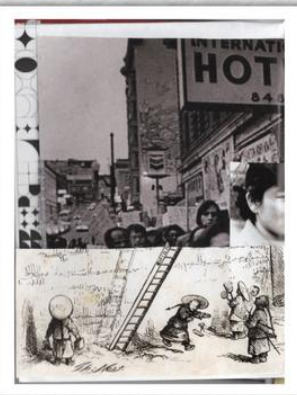
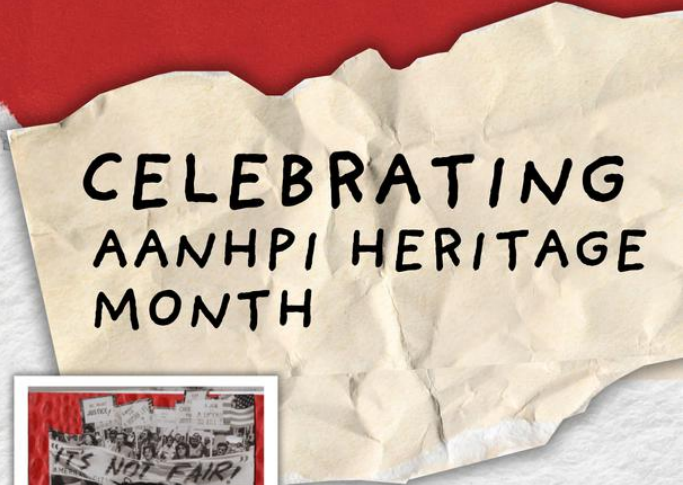
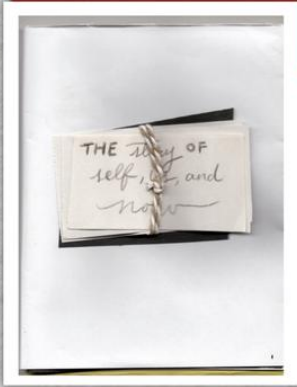


# Our stories



Made  
by the  
youth  
for the  
youth

# LETTERS FROM THE ORGANIZERS

Dear Reader,

In celebration of AANHPI Heritage Month, ASA set out on a mission to capture the voices of young Asian Americans in Georgia. We've bound their stories together to share with you.

Each page has been specially curated to engage you in a personal conversation. We hope you lean in, listen to our stories, and—perhaps most importantly—listen closely to the way your heart responds. Our empathy is our greatest strength; we build bridges by seeing ourselves and one another in our full, dignified humanity.

AANHPI voices belong in all spaces. We invite you to use this collection for your personal journal prompts, discussion with friends and family, or to display in the backdrops of your next gathering.

Ahra Cho  
Executive Director of ASA





Hey, there.

At AAVEd, we envision a Georgia where all students and families understand our interconnected histories and create meaningful social change in solidarity with one another. It's more than representation.

Through this project, we honor our Asian American ancestors who came before us. We celebrate our diverse and resilient communities. And we root for you and other Asian American youths as you uncover your voice. Know you are powerful.

Weonhee Shin  
Executive Director of AAVEd



Welcome!

At the center of our organizations is the uplifting of young AANHPI people. With this magazine, we can share with you their creativity, stories, art, and heritage.

As you look through the pages of this collection, we hope you are reminded of our history, our trailblazers, and the power that creativity wields for our future.

Akshay Maheshwari  
Founder of Naya Magazine



# THE cread



**Denise  
Vale**

11th Grade  
Newton County

**Fun Fact:**

I'm a left-handed  
artist and founded the  
NCCA Art Club!

Instagram:  
@drewnise



**Isabella  
Gruber**

11th Grade  
Gwinnett County

**Fun Fact:**

I am the first  
REACH  
NG

Instagram:  
@nghs



# tivies

MEET THE DESIGN TEAM  
BEHIND THE MAGAZINE!



Bella  
owner

Grade  
tt County

**Fact:**  
founder of  
Club at  
HS!

gram:  
sreach



Akshay  
Maheshwari

11th Grade  
Forsyth County

**Fun Fact:**  
I'm the founder of  
Naya Magazine!

Instagram:  
@naya\_magazine



# WHAT IS A ZINE?

Zines are **smaller, independently produced** and **published magazines** that capture stories, writings, and works of art from communities that are often sidelined by mainstream publishing.

Zines are **fusion of art and activism**, used to share stories of our marginalized communities.



## Meet Lena Song

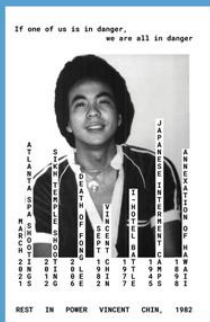
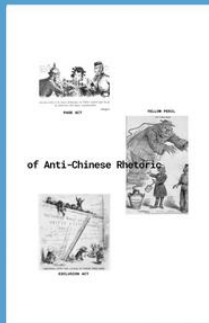
**Lena Song** is a documentary filmmaker and graphic designer committed to storytelling for social justice. Zines became a way for her to document lived experiences and uplift youth by representing stories that speak to their identity.

Check out a Zine  
made by Lena!





# History of Sinophobia

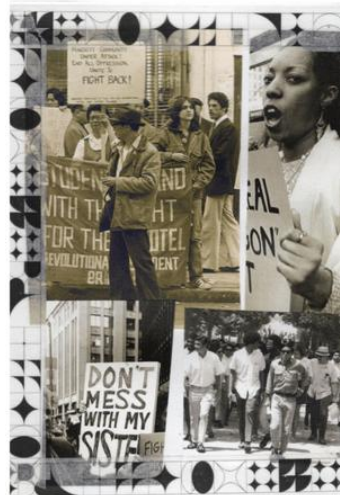




Asians and Asian Americans in the U.S. oftentimes create tightly knit communities within their own ethnic groups in search of safety and belonging. However, this can isolate them from the larger community, creating a bubble and echo chamber. Asian Americans are also often boxed into stereotypes as the model minority-- never causing trouble, keeping their heads down.

