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Hellenic-American Educational Foundation

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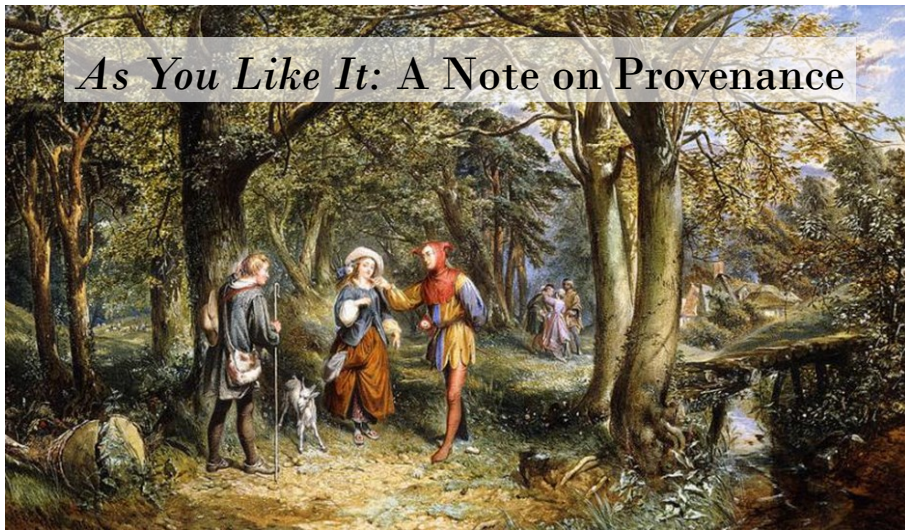
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As You Like It: A Note on Provenance



The English Department Magazine is named after one of William Shakespeare's most beloved plays: *As You Like It* (1599). In the play, the heroine Rosalind escapes the perils of her uncle's court by going into the Forest of Arden, where she breaks all the rules to discover herself, love, and true happiness. This year's magazine is a real tribute to its namesake as Rosalind masks her identity only to find her true self in the end!

From the Editor

Who are we? What is that one thing that makes us, *us*?

Who said it had to be *one* thing?

This year's theme of *As You Like It*, Identity, is a challenging topic to grasp and expand upon. People's identity consists of an array of qualities and attributes that they acquire through the different social roles they play. Elements of people's identity stem from their personal lives, ethnicity, national heritage and history, their academic responsibilities, their skills and talents, passions and hobbies, or even from a greater sense of purpose and calling.

In recent years, however, the need to fit into a social group and the constant pursuit of external validation, created by insecurities that modern society has instilled in us mostly through social media, have led many to lose sight of their true identity. Instead, they tend to oversimplify themselves, base their perception of themselves on other people's opinions, define their worth by their appearance, social status, or financial background. As a result, more and more of us fall out of love with ourselves—with the person we truly are—which, in turn, casts a shadow on our unique identity.

Authenticity. That's the end goal of identity exploration. It takes courage to be you in a world where you are constantly being told that that isn't enough. In reality, though, authenticity should never be traded for approval. Understanding the complexity of one's identity, the multiple axes on which it expands, as well as the potential for growth that it entails, is the single most important step that we as a society collectively need to take.

Casting a light on our national identity as Greeks, this year's *As You Like It* highlights how collective identity is a meaningful tool, and shared history a productive path, towards societal progress. At the same time, however, this year's magazine also testifies to the fact that as students of Athens College, we share another part of our identity, a part that inspires us to make a meaningful impact on our school community and beyond.

With all the aspects of identity in mind, *As You Like It* explores different perspectives and approaches towards this theme. Starting off our journey with the article submissions, readers will appreciate the correlation between identity and social sciences and well as applied mathematics. Art emerges from the pages that follow through both creative artistic pieces and deeply meaningful poems and short stories. Each dimension of this year's theme that is explored offers significant insight into the foundations of our identities and enables us to discover the many things that make us, *us*.

Katerina Karaindrou

Editor

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Part I: Articles



“Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember.
Involve me and I learn.”
—Benjamin Franklin

Getting To Know President Synolakis

Interview by Dafni Mitsotaki and Phoebe Moustaka

This year's magazine theme is identity. How do you define identity? Tell us about your own identity/background.

I think identity is about the way that you view yourself as part of the world. And identity is something extremely unique. We are all different. What has shaped my identity has been my studies in the U.S., where I realized that we could do things quite differently than we were doing them in Greece. One of the main lessons I learned is that meritocracy is a superior system, and it works. The other part that shaped my identity was fieldwork. Every time there was a natural disaster—mainly tsunamis—I would go there, and I realized two different things. Firstly, in places, as different as Nicaragua, Kenya, Indonesia and Japan, by seeing how people reacted to extreme disasters— I realized how similar we all are. We are all unified by our common anxieties; this was eye-opening. Also, through my fieldwork, I focused further on the consequences of climate change.

How do you believe a strong sense of identity can support young people to become independent?

I think fundamentally, we all need to believe in ourselves and our abilities, and we have to learn to be resilient. By believing in yourself and by learning to overcome difficulties, you can become independent. I realized this by seeing people who have been affected by extreme natural disasters. Once in Sri Lanka after the 2004 tsunami, I met a man who had lost his house, all of his belongings, all his family members, and yet he found the strength to pull himself back up and think about the future. As people, we have incredible strengths that we must learn to harness and develop a “growth” attitude. I have very little patience for people who say that it can't be done. I think that if people



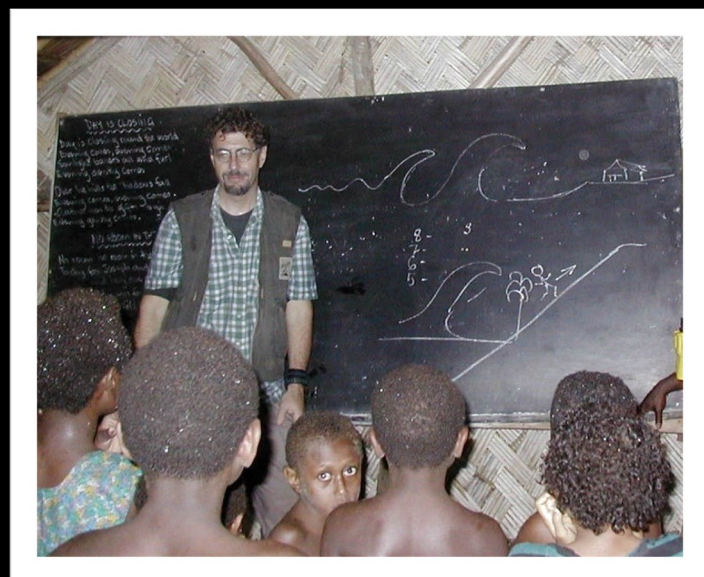
really believe in themselves, they can do wonders.

How did your experience and education at Athens College compare to the education students at Athens College are getting today?

Athens College was a very different school—it was much smaller, it had a boarding school, and was all boys. It was a much more elitist school, in the sense that everyone that was coming in had to take exams. It was and still is a school that allows you to spread your wings. For example, I grew up in a middle-class family and had never travelled to the U.S., but I got accepted to Caltech, and my life changed. Another difference, one that I want to bring back, is that then there was not any class consciousness. We were really not aware of any socioeconomic differences, partly because the school was so good at equalizing us and also because Greek society was not into conspicuous



“Every time there was a natural disaster—mainly tsunamis—I would go there, and I realized two different things. Firstly, in places, as different as Nicaragua, Kenya, Indonesia and Japan, by seeing how people reacted to extreme disasters—I realized how similar we all are.



consumption. I'm hoping we can preserve this at the College.

Each of the presidents of Athens College has been unique and brought something to the school. What do you hope to bring to the school? What do you want your identity as the president to be?

I want to bring in broadly two different things. Firstly, I want to start with climate change and the environment. I want to set Athens College on a course to be sustainable, to be carbon-free. We have to educate the entire Athens College community. I want to impart to the community that this is a really serious issue that will affect this and future generations. I have several plans for this. I also want to bring in inclusiveness. I want to make Athens College like it used to be—more inclusive and diverse, to represent all of Greek society, from refugees to the wealthy. History will not be kind to Athens College if we don't adapt and start being inclusive. We will try to bring in two students from the Home Project next year in order to achieve this goal. We are going to bring back regional scholarships and adapt exams to their local schools, so that it's a fair competition.

How difficult has it been to hold such a position, especially during a pandemic?

It's actually quite frustrating. There is so much that I want to do that I can't because of the pandemic. On the other hand, because of my background in crisis management, the main principles are the same: it takes discipline, and you take as many measures as you can afford. The hardest part has been discipline, which is something that I preach to other people, and even though it is very tempting sometimes to cut corners, in every crisis, we have to follow a strict protocol. I have wanted to take a lot of initiatives in my first year, to make the campus a little more green and sustainable. The frustrating thing is that I have to delay them. The other part that has not been easy is having this fantastic building and campus, on my own. During the lockdown, there were only 10-12 people in Benakeio, which was spooky. I was used to being

on a campus and listening to students and seeing people. But it was a very small price to pay to survive the pandemic.

What made you come back to Greece after all those years in the U.S.?

Romanticism. Athens College is an amazing place to work at with great growth potential that one can really feel the possibility of making a difference. I was attracted to coming back because I felt that I could contribute. I wanted to come back to my alma mater and to Greece, but also because I could see that I could make a difference in the day-to-day running of the school and the direction that the school is headed in. Big schools like Athens College are like an ocean liner; they change course very slowly. To be able to be part of this change—because Athens College does have the capacity to change and adapt—was a huge motivating factor to come back.



President Synolakis (center) as an Athens College student.

What are your goals for Athens College in the future?

I told you about my goal to make Athens College more sustainable, get it on course to be carbon-free by 2040. We need to make a plan and follow it to move towards a greener Athens College. The other goal is to make our school more diverse and inclusive. My third main goal is to increase the involvement of our students in philanthropic organizations, giving back and volunteering in society. In order to learn more about the students and their aspirations, this year I asked to read the anonymous personal statements of students applying to the UK. What struck me was that, in most of them, there was no bigger picture and no

true desire to make a difference and change the world. By encouraging more volunteer work, we could light that spark. Next year, I plan to meet with all students applying abroad to make sure that they understand this.

How do you think traditions like the Delta Speech Competition and Founder's Day help retain the school's identity?

When Athens College was founded, a number of institutions started. Each was created and adapted to meet the needs of that particular era. Many of them survived and became traditions now connected with the underpinning values and pedagogical philosophy of Athens College. Those institutions contribute decisively to the achievement of the educational and social objectives of the School and are, to this day, practices that characterize the School's distinctive character, such as the Scholarship program, Founders' Day, oratory competitions, College prizes and awards, clubs, and others that give our school its unique identity.

Are there any aspects of your education in the U.S. that you would like to bring here?

That's a very good question. The one aspect that we have less of here than in the U.S. is the focus on the arts. In the equivalent schools in the U.S., there is more focus on the arts and more focus on reading. At Athens College we had a focus on arts, but we lost it along the way. Thirty years ago, when the School was only in Benakeio, the top floor was dedicated solely to the arts. There was a very strong education in the arts, but we lost it, not only as a school but as a society. That's one component that I'm very happy and honored to announce we are working towards since we are going to build a new building dedicated to the arts, called the 'Art Hub.' We hope that the building will be ready by our centennial. The other aspect that I would like to bring back is reading. In American elite schools, reading is extremely important, and here, exactly because our curriculum is so heavy, and there is no free time, there is less emphasis on reading. Here, we have

this amazing and unique library, one of the greatest assets of the school.

Over the past year, HAEF has transitioned, and we have once again become Athens College—why is this?

As a school, we have a very strong identity and name, and slowly, we are trying to associate all the school's names with the name of Athens College. The name Hellenic American Educational Foundation is for the Association which founded Athens College; we still have it as an umbrella name. Athens College was founded by Emmanuel Benakis and the other founders in 1925. A recent decision was made to focus on the name Athens College with the understanding that within Athens College, we can have different school formations.

What identity do you hope the school to have in Greece and abroad? How do you hope to achieve this?

I'm hoping that our identity in Greece will be the school that raises the bar for all the other schools in Greece. And this is not easy. There are other excellent schools in Greece, which means we have to work harder to keep raising the bar for everybody. We have huge name recognition, but I would like to make sure that this is backed up not only by the name and campus, but also by what we do here. One part that encourages this is the reintroduction of our own books, written by the faculty, which will be a big contribution for us and Greece. We certainly have the means and the talent to write what I'm hoping will be among the best teaching books there are, which is a long tradition of Athens College. I think the other part of being leaders in education will be being leaders in creating this spirit of volunteering and public service. As a society, I believe we need people who are less self-centered, and it is very important to give back. So, this is where Athens College can pave the way for all other schools, by showing how well we can integrate different parts of our society, and thus, be a great example for our society as a whole. Athens College has a special responsibility to do so.

The Identity of the Modern Greek Citizen

By Anastasia Giannoulatou

This year, Greeks all over the world are celebrating 200 years since the beginning of the Greek War of Independence. On this occasion, it would be fitting to look at the identity of the modern Greek, the qualities that make a current-day Greek “Greek”!

It is difficult to define exactly what the identity of the Modern Greek citizen is as the term “identity” is in itself hard to explain. Therefore, to gain a better understanding, it is first necessary to define “identity.”

The Cambridge Dictionary explains that “identity” is “who a person is or the qualities of person or group that make them different from others.” So, what gives the modern Greek citizen that unique identity?

