

AUSTIN  
PUBLIC  
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2020:  
A  
Year  
in  
Review



**ATXYZ**  
*Pandemonium*



On The Cover:  
"Abandoned Subway"  
by Eva Davis



*"I wanted to invoke the feeling of loneliness in my piece, and how many people feel more lonely than before. It's hard to go from being in large crowds to having to be cautious of everyone you meet."*

# ATXyz

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## Hello!

Welcome to the second issue of ATXyz (the Austin Texas Youth Zine). This issue showcases the art and writing made by teenagers experiencing a prolonged global pandemic. While reading and looking through this teen produced magazine, we hope you enjoy and appreciate the pieces of art and writing that are a snapshot of the teen community in Austin during the fall of 2020.

### ATXyz: Issue 02 Teen Editorial Board:

Estella Zhao   Justin Gao   Siyonna Jain  
Momitha Katta   Mishree Narasaiah

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Read Issue 02

# CREATIVE? SUBMIT TO ATXyzine

WHAT?

Call for Teens to submit original work to ATXyz - the Austin Public Library's youth-led magazine. All works are welcome!

WHERE

SUBMIT / READ AT:  
[tinyurl.com/atxyouthzine](https://tinyurl.com/atxyouthzine)

DUE BY

April 2, 2021

OPEN  
TO TEENS  
AGES 13-18

ART. POETRY. PHOTOGRAPHY. MUSIC. VIDEOS.  
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Questions? Email: [kathleen.houlihan@austintexas.gov](mailto:kathleen.houlihan@austintexas.gov)





# vibes

A POEM ANTHOLOGY  
BY ERIN HOUCHINS

*I started writing as a hobby in elementary school, and now I'm the president of a creative writing club. I hadn't written for myself in a while, and quarantine gave me a chance to do that. As quarantine progressed, I found that I could remember the things that I wished I could do through my writing.*






# fog

a thick mist hangs low in the air  
covering the hills peppered with trees.  
wrapping around sleepy little houses in unhurried  
suburbs.  
and just for the day  
time is ignored.  
it's a lazy day.

the sky is covered in a sheet of smooth cool grey.  
only clouds.  
time loses its grip on us for a day because we can't  
see the sun move across the sky.

kids stay inside, settling for doll houses and tv.  
teens curl up with a book, wishing they could go to  
the mall with their friends.

like a painter cleaning ebony paint from their brush  
in murky water until it turns black. as night grows  
closer, that watery sky grows darker, and we only  
know it's night when the clouds are black.  
there are no stars tonight.



# afternoon walk

*the sweet rot of fallen figs  
mingling with the scent of fresh honeysuckle blossoms  
the smell hangs thick in the heavy humid air  
making it hard to breathe*

*there are clouds in the sky  
some light and fluffy  
some dark and heavy*

*the sun peeks out  
the clouds moved with a sweet gentle breeze*

*a lizard scuttles along the edge of the sidewalk  
i lose sight of its red striped tail in the grass*

*the sun dips lower  
now peeking into my eyes  
my flyaways are slicked to my neck and forehead with  
sweat*

*it's a pretty afternoon*





# roller skate

colorful patterned carpet, sticky with spilt soda and dropped candy.  
multicolored lights flashed on the wooden floor and reflected off the  
disco ball hanging in the middle of the rink.

the air was as sticky as the carpet. the humidity from poor  
ventilation and a mass of people traveling in circles building up  
against the walls.

it was just like any roller skating rink you'd see in an 80's movie.

we grabbed brown leather skates with knotted brown laces and  
hideous orange wheels.

the worn down laces were tied, and we were off.

skating in a mass.

grabbing hands and avoiding stumbling children tripping over their  
poorly tied skates.

i felt my back start to sweat from the sticky air and constant  
movement.

i needed a drink. i get off the wooden rink by cutting through waves  
of kids and the help of a grimy green rail.


i buy a root beer. my skates drag through the carpet as i make my  
way to a table.

my feet feel heavy.

i drink quickly and go back out on the crowded rink.

we skate for too long. wearing blisters through our socks and not  
taking enough time to sit.

we laugh and smile as we leave that sticky but wonderful rink and  
walk into the hot summer sun.



# raindrop



swollen beads of water drip down from the overcast sky. those sad looking clouds finally release their tears onto the sleepy neighborhoods and drab buildings.

they sound nice. calm. not in too much of a hurry to fall down and grace the ground with their cool life giving kiss.

they don't smack into the ground - pushed on by impatient wind.

they don't float down in an overly cautious mist - settling into a thick fog and heavy dew on a grassy field.

they plink onto my window. they thump against my roof.

they are cool to the touch as they run down my face and arms. my hair sticks to my forehead as the water slowly washes over me. the drops feel fat as they plop onto my face and closed eyes. i open my eyes and look through my droplet covered eyelashes.

the grey clouds break and a bit of golden afternoon light peaks through.





