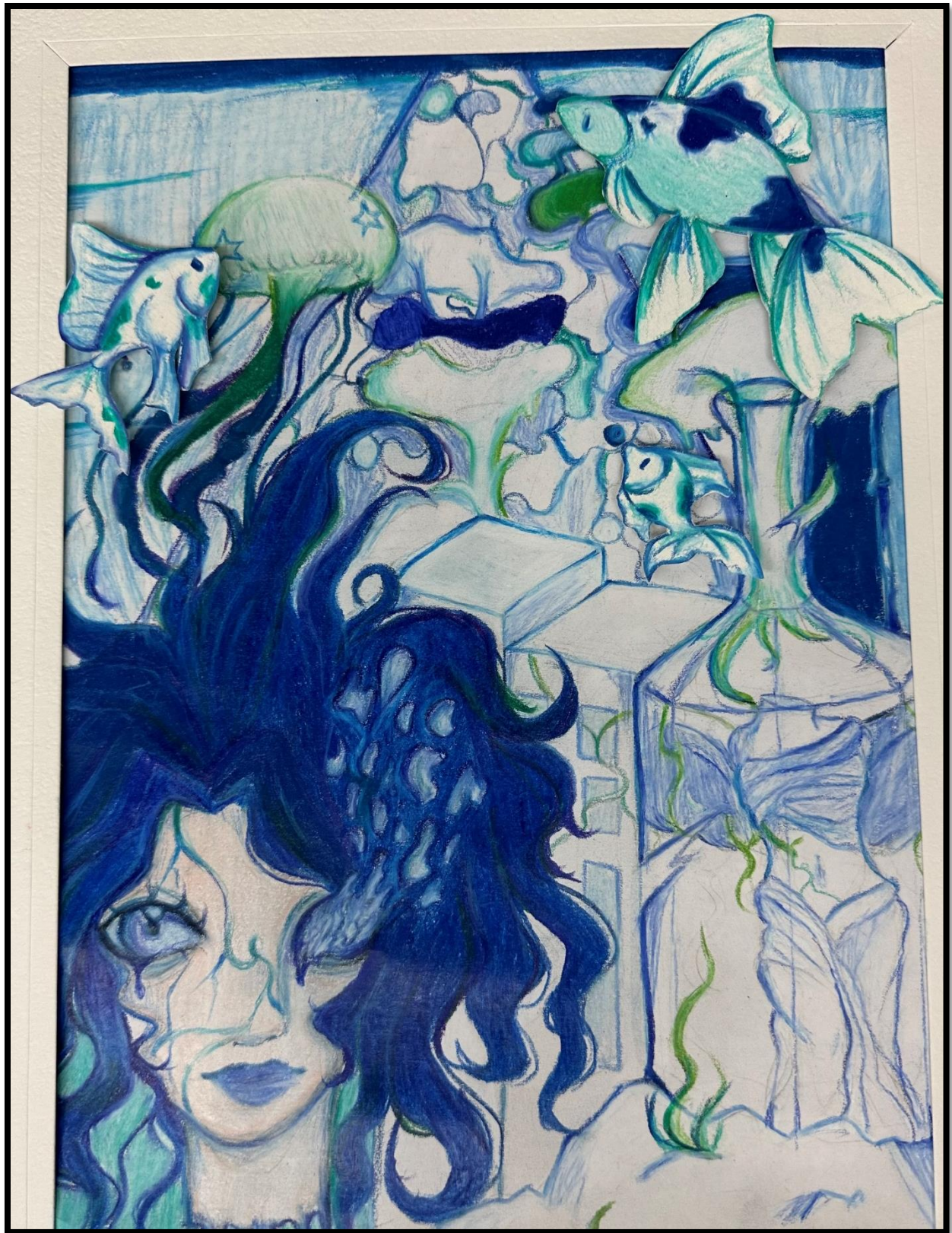
Burning yet frozen.

Paralyzed and screaming.

All could've been avoided if I'd just stayed home.

WHY DIDN'T I JUST STAY HOME?