Firstly, “Philotimo” is a unique characteristic of a Greek, but it is a difficult concept to translate into English. According to G. Babiniotis, professor and Greek linguist, “philotimo” essentially means “the strong sense of personal honor and dignity.” The ancient Greek



The Ancient Greek general and politician Pericles speaking on the Pnyx, the hill where meetings were held.



The logo for the celebration of the 200 years since the Greek War of Independence.

philosopher Thales of Miletus said, “philotimo is like breathing to the Greek.” It combines many virtues: honor, dignity, pride, duty, and courage, all in the positive sense. Greeks embody their philotimo, a characteristic which endures in the modern Greek citizen.

Greeks also truly value their liberty and independence. There have been many instances in the nation’s history when Greeks have united and fought for their liberty, in most cases against a more powerful army. Despite these challenges, they fought with bravery and self-sacrifice in the name of freedom. The pride the Greeks feel for this resonates in the fact that every year, Greeks celebrate the War of Independence, and this year, on the 200th anniversary of this independence, Greeks around the world celebrate their “Greekness.”

Hospitality is another defining characteristic of modern Greeks. Since ancient times, Greeks have viewed the institution of hospitality, of “philoxenia,” as something sacred. In ancient

times, the god Zeus was believed to be the protector of foreigners and people seeking shelter. This is why he was called by the name “Xenios Zeus,” which translates to “Foreign Zeus.” Because of its importance as an institution, there was a specific procedure followed to welcome and accommodate strangers. After the owner of the house allowed the stranger seeking shelter to enter the house, he was offered new clothes, a bath, and then a rich meal. Before the guest’s departure, the host gifted him lavish presents. Today, Greeks still take pride in being hospitable, carrying the spirits of their ancestors.

Alongside hospitality, another institution that defines Greek society and the modern Greek citizen is the belief in family. The Greek family does not only include the so-called “traditional” family members—the father, the mother, and children. In most cases, it also includes the extended family—grandparents, aunts and uncles, cousins, and even those with a distant blood relation. As such, the family bonds in Greece are very tight and form the fabric of Greek society.

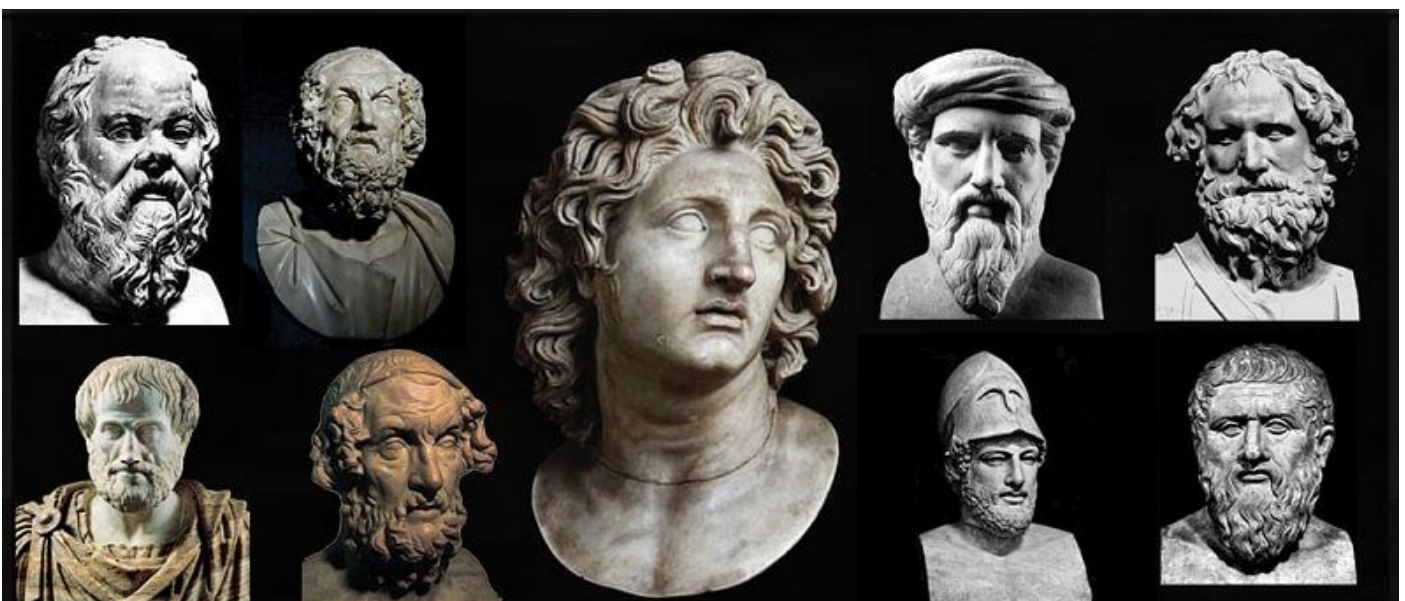
Research conducted by Eurostat in 2016 revealed that while in countries like Denmark, Finland, or Sweden children leave their parental households around the age of 21, in Greece, most leave their parental households much later, between the ages of 25-34. In fact, in Greece, the



Women wearing Greek traditional costumes dancing.

average adult leaves his home just before turning 30. Although today, one might argue that this could be a result of the economic crisis that has plagued Greece and other southern European countries for so long, this late departure from the family home is not a new trend; rather, it is a tradition of keeping the family together for as long as possible. Even today, it is not unusual to have several generations living under one roof, helping and supporting each other.

Thus, although globalization has affected many aspects of our lives as modern Greek citizens, we still have some unique characteristics that make us Greek. No matter what armies have tried to conquer us, no matter how many changes have occurred within our homeland, those characteristics endure, and they unite Greeks across time and around the world.



Greeks of the Ancient world have influenced politics, philosophy, science, mathematics, and art.



Behind the Curtain

How Companies Use Our Personal Data

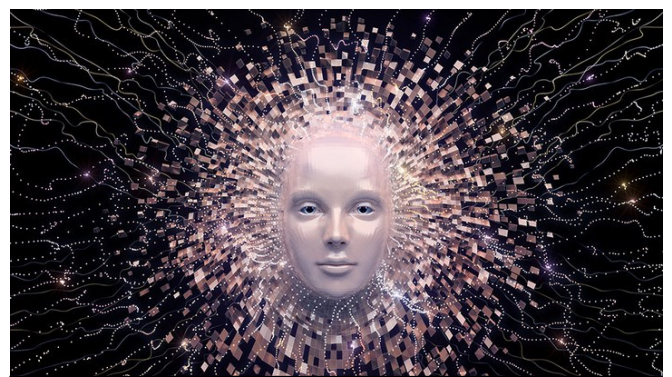
By Myrto-Jenny Macmillan

Almost each and every one of us makes daily use of the products of software corporations, such as Google, YouTube, and Facebook. Therefore, they can and do influence our lives to a great extent. In order to maximize their profits and maintain their global presence, these large tech corporations endeavor to keep their users constantly engaged and “hooked.” One way of doing this is by attaining a great deal of information about their users, information relating to their backgrounds, interests, feelings, and broadly speaking, their identities. In this way, software companies can use our own identities to bombard us with posts and advertisements, matching our tastes, so that we continue to scroll for as long as possible.

The big question, however, is how such companies collect the necessary details about someone’s profile. The answer is that they catalogue our every action online, including all the videos one has ever watched and all the likes one has made, and they even measure the time one spends on a website or on an image. Having an in-

depth understanding of our personalities, companies working in the technology industry then choose to send us personalized recommendations that contain tailor-made messages.

The next questions are: What is the effect of our data being compromised? Can that practice be used against us? Well, experts on the matter have agreed that software corporations are shamelessly preying on our need for interpersonal connection. For instance, when a friend has tagged us in a photo on social media, we receive a notification that sends us to that particular app. Have you ever asked yourselves why that notification doesn’t contain the photo itself? The answer is that the notification is just there to entice us to open the



What is the effect of our data being compromised?

app, and more often than not, we end up looking at more than what the notification was about. This is just one example of the many techniques used to lure us in. Interestingly enough, Tim Kendall, former executive at both Facebook and Pinterest, has confessed that “Knowing what was going on behind the curtain, [he] still wasn’t able to control [his own] usage.”

Little do we know, though, about how we can become actual victims of propaganda. In general, propaganda is very difficult to recognize. We are completely clueless about how some ideas can seep into our minds. That’s because such messages hide in plain sight as news reports, advertisements, and even social media feeds. These techniques can and have already been used in swaying some individuals towards one political party or the other. In particular, during the 2016 American elections, millions of Facebook users’ personal data was

harvested in order for one candidate to gain more supporters. How was that possible? The British company Cambridge Analytics firstly detected some Americans who were still undecided about whom they were going to vote for. It then tried to direct them towards their client’s political party by exploiting their insecurities and worries.

Software corporations are in every sector of our day-to-day lives. They have the power to affect our behavior, feelings, and points of view. Unfortunately, such companies can even undermine values, like democracy. We should, thus, beware of the current situation. Process every piece of information before accepting it as true or false. And remember to take everything with a pinch of salt. But most of all, we need to be conscious of how much of our own identities we want out there for the online world to use.



Online, we leave behind our digital footprints with every click.



It's in Our Nature

By Georgina Synodinou

The debate over nature versus nurture has kept scientists occupied for years. In recent times, more people believe that the way one is raised by his or her family and school, the influence of his or her social environment, actually plays an even more decisive role in the formation of someone's identity. Going back to history, however, the impressive case of Jim Lewis and James Springer is a reminder that this may prove otherwise.

Identical twins James Arthur Springer and James Edward Lewis were born in Ohio in 1940. Even though they were twins, they were adopted by two different families and didn't know about each other's existence. Thirty-nine years later, after discovering that he had a twin brother—and that he was living just 40 miles away—Springer started searching for his twin. After coming in contact with Lewis, Springer revealed, "I've always felt an emptiness."



James Springer and James Lewis

The two brothers were reunited in the winter of 1979 only to realize that they had much more in common than they had anticipated.

Springer even mentioned that when he looked into his brother's eyes, he saw a reflection of himself. All the above bring the following questions to mind: What was so unbelievable about the twins' similarities, and why would it be so hard to believe that they wouldn't share strikingly similar lives since they shared the same DNA?

No matter how similar one would expect them to be, the coincidences are uncanny. The twin brothers both had identical love lives, childhoods, interests, and habits. More specifically, their wives were both named Betty, and their exes were both named Linda. They both named their first sons James Allen. They even had similar jobs in law enforcement, and shared the same interests, such as drawing and carpentry. Lastly, their drinking and smoking habits were astonishingly similar.

The story of the two brothers eventually attracted a great deal of attention from professionals worldwide. "If someone else brought this material to me and said, 'This is what I got,' I'd say I didn't believe it," said Thomas Bouchard, a psychologist at the University of Minnesota, who was in charge of the research on the twins. In this study, they both went through more than 20 physical and psychological tests in order to identify just how similar they were by nature. The results were, as expected, fairly similar. Their medical histories were also almost identical as they had been through the same illnesses and suffered from the same health conditions.

However, Springer's and Lewis' case is not the only case that proves the importance of nature and genes in the formation of one's identity. Over 100,000 studies have been conducted in order to end the nature versus nurture controversy once and for all. Though a great deal of merit lies in nurturing children at home, at schools, and in society, it is important to take this case and others like it into consideration to determine how best to nurture each person based on the nature he or she was born with.



On Being a Mathematician

By Anastasis Varvarigos

“Identity” is a function that can take a myriad of different values, depending on the argument of the function. This function assigns each person to a group or to several groups in a way that is determined largely by that person. How people view themselves depends on the way they view the world, and vice versa, their personal theory about life and the cosmos affects the way they view themselves.

For a historian, the word “identity” moves the world as it has been the cause of many revolutions and upheavals. The perception of different identities by different people is what caused the Peloponnesian War (the Athenians against the Spartans), the Persian Wars (the Greeks against the Persians), the Nika Riots in the Byzantine era (blue or red uniformed teams in the chariot races). It is what caused the American Revolution (the English against the rising “American” identity), the Indian Rebellion of 1857 (the Indians against the British empire), the revolutions leading to the end of the Ottoman empire (different religions or patriarchs or languages pointing to a different but not always clear national identity), the Russian Revolution (proletariats against bourgeois). It is what caused the May 1968 Uprising (youths or progressives against older people or conservatives), Martin Luther King’s march (blacks against racist whites), and the contemporary riots in cities around the world (the haves against the have-nots). Such events cause historians from all over the world to burn the midnight oil every day and muse. As long

Mathematicians think in terms of numbers, mathematical models of reality, abstract spaces, and theorems that connect different concepts and can be proven based on axioms.

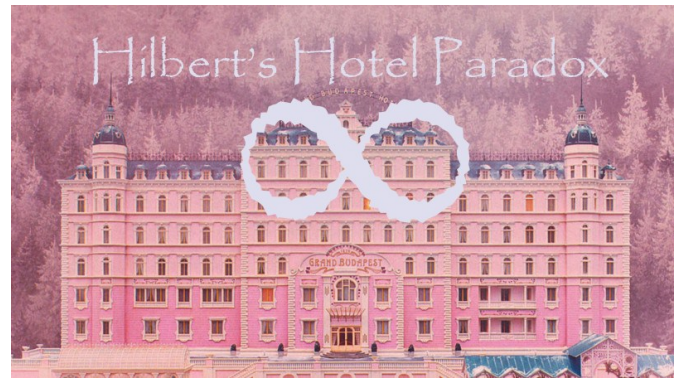
as people feel strongly about their identities, history will never end.