# THE STAGES OF 2020

by N. Murphy



Beginning



Middle



Recovery and  
rebirth



18

CANVAFILLM

CANVAFILLM

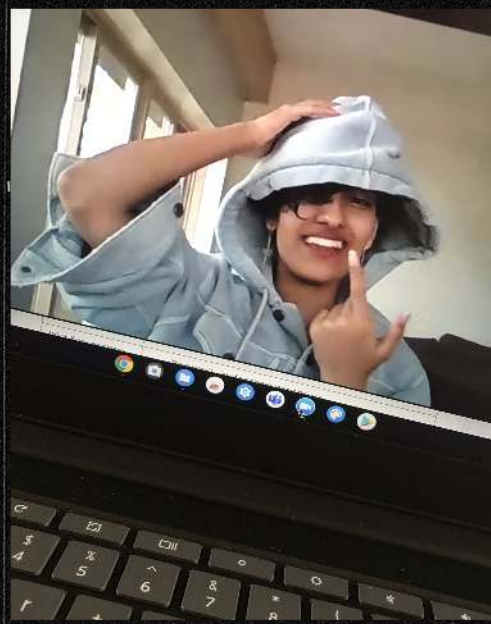
# HELLO AGAIN

CANVA STORIES Z850

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CANVA STORIES Z850

18



18

CANVAFILLM

CANVAFILLM

CANVA STORIES

CANVAFILLM

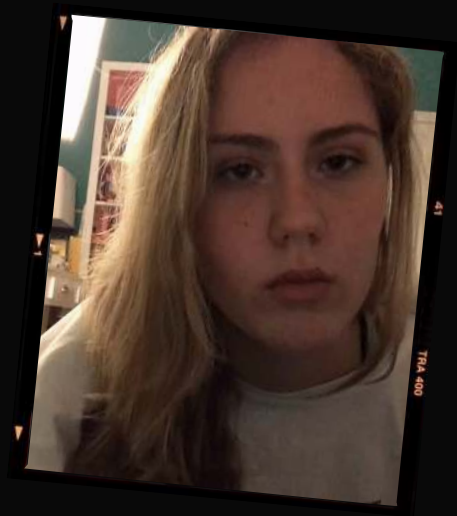
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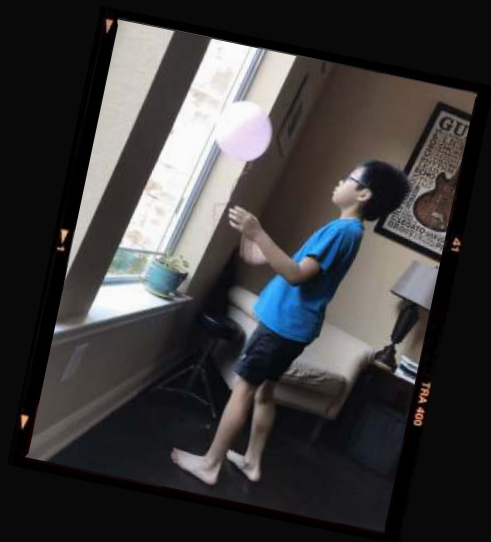
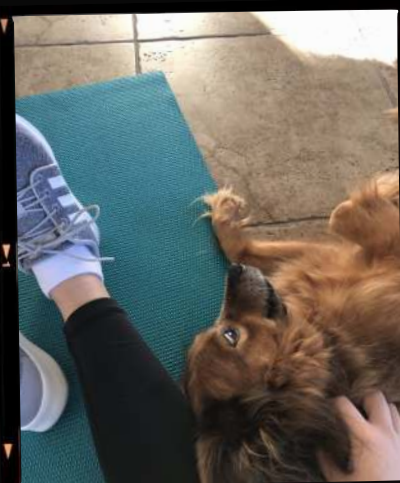
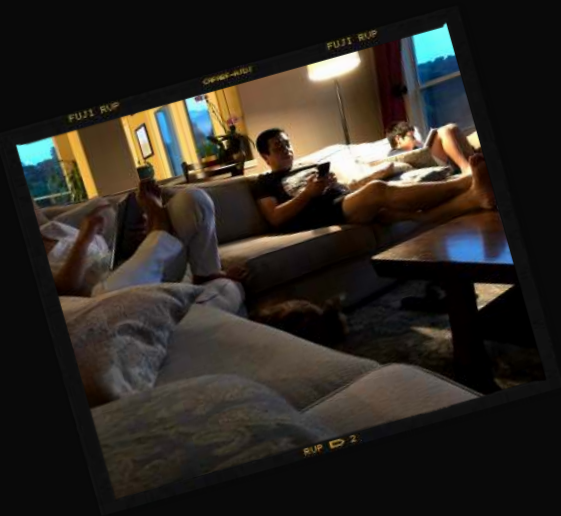


*a photo essay*





I look back at this year, and I don't know what to think. What can I possibly come up with that can encompass 365 days in a year that is both chaotically jumbled and mind-numbingly boring?





My teacher's COVID set up: shower curtains!

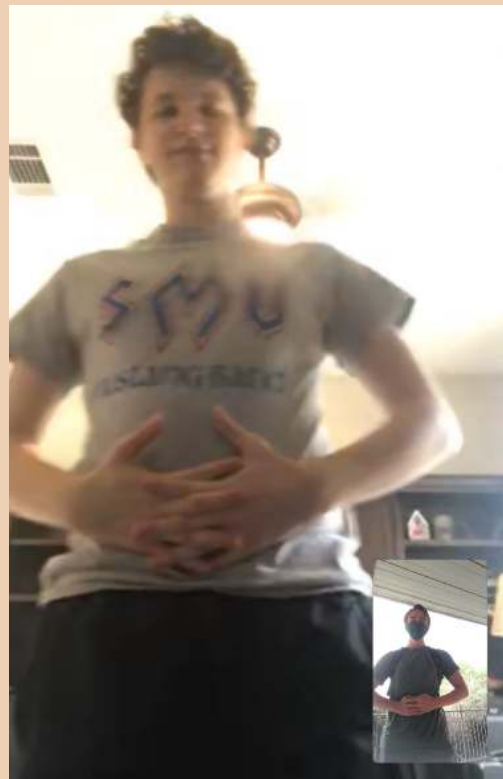
As nice as it was to finally see my teachers, my biggest class was 7 people. By the end of my first week, I was the only student in half of them.

Hello? Yes, I am suffering and alone.



# A SNEAK PEAK OF IN PERSON LEARNING IN 2020

To put it lightly, the fall semester of my Junior year was not what I expected. After two months of virtual learning, I was more than ready to go back in person.



FaceTiming during lunch was extremely fun



I (occasionally)  
go outside

AAAANNNNNDDDD

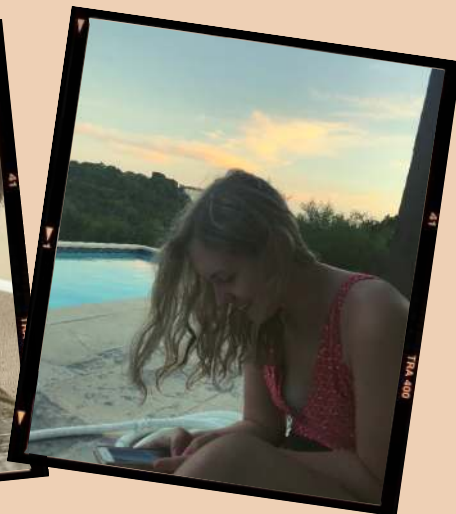
# BACK TO VIRTUAL

ZOOM ZOOM ZOOM

but for the most part, i  
spend a lot of time glued to  
a screen



my very organized  
workspace



We're all screenagers

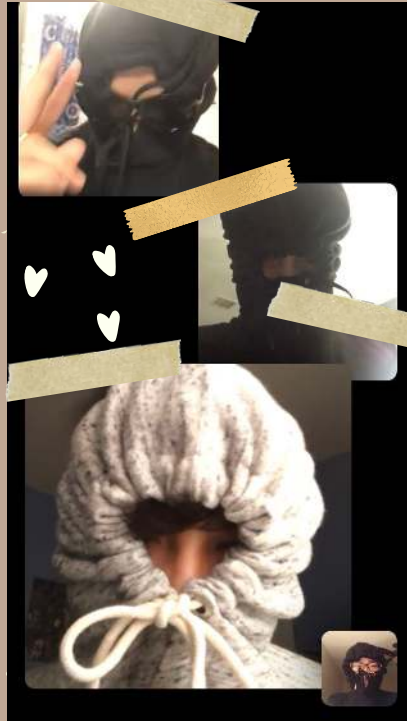
"Hey, Wanna  
FaceTime?"

(pls pls pls)

we went from  
this to this in  
two minutes



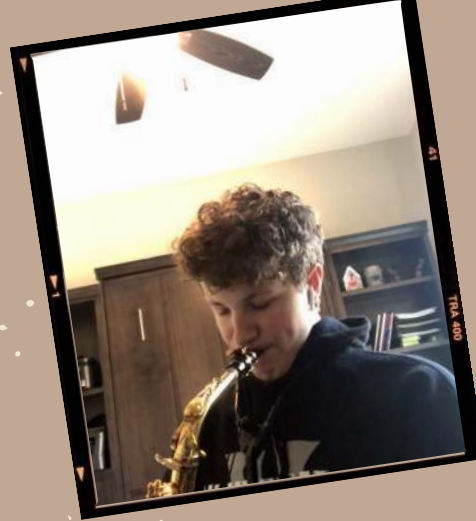
I never failed to  
laugh while on call



Unable to meet face to face, calling each  
other was the only way to hangout...