**Blue Koi**  
By Chloe Kim



## **Day By Day**

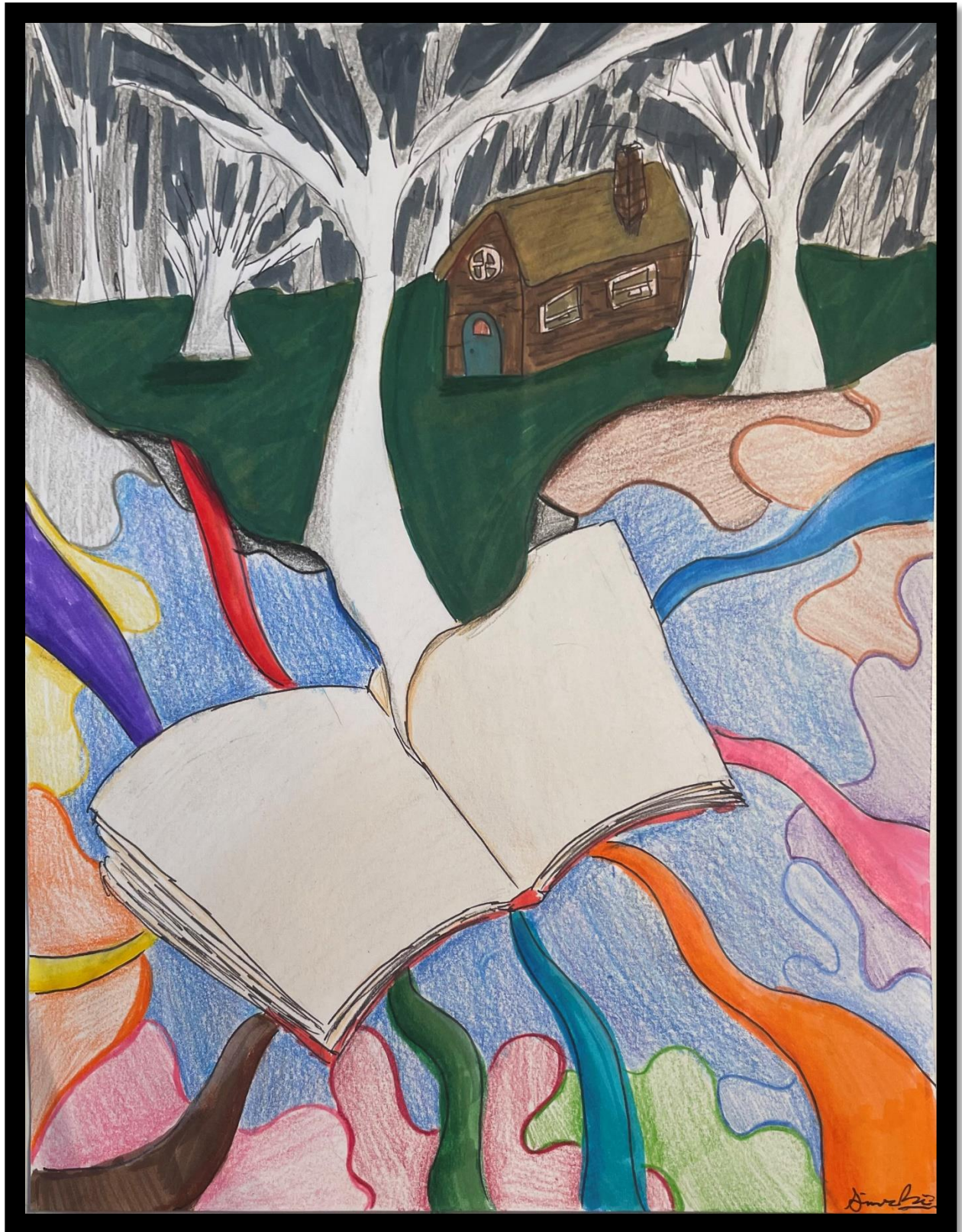
By Koby Shnekendorf

The relentless march of time passes by, passes by  
Willing, daring us to live our life and try, live and try  
And while today the present hammers loudly at our door  
Soon the future will come rushing in to dispel it with a roar

Sooner or later the future will arrive for us in all of its great fury  
And when it comes for you, there will not be a trial by jury  
Tearing and testing each of us to the very limits of our being  
You will either stand prepared or be set to flight, to fleeing

And we ask ourselves what we can do, to stand against the tide  
What will be our recipe, our instrument, our guide  
But that question posed is futile, has no purpose, lacks design  
No single soul knows what the future holds, no oracle can divine

So how do we prepare ourselves for what's about to come  
The invisible rhythms beat upon the cosmic drum  
The answer is a simple line, an oft quoted cliché  
Live your life week to week, each moment, in each day



**Life's Pages**  
By Simran Rai

## **Life in 100 Years**

By Koby Shnekendorf

What will life on Earth be like in a long 100 years?  
Who or what will be the thing to turn our planet's gears?  
Will there be an alien invasion or a robot infestation?  
Will the sun explode and remake Earth in a redo of creation?  
What will be the pillars of our planet's new foundation?  
Contemplating the endless possibilities can cause immense frustration

