


The Grackle

Art & Literary Magazine

A painting of a Native American woman wearing a grackle mask and a feathered headdress. The woman has yellow eyes and is holding a bow and arrow. The background is a warm, golden-yellow color. The painting is done in a style that uses visible brushstrokes and a rich color palette of oranges, yellows, and browns.

2016-2017

THE

GRACKLE

Chestnut Hill College's Art and Literary Magazine

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Dear Readers,

It goes without saying that writing and creating art is no easy feat; a photograph does not take itself, a pen does not move of its own accord, and a paintbrush does not make its own strokes—unfortunately, and fortunately—but I digress. I commend all of the artists who submitted their work to this year’s edition of *The Grackle*. Your efforts have not gone unnoticed or unappreciated. Our review board went through great lengths to view all of your submissions and account for every detail. We reviewed each work in earnest, and what you now hold in your hands is a culmination of all of our efforts. When we set out on assembling this year’s literary magazine, we only hoped to do it justice. I think we have.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our review board members for both their patience and diligence. For pardoning my erratic schedule and what seems to be a chronic habit of not answering my emails, phone calls, and even text messages. Apologies. I see you, I hear you, I appreciate you. You have all truly done an amazing job. I would also like to thank our faculty advisor Dr. Keely McCarthy for her guidance, for sharing her breadth of Grackle knowledge with me, and for making time when I began to question whether time even existed. It goes without saying, this magazine would not exist without the hard work of our publisher, David Kahn, to whom I also owe a special thanks. Thanks so much for answering all of my silly questions about InDesign!

Last but not least, I would like to thank those who submitted. Those artists who took the time to write, paint, and snap a photo even though it was not required. Even though they wouldn’t have been penalized if they didn’t. There would be no literary magazine without them. It takes a lot to write and create art. It takes even more to share it. Thanks so much for sharing.

I hope you all continue to pursue your own personal excellence, and I hope you all enjoy the 2016-2017 edition of *The Grackle*.

Tiara Holmes, ‘17, Editor-in-Chief

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Cover Art: **Jaguar Heart** by Anna-Victoria Duzinski, ‘17