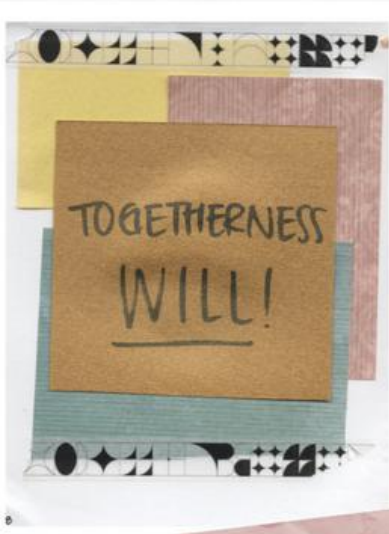
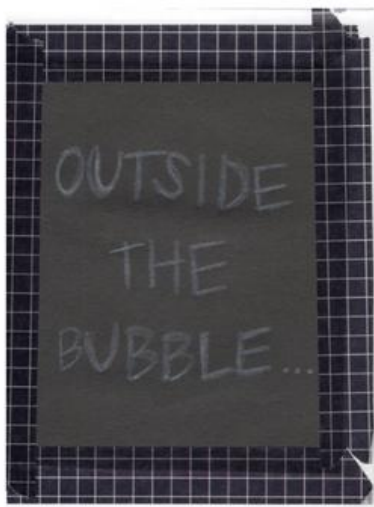
However, when we look outside of these bubbles, we see that Asian Americans have always been fighting for civil rights in solidarity with other racial and ethnic groups.

We can only create true safety and belonging by leaning into togetherness across cultures, language, and identity.





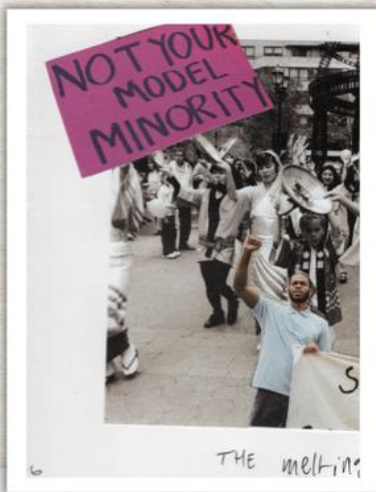
# TOGETHER?



Nicole Chung.

**How can we create togetherness  
across cultures and identities?**

# THE UNITED STATES OF ASIAN AMERICA



I wanted to create a hypothetical nation of only Asian Americans. I juxtaposed the common phrases in America's founding and applied Asian American motifs to show the hypocrisy of such statements. The Zine highlights the ways the country often fails to uphold its values. The Statue of Liberty is a monument that represents the U.S., but history shows time and time again how marginalized groups have to fight for liberty.



Andy Tran, Gwinnett County, 19.



All men are created equal...



pot of the



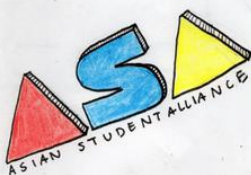
THE U.S. F.A.A.

**What values are representative of the U.S.?**

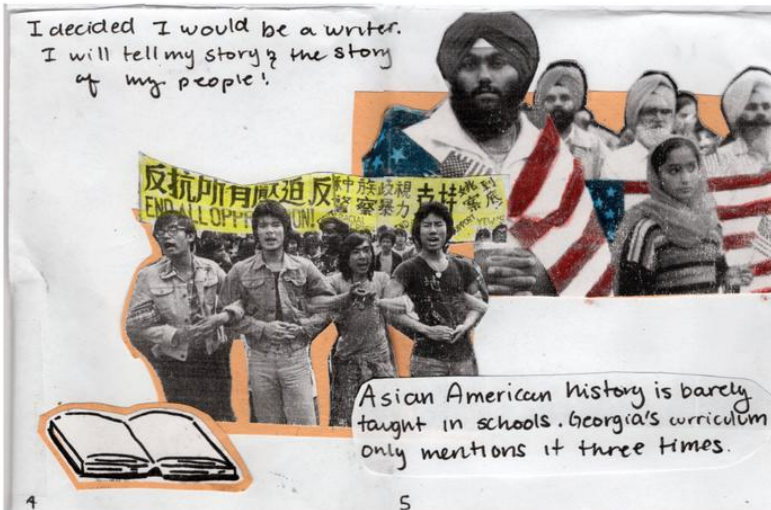
**In what ways are the values being upheld, or not, today?**

# REPRESENTATION MATTERS

3.15.25  
Zine Workshop



STORY OF  
SELF  
US +  
NOW





This shows the story of many Asian American youth who grew up not seeing themselves represented in the school curriculum. Young people are using their voices to advocate for Ethnic Studies and U.S. history that is inclusive of Asian American stories.

**Why is it important to see yourself represented in history and stories?**

## **FUN FACT!**

The Third World Liberation Front from the 1960s in San Francisco was a multi-ethnic coalition of college students, faculty, and community members that fought for educational justice and the right to learn a full U.S. History. Their efforts led to the creation of ethnic studies courses that we have today.

Follow @c.apaas on IG to learn more about the work of the Georgia Youth's Coalition for AP Asian American studies!

# A Thought Regarding A Past Event From an Art Student.



In March of 2021, I watched Twitter spring to life in the aftermath of the Atlanta Spa Shooting.

8 people — 6 Asian women — were gunned down by a man who saw them as nothing but sex objects.