So I've compiled a list for you of some of my predictions  
But don't just go by me, keep in mind your own convictions  
But with all of that in mind  
Let's see the list that I've designed  
And after all is done, dear reader  
It's for the future to decide

I think that in 100 years the Earth will be quite a place  
With amazing technology and colonies in outer space  
Our scientific knowledge will be beyond reproach  
With even the ability to clone an intelligent cockroach

But with all of that great progress comes downsides as well  
And for many ways of life, it will be the ultimate death knell  
For the rich and powerful it will be a constant movement forward  
But the poor still swim against the tide, forever pointed shoreward

Beyond all that I cannot say without a time machine  
After all these are the thoughts of a kid of just fourteen  
But what I can say for sure is that without a doubt  
In 100 years, we'll deal with whatever's here, and there is no opt out





**Modern Times**  
By Olivia Yang



## Bobbing for Apples, an excerpt

By Jane Yarrington

Sure, I'm not necessarily the *best* athlete, or the *funniest* kid in my school, or the *prettiest* girl, or the, well, let's just say I'm not a lot of things. But my sister is. She might as well be the best kid on earth. That's how I see her, anyway. But other people might not see her the way I do. They don't see her as the cute, funny, all- good-things girl I do, but the 'wonky nerd girl who can't hear'. But that was *after* she started to go to public school. Before *now*, she just learned where everybody would go at HER pace. Since my mom was a teacher, after she got pregnant with my sister, she went on her maternity leave. After she had my little sister, they ran some tests. And then when mom came home with her one Friday night, she told us. The new baby was deaf.

Dad worked a *lot*.

I wasn't that old then, just about two and a half, so I couldn't do much, and only knew the story because of what my mom and dad told me.

My mom set up a babysitter for me and the baby once she felt she could trust someone enough, and then she started up work again too.

We wanted to make sure that little baby Flora had all that we could give her.

Then we got her hearing aids with all the money we saved. That, I think, was the best moment in my life. Watching, as my baby sister heard her first noises ever, I was quite surprised when my mother pushed me forward towards the crib, where she was hearing for the first time in her life. My mom wanted ME to be the first person that Flora would ever hear. That moment will probably be glued into my mind forever, the moment where I looked into her big brown eyes and said, "Flora, hi, I'm your big sister, and I want you to know that I love you. And I will always love you, forever and ever."



**Kitchen**  
By Victoria Pennington

## **The Hole, an excerpt**

By Autumn Gray

The early summer days were full of sunshine, but near the end it was dark and stormy. Day after day after day the storms erupted. The one day that was suspected to be sunny, I relaxed outside in my backyard. Laya, Josh, Freddy, Thomas, and Olive were all with me. We had a radio playing music. The radio crackled a breath eroded from under the loud crackle. The breath became louder until it was a scream. "AAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHH!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!" The radio played, I stepped back from the radio and towards the door.

"Amber, what's wrong with your radio?" asked Thomas.

"It's never done this before!!!!" I screamed. Rocky barked at the radio, before backing up. I opened the backdoor running inside. Thomas kicked the radio into my pool and followed me inside.

Everyone sat on the couch quietly. My leg bounced up and down over and over. The silence continued for around 5 minutes before Laya jumped up from the couch, "Stop denying it happened because it did, you can just stop pretending everything is ok because obviously it's not!!!!" she yelled.

"I'm just trying to grasp onto reality. Why is it raining in summer for this long? Why was the radio crackling? Why was it so bright and now so dark? What caused these things?" I said aloud.

"Ok Amber we are all asking these questions," said Olive.

"Then why is everyone so quiet!!!!" Laya said, raising her eyebrow.

Conversations were scarce and everyone just was going to stay the night. I was in the kitchen making some tacos when I walked over to the sink to wash my hands which had a perfect view of the backdoor. A strike of lightning shook the ground while a man showed. He was hard to see because he was in all black you could not see any of his body features because they were hidden under a black bodysuit. On the top of his mask was a blood red 3. I jumped back from the sink in fear. My hands were drenched in water and the man disappeared. When the light was gone. The water coming from the sink became hot and red. "Blood? Blood?! BLOOD?!?!!!" I spoke. I watched people's eyes turn to me. Then to the sink. The blood poured into the sink splashing the corners and the faucet. Thomas shut off the faucet since I was too stunned and confused to be rational. I looked out the window to see if the man would show up. No sign of him. I watched the thunder strikes, nearly jumping in fear. My mind funneled with confusion. I didn't know how to react to such a wretched thing.