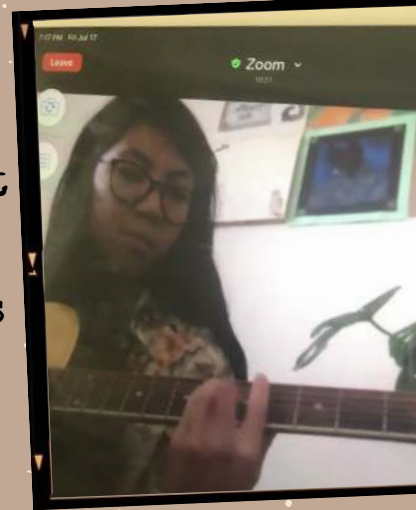






Listen to his  
Spotify @Eric  
Parmalee :)

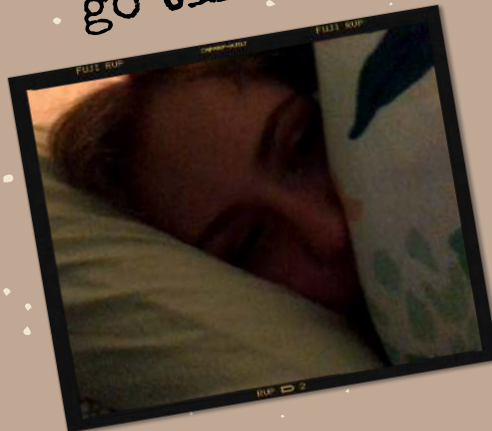
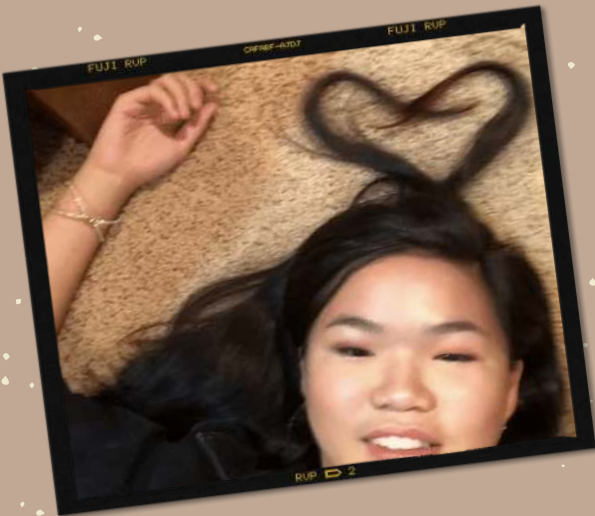
Check her out  
on Youtube  
@ambirdflies



My friends are  
wonderful, wacky,  
and weird, and I  
wouldn't have it any  
other way.



late night calls  
are the best, even  
if they sometimes  
go till 3 am....





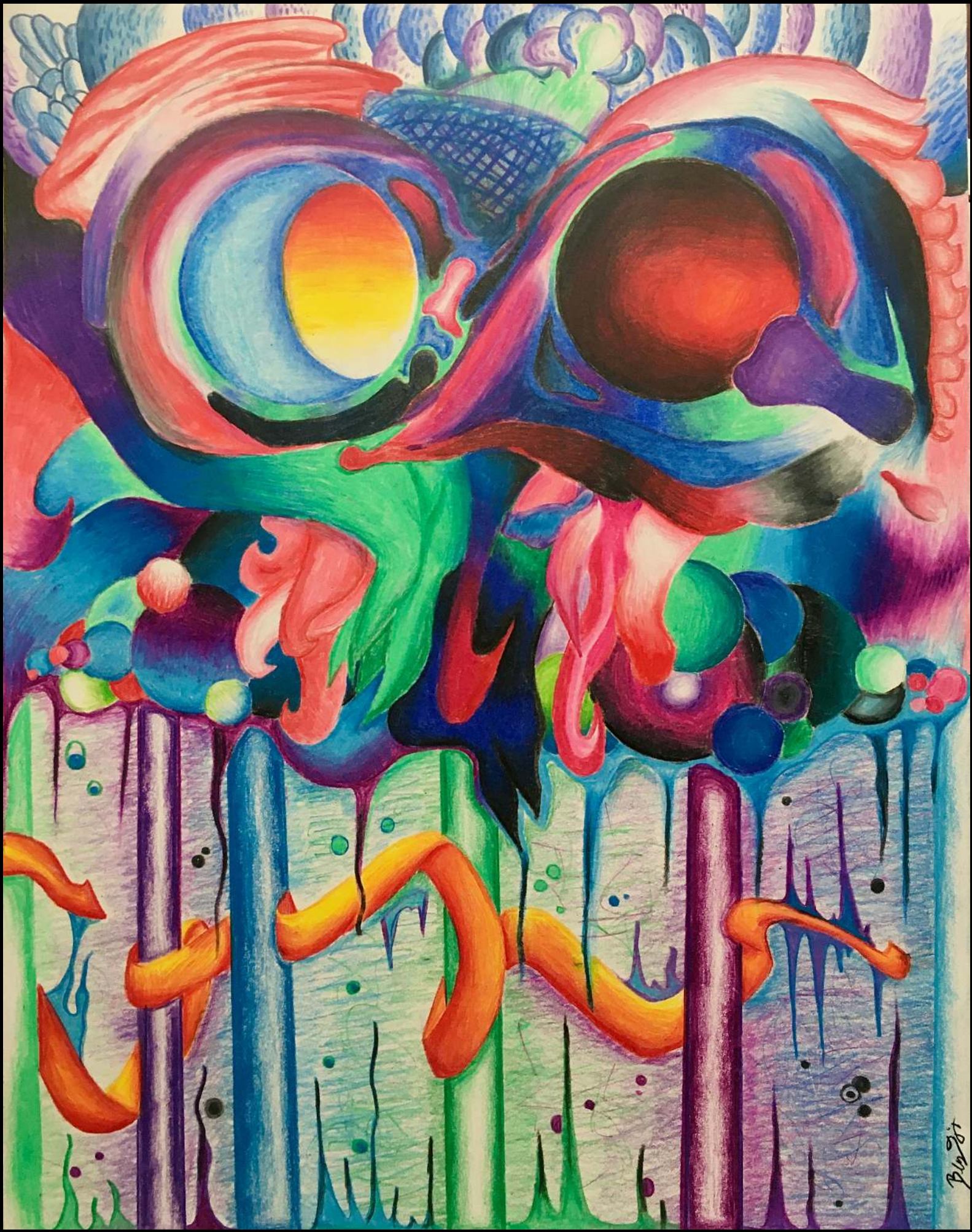
An abstract pencil drawing of a face, composed of various geometric shapes and patterns. The face is formed by a series of vertical lines, with the eyes represented by two sets of concentric circles. The nose is a simple vertical line, and the mouth is a series of horizontal lines. The background is filled with a complex pattern of red lines, including zig-zags, dots, and larger geometric shapes like hexagons and squares. The overall effect is a stylized, almost architectural representation of a human face.