What was supposed to be an informative read of the event quickly turned into threads of discourse about Kpop idols in the Grammys.

More news — not at the tragedy, but about the next update on a Cutesy game from Asia.



With the rise of Asian media in the West, it feels as though the only **pieces** of our life that stick are ones that commodifies our culture.

Sharron Van. Clayton County. 21.

It got me thinking about the glorification of Kpop idols and anime and how they informed the public perception of Asian people.



If the media glorifies Asian women in the aftermath of the Atlanta Spa Shooting, then it's inevitable. When a culture and its people are respected, then will they will follow.

**How does the media (tv shows, movies, games, etc.) affect how you see certain groups of people?**



We are treated more as trending topics than as people and a culture-which feeds into the view that we are **nothing** outside of what we can provide for others.

How Asian women are associated with submission and weakness in part of the idol or anime school-girl, evolved from the lotus flower stereotype



**What type of media do you consume? How does it portray certain groups of people?**



# THE STORY OF

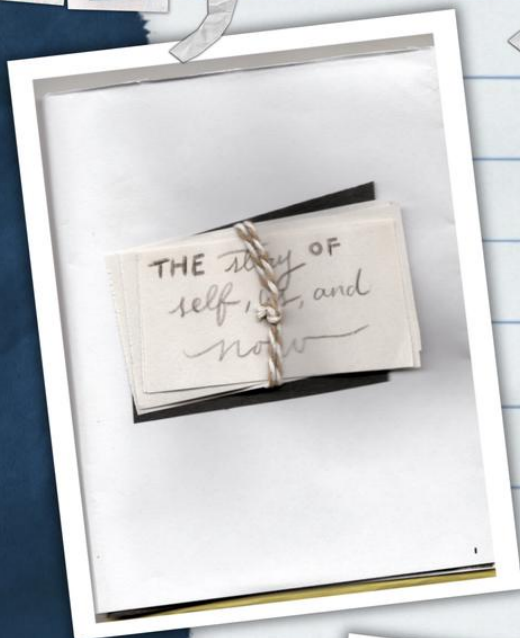
# Self, us,

This Zine features artifacts that show the struggles and resistance of East and Southeast Asian Americans.

These include:

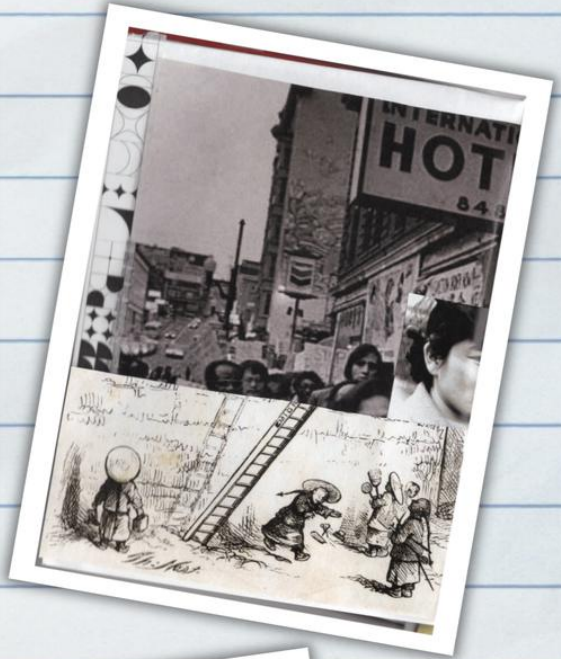
- 1800s Anti-Chinese Immigration Laws
- Japanese Incarceration Camp
- International Hotel
- Vincent Chin case
- Media portrayal of Asian American women

**Research these historical moments. What are their impacts today?**



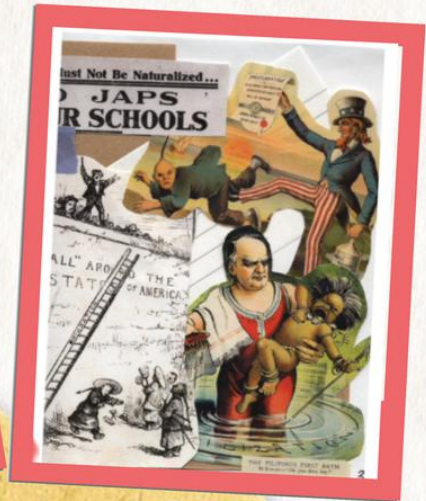
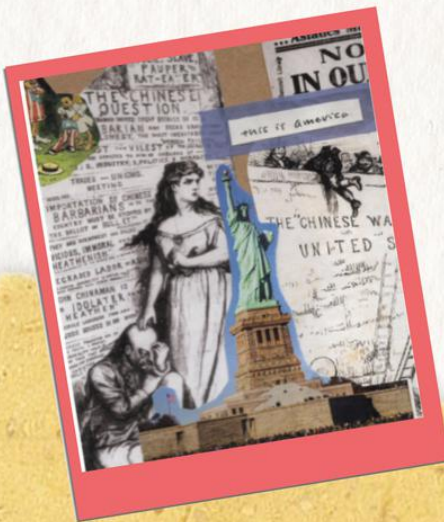


# & now



How does history and stereotypes shape the way we see ourselves and others today?

How do you want to be seen by those around you?



This piece is a visual reflection on how people in power have tried to define Asian Americans. The images in pink frame shows photos of historical propaganda and policies to show the roots of exclusion.



# THIS IS AMERICA

Jacqueline Kwun, Cobb County, 17.



The images in **blue frame** explores how we're often boxed into definitions like the model minority myth or trauma narratives. But the final image in **green frame** reclaims our identity through a collage of pictures showing resistance, protest, and power.



# FAIR OR NOT?



Michael V. Gwinnett County.