For a philosopher, on the other hand, the word “identity” resonates as something much deeper and more personal than the previous superficial, defining characteristics, something quite unclear and abstruse yet so interesting to think about. It is not that difficult to picture a philosophy major poised before the statue of Shakespeare shouting, “To be or not to be!” as the meaning of life is the main philosophical unknown, and the answer given to it defines a person. Your identity is the way you think and feel, your moral and philosophical axioms.

For a mathematician, however, “identity” is a different story. Instead of race!, religion!, nation!, team!, meaning of life!, mathematicians think in terms of numbers, mathematical models of reality, abstract spaces, and theorems that connect different concepts and can be proven based on axioms. A math identity is something that can be proven to always hold; it is a universal truth. It is not something relative; it is a fact on which every logical person must agree, once it has been proven.

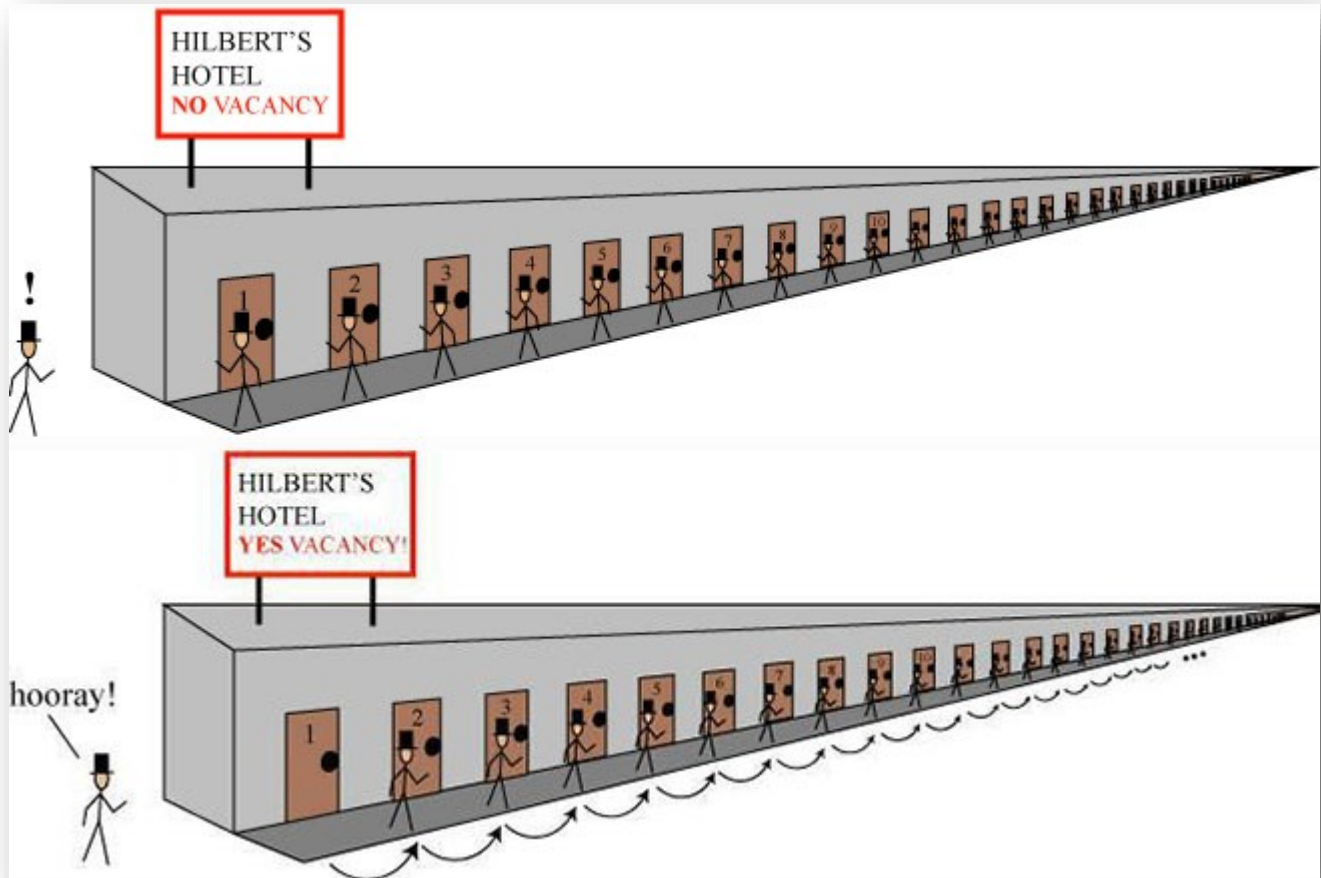
Math identities unite people under a common logic, which transcends all other identities as they are not abstract notions or choices, but truths, and these universal truths are an essential part of understanding our world and real-life situations. The following shows that being a mathematician can have its benefits because anything can be explained, even how to book a holiday hotel

You have probably been in a situation where you want to book a room at a particular hotel during your summer vacation, but the rooms are all reserved. David Hilbert took this “problem” to another level. He imagined, “What if a hotel had infinite rooms to offer! Then I would have to be the most unlucky person in the world to not find a vacancy.” However, the twist in his problem is that the hotel has an infinite number of guests occupying that infinite number of rooms. If there are infinite guests and infinite rooms, will there always be room? This is the kind of problem that make mathematicians’ hearts beat faster as they envision themselves in this exciting mathematical situation. Booking the “last” room of the hotel is not an option as there is an infinite number of hotel rooms, so no such room exists. The answer to your



problem is simple: Tell every guest to move to the next room in the hotel: Guest 1 who was in Room 1 will now go to Room 2, Guest 2 of Room 2 will go to Room 3, and so on. Even though there is no “last” room, there is always a next room. If every guest moves one room down, then Room 1 will be free for you to book. Mathematics has solved your holiday booking predicament!

In conclusion, everyone has an identity, a unique way that he views the world and the world views him. As a mathematician, I see the world through numbers and problems to be solved, theories to be proven. The constancy of number fascinates me, and as I have shown, can even help me, theoretically, resolve difficult problems in life!



Dr. Hilbert trying to book a room in a hotel with infinite rooms and infinite guests.

identity



What Makes You—*You*?



Colors are emotions, emotions of humanity, emotions of animals, and emotions of Mother Nature. To me, a painter's palette perfectly showcases my identity. It shows the plethora of color combinations an artist can create on a canvas, like I do with my emotions every day. Every day is a new challenge to conquer, and with a range of different emotions, I can overcome every challenge that comes my way easily. For instance, when succeeding on a major test, I choose to "paint myself" red and yellow, bright colors that signify happiness and excitement. Like the great Nikos Kazantzakis said, "You have the paintbrushes, you have the colors, paint paradise and get inside." Indeed, humans can achieve anything if they simply believe in it.

—Anna Stathopoulou

Art is important to my identity. Ever since I was a little kid, my parents have taken me to the theater on a regular basis. They want me to understand the value of arts and how important it is to always make them part of my life. As I have grown older, my passion for the theater has increased, as well. I have joined several drama clubs over the years, and every single one of them has been an incredible experience. I don't think I will ever get bored of the feeling of being on stage. It is a burst of emotions. When I perform, I forget everything and everyone. It is truly magical.

—Danai-Eleni Tsantila





Music is one of the most important parts of my life and is, therefore, part of my identity. For me, music is much more than a source of entertainment. Music is the melody and vibes I feel when I am in a good mood; it is also the support and advice I need when I am feeling down; it can be a means of concentration when I am studying, or it can calm me when I need it to. I could characterize music as a true friend, one who is always by my side no matter what, to share in good times and bad.

—Christianna Faka

Arithmetic & Geometric

$$a_n = a_1 + (n-1)d \quad a_n = a_1(r)^{n-1}$$

$$S_n = \left[\frac{a_1 + a_n}{2} \right] n \quad S_n = \frac{a_1[1-r^n]}{1-r}$$

$$d = a_2 - a_1 \quad r = a_2 / a_1$$

$$A_{\text{mean}} = \frac{A+B}{2} \quad G_{\text{mean}} = \sqrt{AB} \quad S = \frac{a_1}{1-r}$$

My passion is mathematics, and specifically, investigating how mathematics works, what the rules are, and how numbers are interconnected. I enjoy challenging myself and trying to find new ways to approach difficult problems. The thrill of trying to prove a specific relationship or coming up with a formula by myself is an unforgettable experience that I consider more fun than playing any game. The picture depicts one of my favorite math topics, arithmetic and geometric series, on which I've spent a great deal of time trying to come up with formulas by myself.

—Orestis Hatziapostolou

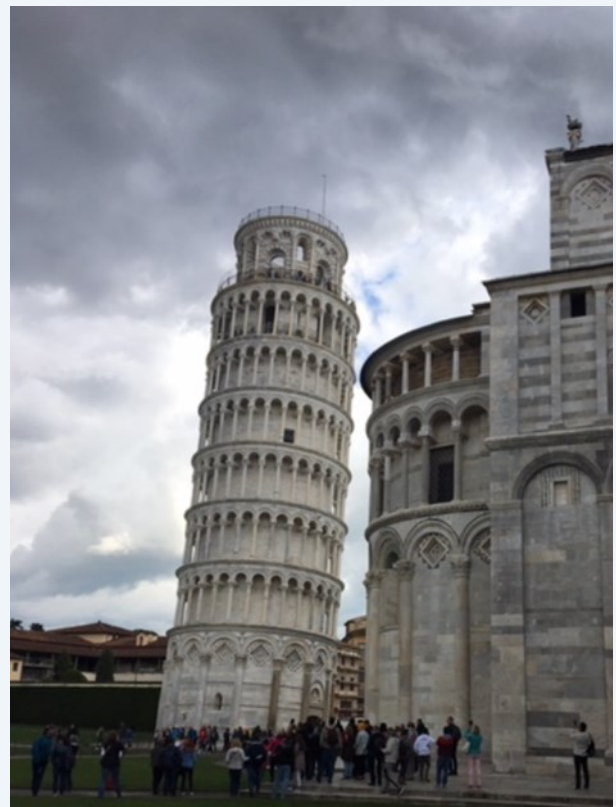


What I consider part of my identity is painting. When I paint, all my negative feelings are gone, and I escape from reality. I can truly express who I am just by using a brush, colors, and an empty canvas. The flow of time changes when I paint; a few hours feel like a few minutes. Whatever I have on my mind, I try to depict: a landscape, a face, or an animal. The most satisfying part is mixing acrylics and creating various shades of colors. Every painting to me feels like an entry in my diary.

—Thea Chrysanthakopoulou

Travelling is an amazing experience and is part of my identity. You get to know different cultures better, interact with people from other countries, and visit monuments, like the Leaning Tower of Pisa in the picture I took when I visited Italy. In my opinion, travelling is a way to escape from my daily routine and find new interests. Each country has a unique culture; therefore, travelling gives us the opportunity to see different perspectives and points of view. I believe that, through travel, you evolve and become more opened-minded. This is achieved by learning about the history of each country.

—Harrys Emmanouilidis



Part II:

Short Stories



“Be yourself; everyone else is already taken.”
– Oscar Wilde



A Recovery of Self

By Stephania Karapanou

Nothing fazes me anymore. I risk sounding cynical, but after you've led countless different lives, only to reboot everything every couple of decades, you start to struggle to find meaning behind it all. I've explored every corner of this earth, tried every profession, learned dozens of languages, tasted every cuisine, had countless lovers, wept over many graves...the list goes on. But it's all a blur. I'm not going to lie; my gradual loss of identity was somewhat conscious—I gladly allowed it to happen. “Live in the present,” they said, and so I have. Only one major problem presents itself: I have no idea who I truly am anymore.

Today, can be considered a milestone in my life. Even immortals celebrate birthdays, and today is my 1,000th. For the occasion, I'm treating myself to a sample of the countless different versions of

myself that have existed over the last millennium. Should I allow my mind to wander to the court of Henry VIII, the construction of the Taj Mahal, or the trenches of World War I? All the memories I've repressed in the past centuries are beginning to resurface. Finally, I choose to head towards the attic, where the only remaining evidence of the earlier phases of my life lies.

In an effort to avoid confronting the reality of my immortality, I haven't been near that part of the house in years. Thanks to the size of the estate, it was fairly easy to avoid, but right now, it's as if

“All the memories I've repressed in the past centuries are beginning to resurface.”

it's calling my name. Hesitantly, I make my way up the stairs, hearing a slight *creak* with my every step. I reach the top, my heart burning with agitation. My eyes immediately land on the chest containing tokens of all my eras of existence. I open it.