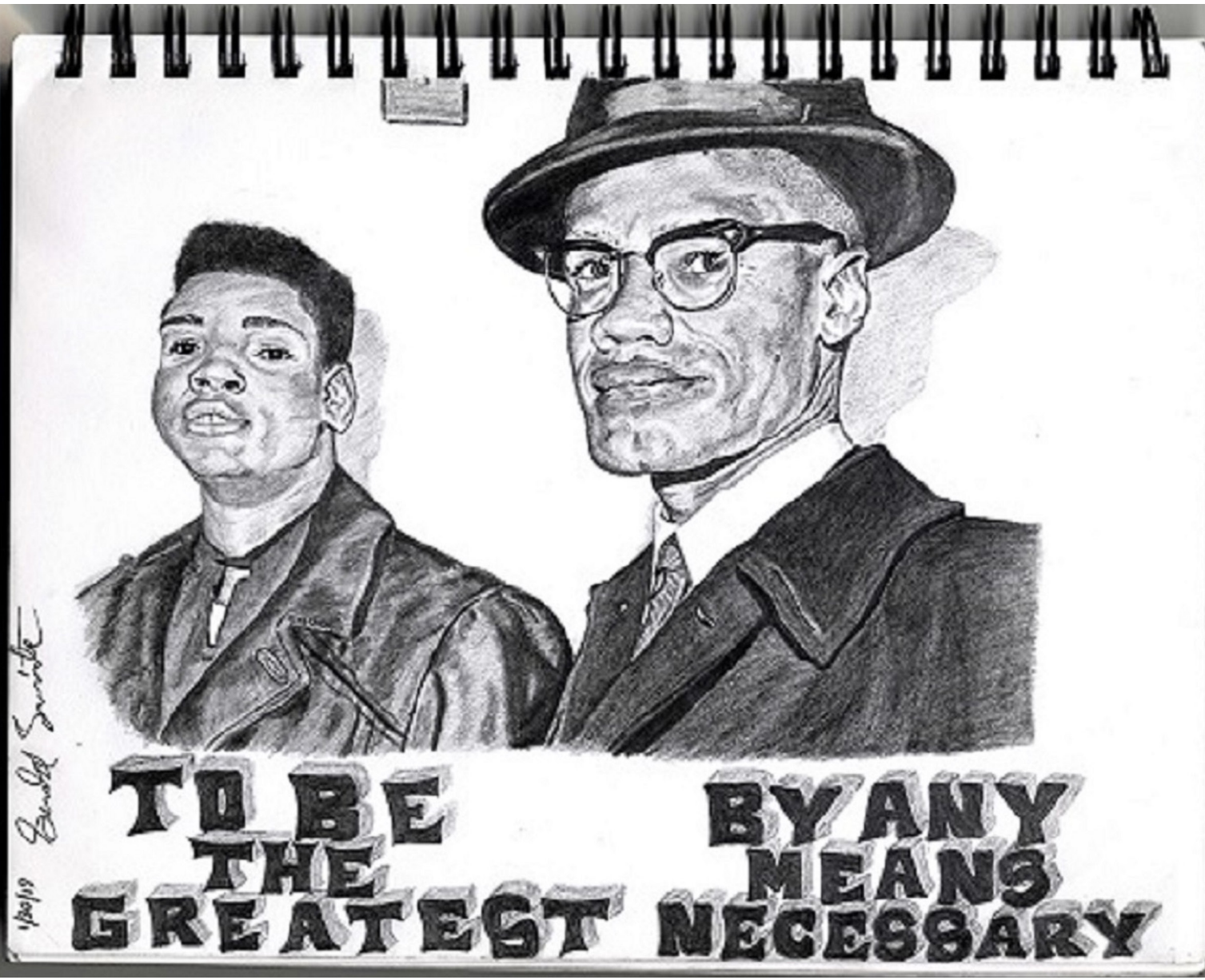
N e w O r l e a n s

Brigid MacArthur-Thompson, '17

Plastic beads swing
like rosaries through the leaves
And the sidewalks have scars
From the rising water.
The roots grow big enough
That as you walk,
You could be upended at any second.
And the ocean waits, ready to rush in
And fade us into oblivion.

The trees must be as old
As my soul,
Because the closest I've come to finding
God
Is on a riverbank
Near the edge of the continent.
Where everything is green,
The air is damp and full,
And the light is always gold.

I feel cleansed and light,
Like I am made up only of myself.
Like the divine is something
Mortal souls can touch,
And I could grow up into the branches,
And the fiery sky might be my mother.



Untitled | *Gerald Evariste*, '17

J e a l o u s C o f f e e

Tiara Holmes, '17

He couldn't move. But he could still chew, and open for the next bite. The spinach and feta pretzel never had a chance. Even though it was still piping hot. Fresh out of the oven. It's smoke still dissipating into the air, snaking its way toward the ceiling like the undulating hips of a belly dancer going up and around. So maybe he could move, but not the way he wanted to. You see, he wasn't hungry. But he sat there in the near-empty room on the one couch crouched over the low coffee table consuming, devouring and inhaling the pretzel and ignoring the hot cheese gliding down his poor throat. Ignoring the weight of an unusually heavy gravity on his shoulders. But he bought it, so he better eat it. That's what David would say.

He was too many places at once. He could feel himself in the empty spaces around him. In the left corner by the door on the opposite end of the table's red oak surface. In the space between his knees and the table—staring him in the face as his jaw rose and fell with each chomp and swallow. Imagine it. Yourself staring yourself in the face. No mirrors in sight. You're eating. But the him that concerned him the most was the one looming just behind him, leaning over the back of the couch, his cold breath on his neck, peering at the side of his face. He—or it—was tapping him on the shoulder, but he couldn't turn to face it. Even though his right shoulder was particularly heavy now and he could hear a whispering in his right ear like the sound of the wind through a slightly cracked window. He couldn't close the window and he couldn't turn around even though he knew there was something important that he was forgetting and the answer was behind him. It was that close.

The telephone rang in the adjacent room. He could picture it. Annoying and yellow, hanging on the wall next to the candid photos of him and David. Old and embarrassing, the rotary dial had pieces of plastic missing. The numbers beneath it faded—no longer black, but grey. He could hear it vibrating in its cradle, feel it shaking the entire room, the entire apartment, and his body. Shivers traveled up and down his spine. The shrill of the telephone grew louder with each ring until it didn't ring anymore, but he could still hear it in the near-empty room echoing around him—bouncing off the walls. Throwing the pictures of David in his face like a poltergeist.

David's smile. He could see it wide and white before him. It was an old photo of the first time he had had the courage to document that they were together. They were going steady at the time. Back then, he had admired David most for the way he drank his coffee. Without its top, he would hold the paper cup gingerly between both hands and the coffee would wait for his lips, still and patient, its steam rising to entice him. Take a sip, it would say.

