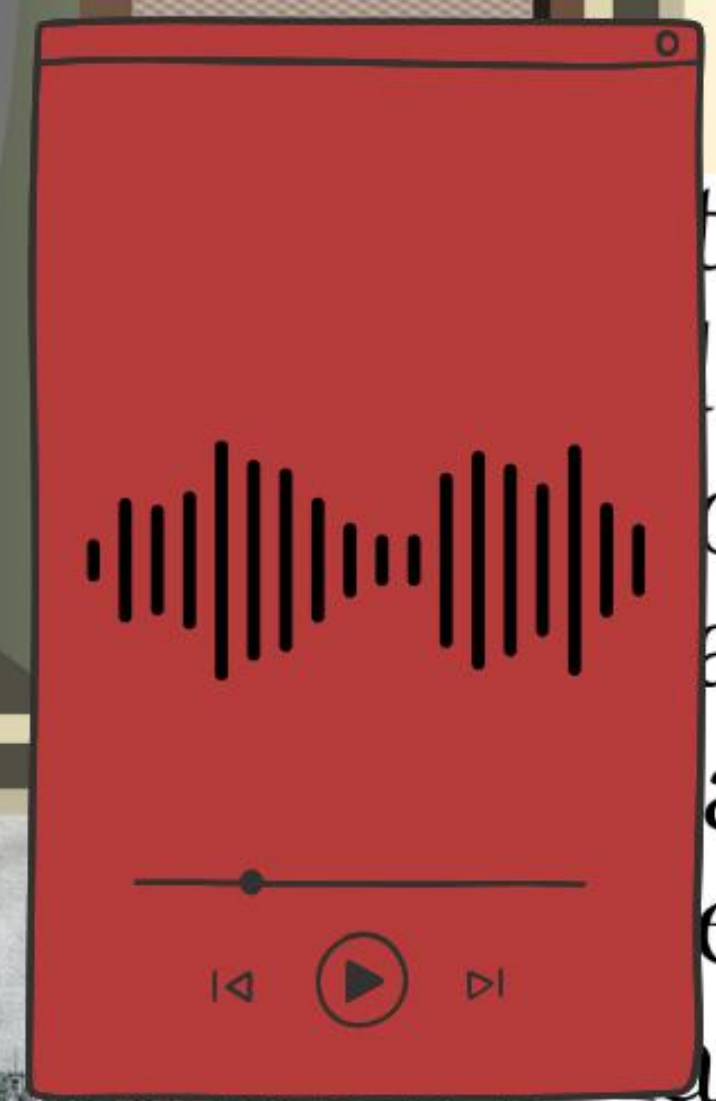
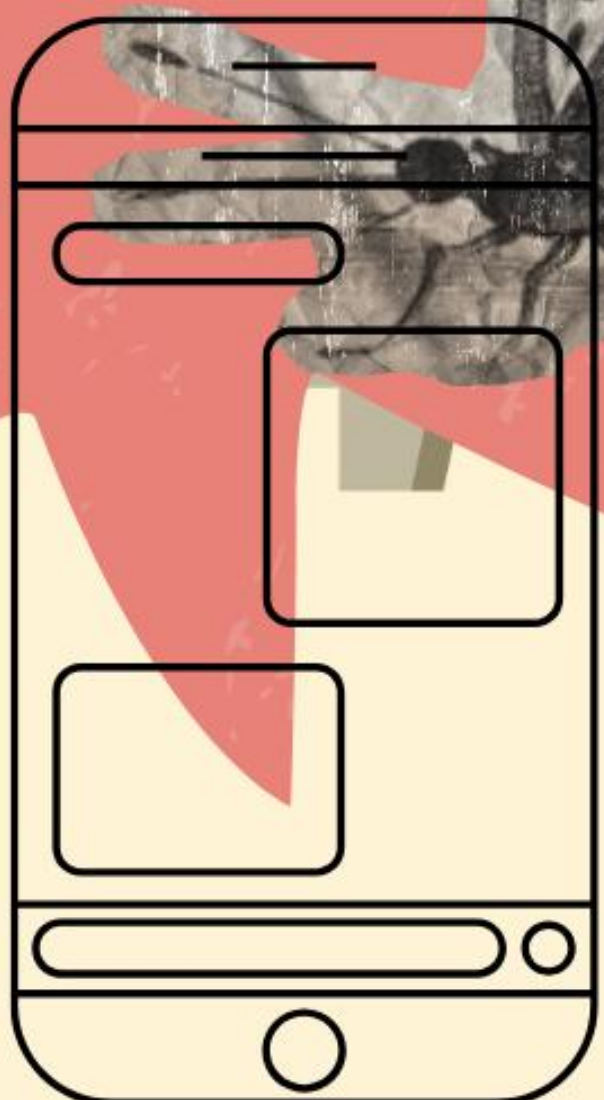
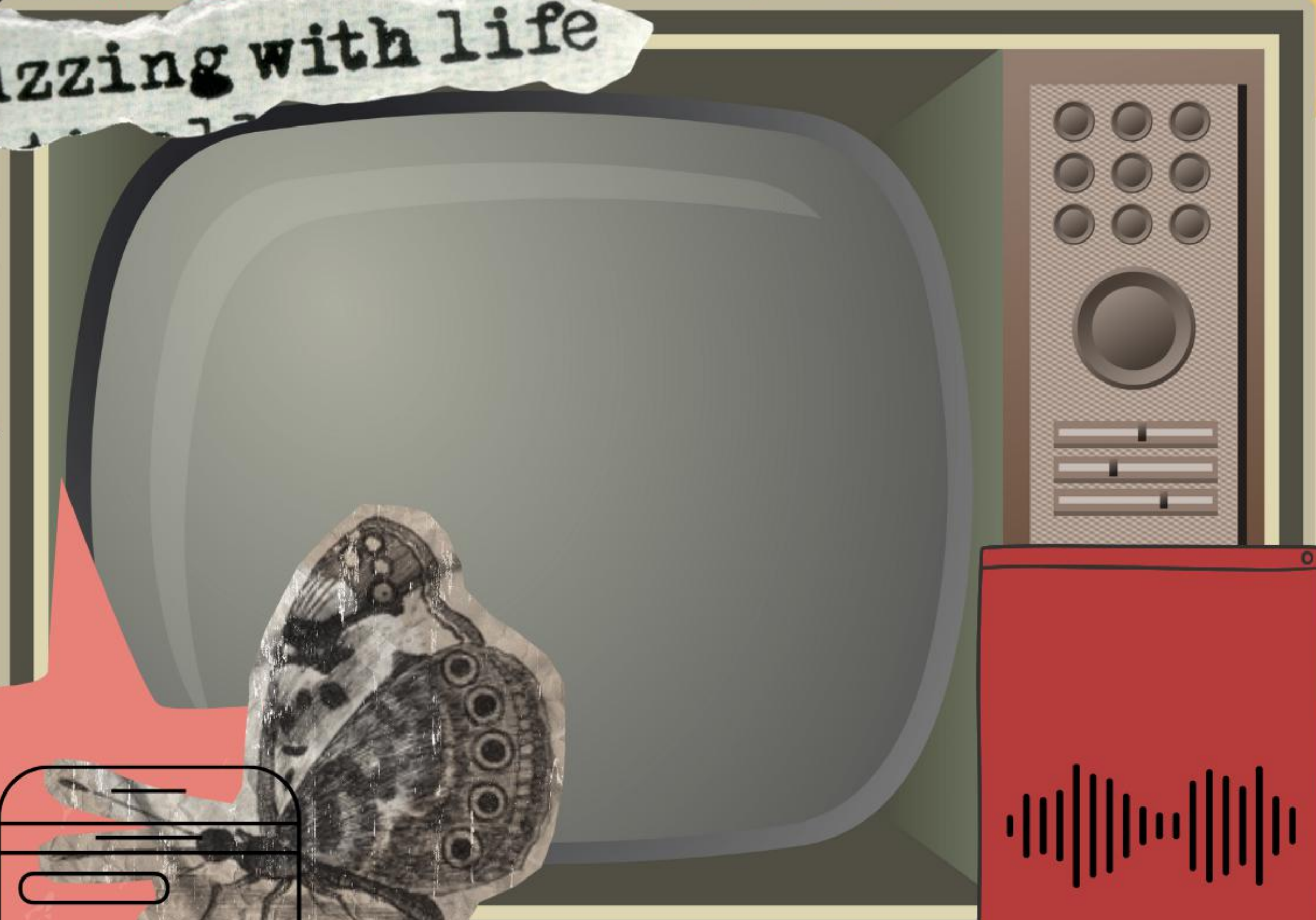


Revolution



buzzing with life



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Nebula Journal

We have a winner!

We asked you to write a 50 word story, This is such a hard prompt as it gives you so little time to make an impact on the reader- but you guys absolutely delivered.

We are so proud to announce our winner- Melissa Cooney

I made friends with grief. Broke bread with her. Invited her to my birthday dinners. She even braided my hair. One night, drunk on cheap wine, she talks for the first time. “Have I ever told you my real name?”

“It isn’t grief?”

“No, its love.”