**To Be Continued...**



**Bonita**  
By Victoria Pennington



## **Barbarous Verdure**

By Kalliope Gonos

The stars look so gorgeous from the moon, each one shining millions of miles away, bright and pure. After an exhausting journey here, the beauty is most definitely appreciated. Though, this break while we run maintenance checks on the ship gives me time to think, and I realize just how scared I am for the next part of our ambitious journey. I have only an hour before I surrender myself to the will of technology and enter my cryogenic chamber. At least it's better than being stuck on the ship for a year. Mars is so far away, but this venture will be worth it. It has to be. Considering the state that earth is in, the fate of humanity depends on it.

I return to the ship and head towards the control panel to check for any final messages before our long-awaited departure for Mars. When I open the message port I see only one unread message, it's a call request from Director Ellroy Hall. I quickly accept the request and step backwards as the director's face appears on screen.

"Hello, Dr. Martin." says Ellroy

"Hello, Director," I reply. "I trust that everything is in order for your departure?" she asks. "It all looks to be Director; we are awaiting the results of our temperature check in the chambers. We are expected to depart in twenty minutes."

"Good," she replies steadily. "I wish you, and your fellow pioneers good luck on this endeavor, see you in a year." She then ends the call.

The results of the tests on the ship are all ideal. I take a moment to calm myself before climbing inside. "This could be the day that I die," I think to myself, before entering my pod to sleep for 8760 hours.

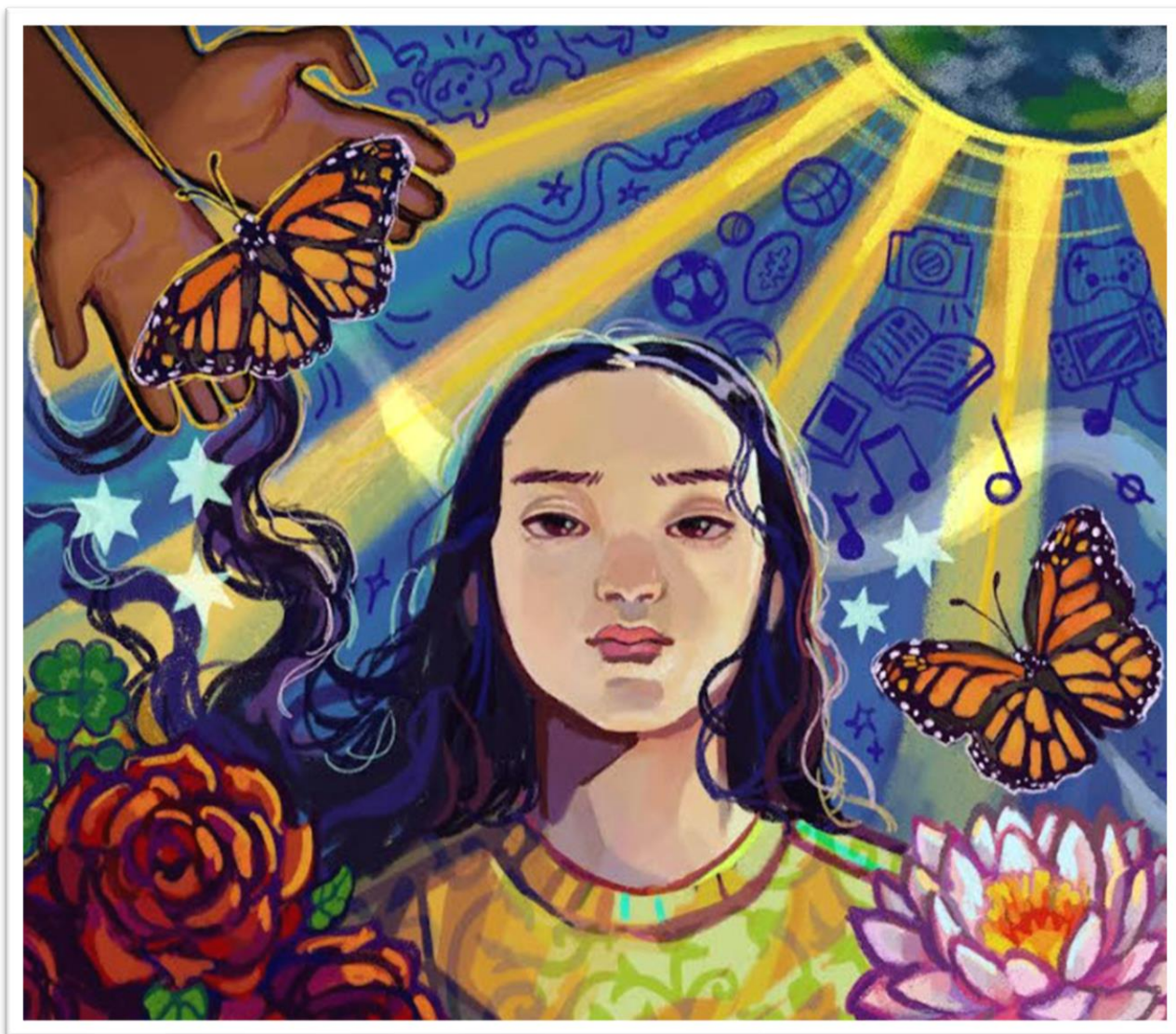
I jolt awake, startled by the sudden warmth. My cryopod has opened. I rush to the window of the ship, shivering as I walk. When I look outside of the porthole window, I see something that no one has ever seen before: Mars, up close. It seems like I can see every crater, every canyon and mountain and fissure. I feel like I'm on top of the world. We made it.