And he admired David for this because he feared he didn't know his own strength. And he was afraid that if he held the cup without its top, its hot contents would lap over the brim, all over the sides, and he would squeeze the cup so hard that it would cave in on itself and coffee would spill all over him and David and David's laptop which was occupying another chair some distance away—but it would be ruined. So, he played it safe. He could see David's smile and the jealous coffee fuming for his attention, and his happy eyes staring into the lens of the polaroid camera.

Knock, knock.

A heavy fist was wrapping on the front door.

Tap, tap.

And a light one.

Knock, knock. Boom, boom, but he couldn't move even though he could hear it. Hear his mother cursing in the hall and the clanking sound of dangling metal. And his daughter's pleas to let her please locate the right keys. It's the one with the pink sleeve—not the purple one or the green. He could hear the key sliding into the lock and turning it open with a squeak.

"Honey," his mother said, inquiring into the quiet apartment that was loud and annoying and full of old trinkets and vintage art. "Chris, where are you?"

His tongue searched out the remnants of pretzel stuck between his teeth and trapped beneath his tongue. His daughter bounded into the room as he swallowed it down. She skipped around the corners of the table and flung herself into his chest. Her jacket was cold against the bare skin of his arms. She reached into her pocket and pulled out a tiny papier-mâché and said, "Daddy, look what I made today." It was a dog. Her favorite animal.

Chris smiled down at her. Told her that it looked beautiful. Swallowed everything down. And suddenly he could move. He remembered that he had to move.



Apples Still Life | Anna-Victoria Duzinski, '17



Untitled |
Sabrina Castaño, '20



N y c t o a g o r a p h o b i a

Sadie Saget, '19

Being sucked up into the atmosphere is what I fear most. On a quiet winter night in my neighborhood, I wander past the abandoned buildings and onto the bridge overlooking the creek. When I look up at the night sky, I swear it's looking back. The short buildings and lack of streetlights make it easy to imagine the intense darkness going on forever. The clouds hover around, close to the ground, and they don't stand a chance of making a statement against the midnight monster. They get sucked up by the horizon, and if I don't hurry home, I will surely be next. The eerie wind blows past my ears as a warning to get indoors, and although it's the right idea to keep my head down and take large strides to get there faster, the sky drags my face upward in confrontation. Its vastness makes me sway. If I lose touch with reality for just a few seconds, it will take hold of me and all that I am and I will never get home, so I begin to run. I don't stop until there is a roof over my head and the dark sky is nowhere in sight.



Sabrina
Latorre

Untitled |
Sabrina Castaño, '20



C o n f e s s i o n

Nola Kane, '19

I wanted to give money to the homeless man in the city
Grandma always said no
They'll go buy drugs
Now I know you need more than just
A dollar for drugs
They just want some food or some coffee
to get through the day
To feed their hope
All around were homeless
Every street doubled with them
Sad and scrawny
Wearing coats in the hot sun
Because the nights are cold
Shouting words at angry people.
They're not bad. Only desperate.
They weave between cars
Could get hit
But no hope if they sit around
So they get up and search
(That's more than what most can say).
Everyone looks down
But pass by their fellow man
"Cities are built so poor remain poor...
But that's for another day"
Said my senior year English teacher
Back in my small hometown
I'm just a college student
Basically broke
Gotta pinch my pennies just in case.
I crossed my heart
Swore when I was out and on my own
Every homeless person I passed I'd give money to
But I still could've spared a dollar
Why didn't I
I had one
I have a job
could replace it sooner than they could
Always for another day
Until tomorrow doesn't come