Writing comp winner: Melissa Cooney

“My name is Melissa Cooney. I am an artist and writer. At 16, I wrote the play “In Her Dreams,” which was performed at The Civic Theatre. In 2022, I participated in the Creative Campus exhibit. I also illustrated a poster for the Comhairle na nÓg “Your Mind Matters” campaign”. We were blown away by Melissa’s competition entry. Her short, personal and unique story left us speechless. We are sure she will go far. We hope to see more of her work! Melissa can be found at: @mel.issacooney and @readwith_bee



Cover art by: Yasmin Kareem

Yasmin Kareem loves to write what a canvas can't hold and draws what words can't describe. In this digital world, she can't help but find herself designing whatever crosses her mind as well. Yasmin’s work, titled ‘Revolutionary Mess’ embodies the chaos of revolution through graphic design, but also the many possible interpretations of the theme.

Yasmin can be found at: @Out_of_time_Yasmin and @yasminthecreative83

Flip to the back to see our amazing competition runners up!

Cover art and writing comp:

YASMIN KAREEM
MELISSA COONEY

Prose:

BLANKA PILLÀR
MANYA VIVEK
BIANCA
PRARTHANA VJAYAKUMAR
MAHA HAMMAD
ARIANNA KANJI

Poetry:

MK ZARIEL
RIDDHIMA DAS
CAILYN PORTER
SARRA GUEBSI
KATE ABRIELLE MCCORMICK
D.LIU
DANIEL RUBALCAVA

Art:

TIMEA AZAR

Comp runners up:

BIANCA
LEEZE
SAAIM ATIF
ZAYNA RAHMAN
ARIANNA KANJI

Palestine: KATE ABRIELLE MCCORMICK



What is political theatre, and why do we need it?

Blanka Pillár



“Cable Street review - dazzling musical portrait of a community against fascism” (Lawson, 2024), “Rewind review - ingenious portrait of oppression and dissent in Latin America” (Akbar, 2024), and “James Corden to return to London stage in political drama *The Constituent*” (Wiegand, 2024). What do these The Guardian headlines have in common?

They are all about a highly complex and multi-dimensional notion, commonly referred to as political theatre. But what is political theatre exactly, and why is it so substantial?

In order to understand it thoroughly, defining political theatre is essential but also challenging since it does not only include one kind of intellectual product - it is a topic that contains *Antigone*, *Hamlet*, *The Crucible*, *Cloud 9*, *Look Back in Anger*, *Stuff Happens*, *The Island*, and *Fear and Misery of the Third Reich*, to name just a few. This theatrical category comprises political dramas, political grandstanding (a rather one-dimensional theatrical act or series of speeches intended to appeal to emotions and to gain political support), guerrilla theatre (a form of street theatre that aims to question various social norms), and, more broadly, political stunts; therefore, we can state that the conscious use of theatre in order to make political statements may be interpreted as political theatre (Hartnoll and Found, 2003). Generally, political theater employs political ideas and themes, usually in order to criticize or support a specific political perspective; therefore, it can be used for both government propaganda and protests against the government. As an excellent example of this duality, we can consider the plays of the Angry Young Men movement as political theatre, which are essentially disillusioned critiques of modern society, the state and conventional governmental structures, but also the agitprop theatre of Soviet Russia, which served exclusively state propaganda purposes, and is thus clearly a strongly pro-state initiative (Filewod, 2016).



Political theatre falls under the category of literary theatre, but not because it is necessarily distinguished by the use of words or scripts but by the fact that all political theatre works serve to support and reinforce symbolic ideas. The political meaning is “read” by the viewer; therefore, their political knowledge heavily influences how much the spectator perceives the play as political (Kirby, 1975). This fact, of course, begs the question - aren't all plays political then? I believe this notion can be understood as a scale. For a play to be successfully political, two sides are essentially needed: the author must incorporate conscious political elements into their work, but it is also crucial that the recipient interprets it politically (but not necessarily in the way the author meant it to be political). The importance of interpretation is also reflected in one of the main characteristics and effects of political theatre: one of the reasons this genre is so significant is that it offers the possibility of parallel interpretation for the reader (Taylor, 2013).



Political dramas place their characters in an elaborate socio-economic and political context, thus presenting us with a scenario in which we can observe their reactions to universal problems that may occur in our own lives.



If we consider relatability to be an essential aspect of political drama, it naturally presupposes a specific circular understanding of history, according to which political situations and people's reactions to them are repeated to a certain extent; otherwise, there would be no proper connection between the reader and the characters in the drama. For this reason, political dramas tend to deal with more general political themes, such as power, influence, compromise, rebellion, change, and so on (Freebody and Finneran, 2021). In this way, we can observe systems and reactions as outsiders that we can use and then interpret for our present time to form complex analogies. So political dramas give us the space to explore universal concepts by taking a step back and using the natural workings of the brain to look for patterns and similarities between what we read (or see) and our lived day. Taking this role into account, political theatre can be understood as a kind of reflective surface, a mirror, held up to us by the playwright (even from another time and another life situation), which both speaks to us about ourselves by giving us the space to ask ourselves what we would do in the situation the play is depicting, and talks about our own society from a perspective that allows for an unusual double role where we are both actors or characters and readers, or recipients. Moreover, political theatre can also function as a pedagogical tool for raising awareness and cultivating social consciousness since it educates and inspires audiences to be change agents in their communities by presenting complex political themes in simple and compelling settings (Taylor, 2013).

However, we do not just need political theatre to make connections with our lives or educate us by showcasing social problems; it is also crucial from a scientific research point of view (especially political science). Politics and theatre have been intertwined since ancient Greece (Hellas), where playwrights such as Aristophanes used the stage to mock political leaders, criticize societal standards, and spark public debate on urgent topics of the day (Greenblatt, 2018), and this link has remained in the modern age (Belcher, 2022). Even non-political theatre has significant similarities with politics (some even venture that politics is theatre [Apter, 2006]): both theatre and politics seek to persuade and mold people's opinions, relying on the performer's ability to captivate the audience and the political actor's ability to establish trust and authority. This relationship emphasizes theatre's ability to function as a political tool, exposing existing power structures and pushing for change. Therefore, examining diverse theatrical movements throughout the history of political theatre through the perspective of political theory allows us to recognize shifts in power dynamics and establish a foundation for a new type of political theater (Leahy, 2008).

In addition, political theatre is an outstanding outlet for particular social and demographic groups that were previously oppressed in the entertainment industry (as authors or playwrights) during the struggles for equality in the turbulent 1960s and 1970s, which saw a growing demand for the emergence of women authors and the representation of women's issues on stage. Thus, feminist theatre, in which plays are written and directed, also fell under the category of political theatre, was born. Caryl Churchill, Michelene Wandor, Martha Boesing, and Pam Gems are some of the defining authors of this movement, and from the contemporary scene, Alice Birch, Rebecca Lenkiewicz, Winsome Pinnock, and Martyna Majok are prominent figures, to name a few.

The staging of these plays has given jobs to many previously marginalized excellent female professionals, increasing the number of female lighting designers, actors, producers, and stage managers (Wandor, 1984).



However, other subgenres of political theatre approach their goals differently; for instance, guerrilla theatre is another unique approach to political theatre, blurring the barriers between performance art and activism. This type of theatre emerged in the 1960s in response to social and political upheaval, and it aimed to break conventional narratives and challenge societal conventions through spontaneous, often subversive performances in public locations (Kershaw, 1992). Guerrilla theatre strives to strengthen marginalized voices and foster conversation about urgent social issues by reclaiming public places as sites of political expression. In this way, this type of political art also contributes to the transformative power of political theatre: both guerrilla theatre and more traditional political plays have the ability to catalyze social change, inspire collective action, and envision alternative concepts of the future. By creating imaginative spaces for dialogue, dissent, and solidarity, the genre, in general, challenges dominant narratives, disrupts conventional wisdom, and fosters a culture of critical inquiry and civic engagement (Auslander, 1997). Through techniques such as Brechtian alienation (methods intended to separate the audience from the emotional connection in the play by jolting reminders of the artificiality of the theatrical performance [Britannica, no date]) and guerrilla theatre interventions, political theatre empowers audiences to become active participants in creating their own reality, thereby transcending the passive spectator role of traditional theatre forms (Brecht, 1964).



In conclusion, political theater is a distinct and complex form that includes a diverse range of styles, approaches, subgenres, subjects, and goals. At its core, it seeks to stimulate critical thinking, challenge conventions, and inspire radical change. As previously discussed, this theatrical genre usually exploits essential social and political archetypes (such as oppressor-oppressed, compliant-rebellious, or traditional-innovative), making it a more universal and even accessible art form. One of the most remarkable aspects of political theater is its ability to educate and transform society: sociology, social analysis, political activism, writing, cultural reflection, theater, and history are all effectively combined into an understandable and highly thought-provoking artistic blend in this genre. Political theater has become even more relevant in today's world, where political and social issues are becoming increasingly complex and polarized (University of Wyoming, 2021) since it allows artists to express their opinions and comment on pressing issues and audiences to engage with those opinions and the situations presented on stage, both actively and passively. I believe that this type of theater can truly help build a more informed and involved society by providing a forum for conversation and reflection, which is crucial for a healthy democracy as well as an arts-loving community.