**How do immigration laws impact our broader community?**





My Zine is about stopping **anti-Asian discrimination** and explaining **immigration laws** that affect the Asian community.

Back in the late 70s, South Vietnam was united with North Vietnam as a communist state of Vietnam. My uncle sought refuge and took a boat to Singapore.

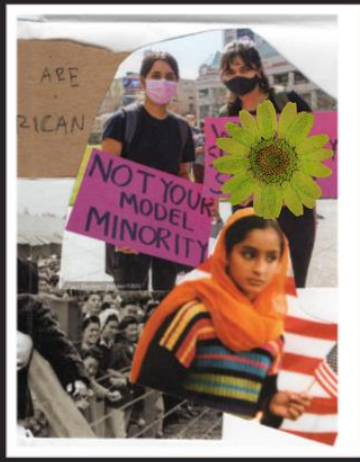
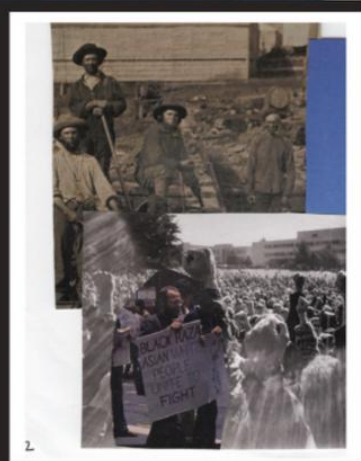
He later gained **refugee status from the U.N** in the mid 80s, and got citizenship from the U.S.



That wasn't the end. My uncle started helping my family with the immigration process to help us start a better journey in the U.S. However, the process to gain citizenship took over 20 years because of **discriminatory immigration laws**, which continue to impact my family.

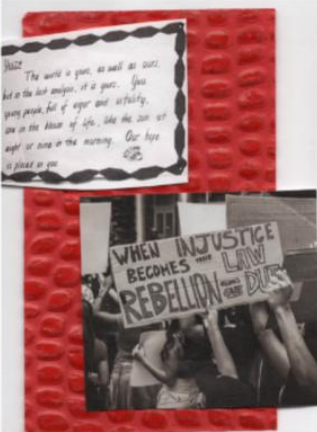
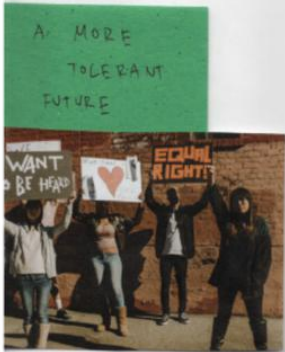
What do you notice about  
the images?

What are they trying to say?





# WE ARE STILL HERE



Summer Chen, Gwinnett County.

# YOUR TURN!

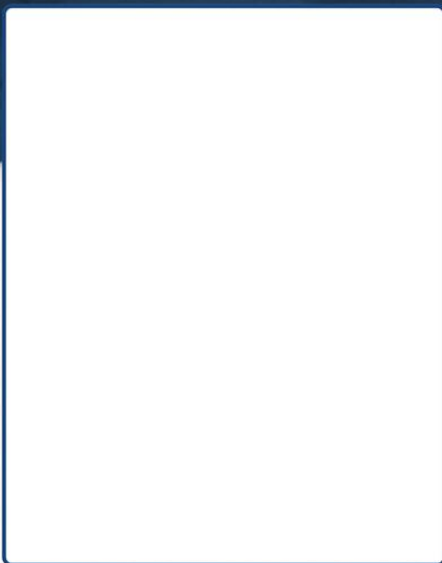
Create your own Zine to share your story.

What do you wish people knew about you?

What is important to you?



Check out this  
link for important  
historical images  
in AANHPI history!



# WHAT IS A BLACKOUT POEM?

Blackout poetry is a literary art made entirely of artistic inspiration from already created writing.

It usually incorporates **blacking out** entire paragraphs and phrases in an effort to **highlight certain words** to make a point.



## Meet Ankita Jaikumar

**Ankita Jaikumar** is a teen poet from Forsyth County. She is one of the 24-25 Atlanta Youth Poet Laureate Ambassadors and has work featured in Mosaic Lit, Qafiyah Review, and misPrinted. Additionally, she serves as the Director of Programming at Rosetta Literary Magazine.

Check out a poem  
made by Ankita!





# We Are More Than Our Fences

Incorrect. Simple actions such as these are indeed good ways to model students as they are highly visible and

**Asiatics Must Not Be Naturalized**

**NO JAPS IN OUR SCHOOLS**

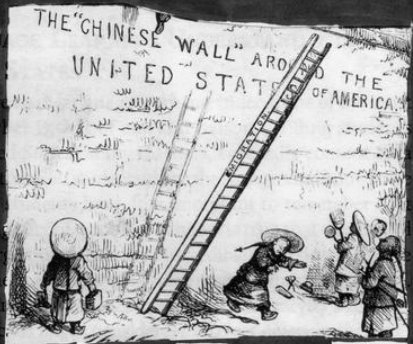
its with needs other than academic ones  
if see students as whole people with  
contributions of their own rather than as stereotypes or as problems  
that need to be solved

**HELPING ENGLISH LANGUAGE CULTURE OF THE UNITED STATES**

Teaching ESL involves much more important roles of the ESL teacher through the culture of the United States. Teachers may mistakenly assume that and experience that native-born sharing culture will be an ongoing States is a big country with a large some cultural norms that will be (Note that the term *American* is used with the caveat that South American The examples below serve as general indicators; they do not necessarily hold true for all Americans, as individuals or groups, and should not be viewed as always correct or incorrect.