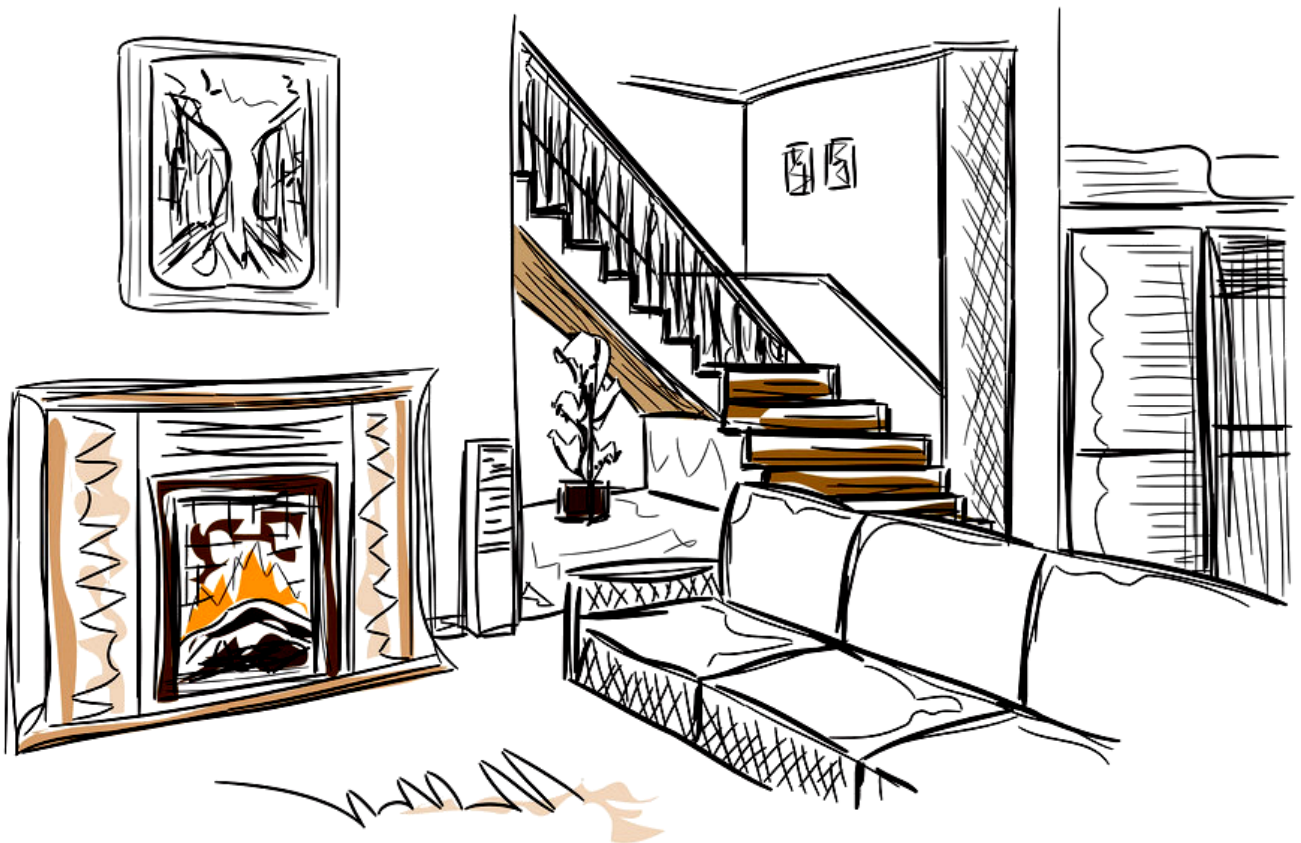
Watch out! Bullets fly around me, producing a deafening sound. The beloved comrade who tried to warn me is the one who winds up dead. Watching life leave his eyes after fighting alongside him for months scarred me. World War II—I have considered it forbidden territory for my mind to wander to for decades until I saw both our helmets in the chest.

Dear Jonathan... Reading just the first few lines of her letter, I begin reminiscing about our time together in Paris. I distinctly remember the evening I had to let her go, telling her I was to leave France indefinitely and her promising me we would correspond. The promise was

inevitably broken; the last I heard from her was in 1902.

I feel compelled to keep digging deeper into my chest of memorabilia, going further back in time. I encounter relics from the 1896 Summer Olympics, the Great Fire of London, the Salem Witch Trials, the Fall of Constantinople, and even an Aztec ritual I once attended, to name a mere few. The more I find, the more and more of myself I reclaim.

I now feel the inescapable need to showcase my mementos of the events and people that shaped me, the real me, the one I've been meticulously concealing for decades. I no longer want to appear as ambiguous and mundane as possible, trying to assimilate inconspicuously. I want to embrace everything that formed the complex mosaic of my identity, and I know exactly how to do it.



THE EMPTY SEAT AT CARNEGIE HALL

Bernard Hallstein

By Irene Protopapadaki

It was time. 8:00 o'clock precisely. The young pianist stood up and started to make her way to the stage. Her steps were vigorous and bold, and she did not hesitate for a single moment. She reached the small entrance to the stage and went straight in, her whole body beaming with pride. She was welcomed by a warm round of applause.

"This is it," she thought as she sat on the velvet piano stool and looked at the keyboard.

The pianist knew that this performance at Carnegie Hall was the most important of her life, yet she was not at all worried. She had been practicing the piece she was about to play for over a year, and she was certain she was going to play magnificently after all the hours she had spent at the piano, all the sleepless nights trying to get every single note right. She had learnt it by heart and hadn't made a single mistake in weeks. She felt she owned the piece, felt as if it were written especially for her. She placed her fingers on the keyboard, poised to play the first chord.

"What could possibly go wrong?"

She took one final glance at her audience. A single empty seat could be seen in the enormous concert hall, the one in the top left corner. Her glowing face immediately turned somber. Her rosy cheeks suddenly turned pale, and a melancholy frown took the place of her excited smile. She had remembered. Had it been any other seat, everything would have stayed the same. But this particular empty seat was a very special seat to her. This was the seat her father sat in when he had first brought her to Carnegie Hall 16 years ago. That single seat in the top left corner was all that they could afford at the time, so her seven-year-old self had to sit on her father's lap throughout the entire concert. All of a sudden, the young woman could recall the night very clearly. That was the night she decided to become a musician herself after becoming mesmerized by the piano music her father had introduced her to.

"Daddy," she had said, "one day, I promise I'll play the piano here, too!"

"I'm sure you will, dear, and I promise I will be right here cheering you on."

She had kept her promise. He had not. Shortly after their night together at Carnegie Hall, he had sadly passed away. The pianist had spent her entire life mourning his death, but she had, somehow, forgotten all about their night at Carnegie Hall. It seemed so long ago, but now she could remember every detail, every note, every expression on her father's young yet tired face...

She was awakened from her trance by a cough from someone in the audience. It was time to play now, but how could she after remembering a night like that? Every last bit of confidence and excitement escaped her the moment she noticed the empty seat.

Why should that seat be empty? That is where my father should be sitting!

The young woman was suddenly enraged. Enraged with the world for taking her Dad away, but also with herself for forgetting one of her fondest memories of him. She felt like she had

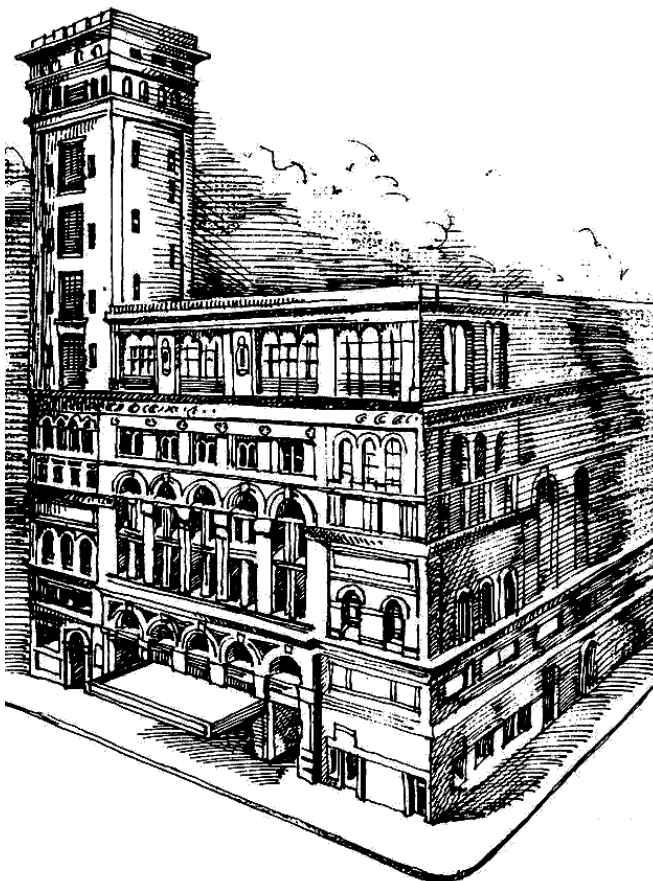
betrayed him. The person she had loved the most in the world was no longer alive; he did not keep his promise...So why should she keep hers? What was the point of playing the piano if the person who taught her to love music, the person who would have enjoyed her playing the most, was not there to listen? All she wanted was to leave without playing a single note. She needed to be alone with her memories. But that is not what her late father would have wanted her to do...

She tried to pull herself together to concentrate on playing the piece of music she had worked so hard to master. It was a forlorn piece, one of the saddest she knew. All the time she had been practicing and studying it, she felt she completely understood it. However, at that moment, she realized that in order to play a piece like that, it did not suffice that she knew the score, the harmony, or the rhythm. In fact, what one needs is to feel the sentiment behind the music. That night, at her performance, she finally saw what the composer was trying to convey by writing this work of art: sorrow. That was precisely what she tried to convey to her audience through her performance, and, judging by the exquisitely long standing ovation she was rewarded with after playing the last note, she succeeded.

The pianist couldn't help smiling as she bowed again and again, waiting for the audience to stop cheering.

"This performance is dedicated to my father with all my heart," she thought to herself.

Before leaving the stage, she took one final look at the empty seat that had changed everything. But the seat was no longer empty, it was occupied by a man she recognized as her own father, just sitting there, with a proud grin on his face.





Generation Apparatus

By Marialena
Petropoulou-Botsiou

I dreaded the moment I opened my eyes. Although I wished to remain in the careless oblivion of sleep, my ceaseless angst triggered the innate alarm of my body. My hands began shaking uncontrollably, and I was drowning in the pool of sweat that had formed inside my dark gray sweatshirt. I looked around worryingly, but the room resembled an endless abyss of darkness with no escape.

“N-No...I’m fine, I just need to calm down,” I murmured to myself as I checked to ensure my safety.

The time was 6:40 a.m. The gravity of the upcoming event demanded I prepare myself at dawn. I stood and stroked the harsh walls to locate the switch and finally view the regular sight of my room to continue with my routine. I brushed my teeth, washed my face, and tamed my dark hair. Normally, my biggest worry at the start of the day ought to be my outfit, the one thing that directly exposes my true identity to a world of strangers without the need for a single word. Yet the only element of sanity and normalcy was the presence of meaningless fabric.

Chaim was a regular community of individuals, rules, and order. Such a gigantic and acclaimed city, yet the skies were always gray, the citizens resembled robots produced in the same factory, and any form of conflict was noticeably absent. It was completely dull and dead. Decades ago, uprisings from minorities and their “ridiculous beliefs”—as they like to call them—brought absolute chaos and disruption that caused Chaim to

plummet into a period of anguish and decline. To ensure that an event like that would never reoccur, they removed any aspect of human nature, with technology.

Today, everyone has a chip implanted in their heads and a small screen that provides them with fake comfort of control. Every day, it proposes different outfits, hairstyles, activities, phrases that appear “trendy” and popular. The more you follow these patterns, the more likable and stylish you seem, the greater a score out of 10 you receive. When you reach the age of 18, your Generation Day comes, when your final score is calculated in front of everyone; you either receive a high social status or are exiled and forced to live at the borders with the Unjust.

“Good morning, Aidan!” gushed my father with a wrinkled smile that betrayed his excitement.

“Hi, dad,” I sighed and looked at my mother, who couldn’t bear to face me.

“I hope you’re as ecstatic as me for today!” he exclaimed while pushing white strands of hair out of his eyes.

I didn’t bother to answer, so I ate my cereal in silence and immediately left the suffocating space of the kitchen. I stepped onto the cold pavement and shifted uncomfortably in the awfully tight jeans the machine had suggested I wear to maintain my 8.7 average.

“What’s up, Double A? Do you like the nickname? It stands for Aidan Ashford. The screen

To ensure that an event like that would never reoccur, they removed any aspect of human nature, with technology.

proposed it, and I love it!” shouted my neighbor, Sam, with his glistening hazel eyes and a friendly thin grin that stretched to his ears.

“Sure, Sam,” I grinned and walked faster to avoid further awkward interactions.

The air was cold and the sky perpetually cloudy, but I was sweating from the woolen turtleneck that supposedly fit the occasion. Pedestrians that crossed in front of me wore a sweet smirk on their faces, nodded with regard, and then returned to their screens. I felt trapped in a maze of live advertisements and identical spirits, so I decided to wander off and explore the capital. Suddenly, I caught a glimpse of gentle auburn hair behind the tall walls of an abandoned building at the borders. With disregard for any danger, I entered a bright room with a ravaged couch, a tall, damaged lamp, and colorful drawings on either side. It was almost empty, but it brought ease to my soul.

“Hey!” I yelled and forcefully jerked her pale arm to stop her from disappearing.

Her penetrating blue eyes paralyzed every limb of my scrawny body in astonishment as she stepped towards me and caressed my sallow skin.

“Who are you?” I mumbled under my breath in disbelief at her existence.

“Francis...but you’re not supposed to be here, it’s Generation Day. Leave before they come,” she warned with an anxious frown.

I remained speechless and observed the vivid evidence of her imagination that surrounded us.

Aware of my excitement, she giggled and lifted her worn blue dress to sit.

“Drawing is my refuge. No matter what they want us to believe, our uniqueness can’t be completely concealed. What is yours?”

“I—I...” I had nothing to say. I had explored every activity and passion known to man, yet I was unable to express my identity because I had none.

The following scarce instants of laughter and joy were the only hint of freedom I had ever tasted. Finally, away from the captivity of inhumane monitors and in the arms of those deemed “dangerous,” I found safety. Only then did I realize that the true enemy lay behind the screens of these machines, the ones I had deeply relied on to fuel my need for prominence. Francis guided me and revealed the bleak significance of my existence in this simulated world of thrill. Moments later, my screen lit rapidly and armed men with heavy black uniforms stormed in and grabbed Francis, removing her from my world forever. I stood up and rebuked them, attempting to rescue her but only managing to injure myself.