Blanka Pillár is an eighteen-year-old writer from Budapest, Hungary. She has a never-ending love for creating and an ever-lasting passion for learning. She has won several national competitions and has been an editor-in-chief of her high school's prestigious newspaper, Eötvös Diák. Today, she is not throwing away her shot.



the art that comes out of crashing and falling

-manya vivek

You're not scared of the screams, she says to me. *The waves. That's what scares you.*

I think of the little memories that took too long to be buried under tombstones with names that bleed under your tongue. When i laid my heart beside me and begged on my knees to ~~never~~ let go. The fear of forgetting haunted me. You see, forgetting means to be forgotten and I'd rather live with my decaying heart than nothing at all. You see its not death im afraid of. The truth is ive died too many times. Under your touch, under her love, under the tree from waiting too long. and I think I'm forgetting. i'm forgetting the way your hands felt around my neck and the feeling of trying to catch your breath. i'm forgetting the taste of summer on the rim of my mouth, too close, too far. Im forgetting how it feels to be home and not know it.

(You see i've died too many times and i think i've forgotten how to live.)

THE FALL OF THE BERLIN WALL (9th of november 1989).

Bianca

On the chilly, autumnal night of November 9, 1989, the world watched in breathless anticipation as history unfolded in the heart of the German capital, Berlin. For nearly three decades, the Berlin Wall had stood as a grim symbol of division, destruction, and unfathomable grief, cutting through the dainty soul of a historical city, and separating family members, friends, and lovers. It was more than just concrete and electrical wire, it was a barrier that epitomized the Cold War's ideological abrupt rift.

As the evening descended, an unexpected announcement was broadcast on the radio: the border would finally be opened and no amount of distance or concrete would separate the West from the East anymore. The general neutral feeling of the citizens turned from confusion into excitement and euphoria. The people of East and West Berlin surged towards the wall, not knowing whether to believe the incredible news. Thousands gathered, their faces illuminated by the glow of streetlights and the flickering, striking flames of dimly lit candles. The atmosphere in the thin, cold air buzzed with anticipation, a tangible electricity that crackled through the sea of people, an immense crowd.

Among those present was a little, frail girl named Helen. At just eight years of age, she had grown up in the shadow of the wall, its imposing, stoic presence a constant malice in her young existence. She had heard many tales about the other side, whispered stories of a world both good and evil, which seemed foreign to her ears, and tantalizingly close. Her parents, especially Mama, had often spoken of freedom, of the splendid day they might walk with their hands clasped in a sacred oath of survival through the streets of a united, unbreakable, prosperous Berlin, but sweet Helen had never even dared to dream it could be possible, and that a simple supposition could eventually become a tangible reality.

That fateful night, settled on her father's strong shoulders, Helen saw something miraculous, a dream come true. With the gentle eyes of a child, she witnessed the impossible become possible. As the first brave souls, most of them teenagers or young people began to climb the wall, once thought as indestructible, other courageous Germans followed, their determination eroding the barriers that had seemed flawless and everlasting. Chisels, hammers, axes, and bare hands attacked the concrete, and piece by piece, the wall began to crumble in an avalanche that signaled the end of the Communist regime.

Amidst the lively cheers and stinging tears, Helen's gaze was drawn to a fluttering, apparently insignificant movement. There, perched on the remnants of the wall, was a tiny, gracious bird. It was a creature so delicate, so free, and incredibly liberated that it seemed almost out of place against the background carved in stone and steel. The bird looked around as if assessing the moment, and then, in a burst of motion, it took flight into the dark sea, the endless tapestry of the night sky.

Helen's heartbeats soared in perfect tandem with the magical bird. She watched, with a wide-eyed expression and completely mesmerized, as it flitted over the crumbling barrier, its dainty, fragile wings carrying it effortlessly from East to West. Without a second thought, she slipped from her father's protective arms and began to run, and run she did. Her small, doll-like feet pounded firmly on the auburn ground, her breath coming in excited gasps, as she chased the bird through the vast, glorious crowd.

People parted the sea for her, their smiles widening as they remarked on the sheer determination and free spirit visible on her joyous face. She ran and ran, and never stopped, not even once, not even for a breath or a quick look over the shoulder, the bird always just a step ahead, leading her forward in her conquest to freedom. For the first time since her birth, she, a little girl residing in the heart of the German capital, crossed the invisible line that had divided her world for a long time. With each step, the weight of the wall's shadow lifted, replaced by the exhilarating promise of a newfound world.

As Helen reached the other side, she stopped and finally looked back. The bird had disappeared into the tranquil night, but she didn't mind. She felt the spirit of its flight within her very core, a sense of enormous possibility that she would carry on forever. At that moment, Helen knew that the entire world had managed to change for the better and strike a ray of sunshine where not too long before shadows and terror reigned. She had seen it with her own eyes, felt it in her own heart. The wall was falling, and with its structure, the barriers that had kept dreams caged for far too long were being swept away into oblivion.

Helen stood on the other side of the wall, a tiny figure amidst the throng of jubilant Berliners. The night sky, above her, encapsulated all of the people's grand hopes and strong beliefs for a better future, while still being full of reigning stars that promised a new, victorious dawn. And as she gazed at the horizon line, she knew that she, too, was finally set free from a golden cage, chanting along with the German crowd a single, liberating anthem:

"Freedom!"



Bianca is a high school teenager who recently turned 16 y/o. She loves spending time creating poetry, practicing horse riding, and playing tennis during summer vacation. Besides that, she adores listening to rock music, specifically Nirvana. Her main goal is to encourage and inspire others through her daily work. This year she is extremely proud of her achievements, one of them being the extraordinary number of submissions, specifically poems, to numerous literary magazines worldwide.

Social media accounts - instagram: [bia._.02._.08](#)

ushering light in

-Prarthana Vijayakumar

Eggs laid out two each in seven plates. The porcelain bowls and silver spoons are in sight after an eternity. The front page of the newspaper was badly printed today, ink bleeding through the headlines. The firing continues today. It is the seventy-sixth of such todays. Maybe it's the words crying for us. We do not know what to expect anymore, or, more like we know precisely what each day holds so we've stopped guessing. And we've begun to live each day like it's going to be our last. Like really LIVE. Yesterday, all the people on our street danced to our mother's voices, celebrated with our too-old fireworks joining the missile laden sky. And today, we're all going to have dinner together, those lucky enough to not wander into the line of riots and be gifted a wreath of bullets, that is. We will eat, and eat and eat, until our bellies are full, and our hearts are warm. I have my best shoes on, and so does my sister, shiny, red, leather from a quieter world somewhere distant from us. And I've braided my hair today, in my braids, the names of all the stars we can't see through the smoke. We will begin painting our town yellow today. The colour of the sun that hasn't been pried away from us yet. When you come for our homes, you shall be greeted with a vase of marigolds and the murals of joy. A quiet revolution begins at the dining table. I skip the coffee today.

Prarthana Vijayakumar writes whenever she isn't preparing for her Chartered Accountancy course. She has been published or is upcoming in The Daphne Review, The Curie Review, White Rose Muses, an AIFEST magazine and elsewhere. You can find her selected works at Chill Subs looking up her name.

The Indian Mutiny or the War of Independence: Revolution Through the Eyes of the Oppressor

-Maha Hammad

The Sepoy Revolt; the Indian Insurrection; and the first War of Independence in India. The difference in the names of Southern Asia and Britain, regarding this war, tell us how tales can be spun in favour of and against a party, all depending on who tells the story. Before we begin, on the ever-importance and influence of names, we must first understand what made the events of 1857-58 come to be, and exactly what these events were.

The Indians agitation had grown as the British implemented more of their own policies in India. The Doctrine of Lapse, introduced in the 1840s, stated that were an Indian ruler to die without a natural heir, his lands would be seized by the British. Satara, Nagpur, Jhansi, and Oudh, even though the Nawab had had multiple legal heirs, soon fell to the British. The royal family being moved from the Red Fort of Delhi to Qutub Sahib was also seen as disrespect. The lack of opportunities for natives in the civil service, as well as the language in which education must be given, and the national language being changed to English, infuriated the Indians.

The treatment of the Indians as an inferior race to the British, as well as the introduction of a new way to live was unacceptable for many. The exploitation of Bengal, in the late 1700s, had also proved to the Indians that the British did not truly care for them, as they wrote their fate on another continent. Christian missionaries being sent for conversion seemed as a sign of hostility towards their religions and beliefs to the Indians. The high taxes, low pay for sepoys, and drainage of Indian wealth left the Indians with further resentment. In the military, most of the lower ranks being Indian, and the higher ranks being British, also spoke volumes of the treatment towards Indians. Indian troops had also been sent to Afghanistan, even as it was unacceptable to Hindu sepoys. The breaking point, however, came in January of 1857, with the announcement of a new type of cartridge, whose end had to be bitten off, rumoured to have been greased with cow (sacred to Hindus), and pig (forbidden to Muslims) fat.