**Cultural norms** are the rules and standards a group uses to determine what are appropriate or inappropriate, expected, and accepted behaviors. All cultures have them, and many of them vary from culture to culture, sometimes subtly and other times greatly. It is useful for ESL teachers to have a good understanding and awareness of cultural norms in the United States and how these norms might appear to those from different cultures. Bear in mind that people often assume that what is *normal* to them and their culture must be *normal* to others.

One aspect of culture in the United States that visitors find striking is informality. Newcomers often remark on how informal, open, and friendly Americans are. For example, introductions are not needed with strangers before striking up a conversation in a line or with people sitting next to each other, engaging in what is known as *small talk*. Furthermore, such conversations will also cover ground that many would find too private for casual conversation with strangers or superiors: marital status, profession, etc. That said, seeking details about these facts and asking too many questions would make Americans uncomfortable.



**Incorrect**  
**model students as stereotypes–**  
**problems that need to be solved**  
**norms that do not**  
**hold true for all Americans.**  
**inappropriate cultures will make Americans**  
**uncomfortable.**

"But I'm going back to the fields that I know, to take care of my flock again." He said that to himself with certainty, but he was no longer happy with his decision. He had worked for an entire year to make a dream come true, and that dream, minute by minute, was becoming less important. Maybe because that wasn't really his dream.

Who knows . . . maybe it's better to be like the crystal merchant: never go to Mecca, and just go through life wanting to do so, he thought, again trying to convince himself. But as he held Urim and Thummim in his hand, they had transmitted to him the strength and will of the old king. By coincidence—or maybe it was an omen, the boy thought—he came to the bar he had entered on his first day there. The thief wasn't there, and the owner brought him a cup of tea.

I can always go back to being a shepherd, the boy thought. I learned how to care for sheep, and I haven't forgotten how that's done. But maybe I'll never have another chance to get to the Pyramids in Egypt. The old

*"Being." is a piece that speaks on the feeling of unfulfillment after having pursued, or being in the process of pursuing, one's dream. I want it to be a reminder for all those working towards something that satisfaction comes from internal contentment, something that external achievements cannot fill. The pursuit of one's dream is an amazing journey, but also one that can be draining if not intentionally seeking rest.*



I know why I want to get back to my flock, he thought. I understand sheep; they're no longer a problem, and they can be good friends. On the other hand, I don't know if the desert can be a friend, and it's in the desert that I have to search for my treasure. If I don't find it, I can always go home. I finally have enough money, and all the time I need. **Why not?**

He suddenly felt tremendously happy. He could always go back to being a shepherd. He could always become a crystal salesman again. **Maybe** the world had other hidden treasures, **but he had a dream**, and he had met with a king. That doesn't happen to just anyone!

He was planning as he left the bar. He had remembered that one of the crystal merchant's suppliers transported his crystal by means of caravans that crossed the desert. He held Urim and Thummim in his hand. **be-**cause of those two stones, he was once again on the way to his treasure.

"I am always nearby, when someone wants to realize a legend," the old king had told him.

He went over to the supplier's warehouse.

**What are your dreams?**

**Do you find yourself  
balancing work with  
rest, or is that something  
you struggle with?**

*He worked for that  
dream  
but the strength and  
will  
wasn't there  
why not?  
maybe he had a dream  
to just be*

**BEING.**



# EMOTIONAL DETACH

Caroline Kwon, Gwinnett County, 18.

...that, the boy had to know what he wanted. So, he  
...if the old man's blessing was still with him.

He took out one of the stones. It was "yes."

"Am I going to find my treasure?" he asked.

He stuck his hand into the pouch, and felt around  
for one of the stones. As he did so, both of them **pushed**  
through a hole in the pouch and **fell** to the ground. The

boy had never even noticed that there was a hole in his  
pouch. He knelt down to find Urim and Thummim and  
put them back in the pouch. But as he saw them lying  
there on the ground, another phrase came to his mind:

"Learn to recognize omens, and follow them," the  
old king had said.

An omen. The boy smiled to himself. He picked  
up the two stones **and** put them back in his pouch. He  
didn't consider **mending the hole**; the stones could fall  
through any time they wanted. He had learned that  
there were certain things one shouldn't ask about, so as  
not to flee from one's own Personal Legend. "I promise  
that **I** will make my own decisions," he said to  
himself.

But the stones had told him that the old man was  
still with him, and that made him **feel** more confident.  
He looked around at the **empty** plaza again, feeling less  
lonely than before. This was a **strange** place, it was  
new, **and**

After all, what he had always wanted was just that:  
to know **new** places. Even if he never got to the Pyra-  
mids, he had already traveled farther than any shepherd

he knew. Oh, if he could  
just two hours by ship.

Although his new work-  
place, he had al-  
with life **and** would  
the sword **to hurt** him  
never seen one like it.

things, he realized that  
ing of himself as the p-  
venturer in quest of his

"I'm an adventurer,  
himself.

He was shaken into w-  
fallen asleep in the mi-  
the plaza was about

Looking around, he  
that he was in a new  
land, he was happy to  
and water for the shep-

treasure, instead. He b-  
he had **faith**. He had d-  
could be as much an a-

lived in books.

He walked slowly  
chants were assembling  
candy seller to do his  
on his face he was la-

144 ◆◆◆ PAULO COELHO

When are the times you feel lonely or misunderstood?  
Do you let your emotions free or repress them?



# CHMENT

only knew the different things are  
from where they are, he thought.  
That the moment was just an empty  
ready seen is when it was occurring  
d never forget it. He remembered  
to think about it, but he had  
before. As he mused about these  
he had to choose between think  
or victim of a thief and as a mad  
treasure.