“STOP!” I cried, but to no avail.

The sudden sound of heels clicking drew my eyes to meet the stare of the leader of the Supreme Six, Ravana Shaw. Her thin silver hair was as firm as her perennial thirst for power, and her vicious sneer demanded my retreat.

“This is a shame! You can either return or be exiled forever!” she scolded, fracturing the mirrors of my gray eyes with her stare.

I stumbled and stood in front of the table of the Six. Ravana nodded with approval and pressed the button to commence the calculation. I had shamefully succumbed to their will; I had abandoned the freedom of the Unjust and their magnificent recklessness. The power of prestige had diminished the value of liberty, passion, and expression once more. Francis had revealed the wonders of this life, and I decided not to take them.



Pitch black. The only thing that someone can see from above is pitch black. The heavy winter rain drops in the darkness of the night on the city of London. Only a few souls wander around; everyone else is at home or at one of the numerous underground stations taking shelter. All the doorways, all the windows, all the possible holes that light could crawl through have been sealed for fear of the one true enemy, the Nazis. In a flat of Central London, a mother and her only child sleep with fear and anxiety dominating. Their sleep is cut short when the deafening siren awakens all citizens.

“HARRY!! GET UP!! THE SIRENS!! WE HAVE TO GO!!” Emma cries. Harry jumps immediately out of his bed, running to his mother’s bedroom with a look of distress and terror on his face.

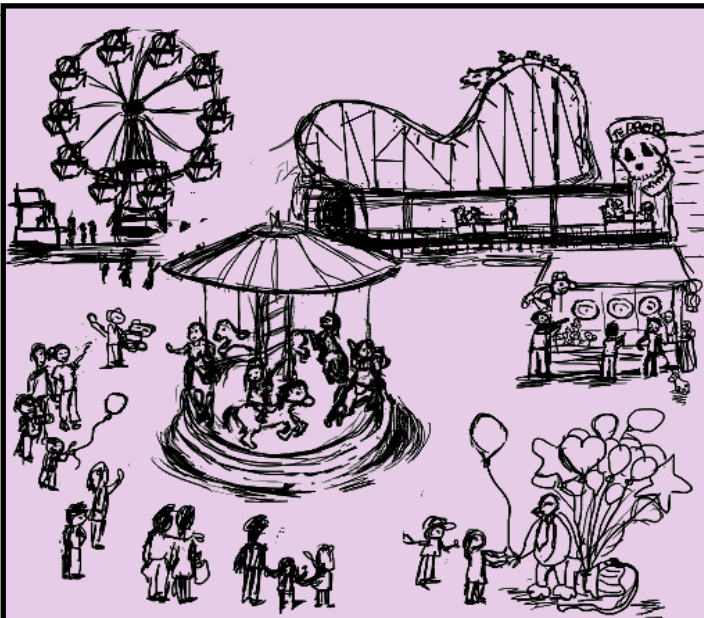
“What are we going to do?” he asks in a trembling voice. His mother is taking everything valuable she can find, piling it into her pockets, including the ration coupons.

“For now, run. We have to get to shelter as soon as possible. Take anything valuable you have, and come to our front door. I’ll be waiting,” Emma answers back. Harry hurries to his room, takes a look around and grabs the only thing valuable he can spot, his teddy bear, Sergeant

Brown. He sprints to the door where his mum is waiting, and together they leave their flat, rushing down the stairs, along with all of their neighbours.

Once they reach the front entrance, they are met by herds of people running in all directions, scared for their lives. The cries of infants and the shouts of innocent people looking for family add to the sound of German planes flying above London. Frightened, Harry looks up at his mother, and she tells him to run to the station, the closest shelter. He starts running, with his mum behind him, guarding him from any obstacle that may come his way. He never looks back—even when he hears a large explosion behind him, unaware that it was his home. The heavy droplets fall on his head, drenching his thick hair hanging in front of his eyes, partly blocking his vision. In his hands, he holds his teddy bear tightly, and in his mind, hope and salvation.

Exhausted, Harry arrives at the station and bends down, holding his knees and looking at the floor. Something doesn’t feel right, though. He raises his head and does a slow full turn, searching for his mother. She is nowhere to be seen. Harry begins to panic. He can’t remember the last time he saw her. His eyes begin to tear up like water balloons about to burst. He sits still, in the middle of the platform, gripping onto Sergeant Brown in his hands.



Back in Action!

By Christianna Tricha

Hello, I am Emilia Windsor, and I am the assistant of three retired villains. Now, do not get me wrong, the idea sounds a bit lame, but it's quite an entertaining job. These villains were once the scariest and most savage in London's history.

The first retired villain is Liam Good, and he was anything but *good*. He was known as the Shadow Bandit. Back in the day, he would go into a bank and leave unnoticed with millions in his pockets. Rumors have it that he once stole a whole safe owned by the Queen of England herself.

The second one is Logan Montgomery; however, he is mostly known by his nickname, The Fix. Before he retired, he would sabotage people's cars in his repair shop. They would come in to fix something, and he would break something else so that business kept coming. It is said that he had 'worked' on all the cars in the surrounding two blocks.

The next one is Robin Miller, mostly known as The Mastermind. He was always one step ahead. He had managed to steal two million dollars from his fourth cousin's company, where he worked as a janitor. Nobody suspected him and wouldn't have if it hadn't been for his fourth

cousin's daughter, who caught him sneaking out of her father's office with a garbage bag full of money. He tried to appease her with the classic line. She wouldn't tell her daddy, and he would bring her candy. But, of course, he forgot to bring her candy the next day.

The last and most sinister is Elias Webb, known to the ladies as Prince Charming. His go-to crime was bank robberies, but he always fell in love with one of the hostages. The thing that made him stand out the most was that he was extremely handsome. This one time, a woman refused to return home to her husband because she had fallen in love with him. He is proof that Stockholm Syndrome does not exist only in books.

Now, they might be old and retired, but that does not stop them from being as evil as ever. I wish I had been around during their heydays to see them in action.

"Emilia, love, could you please help me find my glasses? Must've misplaced them somewhere, and now I cannot find them."

"They are on your head, Mr. Montgomery."

I guess they are not as evil as they used to

be. They look kind of miserable. I wish I could do something to remind them of their crazy past when they ran on adrenaline.

“Amusement Park,” Mr. Miller said enthusiastically.

“Excuse me?”

“What did you say, Emilia?”

“No, what did you say, Mr. Miller?”

“Milk. You want some milk, Emilia?”

“Are you wearing your hearing aid, Mr. Miller?”

“You lost your earrings, Emilia?”

“No sir, HEARING AID.”

“Oh, hearing aid—give me a second to put it on. Alright, now I can hear you.”

“I asked, what did you say?”

“What did I say?”

“Amusement Park,” Mr. Montgomery jumped in. “It says it right here on the telly.”

That’s it! That is exactly what these retired villains needed – an amusement park to bring some fun back into their lives.

“I have an announcement to make, my beloved villains. I am taking you to the amusement park.”

During our time there, I saw them acting like little children. Going from game to game, collecting points, and stealing stuffed animals bigger than themselves. It was around four when we had to return home for their afternoon nap.

“Did you all enjoy yourselves?” I asked.

“It was wonderful, Emilia. I stole five stuffed animals and two buckets of popcorn,” said Mr. Good.

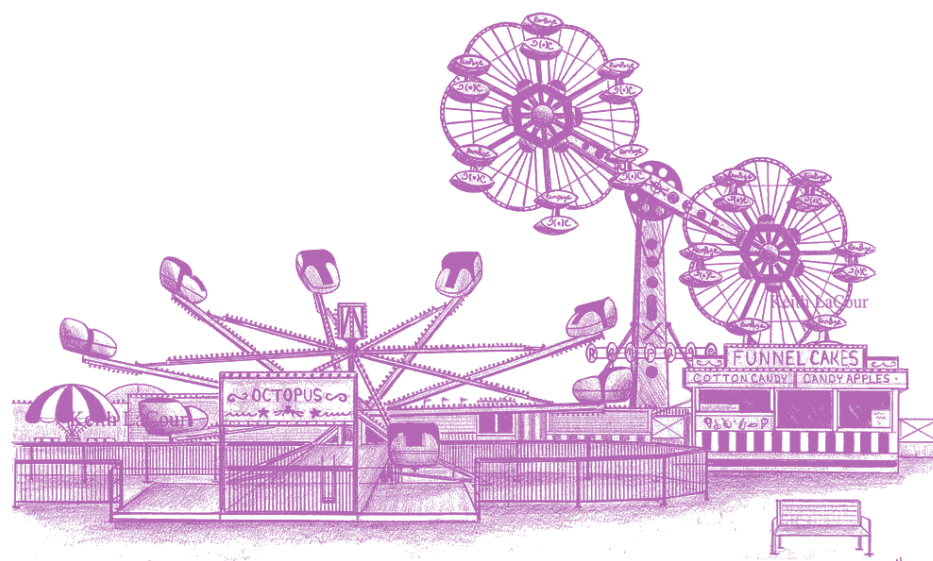
“Did you hear those screams, Emilia? That was me! I stopped the Ferris wheel, and everyone got stuck up there for more than half an hour,” Mr. Montgomery said enthusiastically.

“And I tricked the guy who was giving the points into giving me five instead of three,” laughed Mr. Miller.

“Wait—where is Mr. Webb?” I worried.

“Do not worry, sweetie,” he said. “He’s met a lady and will be home later,” Mr. Good reassured me.

I guess some people just never change.



“I guess some people just never change.”



By Ino Tegou-Georgakopoulou

The letter announcing Evangeline's death and the birth of his baby daughter, crumbled in his pocket, had last month's date. The air was crisp, and the orange leaves had started falling. You could hear the crackling of the fire they had all huddled around in an attempt to get warmer and the whispers of the soldiers recovering from one battle, getting ready for another in just a few hours.

"Hey, mate, come join us! Don't sit over there all by yourself. You'll freeze."

"What's your name again? Isn't it Wi—"

"No!" he said and went further into the woods, away from all these people he didn't know and couldn't understand. How could they live with themselves when they had taken the lives of so many people? Then again, he had killed, too, and would have to kill again.

He had pressed the trigger and shot right through men's hearts. He had shot and shot until he was left without bullets. He had spent long weeks hearing the bullets flying around him and had seen his comrades falling one by one, just like the birds he used to shoot with his father all those years ago, lifeless and surrendered to death.

The others called him again. He ignored them. They were calling him by his old name. The name he had had as a child, the name under which he had met his wife. The name she had called him—and now she was gone, killed in the bombing of their hometown. That name wasn't his, it was a different person's. A person who liked reading, who went to the park every Sunday morning, and who greeted his neighbors on the way home. A young man with silky blonde hair, a warm sophisticated smile, and eyes at once blue and grey. Eyes that believed in humanity, believed in the future. That wasn't him

now, he couldn't possibly carry the same name as before, not after all this. Right now, he was no one; that name didn't represent him any longer.

He was now X.

Suddenly, X heard a loud crash. He fell onto the ground, something pierced his legs, and all went dark.

Excruciating pain woke X up, and he abruptly opened his eyes. Where was he? He tried to move, but he felt tied down. Then, he heard the creaking of a door, and the place filled with the smell of freshly brewed tea. He tried to speak but couldn't. The person seemed to realize this, though, as she rushed to his side, cupping his face with soft warm hands. He flinched. X wasn't used to the touch.

"It's me, darling, your mother," the woman said with a sob and hugged him.

"What happened? Where am I?" he wanted to ask but couldn't. He opened his eyes once more, and this time he could see his mother's white hair and her face, once full of life but now wrinkled. X was home.

He was awoken in the middle of the night by screams, "Evangeline, Evangeline! Where are you?" He tried to understand where they were coming from. They were coming from him. But why was he screaming? And then, he remembered. X started crying. His mother walked in and tried to embrace him. He wouldn't let her, so she left the room. He stayed up all night crying. She stood by the door listening to her son suffering.

The door opened. X jumped and searched for his gun. He panicked. He couldn't breathe. They were going to kill him. Where was his gun?

"Your tea, darling," offered his mother. He

opened his eyes, still shivering with fear. His mother held the mug as he drank. He drifted off to sleep again.

Every time his eyes closed, X would see the battlefield. He would remember seeing faces he recognized on the ground, the life sucked out of them. He would remember holding the other soldiers, trying to save them as they took their final breaths.

Months passed, and every night he would wake up covered in sweat, crying for his wife, but she would never come. One day, his mother entered his room. He had started getting used to the sound of her knocks and the door's creaking. He still flinched when she touched him.

"It's time, son—you need to meet your daughter."

As he walked into the room alone, he inhaled, and he smelled Evangeline. In the corner near the window was a small crib, which he approached slowly. When he saw her, he couldn't look away. Her short blond hair resembled his own before the war had turned it grey, but the rest was identical to her mother. Her plump pink lips, her tiny nose, her eyes. The sun was illuminating her face as he took her beauty in. He had been standing there for a while when she opened her eyes and started crying. His hands trembling, he picked her up and hugged her. When she saw him, she stopped, and her small round face brightened with a smile. She reached out her tiny hands to grab his face, and it was as if she recognized him. For the first time in a year, he felt a glimpse of happiness. With her in his arms, he sat on the couch and finally slept peacefully.

His eyes opened. Suddenly. He knew it was coming, so he started walking as fast as his injured leg allowed him to towards the door to get to his

mother and his daughter. And then it happened. A loud crash and an explosion. He felt himself struggling for breath, and the house toppled on all three of them.