March 29, 1857, is one of the most important dates in South Asian history; when a sepoy, with the name of Mangal Pandey, attacked his British soldiers, the first major incident in this series of events. He was executed soon after, for his actions of defiance. Through this one announcement, the British had effectively turned most Indians against them.

Two months later, in Meerut, sepoys utterly refused to touch the new cartridges, thus, these sepoys were imprisoned, however, later freed by their comrades. Meerut was sacked, and the British and Europeans put to death. Delhi, Mathura, Kanpur, Jhansi, Lucknow, and Allahabad, had been successfully taken back from the British.

In Kanpur, soldiers, led by Nana Sahib, trapped the British for over three weeks. The British surrendered, eventually, at the promise of safe exit. However, this was a lie, Nana Sahib's forces turned on them, killing the British officers, as well as over three hundred women and children. When the British regained Kanpur, however, they executed tragedies on a larger scale, as compared to here.

However, this revolution proved to be short-lasting, with the British recapturing Delhi and Lucknow, in September. The Mughal Emperor, Bahadur Shah II, who had grown to be a unifying symbol for the war, surrendered, yet his sons were not spared. Their heads were presented to the Emperor as a lesson.

Now, the main difficulty for the British had been Jhansi. Sepoys here were led by Lakshmibai, the Rain of Jhansi, who had been assisted by Tatya Topee, an Indian general. In June of 1858, Lakshmibai was killed by the British, while in battle. Tatya was later captured and executed, as well. Now, only small inconveniences were left for the British to take care of, which they effectively did, ending the war in August, 1858.

The importance of wording and naming this event is soaring, so the generations to come recognize history, in all its truth. Only through words can we express our innermost, deepest thoughts. Terms, such as 'rebellion', 'mutiny', and 'revolt', imply negativity. This wording has been used by those who have disregarded the Indians' troubled history, famines, and countless losses, the majority of which have been as a result of the British's colonization. Some of the consequences of colonization are present and evident today, still.

Many British historians successfully managed to interpret biasness discreetly into their work, through such titles. Historians, such as R. Holmes, stated the revolt was a 'clash of civilizations & barbarians'. This aligned with the view that many British already had of the Indians, an uncivilized, and barbaric race. It can be seen that, whilst for the Indians it was a step towards their self-independence, the war seemed only an inconvenience, caused by a race of inferiors who could not possibly understand the 'greatness' of their oppressors, to the British.

I'm a 14 year old, with way too many interests and hobbies to keep track of! One of these happens to be writing, which I enjoy greatly. I prefer writing horror & fantasy stories, as well as essays and poetry.

a list, in no particular order, of what I wish I could tell my seventh grade self (and any other brave but trapped human beings)

Arianna Kanji

1. Nobody will get it, not for a long time

Soon the effort will dissipate from your muscles and you'll struggle to find a reason to continue on at all, as though their lack of understanding reflects back on your inability to be understood. But the most complex languages are often the most beautiful, and you speak so divinely when there's nobody around to correct you. Let the bend of your chin perch up high, so they can see the lives flashing in your eyes. Keep your back straight, or they might mistake your slouching for obedience. Strip down to your bare bones and pour boiling color into every crevice until they're forced to ask what happened. Make sure not to give them an answer.

2. Sometimes it'll feel really shitty

and you'll want to bind your breasts to your chest with duct tape and snip away at your life with pink barbie scissors and the monsters in the closet will seem so very real, but it'll pass. It'll all pass. The rushing wave of heat will burn your body, but the upcoming tide will be a bitter chill. Your arms will twist into tentacles and your legs into sharp talons, your flesh flaking away to scales. You'll mutate into a vicious creature of the sea, like the ones in your father's old storybooks, spinning from ocean to ocean until you finally forget how to swim. You're too young to ask when it ends, too small to wonder when the world will get bigger, too happy to be vomiting in a washroom at 2 am. The pretty girl with water in her lungs just drowned herself in the passing storm - please, don't minimize yourself within a petty statistic. You're worth so much more than the world is able to admit.

3. Your grandmother's house will never feel the same again.

No more shopping for shiny shoes with tall heels, or searching through the spice cabinets with your little cousin at your heels, or decoding your mother's scrawling handwriting because she didn't live long enough to teach you how to read it. They'll slowly drain the rosy color from your cheeks, because only girls have pinkish-tinged smiles and princess hair. But you'll get used to the paint dripping down your brow and the wind brushing against your neck. Sifting paratas from pan to pan with smoldering fingers, biting down samosas and realizing you can no longer taste the sting of fresh-running blood beneath the sauce, sitting down at the table and having the conversation quiet, you'll get used to it. Soon it'll start again, little by little, a heartbeat revived through locks of ivy and vine. They'll pass you the sharbat when asked, and hand over a small tasbih with a grimace. But you'll have to watch your aunt and cousins flipping roti in the kitchen, laughs clashing, while you sit locked away at the darkened table.



4. You'll still be pretty. Just a different kind.

A harsher, sharper, more breathable kind. The moss spread along a lake shore, or the barnacles stuck to an abandoned shipwreck deep below the feet you'd dangle from the pier during summer. Striking like the first time you witnessed New York graffiti, and it was a myriad of rainbow colors decimated with black paint and a collection of hasility written slurs. Handsome like shoes ruined the day you bought them, dust smeared along their white laces, or the cracked gravestone about a hundred years from your sleeping body. Captivating like when you stopped having extra hair ties slung around your wrist, or the lipstick you'll soon scrawl upon your face because if they give a shit either way it truly doesn't matter what you wear. It doesn't. Every suit jacket is an act of rebellion, and every plaid skirt is an act of war.

5. You'll find people. Not on purpose, but you will.

Hidden in the margins of textbooks or under benches or perhaps just conveniently dropped at your feet. You'll find hands limber enough to hold, bodies strong enough to hug, mouths fluid enough to switch with your changing dialects. Their bones won't crack with the force of your gaze - and if they do, they were never strong enough to handle you in the first place. You might break a few shoulders, but you'll piece them back together with duct tape and a grin. The fluorescent lights will flood their faces, kaleidoscopic smiles shimmering like a multicolored tattoo. You'll want to paint their names in lights and keep them packaged away, unable to run. You'll release your grip eventually, when markings start tracing along their skin, and you'll be surprised how many run only to hug you back. Say thank you to them sometimes. God knows they deserve it.

6. Take a break from bending down until your knees get bloody

and slipping prayers into your socks, because the beginning was never the beginning and the world will never care enough. You can't peel away the river's wrath from under your skin or pick apart the color ensued into your hair, and if you try, you'd only end up with marks on your fingers and ash on your teeth. Don't light anything just yet, though. Worship works in diverse ways. You'll find a newer, brighter force to believe in, a myriad of flashing lights and painted faces and bare chests, and learn to lie until it burns. The rush of hellfire will be entertaining. You might leave with the devil tucked under your hood, but you'll be laughing all the while. The world will soon find that it cannot shove you into a box and cram lies down your throat - it can only prolong the inevitable. An invisible force isn't worth a physical one. And you, my dear, are the only changing tide you'll ever truly need.

7. Whatever they say will cease to matter.

Any slurs they toss will be ingested into your system by midday, spreading a virus of sorts to your hands and feet until the skins crumble off in chunks. With every insult they hurl, you take them to heart and shape your body around their words. Every punch permeates your body and shifts your organs to their melody, twisting farther and farther. They'll try to undo the knot, but it'll tighten with every movement. You'll become a symbol for everything they seek to destroy, a martyr for the other side, painted in vibrant colors and sparkles along your eyes and scars dug into your chest. Your queerness is beautiful, honey. Their apprehension only sharpens your tongue. Their hatred only decorates your fruitful language, until apples grow gold from your branches. Don't be held down by people who can't even comprehend your greatness. After all, there's no point in existing if people don't realize you're there. So exist. Scream so loudly they've forced to look at you. Turn heads so violently they snap.

8. Don't live off of spite. It'll kill you.

Live in rebellion instead. Take up the space they've spent centuries guarding. Throw stones at closed doors until they scrub away the paint, and then leave them with an echoing reminder of the sparks you will soon light, the world you will soon break down, the people you will soon become. If you never become those people, don't fret, because they're in your bones and your mind and every word you've ever written. Don't let anything but your own torch burn your skin. Don't take anything to heart but your own mind - it'll be your last comfort until the day you die. Write until you can't anymore, until they've heard exactly what you have to say. Step further into your body every year - become so unrecognizable the face in the mirror feels like home. Smile. Laugh. Be the human being they've always doubted you could be. Love the way you were always too scared to. Holler up to the sky that you survive even more with every second.

9. They want to destroy you.

So disturb them. Confuse them. Be incomprehensible. You were given this life for a reason, after all. Your identity is both a blessing and a curse, but you can form it into something else entirely. If you go, they win. And remember: above all, never let them fucking win.



uncertain

mk zariel

an erasure poem of BigFuture's online blurb for high school students looking at colleges

When everyone [redacted] looks different and there are so many [redacted]
[redacted] matters.