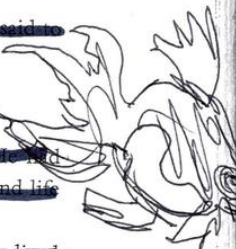
"Looking for treasure," he said to

wakefulness by someone. He had  
middle of the marketplace, and life  
to resume.

brought his sheep, and then realized  
world. But instead of being sad-  
le no longer had to seek out food  
p, he could go in search of his  
ed not a cent in his pocket, but  
ecided, the night before, that he  
adventurer as the ones he had

through the market. The man  
their stalls, and the boy helped  
s. The sandy seller had a smile  
ppy, aware of what his life was

The Alchemist



I spent my entire life  
searching for someone I  
could completely love  
and share all of me with.  
But deep down, I never  
felt any real emotional  
attachment to anyone. I  
love my friends, my  
parents, and my sister,  
but I never truly felt  
connected with them.  
When I'm feeling stuck in  
this endless loophole of  
emptiness, I want  
someone to come along  
and drag me out of it.

***pushed to the ground  
and mending the hole  
i feel  
empty  
strange  
different  
and hurt  
i'm an adventurer  
in search of faith  
and a smile***





# INDEPENDENCE

The boy was surprised within him to have  
anger toward his companions  
because he thought he had a purpose  
purpose in life after two years His parents  
wanted him to be a priest, he  
had wanted to know the world,  
the only ones who travel are the shepherds," said his father  
then I'll be a shepherd! the boy explained  
"comparison is the greatest thief of joy"

*the boy was surprised within him to have anger toward his companions because he thought he had a purpose, purpose in life.*

*after two years, his parents wanted him to be a priest.*

*he had wanted to know the world.*

*"The only ones who travel are the shepherds," said his father.*

*"Then I'll be a shepherd!" the boy explained.*

***"Comparison is the thief of joy"***

An Vu. Gwinnett County. 16.

This piece is based off of a struggle many people in the Asian American community experience: comparison and pressure. This poem is meant to remind you that your parents and peers don't write your story. You do.

**If you were in an environment free of pressures and expectations, what would you want for yourself?**



*sensitivity, understanding  
multicultural  
all are valued  
name meanings, food, holidays,  
stories, folktales  
storytelling enriches all students*



**What is the meaning of your name?**

**What foods, holidays, and stories are important to you and your family?**

**CULTURE**

# VOICES OF AMERICA

ESL is important to  
sharing culture to  
incredible diversity to  
understand American culture, and to  
serve as general indicators  
for all Americans



Madison Nguyen.



This poetry emphasizes the value of ESL (English as a Second Language) in American society. It conveys how ESL supports cultural sharing and a broader understanding of the American identity.

The artwork suggests that ESL is not just for immigrants, but serves all Americans by fostering connection and cultural awareness.

**Why do you think learning and understanding different languages and cultures is important for everyone, not just immigrants?**