# DREAD

*by Benji L.*

**"DREAD" is an abstract color pencil piece that shows the world falling apart through one's eyes. 2020 has been rough, but luckily there are new string of hope appearing everywhere**





Blizart



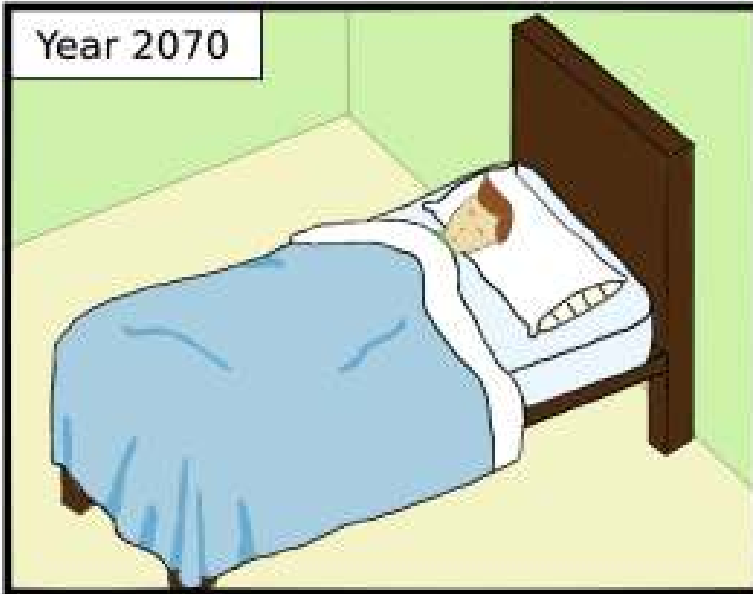
# Quarantine Tales



by Siyona Jain



Year 2070



Teddy, it's time to wake up.



What time is it?



7:40 am



School starts in 5 minutes, I can't get there in time!



When I was your age, I would wake up 2 minutes before class started.



*Signature*

# FEMININE *Fury*

**BY MAGGIE BROWN**

Feminine Fury is a collection of poems with the soul purpose of displaying the hardships that come with being a woman in modern day society. With endless pressure to smile all the time, have a thin waist, and accept every advance a man makes towards you, it is nearly impossible to resist changing yourself to fit the standards of others. I hope these poems will make other girls feel less alone, and know that they are better than the boxes society forces them into.



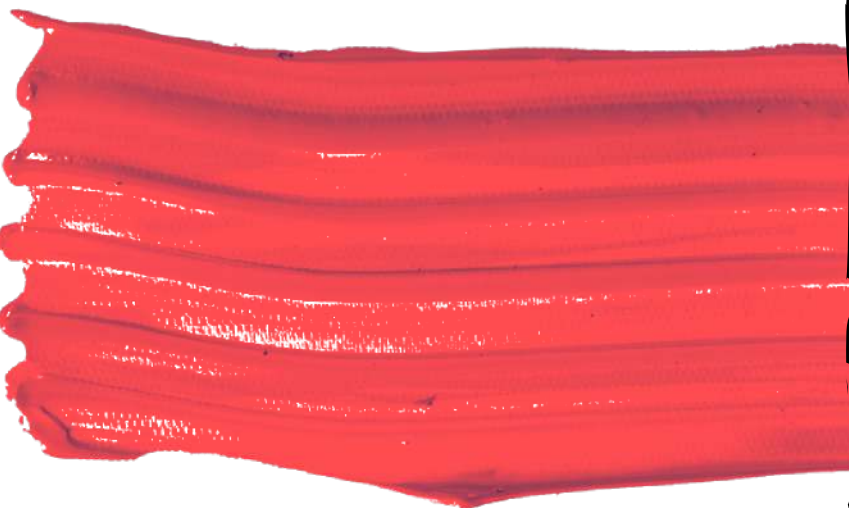




## My Body, My Life

I'd like to have a choice,  
But I don't have a voice  
About what happens to my body  
After all, it does belong to me.  
Unfortunately, my hands are tied  
By awful laws, I must abide.  
My voice deserves to be heard,  
But no one registers a word  
My body, my life  
And if I do become a wife,  
My partner will not decide for me  
What or who I choose to be.  
I shouldn't even have to fight  
For what is good and what is right.  
Nevertheless, here we are  
We've already come so far  
But there is still more to go  
For the better, we must grow.

## Starving High



Sitting at the table  
Eating as little as I'm able  
I'm scared when people look  
To see how much food I took  
My stomach has been aching,  
And lately, I've been shaking  
I guess I should eat more  
But then again what for?  
I feel so good  
Eating less than I should  
My waist is thin,  
And my stomach sticks in,  
So I'll keep eating less  
And track the progress,  
Riding on this starving high  
Until the very day I die

## Never Enough For You

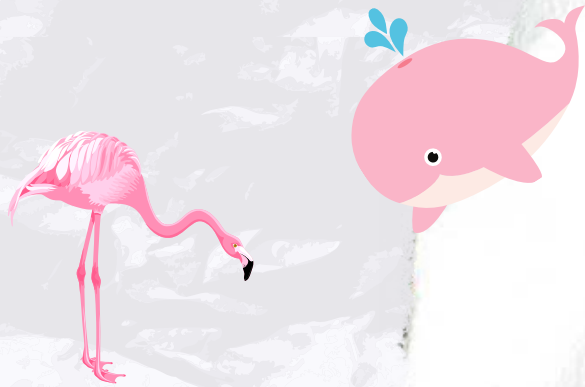
Barbie dolls in hand,  
Castles in the sand,  
Friends all around,  
Digging in the ground.  
We were too young then  
To think about a Ken.  
Fast forward a few years  
Eyes filled with tears,  
As we skinned our knees  
Bikes crashing into trees.  
Playing in the park  
Up until dark.  
What we didn't know then,  
Was our parents wonder when  
When was it gonna be  
When guys catcall me?  
See, we were never really taught  
What being a girl brought.  
We thought that growing up was fun  
And we'd dance under the sun,  
But no one tells you what really occurs  
When you compare another girl's body to  
yours.  
When the taunts and comments from boys

Make girls think they're nothing but toys.  
To change themselves to fit the mold,  
That all the cool Barbies sold.  
Thin waist and curvy hips,  
Big eyes and cherry red lips.  
You see it everywhere you look  
And boys fish for it with a hook.  
Girls must be 'nice to see'  
Or they are cast out by society.  
Bodies will never be treated equally,  
When girls are always told what size to be!  
Size two or double zero,  
And boys are meant to be the hero  
Of the story and the slim princess  
Gets her happy ending, the story says.  
When will it ever be acceptable  
For a girl to be respectable  
I cannot stand the way I am measured  
As if my weight determines if I am treasured  
I will not stand for it anymore  
It seems I will never settle the score  
Between a size fourteen and size two  
Since my body is never enough for you.



## Can't Take Another Day

I stepped up on the scale,  
My hands clammy, my face pale I thought of the boys at my school  
And the cute girls, they thought were cool  
Maybe if I lost enough,  
They wouldn't treat me so rough.  
I couldn't take another day  
Of being treated in such a way.  
Like I was a weirdo or an outcast  
Since I can't lose the pounds that'll last  
When the coach called out my weight I was doomed to a dismal fate  
Of being called fat and hating my looks  
And no matter how many salads my mother cooks  
My thoughts will never be the same  
With only society to blame.



## Future Is Bright

When you buy your first bra, it doesn't come with a seminar  
About how boys act or who some guys really are.  
The ones that only stare at your chest,  
And are always impressed  
When you wear a short shirt to school one day  
And act like catcalling is okay.  
Cause boys are never taught any different  
And this causes girls to become so diffident,  
That soon we just stop fighting!  
And give up on the fires we were igniting.  
The fires of change and protest  
Because sexism takes no rest.  
But if girls are taught to cover up and cower  
Because men can't learn to share their power,  
Then we will never change, never improve  
And women will always have something to prove  
We cannot go on in this cycle of injustice  
And no longer, can people enable this.  
The time is now to rise and fight,  
Because the future is female, and our future is bright!