E l e g y T o A
M a n h a t t a n S k y l i n e

Tiara Holmes, '17

Adolescence stands opposite me in the mirror,
Objectified by the critical eyes of a prepubescent child
Whose lips are still as small as yesterday,
But somehow feel much older and eager
With something to say, on this day.
Because yesterday, planes came crashing into our buildings
Intentionally, and she doesn't understand the reasoning
Or why such vast constructs are so susceptible to caving in.
I pose the questions:
Is all of New York as vulnerable as this? Are you? Am I?
And what am I supposed to do with this information?
I look for wisdom in my prepubescent face.
Some change from yesterday;
I find my eyes less wet, less soft,
Feel sadness suffocating behind my grimacing lips.
What am I to do with this information?
I ask myself this;
Eric Garner takes his last breath.
The country mourns our losses,
The government licks our wounds,
I pledge my allegiance to the flag.
Red, white, and blue
That I know by now are not just America's hues,
But Abdullah's and the corner bodega's, as well.
I can still taste Brooklyn's salt and vinegar on my tongue.
Still see the Manhattan skyline across the waters at the Williamsburgh pier,
Its solidity so fragile on the sway of the East River.
Abdullah is pure and innocent to me,
His brave brown skin, proof of his ancestors' valor.
I consider their plight, their roots,
And the safety offered to a woman behind the panoramic view
Of her hijab
As I scatter pieces of my hero amongst the city pigeons
Off East 12th and 3rd Ave.
As the tides of time roll in and out,
I become less ignorant and less sure,
More angry, more forgiving.

Erena: Our Family I |
Elizabeth Yohannes, '17



Erena: Our Family II |
Elizabeth Yohannes, '17





I t S t a r t s
W i t h A P e n c i l

Sadie Saget, '19

It starts with a word,

begins with a bang
brains spill bombarding the paper
with a thunderstorm of alphabetized knives.
Each letter sharper than the last,
your sentences could stab,
winning words are your warriors
in the war against that
clean
white
page.

Dawning their antonym armor they
march up to your notebook's front lines.

With their vocabulary shields
your soldiers stand yielding

to a writers block barricade.

It starts with an idea.

Similes spit from your mind's eye,
turbo tears of text tumbling through time and space
fall from your face to form prose,
poetry.

Individual pint sized portraits painted with your pen
come together to form a picasso-esque
portrait of
the offspring that occurs between

your inspiration
your imagination
and the language you speak.

It starts with a pencil,
pick your players.

Flames slip from between your teeth
and become your weapons,
igniting your daggers and
lighting your imagination on fire.

Blood dribbles down your enemy's margins,
your language sword slashes
leaving eraser scars or ink scratches.

Done waiting, now attacking,
these literary animals almost act on instinct.

Wild comma kittens curled at the corners of your phrases
crouch down and then
pounce
clawing at the pages.

Their prey begs for mercy,
trying to deflect
the attacks but its completely ineffective.

Your mind is racing now...
you're finished with procrastination,

ideas are pouring from your fingertips
and your pencil runs back and forth
trying to keep up with your rushing lips.

The war is over.

You've won.

The battlefield stands bloodied with words,
your creative writing homework is done.



Shape Shifting Jaguar Head | *Anna-Victoria Duzinski*, '17

D e a r D i a r y

Sadie Saget, '19

Dear Diary,
He delivered my first kiss,
But snatched my freshman innocence.
I had always thought of love as democratic,
But it's an imperial affliction.
My wayward winds have been whipping through endless ex's,
Trying to find the cause of this textbook catastrophe:
girl meets boy
they fall in love
the honeymoon phase dies away.
My poetry is infamous for its infatuation with inviting his presence onto your pages.
He doesn't deserve the perspiration of my pen,
No matter how much it pleases him to paint me picayune.
It's taken me too long to realize that there's more between heaven and earth
Than in his philosophy,
That I am a perfect blend of earth bound anatomy,
That the things he said to me
Could chain angels to earth in all their divinity.
Its pleasing to have you as my stationed mortuary.
You are the dance party of my dearly departed demons,
But what party can pop playing the same songs on repeat?
It seems that I keep laying the same body to rest,
No matter how I slam the coffin shut with with my stanzas
He just keeps resurrecting into my lines.
Your pages are blank without me,
So if only for your sake
I'll write about trees,
How although they're cut and carved and wither to weak carcasses they still stay firm at their roots.
I'll write about roots,
How they branch off into the dirt in search of nourishment.
I'll write about the dirt,
How even in all of its darkness and must it can still spring forth roses.
I'll write about roses,
How even when they're held by unmovable concrete they still spring forth to life.
I'll write about life,
And how though I may be held back by unmovable obstacles I will still spring forth supreme.

J o u r n e y O f
A B u t t e r f l y

Navonna Garrett, '17

She started out a caterpillar,
a slow worm
inching ignorantly along in life.
A pesky parasite who latches hungrily at the hip,
as close as a Stitch.
With expressive eyes,
you reel me in
like rope tied around crossed hands,
but they lack the patience of time
and wisdom from within.
Scuttling along selfishly,
she uses manipulative little legs
to get to the top of the tree,
where the best leaves are.
so she'll stick to the surface,
stripping the tree of its bark
like hands enclosed around the throat,
robbing the tall standing tree if it
valiant voracious voice.
Impulsively, all she did was eat leaves all day,
as if in taking from the tree,
the green plants could sustain her life,
because she is small and defenseless
and birds could easily fly away with such pretty prey.