X was blinded by the light of the early hours, and he could sense all the people surrounding him. He heard some fragments of what they were saying, "Door frame...saved...lady...dead." Someone tried to pry his crying daughter from his arms, but he wouldn't let them. They helped them up, wrapped them in a blanket, and sat him in a chair. He stayed there motionless, looking but not seeing as the people came and went until there was no one left.

He walked towards the ruins of his childhood home. He saw his only link to the past broken and dead.

He knelt down, looking at the rubble. He didn't have any sadness left in him—he was numb. And then he saw his wife's bedside table, strangely, still intact. He opened the drawer with his trembling right hand, the one he still wore his wedding ring on. Inside he found the pen he had bought her, their wedding picture, and an envelope with his name written in her green cursive handwriting. It was dated just a few days after their daughter's arrival.

The sun was hidden beneath the dark clouds, and droplets of rain had started falling. He was in his black suit, and his daughter was dressed in a blue velvet baby dress. It was just the two of them amongst the white gravestones. The war had been over for some months now. He left a white rose on his mother's grave and looked once more at her picture before turning to walk away, holding his daughter's palm in one hand and his wife's letter in the other. After a while, he stopped. Unbearable sorrow overtook him. He sat the baby down on top

of a white stone and looked at her hands moving happily at the sight of her mother's picture.

"And in the end, we were all just humans... Drunk on the idea, that love, only love, could heal our brokenness. —F. Scott Fitzgerald," he read underneath it.

X couldn't take the pain anymore, he fell to the ground and cried for all the lost lives, for his mom, for Evangeline, for his daughter, for himself. He remembered the love he used to have for life, for all the possibilities that lay before him.

He opened the letter, the last his wife would write, the last time he would see her beautiful handwriting and hear her thoughts.

Dearest William,

The radio is playing "If I could be with you for an hour tonight." Oh, how I wish I could be with you and dance with you. I miss you so dreadfully much, I can't bear it. But I am so proud of you, my love. Your letters have been the only thing to keep me going, but now I have one more reason to live. Our little girl. She was born two days ago, and she reminds me so much of you, she has your hair and the color of your eyes. Our family is complete now! I have a picture of you near her bed so she can recognize you the first time she sees you. I believe that the war will be over soon, and you will return to us. We will live together, the three of us, in a beautiful house with a garden by the sea. We'll grow old together and watch our beautiful girl grow up with us. We will overcome all this war has cost us, we will survive it, and we will see the brighter times that are to come. That's why I think we should name her Phoenix. She is our rebirth, and she will help us rise from the ashes of the fire war has created. I found your old writings today, they gave me hope

for our future. I hope you continue to have hope inside you—I know you do.

If something happens, my love, know that you have been the reason I get up in the mornings. Your letters are the only water I need, and your old writings remind me of why we have to fight to exist, to fight for freedom. And you will win, we will win. I know we will.

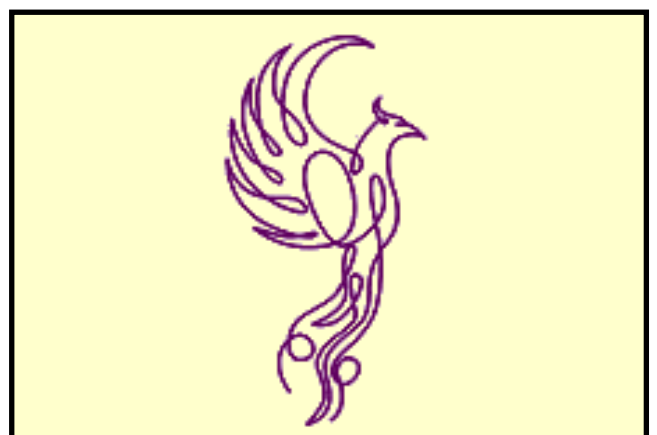
So, I bid you farewell. I will meet you in the time to come. If there is a hereafter, we will be together. Know that if my heart cannot take it anymore, my last thoughts will be of you.

I will be seeing you, my love. Stay strong for Phoenix and me.

Love,

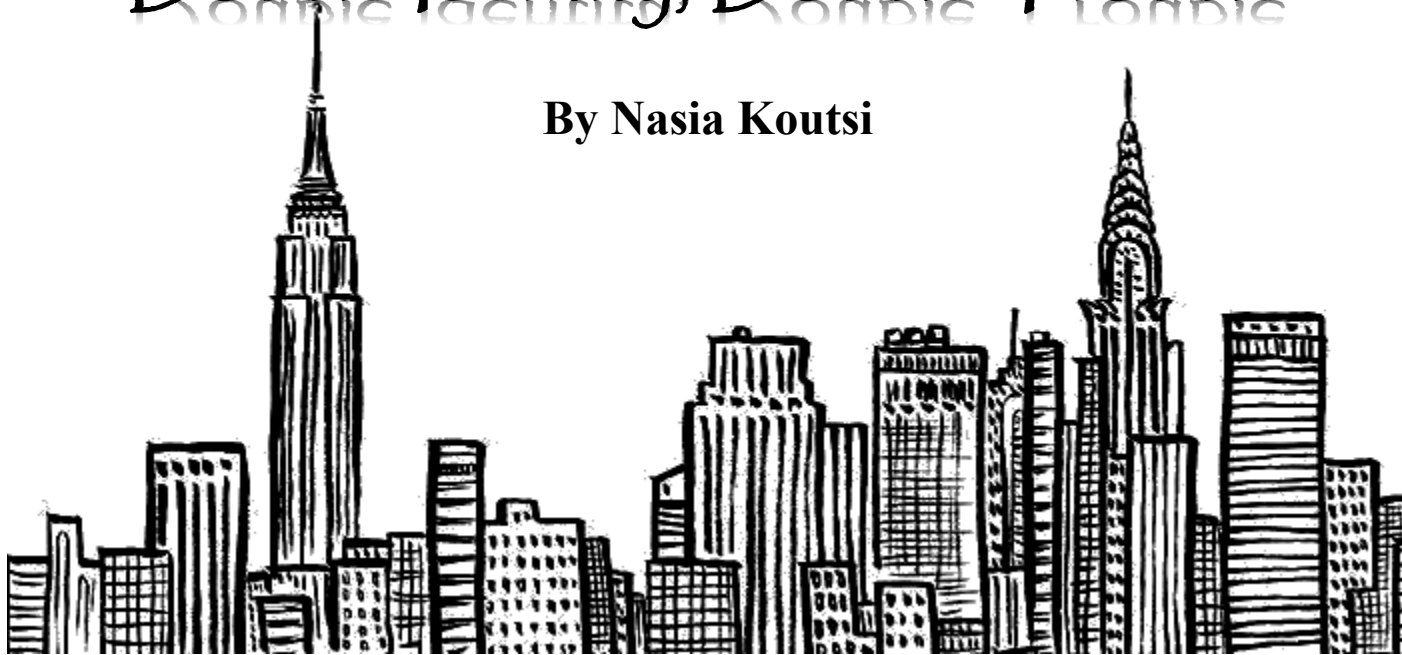
Evangeline

And so, X re-wrote his life from the ruins of his past, giving himself a new name and always holding Phoenix's hand in his own that trembled, every Sunday, following the same path with her—as they grew older together—to go visit Evangeline and his mother. He found himself; he used his old values and new lessons to guide him until one day, sitting in their garden, looking at the sea, he kissed his daughter's cheek, his hand caressing her dirty blond hair, and he finally went to meet his wife.



Double Identity, Double Trouble

By Nasia Koutsi



There was only so much to know about New York City's Glendale. The average American teenager knew of some shows that were filmed there and perhaps some notable features but no more. Sure, it was a lovely area, and it was mostly full of life, but no one truly recognized it for anything more than its teenage artist phenom going by the nickname of Calypso.

Calypso was the resident street artist who always struck at night and always created magnificent art pieces accompanied by her infamous signature. She was known around the States for her talent and versatility, her true passion for art. Such was her passion that Calypso never pondered fame or money, soaking up all the glory. People knew Calypso but never the girl behind the scenes, behind the canvas.

Lorelai Allen was just a supporting actress, an understudy, a 17-year-old girl whose reputation was nothing like her alter ego's, Calypso's. She was an average student, an average athlete, but an extraordinary artist. Of course, no one knew that. Her talent was well concealed under Calypso's mask. Her intricacy was well hidden in her apparent simplicity—it was a treasure only her

best friend, Carson Brown, had found, and perhaps the odd pig-tailed girl, Scout Paxton, who would accompany her on her art trips.

For everyone else, Lorelai was a misfit, an outcast, a gullible girl who they could get test answers from. But no one disrespected her more than Adelaide Madden, a girl whose snide remarks could only be rivaled by her obnoxious reputation, and speaking of rivalry, Lorelai and Adelaide had been engaged in one—albeit, a somewhat one-sided one since Lorelai was mostly on the receiving end of the teasing—for quite some time.

For as long as either one could remember, they had been at each other's throats. Lorelai always preferred to stay on the defensive and later vent her emotions in her art. Fun fact: most of Calypso's masterpieces had been inspired by this specific rivalry.

All the negativity that Adelaide would fuel Lorelai with would later be transformed into something beautiful, something creative. That was what made Lorelai such a special person—she was never in it for the glory, the acknowledgment. Of course, she was particularly delighted that people enjoyed and admired her work, but

Calypso and her art were mostly an escape from feuds and negativity.

Lorelai was never too good at expressing her emotions through words and had therefore created Calypso as a defense mechanism. She found solace in her art; she was content in controlling her own environment. When she was drawing and creating, she felt at ease, in control. She felt as if she could finally express all the intricacy that she concealed every day.

Out in the streets, as she blended colors together to create something great, she felt as if she were part of something bigger. But that feeling would always disappear when she stepped foot into her school and looked Adelaide in the eyes. Those eyes were so cold and menacing, so scary that they sent chills down her spine.

And on Monday, November 23rd, that feeling was no different.

“It’s true, ladies and gents of Glendale High, I am the renowned Calypso.” A voice rang through the crowded, rowdy halls of Glendale High School. Even through all the people talking among themselves, Adelaide Kane’s voice sounded perfectly clear in the school corridors—loud and booming as always. She always made sure there wouldn’t be a single person who hadn’t heard her, and she always miraculously succeeded. So when she shouted out her supposed secret for everyone to hear, they did, they all did—including a dumbfounded Carson and Lorelai who had only previously been discussing the differences between Leonardo da Vinci and Leonardo DiCaprio.

“Did I hear her right? *Please* tell me I did *not* hear her right,” Lorelai mumbled to an equally shocked Carson, who could only muster a nod in his stunned state. But she had. Lorelai had heard every word right, and so had her classmates, who were furiously gathering around their supposed heroine in delight.

A good few exclamations of pure ecstasy, admiration, and excitement were passed around. They were all things along the lines of:

“No way! Do you think I can get her to give me her autograph?”

“Never had her for the artist type, but who am I to complain?” and

“Has she truly been under our noses this entire time?”

“Carson, please tell me I am hallucinating!” Lorelai bellowed in pure anger as she watched Adelaide slowly leave her crowd of newfound admirers and saunter her way over to the two of them. Her hands subconsciously clenched into fists. Her knuckles were turning white, and her grip on her canvas (which was her entry for a rather prestigious annual university competition for seniors offering early admission to the winner and was fairly mediocre because of Lorelai’s lack of free time) tightened significantly.

“What’s this I see, Allen? A canvas, is it? Don’t tell me it’s for the college competition!” Adelaide quipped as she approached the two friends with her usual insufferable pride. Her face displayed a smirk unlike any other, and her hand was already reaching out for Lorelai’s canvas. With a harsh tug, Adelaide snatched the canvas right out of Lorelai’s enraged grasp. She took a good look at it. Her eyebrows rose. Her nose scrunched. Her mouth moved, “You think you stand a chance against the amazing Calypso with *this*?!”

“If you’re Calypso, then I’m a flying camel! I’ve seen your entry for the competition. It’s hardly anything like the art of the person you’re claiming to be. Calypso’s art is rebellious and *different*. It comes from a place within herself—it’s creative and realistic because it is based on actual emotions and expression. Yours is as narrow-minded as *you*

are!” Lorelai retorted with a red face and white knuckles. “And keep your identity-thieving hands away from my canvas!” she added as she reached out in a failed attempt to retrieve it.

“And how would you know all that about Calypso’s art, *my art*, Allen? That’s right, you wouldn’t! Oh, and about *your* ‘art,’ let me show you what I think of it and how I treat those who disrespect me, yeah?” Adelaide responded with edge in her voice. Everything about her was challenging Lorelai, egging her on. For a moment, it looked like it couldn’t get any worse than that... until it did. Adelaide brought her knee up aggressively and applied pressure on each side of the canvas, breaking it in half.

No one noticed; they were all too engrossed in the news that the incredible Calypso was attending their school. But Lorelai did. A hoarse yell tore at her throat, begging to be let out. Her insides churned, and her eyes burned with hot tears that would remain unshed. She managed a very weak “No!” before she reached out to inspect her crushed work. The carefully drawn waterfalls of the utopia she’d imagined were torn, and her piece looked more like a battlefield than anything.

Lorelai said nothing. She remained still, allowing herself to soak in the damage. She felt a hand squeezing her shoulder reassuringly, but it did nothing to soothe her. That was the cherry on top.