## Beauty Like Yours

To the girls that glimmer and shimmer and shine  
Who are always smiling and never show a sign  
Of the hurt they feel, or the pain they endure,  
Do you ever want to give up the grandeur?  
To the girls in threes and sometimes fours  
With expensive new heels that clack on the floors  
Is your kindness real,  
Or just part of the deal?  
The deal with the devil to sell your soul  
To be the one we all extol.  
No hair out of place, no smile to fake,  
With a line of worshipers in your wake.  
I know you never have to wonder, "does he like me?"  
For you are the only one there is to see.  
I don't get how you can be so nice,  
When the only thing I look for is your vice.  
But how can I not hunger for your perfection,  
When I'm stuck looking at my own reflection?  
They say "You'll all look stunning someday,"  
But things don't always turn out that way.  
If looks fade, then why haven't yours?  
With each perfectly glossed lip, my jealousy roars.  
For I've tried the diets, the workouts, the fasting,  
But none give me a beauty that's lasting.  
Deep down I know that I will never measure up,  
Because there are some things, I am unwilling to give up.  
Not only my soul but my conscious and heart,  
Since I know that this beauty tears you apart.  
What I don't get is why I still yearn for it!  
The ache in my stomach is an endless pit.  
And it is not for greasy and sugary flavours,  
But for intense and manipulative beauty like yours.of body text



# UNTITLED

*by Siyona Jain*

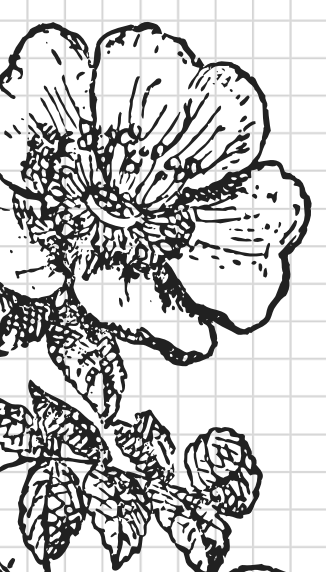


This piece is an oil pastel still life of my soccer stuff. I decided to create this because I was reminded of before the pandemic when I was still able to play.

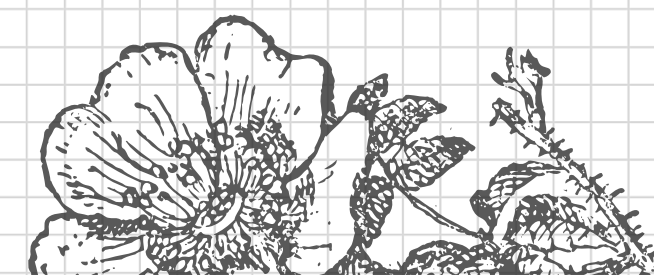



# a field of flowers

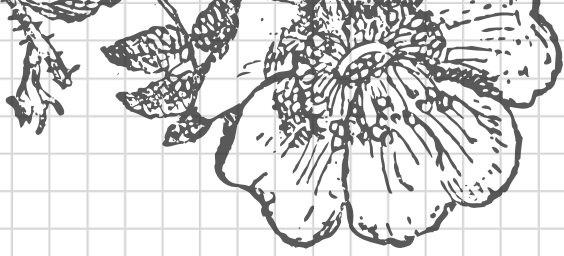
**BY ADRIAN HUGHES**



Hello! My name is Adrian Hughes and I'm a teen that loves making poetry and sharing it with others! I started writing poetry about a year ago, and I have to thank my English teacher Ms.Stolar for supporting me!







Flowers sway softly in the wind  
Without a care, in the world.

A field of green, blue, and pink.

A blue, sunny sky.

A breathtaking place.

Yet, the land remembers.

'tis gravely scarred.

Holes marking its once smooth landscape.

Bombs, lying dormant beneath.

A brutal history, hidden by colors.

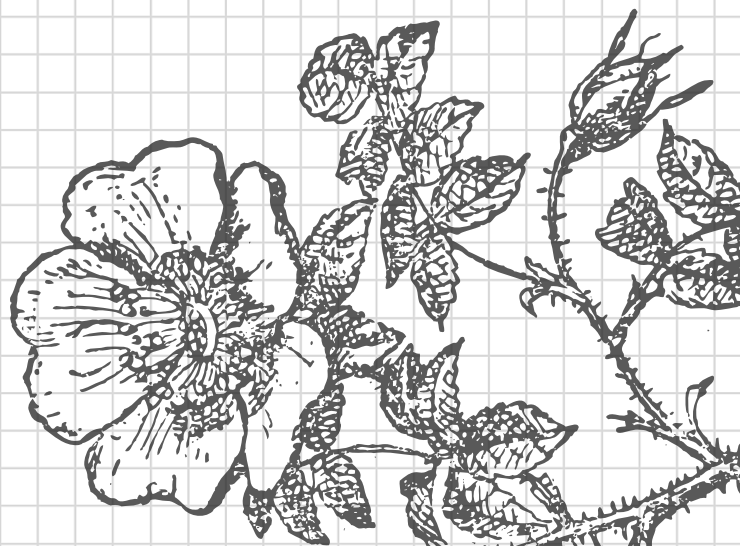
Flowers prosper, bringing joy to the children nearby.

Masking the wounds, caused by war.

The flowers grow, vibrant with color.

Impervious, as to how the ground beneath had been  
fertilized so.

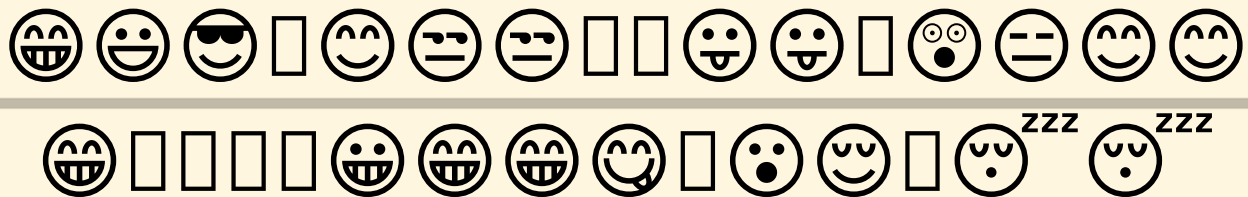
If only, man had not been so intent on destroying  
their foe.