But then she finds a branch to call her own,
and wraps herself up into a ball of circular thoughts.
Cocooned and closed off from the outside world,
she rolls into herself.
A ball of baleful beseechment,
not knowing where she is
nor what she will become,
shrouded in a blanket of darkness,
encased so tightly that she cannot find the light of the sun.
Weak and fragile,
she perches precariously on a twig,

enslaved to the will of the wind,
battered and tossed to and fro
but that was the past
and this is the process of going through change.
The shell of the cocoon hardens,
the caterpillar toughens up with experience
from the inside out,
growing, changing, expanding.

She bursts out of the cocoon
a brand new woman.
Shakily, she stands up on 6 legs for the first time,
adjusting to not having 100 legs anymore.
She is a completely different species altogether,
not just a measly little bug,
but a beautiful butterfly
with long colorful wings
to take her higher than she ever could before.
With her long wings,
she can reach out to new people,
make new connections,
and have a new wing pattern of doing things.
No more crawling along the ground
waiting for things to just be handed to her,
now she can go out and get them on her own

T r a u m a t o p h o b i a

Nola Kane, '19

On the screen false words we debate
On the street true words come too late
Adamant that there's some kind of issue
But whispers cause riots to ensue
To point fingers, cowards cannot
Lest the offending hand cut off and rot
Yet as debates turn into circuses
All our efforts maybe purposeless
So cocky are human's minds
Self assured behind screens
They turn when pushed outside
Beasts scared to fight for their means
Life is full of should haves, a never ending fight
And who wants to swim in a pool of regret?
Change will come to could haves, with newfound might
If one can find abandon, and find true freedom yet.