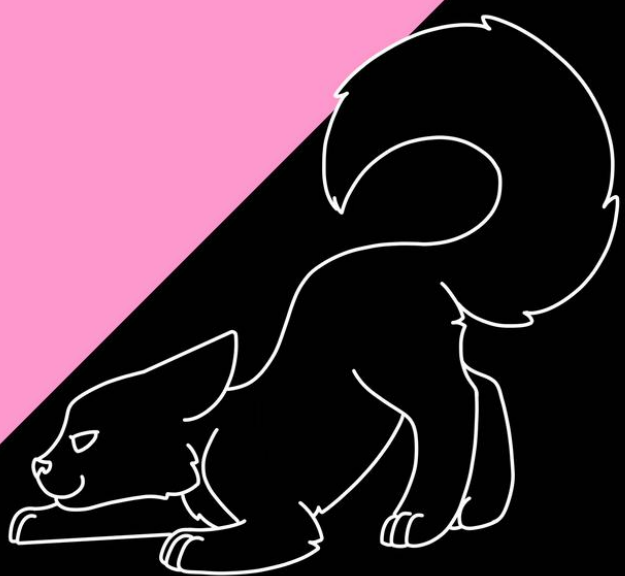
That's where [redacted] free [redacted] helps all students take
the [redacted] first step after high school.

You can check out [redacted] you're interested in. You can find [redacted] what's important
to you. You can discover [redacted]

When you're ready [redacted] the information you need [redacted]
[redacted] feels uncertain, [redacted]

Let's begin [redacted].

mk zariel (it/they) organises trans liberationist spaces across the great lakes region, performs spoken-word and theater, does graphic design for social movements, and vibes to classic queercore. it also hosts the podcast THE CHILD AND ITS ENEMIES (about anarchy in high school), writes for the Anarchist Review of Books, and writes the blog DEBATE ME BRO (a y2k style advice column about anarchy 101). its free-verse poetry is published (or forthcoming) in Unfuturing, Not Your Poster Child, Free Voice Revolution, What We Think About When We Think About Love, Chasing The Storm, The Insurgence, Anti-Misogyny Club, A Rose By Any Other Name, Suburban Witchcraft, Broken Teacup, The Periwinkle Pelican, redrosethorns, and MyrtleHaus; its photography is featured in Coin Operated Press's queer photography zine. it was a contributor to Communication Madison's art exhibition Let Me Tell You, a participant in Free Zine Week 2024, and collaborated with the artist f.f. kahani on an online mixed-media installation. it has presented on youth liberation at BashBack 2023, Smash By Smash West, Davidson Academy Online, and the SRSLY WRONG Discord Server. it is a moderator for the Spooky Specters and Chasing The Storm zines. hang out with mk on the big gay internet: <https://linktr.ee/mkzariel>



Untitled- Riddhima Das

Emotions churn,
a tempest brewing deep within,
threatening to spill over and reshape the world around us.
Inner turmoil becomes outer chaos,
as feelings long suppressed burst forth in a torrent of change and upheaval.
Hearts racing,
minds reeling,
we stand on the precipice of transformation,
ready to turn ourselves inside out.
What once was hidden now comes to light, raw and exposed,
demanding to be seen and acknowledged.
The revolution begins in whispers,
in stolen glances,
in the quiet moments when we dare to dream.
It grows in strength,
fed by the fire of passion and the fuel of long-held frustrations.
We become the architects of our own destiny,
tearing down walls both literal and figurative.
In this upheaval,
we find ourselves stripped bare,
vulnerable yet powerful in our newfound authenticity.
The old order crumbles,
giving way to something new,
something born of our deepest desires and fears.
We dance on the ashes of what once was,
celebrating the birth of a world shaped by our emotions.
No longer content to live on the surface,
we dive deep into the currents of our own psyche.

We emerge changed,
our inner landscapes now reflected in the world around us,
a mirror of transformation.
The revolution spreads like wildfire,
igniting hearts and minds,
burning away the chaff of complacency.
In this new world,
emotions reign supreme,
guiding our actions and shaping our collective destiny.
We stand united in our vulnerability,
strength found in the shared experience of turning ourselves
inside out.
The old boundaries blur and fade,
as what was once internal becomes external,
reshaping reality.
We embrace the chaos,
finding beauty in the disorder,
as our emotions paint the world in vivid hues.
This revolution of the heart and mind leaves no stone
unturned,
no feeling unexplored or unexpressed.
We forge ahead into uncharted territory,
our emotions as our compass,
guiding us towards a new dawn.
In this brave new world,
we are at last free to be our true selves,
inside and out.

Riddhima is a rising ninth grader from the Seattle area, known for her multifaceted talents in poetry, music, and athletics. She writes poetry and songs in four languages, primarily focusing on Bengali. Her musical prowess extends to playing multiple instruments and singing, with a particular fondness for Rabindra Sangeet. Beyond her artistic endeavors, Riddhima is an avid runner, having logged over 2600 miles, often running in the early morning rain despite frequently twisting her ankles. She also enjoys learning new languages and teaching students.

it's time for a change

Cailyn Porter

people dying in the streets.

it's time for a change

women too frightened to even speak.

it's time for a change

millions without a place to call home

it's time for a change

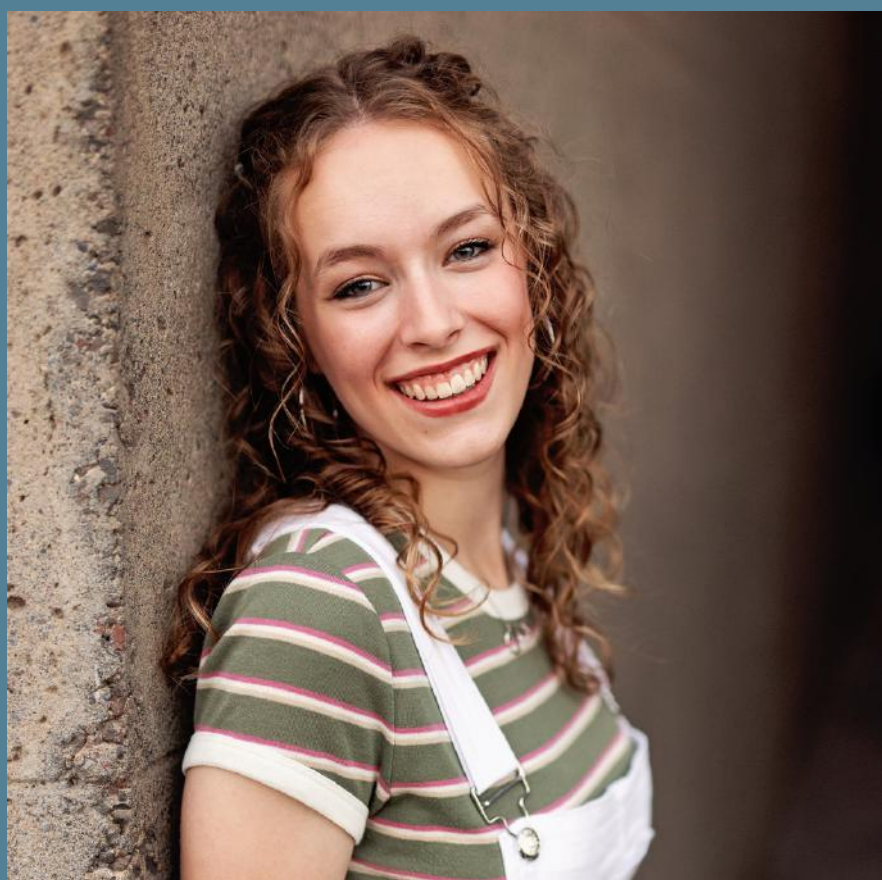
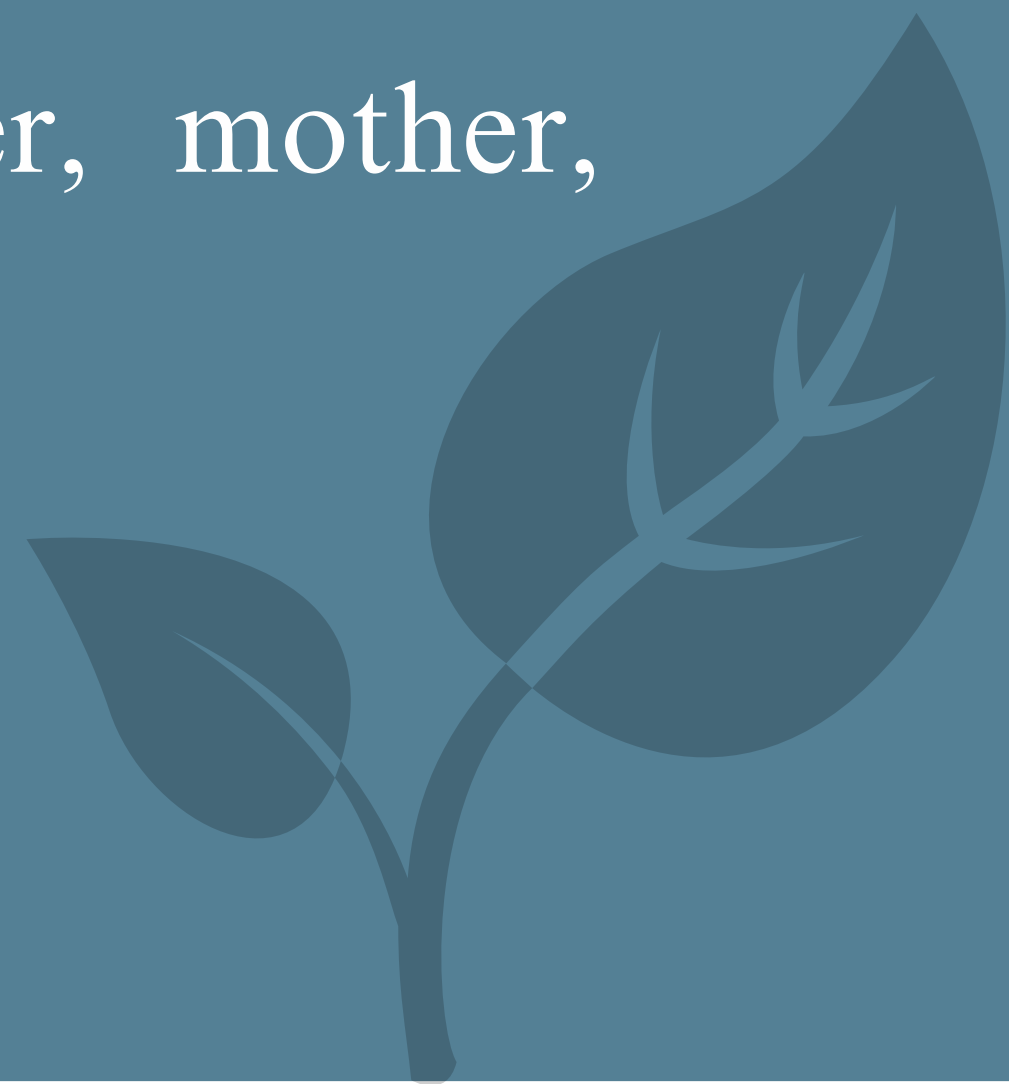
children on the street begging to fill their
bellies