“Hey! Listen up! Whatever she’s been telling you, it’s a lie! She’s not *Calypso*! How could she be? Have you *seen* her works in art class? Have you *seen* her entry for the competition? She’s no artist. It’s me. I’m Calypso. I’ve made every painting, drawing, piece marked with the famous signature. And if you want proof, I can give you proof,” she told everyone decisively. All heads were looking at her. She had attracted their attention. They were all waiting for the proof, the reveal.

So, on the spur of the moment, Lorelai dug her hand into her clumsily zipped backpack and fished out a classified work she’d thrown together for herself, a prototype of her next big drawing, a rough design of the most unconventional angel the world had ever seen. She then retrieved her purple spray—the one she always used for her signature and carried around at all times—and quickly drew the mark everyone knew her for, a grand C, on the prototype she’d been holding.

That had done it. Cheers erupted; comments flew around like butterflies, and as everyone celebrated the reveal, Adelaide’s already rosy cheeks burnt red from the embarrassment.

Having seen that, Lorelai had a final boost of confidence, a final enlightenment, and with a few large strides, she approached the entry desk for the competition she’d been dreaming of, which was positioned on the right of the school’s entrance, and with a swift movement, she threw Calypso’s design, *her* design, into the designated box.

Not two days later, Lorelai Allen had won, but no, she had not solely won the competition. She had won her own life. She had owned up to being Calypso—to who she, Lorelai Allen, truly was. She was no longer going to be a trapped little girl hiding behind her anonymity. She refused to be. She was an artist. She was proud of her work, and she had finally accepted that she and Calypso were two sides of the very same coin.

Lorelai Allen had finally understood—art was beautiful, but so was she.



RED LIPSTICK



By Smaragda Economides

IT was over. Darkness. Pain. Unbearable pain. All the love, the laughter. Gone.

He had loved me, but I wasn't enough for him. I really tried—I tried to convince him that I am worth loving. Worth respecting.

His love turned into poison, but I couldn't see the toxicity.

The day I met him, it felt like the world had stopped. Every time our eyes met, my stomach churned, and my smile expanded from ear to ear. A feeling so overwhelming and intense, it traveled up my chest and made it hard to breathe. I got lost in his deep brown eyes which sparkled when lit up by the rays of the sun. I was genuinely happy. Pure joy and unconditional love. The kind of feelings that you can only dream of.

Travelling around the world because of my parents' jobs has been a blessing and a curse. Integrating into new cultures was always a part of moving that was very challenging for me. It's a

process that takes time and effort as you can't adjust to a new environment overnight. The culture, the norms, the way of thinking, everything in Greece was very different from what I was used to, but Alex made everything seem so much easier because of his optimistic and cheerful attitude. He showed me around and made sure I felt welcome. When I was with him, I saw the world through rose-colored glasses; I forgot all my problems and focused only on the positive aspects of my life. Everything was ideal. At first. But as time went by, he got annoyed with me very easily.

"Stop writing the date like that. It's confusing! How many times have I told you? When greeting someone, you double kiss them. You are embarrassing me!"



However, I didn't take these comments to heart. I was aware of the culture gap, and I knew the differences between our cultures would hinder communication and understanding at some point. But the comments didn't stop. On the contrary, they became worse. I vividly remember going out on a date with him, feeling so confident and beautiful.

"You should wear more makeup...Wear red lipstick."

My self-esteem came crashing down. I wish I could have just left him, but it was like an invisible force was pulling me in. I loved him so much, I didn't want to admit it to myself that he was being mean to me. That night I went to the mall and bought a tube of bright, creamy red lipstick. I went home and immediately tried it on. In that moment, looking at myself in the mirror, I realized he was trying to mold me into the shape he wanted. Change me into something and someone I wasn't.



Girl Before a Mirror by Pablo Picasso, 1932

"That's not me," I whispered to myself. His charm manipulated me into thinking I needed to be changed.

Darkness. Pain. Unbearable pain. All the love, the laughter. Gone.

I was not enough for him. But I should be because I am worth loving. Worth respecting.

Although it hurt so much, I knew I had to let him go. Slowly, I picked up my phone and sent him a text telling him exactly how I felt: *I am worth more. I don't need red lipstick, and I don't need you. Goodbye...*

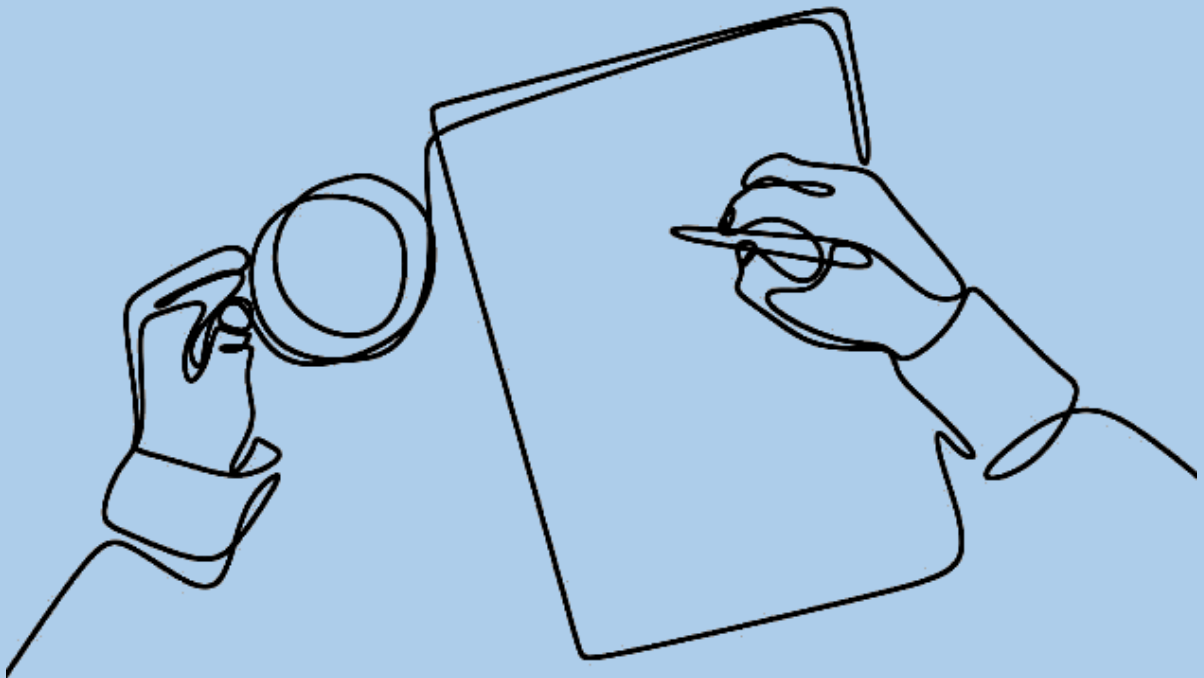
True love isn't about pointing out your partner's flaws and trying to fix them; it's about loving someone for who they are and embracing every single one of their qualities. I hope one day I experience a love in which I can be the best version of myself. With that thought, I tossed my red lipstick into the bin.

"In that moment, looking at myself in the mirror, I realized he was trying to mold me into the shape he wanted.

Change me into something and someone I wasn't."

PART III

Poetry & Artwork



Free Verse

Free verse is an open form of poetry that does not follow a prescribed pattern of meter, rhythm, or rhyme.



My Identity

By Christiana Antonopoulou

It's my family

It's my home

My friendships and experiences

It's me at my lowest

It's me at my highest

My thoughts, my secrets and my passions

It's what I'm hiding

It's what I'm showing

All of it, it's me.



Maskless

By Nicholas Komianos

Out of the raging sea,
And with a damaged soul
I was finally set free
For my face back I stole.
Yet I was missing a piece
As my mask had washed away,
But my search shall never cease
until I find who I am today...



This poem depicts the situation of the post-Covid era, when people will remove their masks and claim their faces. As they do so, they will figure out that they had never truly known their true identity, a part of which was altered during the lockdown. Yet, the time they spent by themselves empowered them to embark on a spiritual journey of self-discovery.

My Identity

By Anna Boura

What is an identity?

What is my identity?

Is it a place? Is it the sea and brown, blue, and white islands?

Is it a culture? Is it the Parthenon and Ancient Greece?

Is it a value? Is it loyalty and passion?

Is it a goal? Is it happiness and success?

Or is it the journey we choose to embark upon?

The path we choose to follow?

The difficulties, the people we meet—

That make us who we are?

That shape us and change us?

This is my identity.



Confusion

By Charis Mitrelia

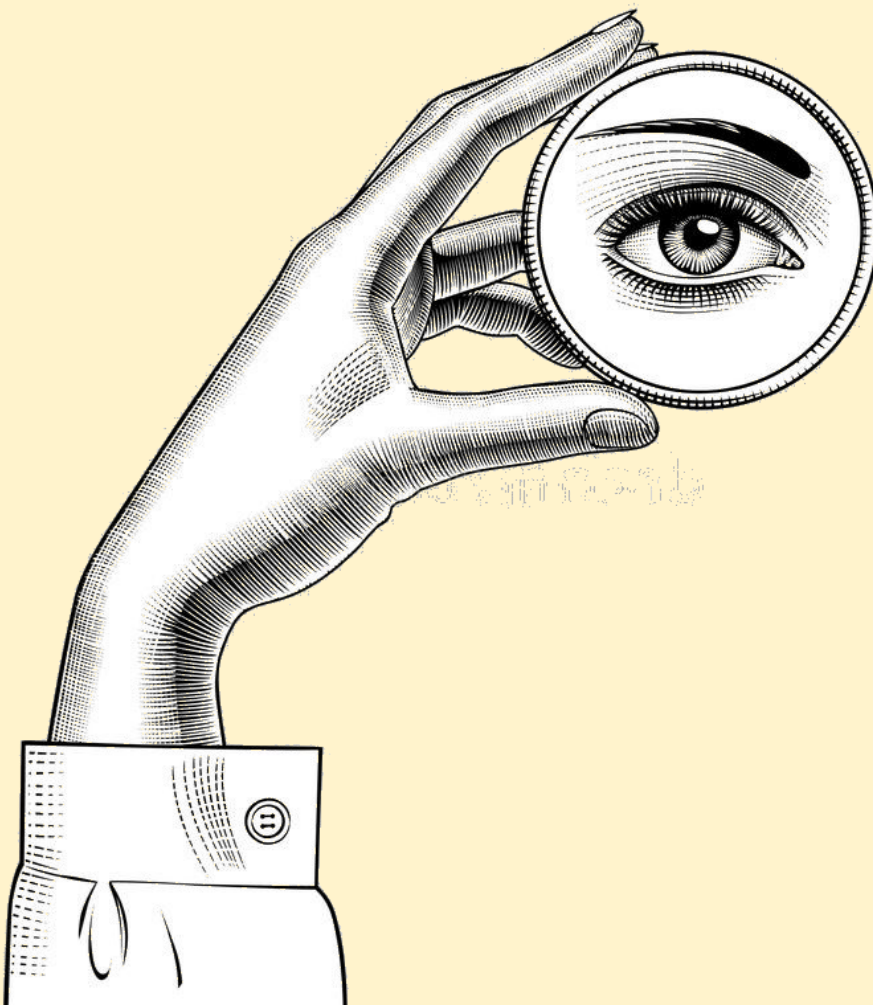
Voices running fast...
Thought the Dream was hers indeed.
Well—does she want that?



Finding Me

By Philippa Anatolaki

I don't know who I am,
Nor who I will be
But I am sure about one thing—
The world will be hard
And put a weight on me.
The changes that will come
Won't be easily undone
In and out of this world,
Finding myself is bold.
Who am I? is the question
Inevitable to my inspection.



12 Digits

By Andreas Stratigopoulos

A picture

A name

A number

All on that thin card.

Religion

Residence

Country

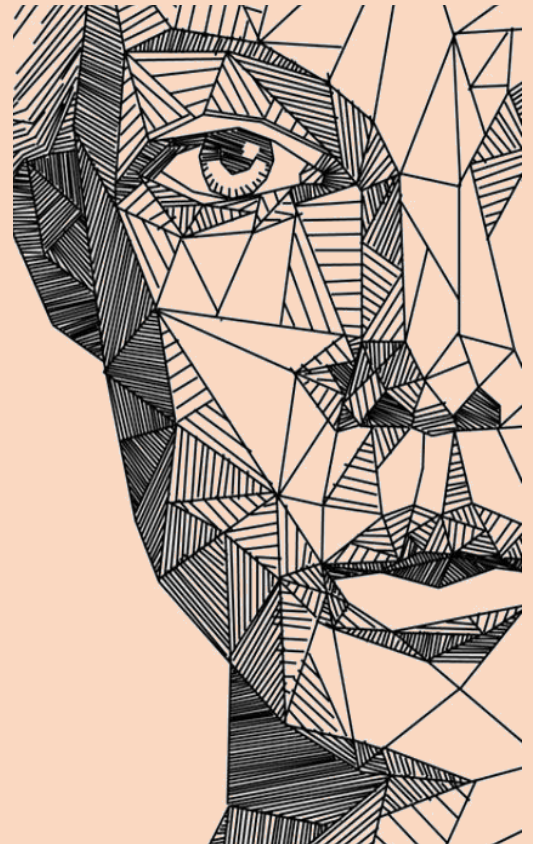
All on that thin card.

Identity in the 21st century,

A numerical value, a categorized list,

Twelve digits on a card

That replaces all within.



Free Fall

By Nayia Golemi

Who am I now? Who am I now?
What if I'm someone I don't want around?
I'm lost again, lost again.

It's the sign of the times.
Don't you cry
You'll fail. You'll blossom.
You'll fall. You'll rule.