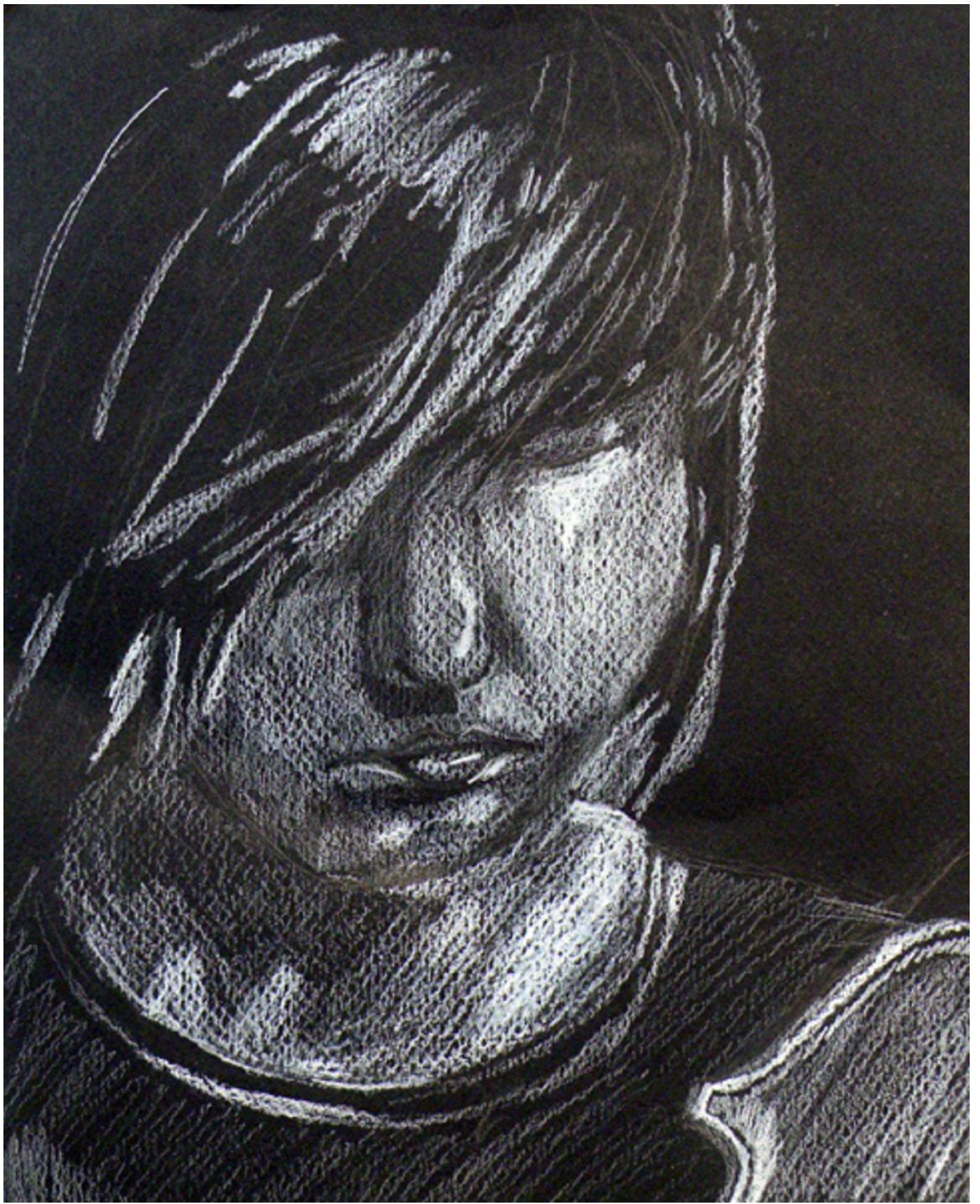


Stop | *Alicia Brucker, '17*

P u r p o s e

Nola Kane, '19

Before you judge a man, walk a mile in his shoes.
While on the road, you'll find if there's anything to lose.
One man's trash is another man's treasure;
One man's sin is another man's pleasure.
Which is which? Well you decide.
Why should one by models forever abide?
Have no fear, let your voice be heard.
Your words will not be found absurd.
Stand by what you love, don't be ashamed.
Abandon it and your self could be maimed,
But perhaps it is time to find a new start
When what once inspired you wishes to depart.
Not everyone will understand,
But there is someone in need of a hand.
We need not judge another's taste—
That only puts our minds to waste.
The meaning of your tastes unfurled.
It takes all kinds to make a world.



Maja Reverse 3 | *Maja Kramer*, '20

H o l d i n g A
S o u l

Brigid MacArthur-Thompson, '17

Just a handful of protons
Joined together.
Building veins like swirling rivers,
Skin like the cracked earth,
Limbs like dancing branches, and
Eyes like burning stars.
Unaware of the magnificence
Of being a holder
For a soul.



Untitled | *Fatimah Salat, FLS student*

MEET THE STAFF!

THE 😊

Erin

Review board member and possibly the only one among staff that knows anything about horses.



Nola

Well read review board member with an enviable sense of style.

Everyone made it possible!

Imani

Fun, easygoing review board member mostly in it for the pizza.



Thanks for your opinions!

Hunter

Review board member and triple threat athlete, fiction writer and science major.

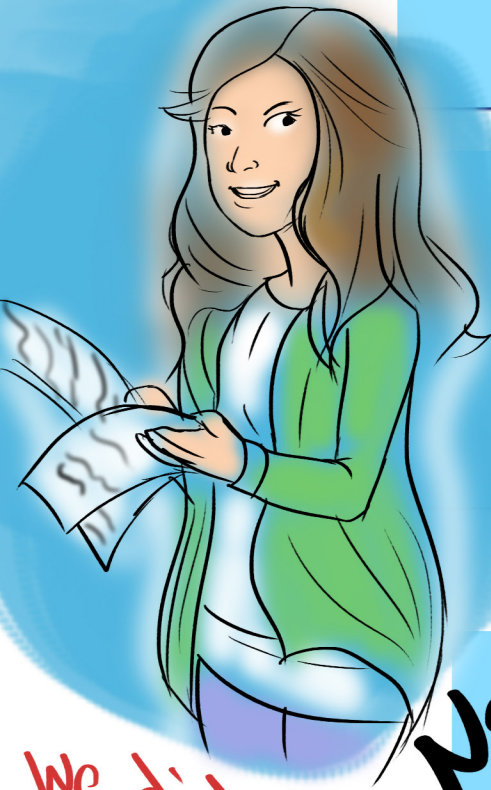


Insightful, patient members this year!

Another
Successful
Crackle!

Tiafa

Over-worked Editor in Chief and English major who values her days off.



Lanie

Associate editor, newspaper writer and survivor of InDesign.

Nahfese

Art Editor, Education major and despicable day-dreamer.



We did
it!



Sadie

Perky review board member who's done hard time in high school detention.

Thanks
for
all
your
effort!