it's time for a change

so grab your brother, sister, mother,
friend

and tell them how

it's time for a change



Hi! My name is Cailyn. I've always loved writing poetry, but I have recently begun sharing my work with the world! I started a poetry Instagram account about a month ago called @daisies.inmyhair. I would greatly appreciate it if you would give me a follow! I have also won the Young Writer's Journal weekly award for my poem entitled "Dear Little Me." When I'm not writing, I love reading, dancing, traveling and hanging out with my friends!

Revolted- Sarra Guebsi

She painted a picture of the future

She felt secure , one hundred percent sure that
she could win and single-handedly finish first in

Her mounting pride of her unabridged story , of her solid history

The fleeting confidence that brushed herself occasionally , was untimely yet
opportune

She was animated with ardor and keenness

blazing in her chest with ardence and fervency

to beat the odds , to bite the bullet , to conquer her worldly desires

Her determined wishes of vanquishing , rivals and diversity of all sorts all
along

The unbeaten , she was victorious , always undefeated , unsubdued

The defeater , the miracle woman , the winner , the historical heroine , a
legendary figure

Wherever she stepped , her glamor shone through , eyes glancing at her from
every angle and every corner in the room , fascinated by her presence ,
powerfully attracted to the look of her , held spellbound in their unblinking
stares and magnifying states of amazement .

Her melodic voice , her dulcet tone of speaking the soothing sounding of her
sensible words tackling the wrenched souls of her earnest listeners , the
mellifluous low beat of her gentle speech ratherly musical , tuneful and
mellowly rhythmic .

Resonating agreeably in their chaotic heads and melancholic souls , all the way
to their ears , delicately sending them into a trance , bewitching them to
hypnosis and speechlessness.

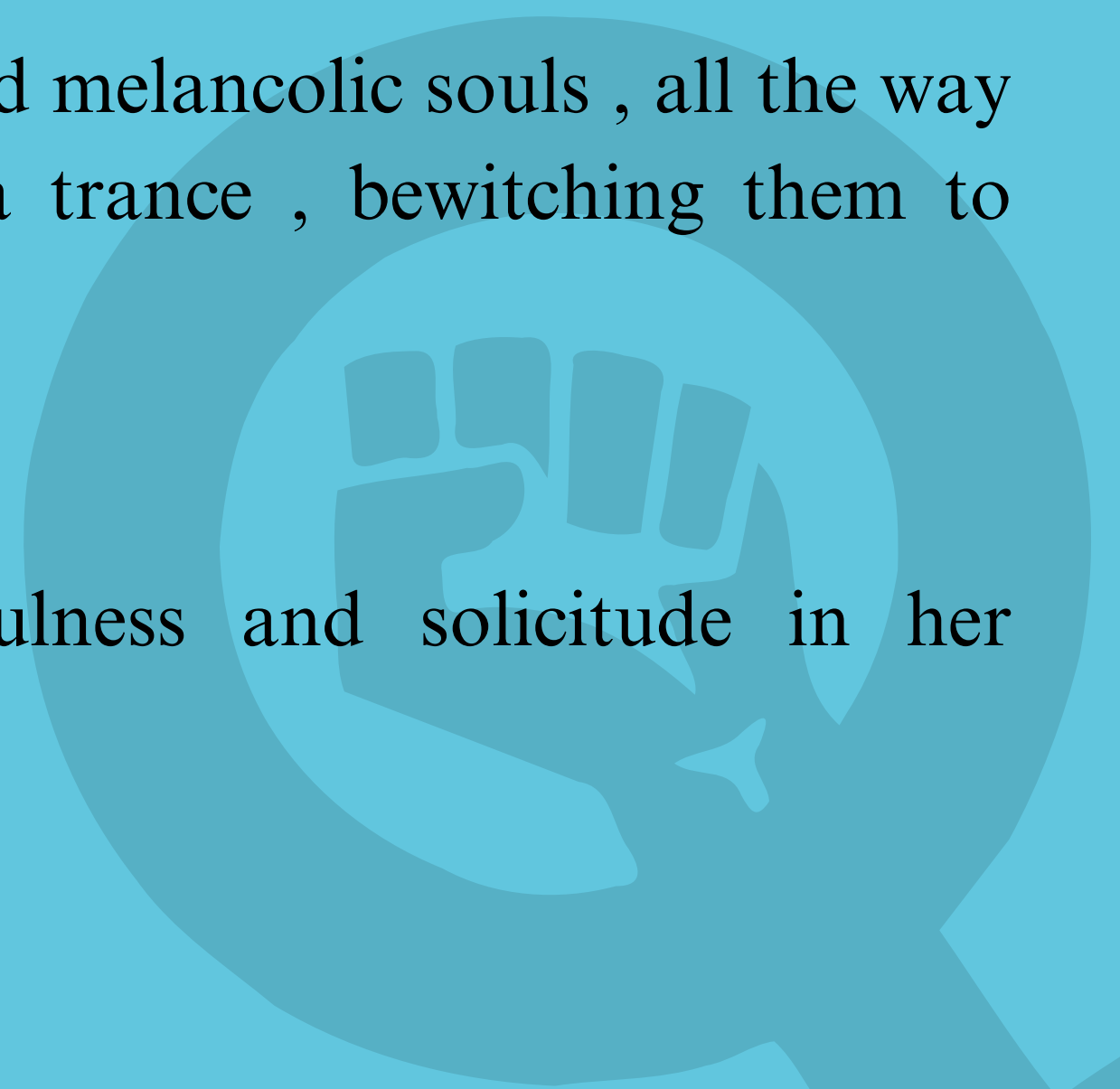
The agony abating ,

when they heard what she had to say ,

they felt the care , tenderness , thoughtfulness and solicitude in her
sympathetic expression .

she went to all bounds

to answer a call of justice



she crossed all barriers
to bring about fairness
she made sacrifice after sacrifice
in the wake of sunlight
in the obscuring night
in the darkening shadows of midday
in the cloudless gloomy sky of midnight
to feel someone's sorrows , to heal another's wounds , to hold a hand in aid and
answer a cry
to get them out of dejection
to wipe out corruption
to aid people in their desolation
to draw a smile and fade a lie
lies they were fed year after year
for subsequent centuries
by unethical , exploitative and self-serving men
venal men who put themselves first and decided to abandon people's welfare
she rejoices the mourning , the miserable and the poor
because women knew better when they had zero chances of knowing at all
and women fought harder with no arms and no swords
and women were wiser when they had no rights to speak up at all .
Because,
women offered more
and Women survived it all.



A 17 year old tunisian teenage girl who has been writing poetry for 5 years, ardently passionate about both poetry and science , currently finishing her studies as a senior in a Pioneer High School . It was a magically illuminating experience to transform her emotions and thoughts into such artistic form . For her , poetry was the best form of expression ever known to exist . In words , she drowned her sorrows and poured her love . She found her purpose in telling stories through her poems and it never failed to provide her a feeling of consolation , appeasement and clarity . She explored uncharted territories within her inmost self and she could unravel the hidden truths and meet with her heart and mind in utmost times where the drops of ink fell and the scrawled letters connected forming words and sentences embellishing the blank pages , summoning the charm of her existence ! As the sun rises or sets , it's always a good time to look at the world poetically , observe it and absorb the feelings .