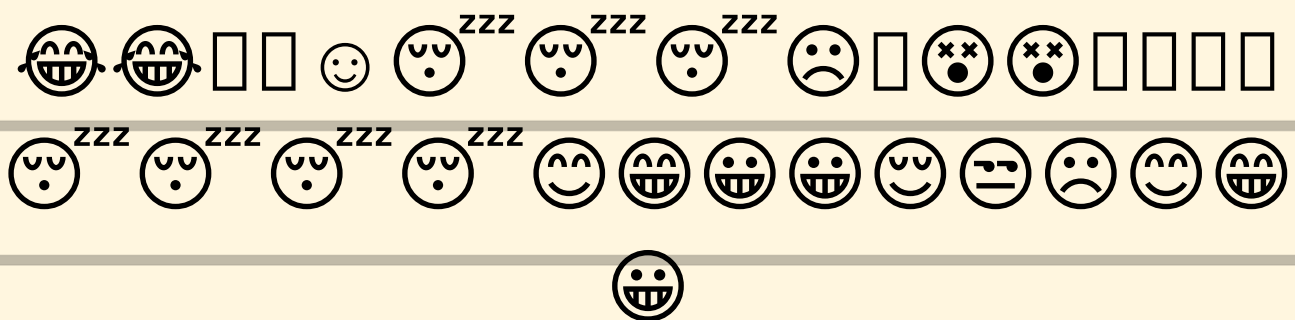
# Emotions and Emotions

By: Justin Gao

This is a compilation of emotions  
that represent my daily moods  
throughout the fall of 2020,  
representing the wild ride that the  
year as been for me personally.  
October:



## November:





# WINDOWS

BY ASTRID GOTHER

So I know I can just sit here all day and watch people, and I'm not sure what it means for humanity that people could be waving at us at any time, through any small window, and yet we never bother to look up, never bother to wonder about the countless stories playing out behind every closed door, because the only stories we care about are the ones happening behind the doors that are open to us, as if the people we know are the only ones that matter, and of course the stories tucked away behind our own doors and windows are the ones we hold closest to our hearts, if only because we as a species do so love a story with ourselves in the spotlight, and I admit to the same fault, as in this dark in-between time where one normal has ended and we wait for another to begin while desperately try to build a new one right now to fill in the empty space, I can watch a thousand people walk by my window, not bothering to stop and wave at me, and I wonder about them, sure, but they could all walk by and I would still wish that the people I miss most could be right here, right now, and I would never look out my window again because my own story would suddenly be enough.

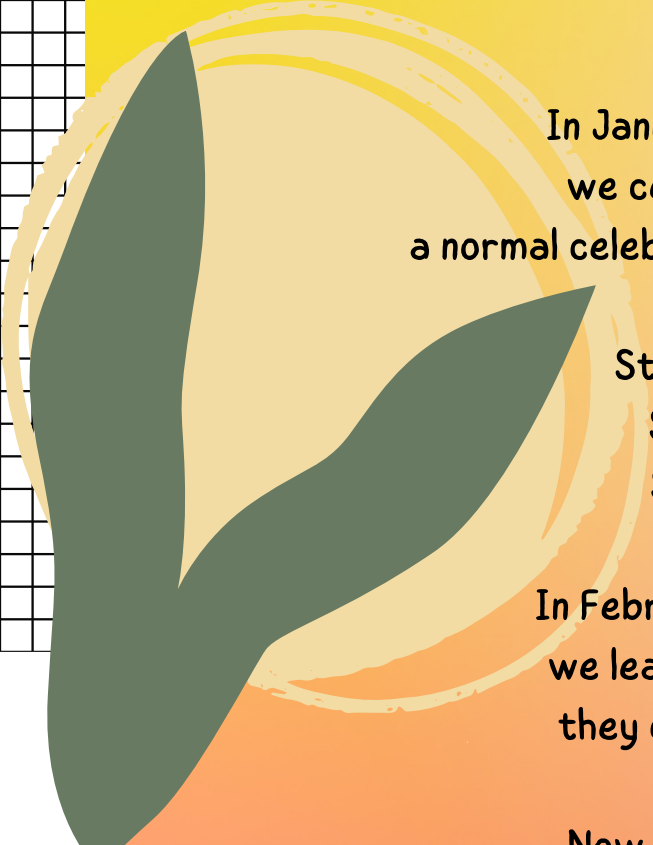
# The 2020 Rollercoaster

BY CHARLOTTE REVESZ

In my poem I write about this crazy year and talk about what our life has been like. I also talk about some of the really important political things that happened this fall, some ups and some downs, just like a rollercoaster.





A large, stylized sun with yellow and orange concentric circles is positioned in the upper left. Two large, dark green leaves are layered over the sun. The background of the entire page is a vertical gradient from light yellow at the top to bright pink at the bottom.

In January of twenty-twenty,  
we celebrate the new year,  
a normal celebration with friends and family.

Still a normal daily life,  
Still normal school,  
Still places to go.

In February of twenty-twenty,  
we learn about this new virus,  
they call it the Coronavirus.

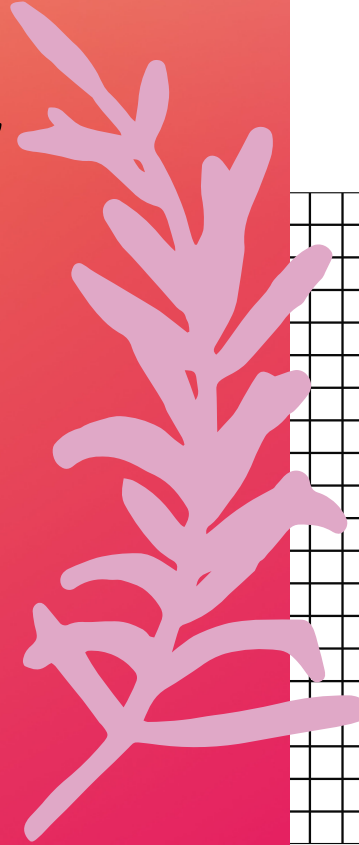
Now things to worry about,  
Now we start to fear what might happen,  
Now we listen closely to the news.

In March of twenty-twenty,  
we start to get cases near where we live,  
school shuts down on the 13th.

Now so little to be entertained by,  
Now we continue to worry about what will happen,  
Now we wear masks to protect ourselves.

In April of twenty-twenty,  
we continue our quarantine life,  
social distancing and wearing masks.

Already so very bored,  
Already planning ahead,  
Already thinking of the next year.

A stylized, light pink plant with multiple branches and leaves is located in the bottom right corner. The background features a grid pattern on the far left and right edges.

In May of twenty-twenty,  
we have our many Zoom meetings,  
for school, friends, and work.

Already tired of zooming,  
Already missing friends,  
Already missing places.

In June of twenty-twenty,  
we want to have a normal summer,  
going to the pool and traveling places.

Missing relatives who live afar,  
Missing talking face-to-face,  
Missing take-out food.


In July of twenty-twenty,  
we see cases spike all over,  
and the graphs have to be re-scaled.

Worrying about friends,  
Worrying about family,  
Worrying about ourselves.

In August of twenty-twenty,  
we see the cases come down a little,  
not so high, but still bad.

Checking the news,  
Checking the data,  
Checking on loved ones.





In September of Twenty-twenty,  
we lose Ruth Bader Ginsburg, she will be missed  
greatly.

Wondering about a future without her,  
Wondering about politics  
Wondering about the upcoming election,

In October of Twenty-twenty,  
we can't go trick or treating,  
and we can't have parties.


Sad to not see friends,  
Sad to not have parties,  
Sad to just be at home.

In November of Twenty-twenty,  
Joe Biden is voted president,  
and Kamala Harris is voted vice  
president.

A first female vice president,  
A first south asian vice president.  
A first second gentleman.

In December of Twenty-twenty,  
we hope to get a vaccine soon,  
and return to a normal life.

A year ago we were with friends,  
A year ago we were with family,  
A year ago was normal.





# THE END

BY AAIRAH SALAM

It's an end of a HUGE chapter, isn't it?! Let's call that chapter 2020. So much has happened this past year, it's hard to believe this "nightmare" is almost over. Although this year was rough, let's look at the positive side, since it's always the best idea.