**How do you think ESL programs help build a stronger and more connected community in America?**

# MY SUN

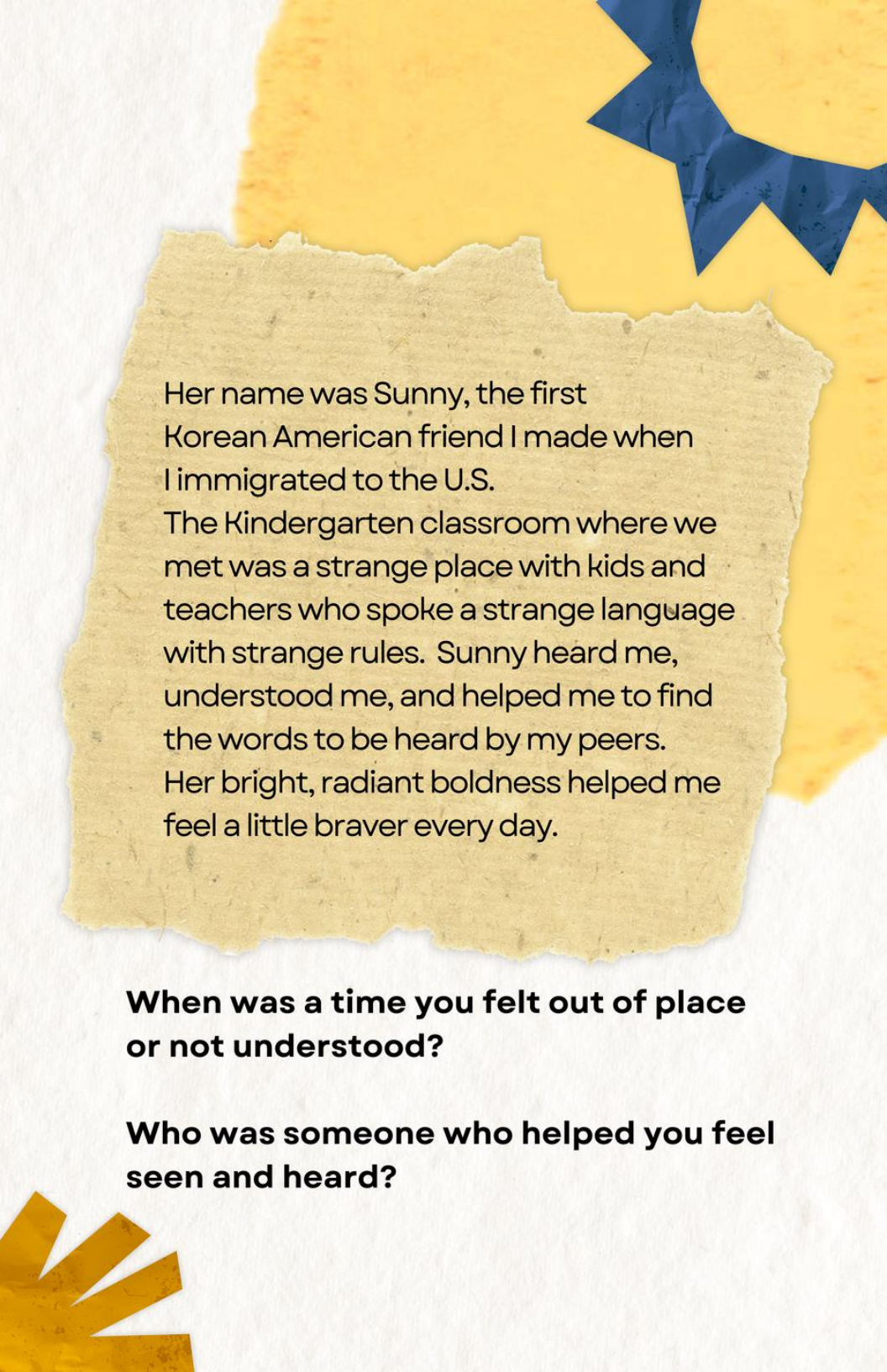
I WANT  
TO BE HEARD

I WANT  
TO BE HEARD

and wound up discovering the Soul of  
Philosophy's Stone, and the Elixir of Life.  
He learned that these things are all so  
written on the surface of an  
disappointed. The years of re-  
the strange words, and the  
laboratory equipment . . . none of this had made an  
impression on the boy. His soul must be too primitive  
the desert, and the sand raised by the animals. "Every-  
one has his or her own way of learning things," he said  
to himself. "His way isn't the same as mine nor mine as  
his. But we're both in search of our Personal Legends,  
and I respect him for that."

*I want to be heard  
I want to be heard  
the strange words  
isn't mine*





Her name was Sunny, the first Korean American friend I made when I immigrated to the U.S.

The Kindergarten classroom where we met was a strange place with kids and teachers who spoke a strange language with strange rules. Sunny heard me, understood me, and helped me to find the words to be heard by my peers. Her bright, radiant boldness helped me feel a little braver every day.

**When was a time you felt out of place or not understood?**

**Who was someone who helped you feel seen and heard?**



*I know  
that  
dream  
but  
it  
didn't matter*

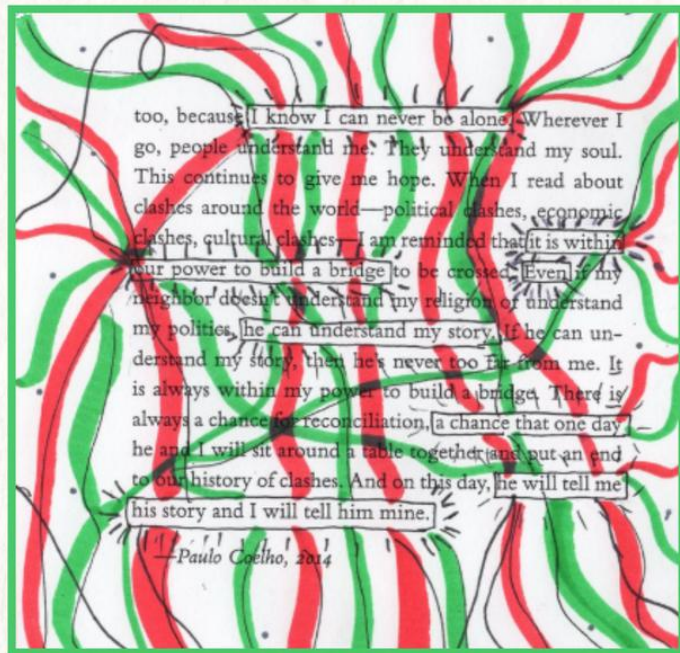
Marinette Katryn Santiago. Gwinnett County. 16.

My cousin Adele lived in the Philippines, and it took years for her to join us in the U.S. As a kid, I asked over and over, "When's Adele coming?" My parents would smile and reply, "Next month!" But that next month kept getting pushed back. I didn't realize it then, but it was the immigration system keeping our family apart.

**How may delays in the immigration process affect families emotionally?**



# BRIDGE



***I know I can  
never be alone  
it is within my  
power  
to build a bridge  
Even he can  
understand my  
story  
a chance that  
one day he will  
tell me his story  
and I will tell  
him mine***

Sofie Malik. Gwinnett County. 14.

I believe we don't hear each other's stories often enough. This piece is meant to bring others together in their differences and encourage all of us to open up.

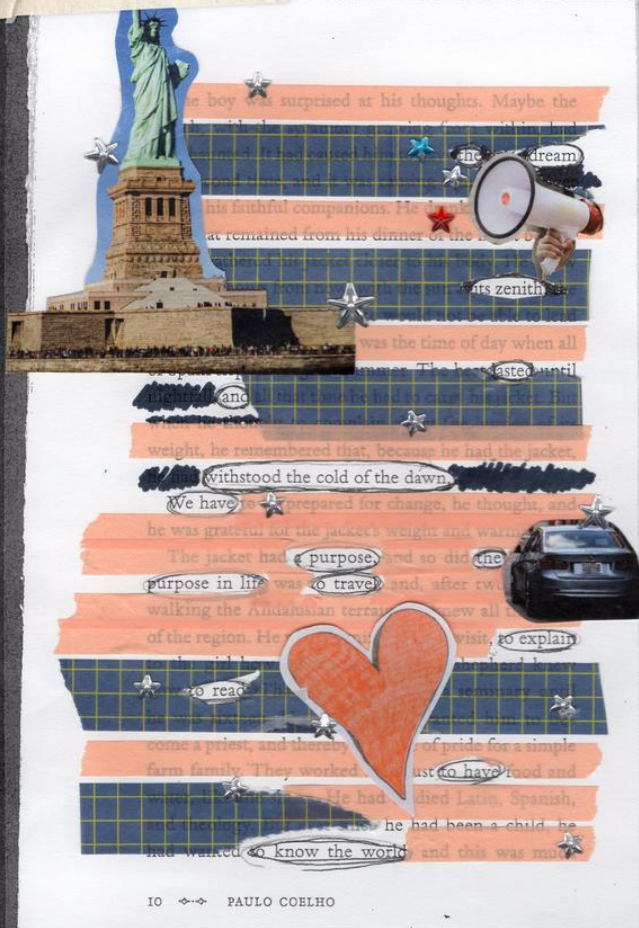
**What do you wish people  
would ask you more often?**