Protest Not Enough

Kate Abrielle McCormick

“She doth protests too much”

I doth protest not enough

While half of the world is sinking in bombs

We are walking along beaches, drinking under palms

Gunshots don't break through our windows and chest

We pray and post online about the unrest

For what are we to do?

“She doth protests too much”

I doth protest not enough

While the entire globe is melting apart

We are doing the bare minimum right from the start

Global warming is denied left, right, and center

We don't rally government to become preventers

For what are we to do?

“She doth protests too much”

I doth protest not enough

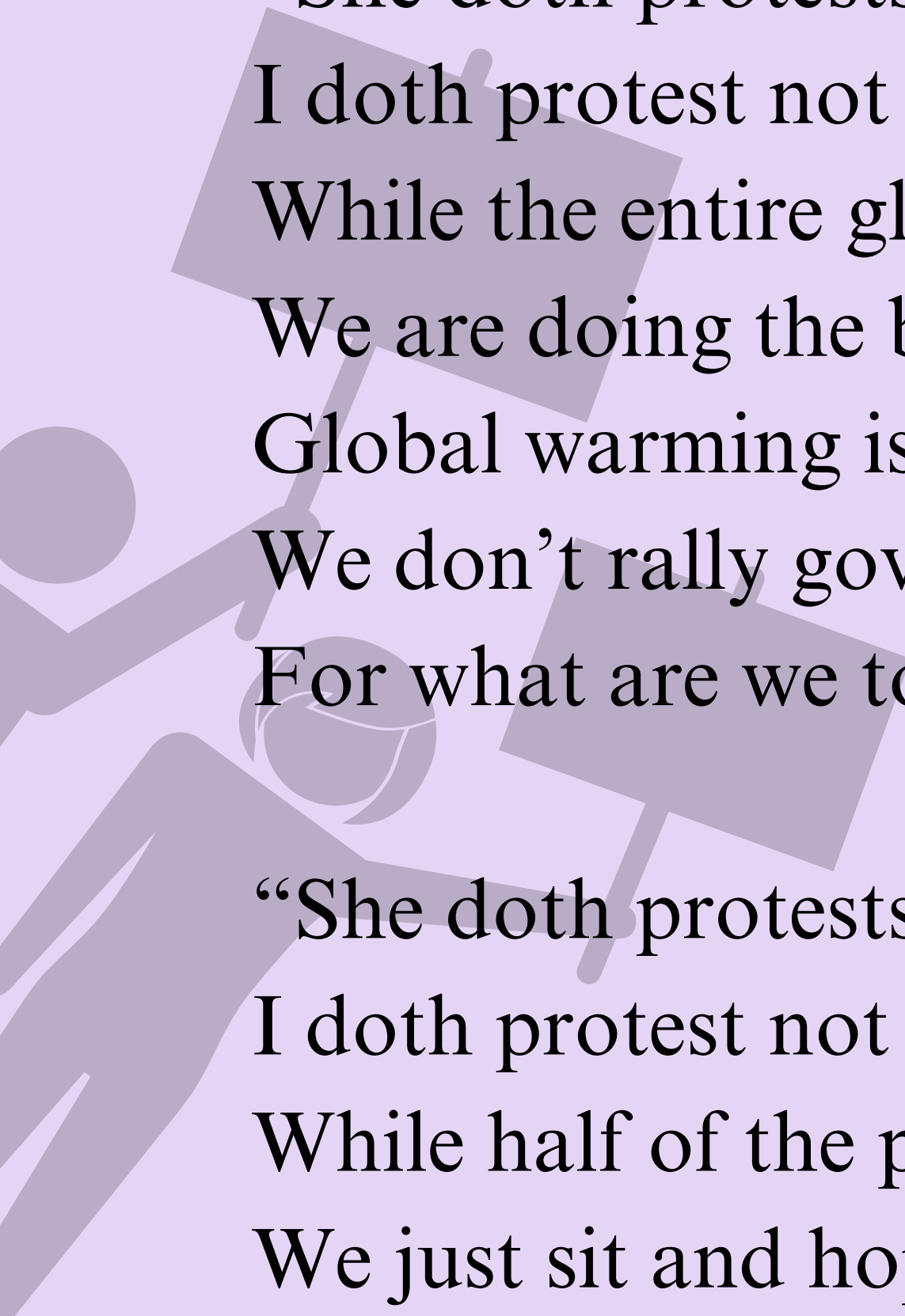
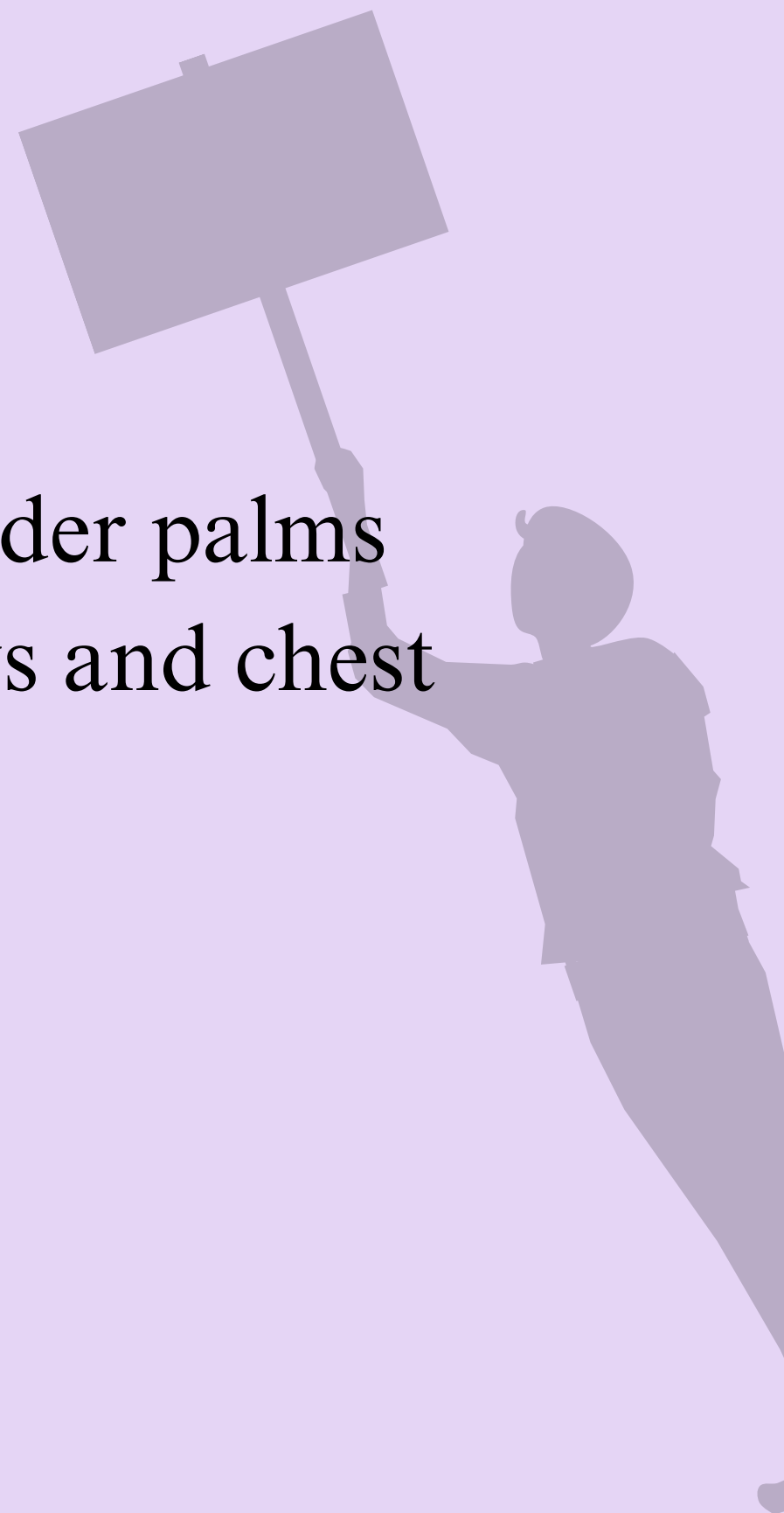
While half of the population is denied their womb

We just sit and hope for a better future and assume

Our bodies have been a battle ground since our creation

We speak about making a better foundation

For what are we to do?



“She doth protest too much”

I doth protest not enough

While half of America is shot due to their skin

Half of us question who the victim was to begin

We do not fight the system and break it down brick by
brick

We spread awareness, but that won't save the people
quick

For what are we to do?

We need to leave our homes and make our demands

We need to scream loudly until everyone understands

We need to go down to government town

Start a revolution with everyone around

There is a power in the people if we give it our all

We cannot do what is simple and small

We need to make change with our voices and hands

Make it right, make a stand

Revolution

Kate Abrielle McCormick is a Master's student that will be attending Queen Mary University of London in September. She has 30+ pieces published across 17 literary magazines and journals. She also has 4 published poetry books that can be found across PA, where she resides, and on Amazon. In her free time, Kate enjoys writing, reading *Good Omens*, and watching *Doctor Who*.