After eating a large meal to regain my strength and sending in a message with word of our arrival to Mars, I meet with the others in my crew. We put on our suits and cautiously step into the pressurization chamber. I am the first to ever set foot on Mars. We start to take tests and samples of everything before loading them back into a separate pod to send back to earth when we stumble upon a large opening in the ground that seems to be some sort of cave. I volunteer to check it out while the others continue to collect samples.

As I descend into the cave paying close attention to my surroundings. I begin to see maroon vines growing on the walls and clinging to the ceiling. We have no prior knowledge of any life on Mars so I grab a sample quickly, as if I'm scared that the vines will disappear. Exhilarated and high off the adrenaline, I continue down the tunnel with a skip in my step. The once narrow shaft opens up into a wide cavern filled with blossoming undergrowth. Shades of purple, green, and pink fill the open space. I'm stunned as I try to take it all in. It's truly a miracle. The reason we had no idea that Mars contained life is because it was all under the surface! These plants grow using the light from phosphorus algae, as opposed to the sun. This is a scientific breakthrough that I am thrilled to share with the rest of my team, and eventually, the world.

As I try to leave the cave, samples in hand, I hear a low, rumbling sound. I look around in a flurry of panic, not knowing what the sound could be. Then I feel something snake around my ankle before pulling me backwards, hard. Gasping in shock, I claw at the appendage in vain. As I am dragged along the ground, I can feel the shards of glass from sample tubes digging into my back, drawing long lines of crimson down my body. Another limb juts out at me from the dark, grabbing my waist and pulling me into an upright position. It hurts, the limbs feel like they are constricting around me, my vision goes spotted around the edges. I can't breathe.

I hear a deep, almost otherworldly voice echoing throughout the chamber. The sound is so rough it hurts to listen to. The voice utters just a few sentences— simple yet menacing. “You have destroyed the Earth. We have observed you, and your crimes. We will not let you do the same to us as you did to our counterpart,” it says this before the appendages begin to tighten. The one formerly around my ankle snakes up to wrap around my throat. I feel myself coughing wet, loud coughs. Blood leaks from my mouth, then dribbles down my chin. All I can feel is blistering pain. It's too late to be saved by the time my last breath rattles in my chest. I savor my last moment, before my eyes gently close.



### **Our Cultures**

*Winner of the 2023 Thoreau Culture Club Mural Contest*

By Victoria Pennington

## **The End of 8<sup>th</sup> Grade**

By Chris Devine

Leaving 8th grade, going to high school  
It's a journey we all must take, it's a simple rule  
A transition from small to big  
Leaving the nest, with our fresh, new wings,

In eighth grade, we were top of the pack  
Now in high school, we will be shoved to the back  
It's a jungle out there, full of unknowns.  
But we must face the challenge, we must leave our homes

We leave behind the teachers who knew us well  
And our friends who made our hearts swell  
We leave the hallways we knew by heart  
Now we're ready for a new start.

High school, full of growth and change  
It's a time to find ourselves, to rearrange  
All of our priorities, goals, and dreams  
Somehow we'll find our way, or so it seems

We'll stumble and fall and make mistakes  
We'll learn to take responsibility for our fates.  
We'll make new friends, and really good ones too  
We'll learn to stand up for ourselves, and what's really true

Discovering new passions, new interests, and maybe new loves  
We'll explore the world beyond, like a flock of doves  
Maybe we'll discover who we really are  
Let's see where this will take us, it could be pretty far

In high school we find out who and what we want to be  
And in the end, we'll find our destiny  
On the last day, we linger in the halls  
As the last 8th grade footstep will surely fall

So let's embrace this journey, with open hearts and minds.  
Let's leave our fears and doubts behind  
Let's make the most of every moment, every day  
And let's go forth, to high school, on our own way.