Allow me to start from the very beginning! It all started late February when I heard this sickness so called Corona. When I first heard this I giggled, as a naive 7th grader this Covid-19 was all a big joke to me. All over social media I saw memes persuading me that this wasn't a big deal, and so I believed them. I believed that Covid was nothing and I just brushed it off my shoulders. Little did I know what was yet to come!

On March 13, my classmates and I were supposed to visit an event together as a class field trip. I may have hidden the non-stop smiling from my teacher, but inside I was so ready. With that, the fact that I would be missing classes without getting in trouble.

The night of March 12, I couldn't stop revealing the excitement in me to my grandparents! I tried convincing my mom to come as a parent helper, but she reminded me she had to take my grandparents to the airport early tomorrow morning! Of course I was devastated that my mom nor my grandparents could come, but that's didn't stop me from waiting to climb on the school bus and get to the event.

I arrived to school that day waiting for my teacher to stop talking so we can head forth!! The second I heard that we weren't able to attend because of the "joke", I was broken. I blamed social media for making me think this was all a funny matter. But later, I realized it was my fault for putting my thoughts in the hands of social media. I climbed upstairs and I was surprised when I saw my grandparents chilling. I rubbed my eyes in shock and they explained that because of covid their flight got cancelled. I also thought that they would only stay for a couple of weeks or so, but instead make that number into a couple of months.



Before long...school was closed! My sister and I celebrated with cake, yup, because school was cancelled. I remember all the texts from group chats explaining that they were screaming in joy. With school closed, my never-ending summer was a little too good. Soon, virtual world was starting to open up. Us humans thought of a way to stay connected all together without actually being all together, makes sense right. I remember my friend and I being so confused on our schedules and how we would start extra-curricular activities. Turns out that things like sports, UIL, and much more would not be a thing this year.

We started to have more and more cases each day which scared me to death. I was scared because my household had elders staying with us, which meant they were at higher risk. Even with all this, I had the time of my life. Many say quarantine felt like eons. Although for me, I wanted to stay in quarantine, as long as my grandparents were there with me. We planted flowers, veggies, practiced sports, played card games, and learned more of our native language!

Now if I continue, this would be a whole chapter in a textbook. I promise I'm not gonna make it that boring!!

So instead, let's fast forward through all the hardships and get to where we are now. For y'all in the future, we are still in 2020 trying to stay as safe as possible. That includes face masks and social distancing. We've adapted to this lifestyle by normally going to school and doing sports but of course safely.

Besides the point, I can't wait to tell my kids about how 2020 was! 2020 was different for everyone. But something we all have in common is that we all maintained faith, hope, and love. Those 3 words may just be words, but really they have so much thoughtfulness behind it. This is what kept us going in the past and is keeping us going in the present!

# SEASONAL AMNESIA

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The COVID-19  
Pandemic

by Natalie Kim



Fig. 1. H. Bolton Jones, *Spring*, 1885-86, oil on canvas, 24 1/4 in. x 40 1/8 in. (61.6 cm x 101.9 cm), The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, NY, United States.<sup>3</sup>

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Hugh Bolton Jones' oil painting "Spring" encapsulates life's cyclical nature of devastation and rejuvenation—a testimony from nature herself proving that restorative powers can breathe new life into the seemingly lifeless (fig. 1). Jones may have completed the painting in 1886, but the paralyzing bleakness of this landscape resonates with Americans during the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic.

Jones' painting depicts an eerily motionless scene, so still that one can observe the trees' reflection on the pond surface (fig. 1). While the pond reflection appears immaculate, a cloud of algae or moss floats atop its surface. This obstruction of seamless reflection emphasizes humans' denial about confronting fears during quarantine, such as unemployment or domestic conflicts. This pandemic has induced a mesmerizing

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tranquility in the most urban of cities—often pushing individuals towards self-revelation after reflecting upon their broken or unbroken lives. Humanity seems to be swimming—or drowning—in time otherwise spent at work or school, which significantly impacts who thrive off of distractions from anxiety or other mental health issues.

Jones' painting also implies that the cyclical nature of devastation and rejuvenation applies to both nature and humanity, as the trees themselves exhibit a contrapposto- stance (fig. 1). Notably, the tree on the far left exhibits anthropomorphism through its left branch, as if it longs for the warmth of sunlight despite its barrenness. This tree leads the eye towards the dilapidated fence, whose tilted beams mimic the lines drawn on diagrams of sculptures exhibiting contraposto stances.

The desolate, undeveloped land reminds the viewer that individuals without access to infrastructure—wifi, nearby health facilities, adequate housing, or running water—suffer more during the pandemic. (Klemko, 2020) Alternatively, individuals cushioned by socio-economic status and material wealth may not perceive the same scene. The phrase “mandatory lockdown” pardons a vacation to a distant lake-house or vacation home—perhaps relieving this cushioned population of detrimental workaholic-ism and the obligatory grooming of appearances. However, their released stress seems to reassign itself to those gripping onto their next paycheck to stay afloat. These adverse effects of the pandemic seep into the faultlines of society—fissures that lead into deep chasms of systemic racism and social injustice.

Furthermore, Jones' efforts to bring his illustration life encourages the audience to sympathize with nature: humanity must also endure the changing seasons of life. In fact, this message indicates the situational irony

of Jones' painting's title. The subjects of the painting seem rather lifeless, whereas spring indicates rebirth. At the same time, Jones' title evokes memories of the natural beauty of springtime as a fount of hope: that transcendent powers have the capability to breathe new life into nature every year. In addition, the perspective of Jones' painting displays a meticulously detailed foreground; however, the more distant the scene, the more ambiguous its definition. In the same way, life during the pandemic seems to materialize day by day, as every major institution around which society revolves has yet to elucidate a long-term resolution regarding the unexpected thwarting of major events such as school openings and the presidential campaign events. (Saul and Corasaniti, 2020) Just as the audience cannot discern whether or not the faraway scene bears lush greenery or worse devastation, the world cannot predict the return or collapse of familiar life after the pandemic.

I want to embrace the hopeful implications of Jones' painting. I want to remember that countless times throughout human history, devastation has led to rejuvenation. Though, as an Asian American, I fall in and out of optimism. Across Texas, the coronavirus pandemic breathes new life into anti-Asian racism. Jones' use of color—or lack thereof—signifies the binary lens through which individuals perceive life during the pandemic. The foreignness of the coronavirus condones a certain antagonism towards all things non-American—particularly those of Asian origin. Binaries of American or non-American, positive or negative, with or without antibodies, exposed or quarantined, dehumanize humanity—blind one to the colorful depth of each individual and the surrounding world. Anti-Asian racism has long thrived in the United States (US)—and particularly in Texas.