**What is a uniqueness about  
you that you are proud about?**



# ZENITH

Jacqueline Kwun.  
Cobb County, 17.



the dream  
its zenith  
lasted and  
withstood the cold of the  
dawn  
we have a purpose  
the purpose in life to travel  
to explain  
to read  
to have  
to know the world

What do you think it  
means to have a  
“purpose”?

What do you think is your  
purpose in life?



# FORGET

time uneasy, maybe the girl had already forgotten him. Lots of shepherds passed through, selling their wool.

"It doesn't matter," he said to his sheep. "I know other girls in other places."

But in his heart, he knew that it did matter. And he knew that shepherds, like seamen and like traveling salesmen, always found a town where there was someone who could make them forget the joys of carefree wandering.

The day was dawning, and the shepherd urged his sheep in the direction of the sun. They never have to make any decisions, he thought. Maybe that's why they always stay close to me.

The only things that concerned the sheep were food and water. As long as the boy knew how to find the best pastures in Andalusia, they would be his friends. Yes, their days were all the same, with the seemingly endless hours between sunrise and dusk; and they had never read a book in their young lives, and didn't understand when the boy told them about the sights of the cities. They were content with just food and water, and, in exchange, they generously gave of their wool, their company, and once in a while, their meat.

So I became a monster today, and decided to kill them, one by one, they would become aware only after most of the flock had been slaughtered, thought the boy. They trust me, and they've forgotten how to rely on their own instincts, because I lead them to nourishment.

The Alchemist

When was a time you felt  
like you or your efforts  
were not enough?

What do you do to center  
and remember joy?

*forgotten  
forget the joys  
never the best  
yes, endless hours  
never content  
i  
had  
forgotten*

# MY STORY

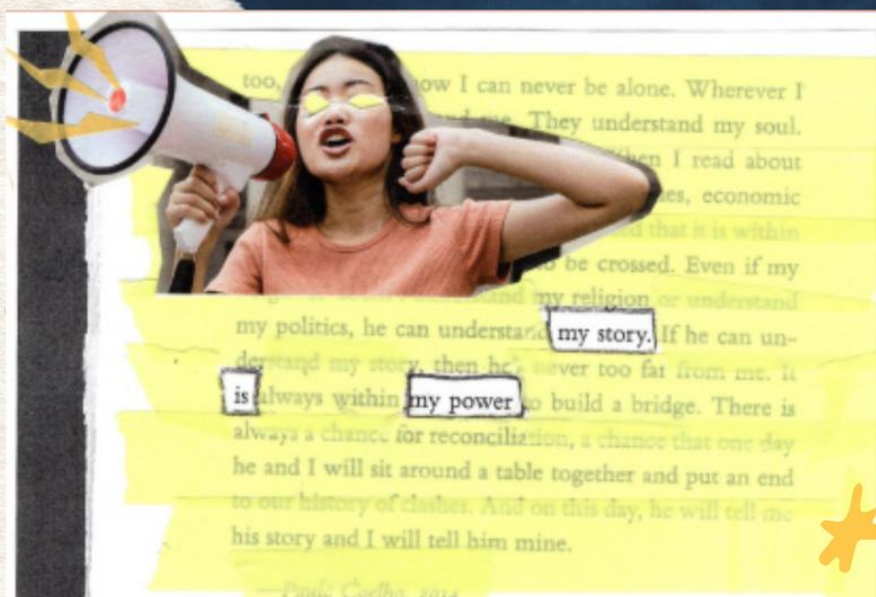




# YOUR TURN!

What is your story?  
What do you want people  
to know about you--  
your dreams, worries,  
aspirations, and values?  
What is on your heart?

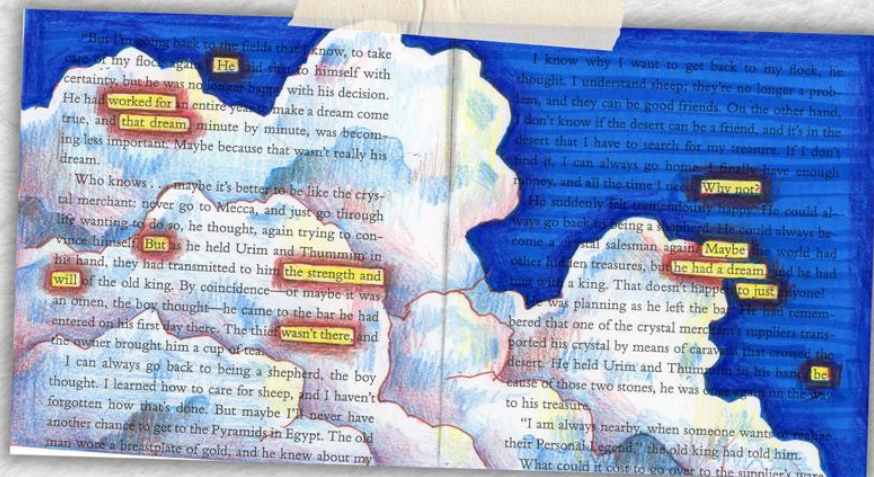
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