Riot, Girl

Kate Abrielle McCormick

Scream for women to have a choice
Feel it in every bone, give me a voice
I feel so tired fighting for my rights
I am a bomb when it ignites

This apple that chains me to my gender
Paints a picture of my surrender
Yet, the seeds are poisonous to the core
And stealing my body I will not ignore

You took me for someone who wouldn't talk back
Who'd sit in silence as you attack
Carving out womb to give future embryos a home
Stitching it to me with words from your tome
Forcing me to live under your Religion, not my own
Congratulating each other on your golden throne

Would you like it if I took a piece of you too?
Told you that you'd have to let something grow till it was due ...
Then made you go through the worst sort of pain ...
And then that growth would then remain ...
You'd have to feed it, and bathe it, and keep it safe for 18 years of your life ...
Whether or not you had a wife ...
No matter the circumstances of how it was created ...
You and that growth would be related ...
What if I did it to you?

No choice for me, so every step is cautious
For this sort of world makes me nauseous
I step out screaming and protesting my rights
Endlessly fighting all the days and the nights
Riot with me and start a revolution
Perhaps one day we will find a resolution
Take down the patriarchy and take back our wombs
Take down the government and all it consumes

change

d.liu

concepts are pursuits that are intangibly endeavored for
where you reach and never feel or touch or hold
for the grass is always greener on the other side, right?

fresh silhouettes of apples patiently present
in the mahogany crate, presumably, they
signify wealth: money, the
sweet aftertaste of the slashed skin
blood dissipating in your mouth

does the world ever remain still;
a breath of fresh immovable air
status quo sits statically secure
or when the crate is polluted with
venomous liquid, seeping around the rough
edges, do the apples decay?

if they were mittens, would they have
survived in the basin instead?



Homologous Structures

Daniel Rubalcava

Oh to be the bat,
let my arms spread into wings
and flap!

To only worry about the next
bug I'd eat,
that's the life.

Oh to be the dolphin,
click my heels into a tail
and glide!

To chirp and whistle with
brothers & sisters,
that's the life.

Oh to be myself,
dance naked in my room
as the king of the castle.

That's the life.

A fourth-year history student from California, Daniel Rubalcava has been studying and writing poetry for nearly five years. His poetry reflects his deep passion for history and literature as he attempts to capture the human experience with the written word. In his literary endeavors, Daniel enjoys learning something new and having a good laugh.

Medusa's Rage

Timea Azar



In my painting, the visceral visceral intensity of anger and feminism is vividly portrayed through the central figure of Medusa. Once a symbol of monstrosity and fury, she is now reimagined as a sexual assault survivor, embodying the resilience of countless abused women. Surrounding her, scenes of women suffering in various ways are painted in hues of red, symbolizing the intense anger that fuels the revolution against misogyny.



I'm an 18 year old artist and i have been in love with art ever since i can remember. i'm entering my first year of university to majoe in animation in september!! here is my insta account @timeaazar!

Competition runners up!

Due to an overwhelmingly large number of competition submissions, we knew it would be only right to highlight some of the amazing runners up! Their pieces of work are absolutely BRILLIANT, and we hope you like them as much as we did!

With trembling hands, she grasped the strings, wide eyed as the kite caught the summer breeze. Her father's reassuring voice guided her, sharing her joy as it flew higher. In that unforgettable moment, fear turned into euphoria, a bond of trust and freedom fluttering between them in the serene sky.



Bianca

Tears welled in my eyes, it was time to say goodbye, something I was never good at but forced to do. Everything I ever had, the reason of my existence, my best friend. She managed to keep it a secret from me for months, laughing through chemo and pain. Seeing her lifeless on the bed, it was as the soul was sucked out of my body. Her voice playing in my head, what I would not do to hear that voice once again.

She was the reason I worked harder; her smile meant everything to me. "Sleep well my love, sleep well."

Leeze

Devoid, Of Peace

Devoid, Of Freedom

Devoid...

The universal application to the modern slave is the word 'Devoid'.

Luxury? Too Poor.

Love? Unworthy.

Shelter? Work for it.

The modern slave is exploited for every ounce so that at day's end he might get what others always had, Liberation.



Saaim Atif

Her hair flowed with the tide. Her angelic voice pierced my heart, compelling me to surrender. Our fingers intertwined, lilies and sulphur clouding my judgement. The beautiful maiden transformed into a beast, jagged teeth gnawing at my flesh. As war tears apart devoted families, so do the alluring sirens.



Zayna Rahman

Zayna Rahman is a Lahore based writer and student.
Instagram: Zayna_98

My mother's jewelry box sits in her childhood bedroom. She used to fiddle with the seamless ballerina legs and the ornate carvings until the paint flaked. Soon her legs began to creak and her heart began to slow, so she hid it under smooth earth. I bloomed from the ashes.

Arianna Kanji

Palestine

a tribute by Kate Abrielle McCormick

More than 40,000 people have been killed in Palestine.

A little over 40,000 people die yearly, in all of the USA, due to vehicle accidents.

A little over 40,000 people die yearly, in all of the USA, due to gun violence.

This is not to compare, but to understand.

Our biggest issues, our leading causes of death, have killed the same number of people.

Yet ... we fight for change to end vehicle accidents.

There are clubs to teach children about drunk driving.

Schools hold presentations about the importance of safety while driving.

Police go to schools with drunk goggles, and instill fear in every teenager who can drive.

There are mock crashes. Driving simulators.

All in the name of saving people's lives.

There are protests to end gun violence.

New school improvements like walls that can turn into a bomb shelter, or bullet proof windows.

There are ads and tv shows that show the graphic reality of shootings.

States fight about how to defeat guns.

There are vigils, walk outs, rallies.

Yet, where is the justice for Palestine? That same fight? That same want to end violence?

Instead it is treated like an afterthought.

About 5 million people lived in Palestine.

About 2.3 million are trapped in Gaza.

The biggest arena in the USA, Michigan Stadium, only holds about 107,600 people.

The biggest modern USA music festival, Coachella, only has about 650,000 attendees.

Gaza is about 140 square miles.

Michigan stadium is close to this square mileage.

Yet, Michigan Stadium only holds 107,600 people.

That is only 4.68% of the amount of people stuck in Gaza.

Less than 5%.

Coachella takes up less square mileage in California.

But it has a lot of people too, crowded together.

Coachella holds 650,000.

28.26% of the amount of people stuck in Gaza.

Imagine all the Palestinians stuck in Michigan Stadium or at Coachella.

Not enough space. Crowded. Dying. Unsupported.

Yet, we go to stadiums and crowd ourselves in.

We go to Coachella and cram ourselves together.

We can go home after, to the air conditioning, cool water, and a comfortable bed.

They are trapped.



But this is not to guilt you into not enjoying what you enjoy.
This is to help you understand.

Tens of thousands of people are refusing to vote, to use their power.
And tens of thousands of people are unregistered to vote.
Is it important to judge those who are in office and can make a difference? Yes.
But, with that, we must collaboratively pressure those who have the power to do something.

According to law, the vice president is president of the senate, can break a tie vote, presides over the counting of the ballot and is the president's fill in should anything happen.
Congress has the sole power to declare war.
And if the Vice President tried to stop a war, it would have to go through the branches of government and the president.

Could the Vice President be pressured? Sure. But the Vice President doesn't determine the course of a war.
Just like a vice principal cannot change the rules of a school without the school board and the principal's permission.
Not voting is not a solution. Withholding a vote does nothing but take from someone who could potentially get to a position of higher power to actually make a difference.
Should Kamala Harris be put on a pedestal to never be pressured or ridiculed? No.
But voting her in, and pressuring her when she has the full power and capabilities, is better.

Who else can be pressured?
It starts with those we elect in our state government positions.
Pressuring them can make Palestine a more widespread issue.
We can pressure congress to send aid to Gaza, to call for a ceasefire.
We can pressure the president.
Those we elect who can change laws, make laws, and help Palestine.
And we must vote. Without voting, then we are just letting whoever into these positions.
Voting is our voice.
Register to vote.
Vote.

This is a plane going down and we need to put on our own oxygen mask by voting in someone who can be pressured, as president, to end the war.
Once she is in, we can pressure and pressure and pressure.
Until then, we vote and we call our officials.
We donate to funds.
We buy the esims.
We educate and we understand.

More than 40,000 people have been killed in Palestine.

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A note from the founder:



Wow, what a journey it's been! When I started Nebula Journal I never would of thought that there would be such a welcoming, supportive, uplifting *community* of literary magazines.

I want to say a big thank you to all who have liked our posts, shared us on their stories, read our website, and most of all to those who submitted work. I am so proud to be able to give a platform to all of these young writers, artists, poets, and creators. They all have such bright futures ahead of them, and I am honoured that Nebula Journal could be a part of that.

Revolution was chosen as our issue 1 theme, due to its versatility and spectrum of interpretation, and we have been *amazed* by our contributors' ability to meet the theme. It just goes to show how essential it is to give a voice to young people. I hope you enjoyed Nebula Journal's debut issue as much as we have enjoyed creating it.

See you in issue 2 ;)

<3