Arguably, most forms of Anti-Asian racism emanate from xenophobia, the “deep antipathy of foreigners”

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(Oxford University Press). Western society has long viewed Asian Americans through a xenophobic lens, which magnifies cultural differences rather than human commonalities. Xenophobia as expressed by the media has distorted the image of Asian Americans, who seem like another species beyond human recognition (Austin Statesman, 1910). Columns written in The Austin-American Statesman often encouraged animosity toward Chinese immigrants and glorified deportation. "Chinamen Are Started Home") In response to the passing of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, the newspaper praised the government for agreeing that "the hordes of heathens" were "becoming a real menace to the country." ("Chinese Exclusion," 1892) Shortly thereafter Congress passed the 1892 Geary Act, which extended the exclusion laws for another ten years. ("Chinese Exclusion," 1892) Similar to how anti-black racism persisted after passing the 13th Amendment, different forms of anti-Asian sentiment continued to thrive. The Geary Act demanded that Chinese people already in the USA carry their Certificate of Residence at all times or be deported. (Immigration History) It was during this time that the Texas Border Patrol hunted America's first undocumented immigrants: Asians crossing over the Mexican border (Tang, 2005). Inevitably, marginalized Chinese men, forced into ghettos were depicted in news outlets "with little to do but gamble, smoke opium and join gangs," and as shameless predators — especially towards white women (Tang, 2005). Published in 1908, "Chinamen Are Started Home" detailed the capture of the "67 of 71 Chinese men shipped into Texas from Mexico" in boxcars. This article objectifies human beings as parcels, packages, or other commodities to be exploited and discarded. The author reassured the public that "officers along the border are now more than ever alert to catch more of the smuggled Chinamen." (American Statesman) The epithet "smuggled" implies an intrinsic association of

Chinese people with malevolence and deceit. As such, this celebratory crusade was reassuring for anyone who had read the news; if all Chinese people were mendacious, disease-carrying opium addicts, deportation may have seemed justifiable. When the bubonic plague reached San Francisco in 1900, Chinatown was quarantined because the bacteria first infected a Chinese immigrant.(Kandil) The image of a "'common Chink rat-eater'" conveniently explained the uncertainties of the disease.(American Statesman) Underlying xenophobia fostered stereotypes that justified immigration enforcement, institutionalized racism, and selective quarantines.(Kandil)

In 1941, Judge Roy Bean compounded discrimination of Asian Americans by blatantly debasing the value of their lives. The judge to whom The Austin American referred as "'the law west of the Pecos,'" declared, "'I've searched the book from cover to cover and I can't find where it's against the law to kill a Chinaman.'"(House, 1941) Shockingly, the author revealed that "without a doubt" this dehumanizing remark was "the most-often told Texas joke," which indicated a common belief among most Texans: that the Chinese were "heathens" truly deserving of murder.(House, 1941) The fact that such an esteemed newspaper broadcast this "joke" alludes to the historic debasement of countless non-white lives through public lynchings and police brutality.(13th by Duvernay) Even after Congress repealed the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1943, the federal government continued to justify long standing anti-Asian xenophobia in unprecedented ways. Namely, Congress waited until 2012 to officially apologize for this discriminatory legislation.(Leon, 2017) While Congress didn't explicitly promote anti-Asian xenophobia, they set an example for the rest of the population by extending inaction. Invalidating the existence of anti-Asian xenophobia altogether allowed it to perpetuate

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without affecting anyone's conscience. How convenient. How comfortable. These stereotypes persisted as evident in the 1959 article "It's a Pretty Come-off When You Find Yourself A Texas-Oriental."(MacNabb) Woman's Editor Betty MacNabb empathized with members of her audience who found it "most disconcerting to creep into the lavatory basin

and the coronavirus pandemic has reignited—and for some, justified—anti-Asian xenophobia in Texas and throughout the nation (Guo, 2016). History affirmed a social contract: if Asian Americans remain submissive, then anti-Asian discrimination would be addressed to avoid disapproval. However, sociopolitical implications of the coronavirus pandemic have proven that this

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## Invalidating the existence of anti-Asian xenophobia altogether allowed it to perpetuate without affecting everyone's conscience.

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to wash your face in the morning, and an oriental face face with pouched eyelids peering from the depths of the medicine cabinet."(MacNabb)

According to the Oxford-English Dictionary, the term "come-off" denotes a "turn of events" or "a successful or desired outcome." (Oxford University Press) Thus, the sarcastic undertone in the title indicates that Asian facial features were an undesirable side-effect of allergies—or perhaps that a "Texas-Oriental" was considered a freak of nature. (MacNabb)She ends another paragraph by explaining that people should not "expect us to grin while we bear [allergies]—we tried grinning once, and looked even more like Fu Manchu!"(MacNabb) Fu Manchu was an archetypal villain of author Arthur Sarsfield Ward's Fu Manchu book series later adapted into film (Baker, 2013). This pop-culture reference demonstrated the deep aversion to Asian Americans—a result of inveterate stereotypes. Through this article's xenophobic lens, beauty necessitated Caucasian descent, and the East Asian epitomized ugliness (MacNabb).

The intensity of anti-Asian xenophobia has clearly reflected geopolitical realities throughout history (Guo, 2016). Unfortunately, China's recent economic

contract is broken.

The brokenness of this social contract is especially evident in the wake of anti-Asian racism during the coronavirus pandemic. Asian Americans faced over 1,900 documented incidents involving anti-Asian discrimination between the start of the coronavirus pandemic and May 13, 2020.(Chinese for Affirmative Action, 2020) In Midland, Texas on March 14, a 19-year-old man with a knife attacked a Burmese man and his two children in a Sam's Club supermarket. ("Interactive Maps") Outside of Texas, a white man in his 50s dragged a 92-year-old Asian man out of a store, and the Asian man fell on his head and back. (Chinese for Affirmative Action, 2020)

Strangely, the victims in these attacks are vulnerable, treasured members of society—the young and elderly—which further indicated the degree to which xenophobia distorted the victims' humanity. Merlin Chowkwanyun, an assistant professor of sociomedical sciences at Columbia University sees such pandemics "as a mirror for society" because xenophobia against immigrants often manifests as blaming immigrants for the spread of diseases.(Kandil)



For example, Irish immigrants were blamed for the proliferation of cholera; Italian immigrants were blamed for the spread of polio; Chinese, Japanese, and Mexican immigrants were blamed for the spread of tuberculosis and smallpox; Haitians were denied entry to the U.S. during the HIV/AIDS crisis (Kandil). Like the coronavirus itself, anti-immigrant xenophobia does not discriminate. Anti-Asian xenophobia remains a political tool today. (Chinese for Affirmative Action, 2020)

Public rhetoric reflects certain national anxieties, which politicians racialize in order to retain political power. (Chinese for Affirmative Action, 2020) In particular, President Trump's campaign ads condemn China for spreading the coronavirus, and other government leaders have adopted a similar approach. (Chinese for Affirmative Action, 2020) In an Austin television show interview, Texas Senator John Cornyn blamed Chinese "culture where people eat bats and snakes and dogs and things like that" for the coronavirus. ("Interactive Map") For Cornyn, this xenophobic fallacy simply connected Chinese culture with the origins of the coronavirus—two things he did not understand. Senator Martha McSally's re-election campaign prides itself on putting Americans first, as she recently stated, "'China is to blame for this pandemic and the death of thousands of Americans.'" (Chinese for Affirmative Action, 2020) Clearly, Senator McSally has no intention of putting Asian-Americans first, and the coronavirus pandemic is definitely not the first time Asian-Americans have endured discriminatory attacks. McSally supports a black-and-white worldview as a defense mechanism, which does more harm than good.

**I now return to the question so poignantly illustrated by Jones' in "Spring." Hope? Jones consoles me. I hear the trees whisper, *there will always be winter, but there will always be spring.* Yes, perhaps this country will always experience a kind of seasonal amnesia—at least when it comes to injustices endured by people of the global majority. Nonetheless, like many other seasons of devastation, this coronavirus pandemic necessitates the innocent trust in the power of rejuvenation.**

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