You Are You

By Stella Anastasiadis

You come and go
You go to places
You meet people
You see different worlds
You think you're changing
You might have even already changed
But if you stop and look back
You will be able to see where
You initially came from.



The Moon We Walk On

By Elli Bravou

The world is like the moon,
And mankind is the lunar ground.
Some people have a soft surface,
And others, a hard one.
Every person leaves his footprints on this world,
And so, a desert of human paths is created -
Like harsh beauty
Material made by perfect tension and clear silence.
Every man leans in a direction
Based on their surroundings,
And they either walk early on the moon
To reach the chosen site,
Or they think of it as an extraordinary mission,
And they never reach the gentle part of the moon.
Others are brought into this world
Sinking in fulfillment,
Living on the bright side of the moon from
The moment they are born.
However, every human has a dark crater in his life
Of which he is too scared,
Afraid that they will sink in.
At the end of the day,
No matter how different one is from another,
All men share the same dream.



The House up on the Mountaintop

By Katerina Karaindrou

It's quiet.

In this house up on the mountaintop;

A snug, brick built house with but one window in its warped wooden door.

Through the window's shattered glass, Light bravely and beautifully breaks in.

In the center of its single room stands a dilapidated redwood table;

Around it - two chairs, and above it - a dusty and dusky lamp, whose Light abounds.

A young girl is sitting at that table, tasting grace and trusting it,
as she patiently waits for the guest of the second chair.

Sitting at that table, she lays down her burdens, lays down her pain.

She places her anxious heart in Light's hands as it shines above and extends beyond her.

Down at the base of the mountain that same girl is making her way to the house;

Only in this different moment in time, a scarf has replaced her hair,

Hurt has found refuge in her eyes, and Fear has stripped her of her Innocence.

How frail, scarred, and weary she is as she courageously trudges towards the mountaintop.

Yet *even* in the rising, raging wind, and facing the depth of the darkness up ahead and all around,
trusting in the Light she cannot yet see, she boldly continues her resilient ascent;

Broken on the mountain foothills, she cannot see how beautiful she is.

And perhaps, what makes her beautiful, is not her fragile, fractured appearance,
but the boundless courage in her heart that holds her shattered soul together,

as she *stays* brave;

even when the mountain seems unmovable, *even* when the path feels too steep to climb.

And perhaps what makes her beautiful is the
boldness of the faith that rises within her,
as she graciously battles the overwhelming darkness surrounding her,
as her walls come crashing down, as her knees begin to fail.
Yet despite the darkness, there is *still* a house up on the mountaintop,
And that *same* girl, in a different moment in time, is there, waiting for her.

One is fighting for the other, fueled by love and grace,
and oh, how beautiful it is,
when Light bridges brave and broken,
with the sound of a knock on the door of peace,
as the girl who was once trudging up the hill of hardship
finally arrives at the house up on the mountaintop.

And oh, how beautiful it is,
When the two girls sit at that table, in the arms of Light,
and the house becomes a *home*.



Simply Complex

By Vassiliki Bakola

It's a handmade puzzle—
Some took pieces;
Some cleared the image.
It's a house built by the owners—
Some parts took years,
Some were destroyed in seconds.
It's a home-cooked meal—
Some ingredients mixed inside,
Some flavors one couldn't taste.
It's a self-made portrait—
Some colors were vibrant,
Some brushes were once used.
It's never steady, always flowing,
Ever-changing, ever-growing
My identity.



THE GEM

By Christos Daniil

A rough gem to smooth, a gem of a heart.
The search, challenging, looking for treasure.
The search continues in a sky-blue lagoon.
Green with envy after discovering the gem.
A sapphire flame, fiery hope emerges.
Versatile identity, yet fragile.
Black-hearted waves shake the earth, trembling with hatred and despair.
Lively despair like no other.
Unique, reminding us of a rainbow of flames.

Reflection

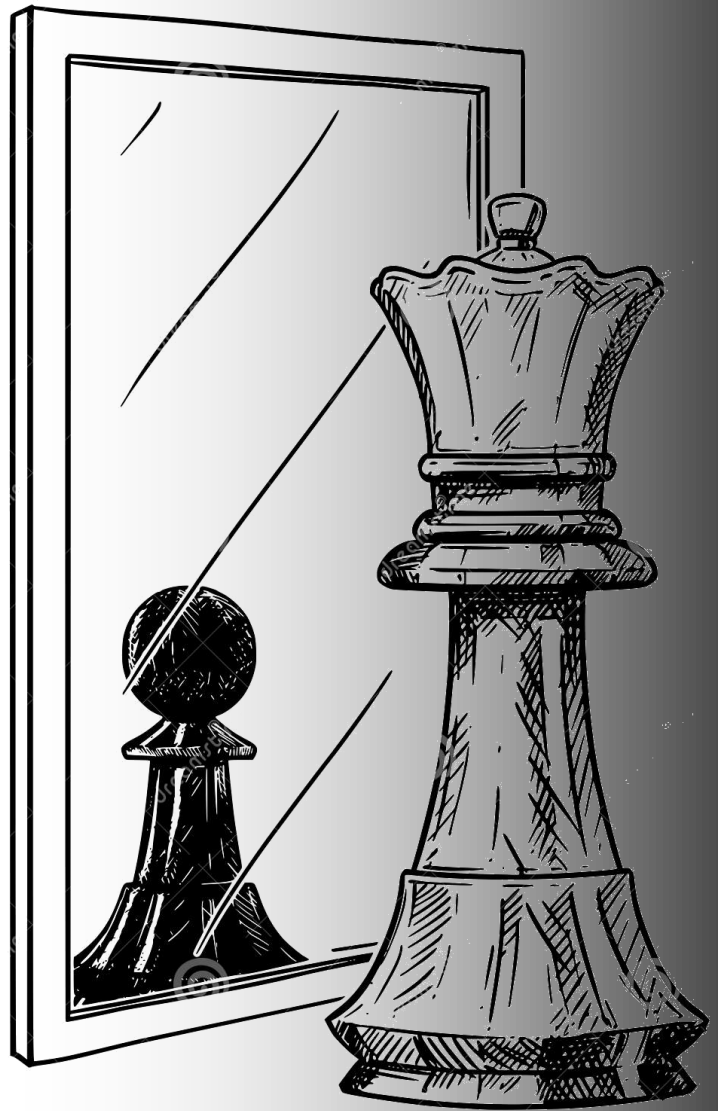
By Freddie Papakyriakou

When I look in the mirror,
As I reminisce about the past
All the lines getting clearer
Thinking of the times that passed.

I sometimes think I see his face
The man I could have been
One who walks another place
Another stage and scene.

One who didn't make the same errors
Avoided all the traps and falls
Always fearless before terrors
Hasn't paid the same tolls.

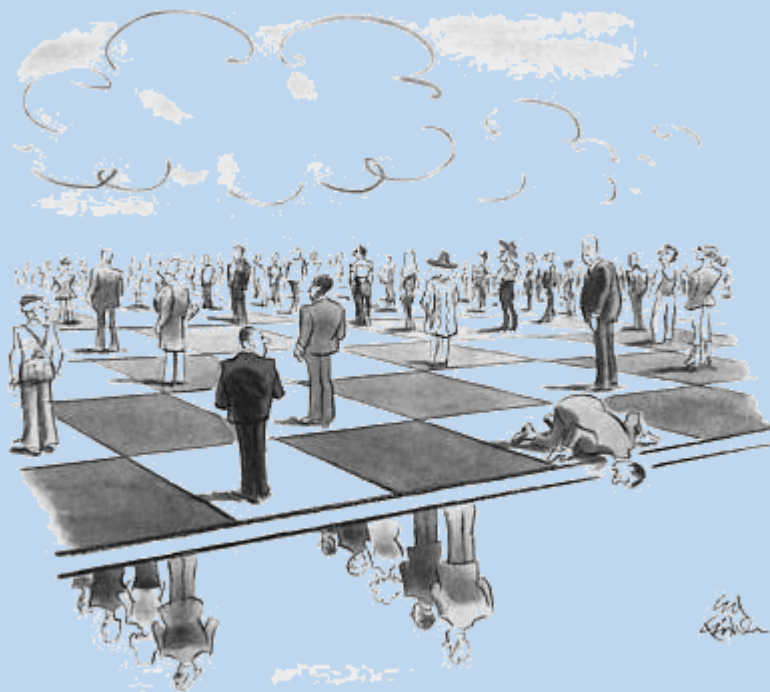
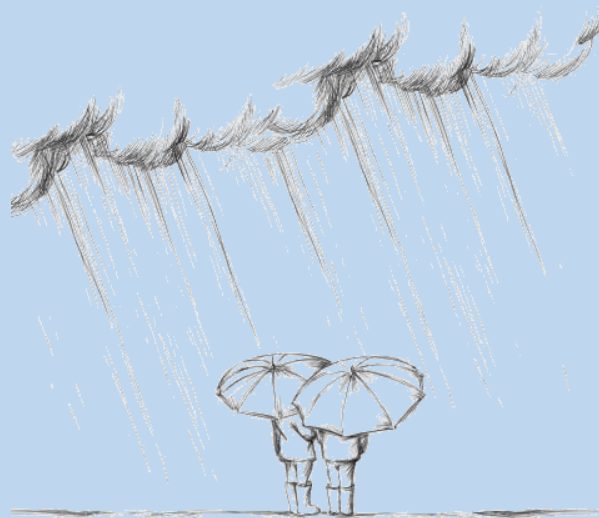
Yet I can't help but laugh with glee
I simply wish to be the same old me.



The Storm

By Konstantina Dipla

The way our lives were once connected.
The things we learnt—
what we took, and what we lost
were just enough to bring us here
and make us grow throughout the storm.
Right and wrong seem all the same.



Do It Your Way

By Lilia Mamakou

“Do it your way”
“Choose your play”
That’s what they say.
But never forget:
Your play
Mustn’t be what they want.
Do it YOUR way!
That’s what I say.

Identity Crisis

By Vassiliki Kapella

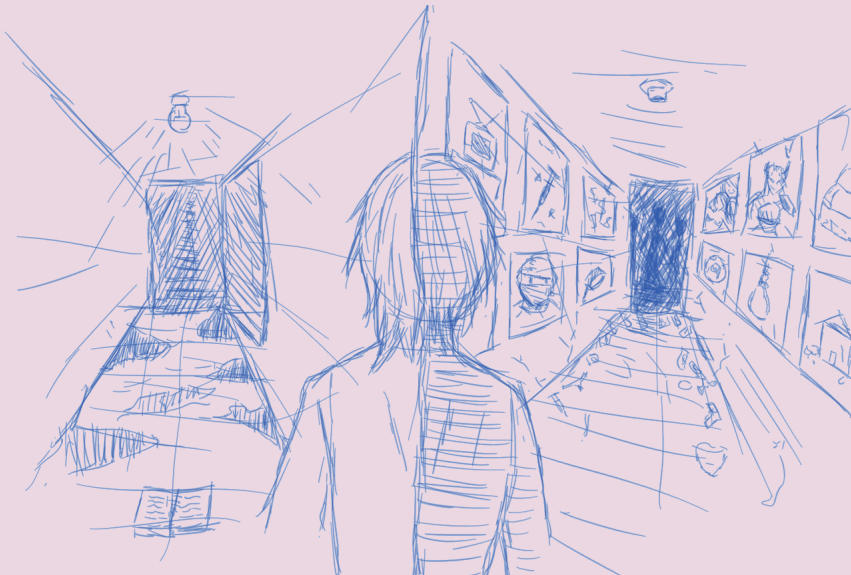
I spread my wings, and I aim high.
I touch the sky,
I see the world,
And I wonder, who am I?
The lights shine so bright;
Eternity feels small.
How can I make it in life?
The cold wind blows me away,
Back to the city.
Everything is the same.



A Part of Something

By Despina Deligianni

I've been a part of something—
Though no one asked me if I wanted to be...
But even if they had,
I wouldn't be able to say no.
What would I do?
Where would I go?
An endless cycle—that's all I know.
An abyss full of choices,
Undone by their commands.
And somehow everyone thinks
The future is in her hands...





Greek Summer

By Athina Hadjieleftheriadou

Blue water, white sand,
Tanned skin from bright sun,
Happy moments with good friends.



ID of a Greek Summer

By Sofia Georgiou

Think of a place where the sun never goes down,
Where the crystal blue sea meets the sky,
Where you can see people smiling,
Where you can taste the simplest and most complex dishes,
Where every new alley is a new adventure,
Where the word “philoxenia” has a meaning...
Greece—is the answer!



A Survivor

By Anastasia Stavropoulou



I stopped being a child
the day I met the real world.
My life became a sad song
with nothing to say,
and a small room
without any light.
The world had left me hanging
from nothing but a string.
And while it was as thin as a thread,
it was still there,
holding me from falling
and losing myself
once and for all.
And when it was ready to break,
and I was ready to fall,
I refused
to let my soul perish.
I rose from the abyss
and I flew up in the sky.
I found the colors to paint myself again,
where the world had left me grey.
And I sang the song of my soul,
that had been buried,
oh!
for so many years...

Who Am I?

By Danae Kalyva

Who am I?
Maybe I'm a bird, free and wild.
I spread my wings up high,
Chasing my dreams to the limit of the sky.
But the bird has lost its wings.
It can no longer fly.
Who am I?
Maybe I'm a string on a guitar,
All tense and firm,
Yet my melodies can find their way into your heart.
But the pressure is too much,
And the string is now broken apart.
Who am I?
Maybe I'm a shooting star,
Brighter than the warmest August day
And faster than the wind during a storm.
But the star crashed into the ground.
It will no longer light the way.
It will no longer shine.
Who am I?
Maybe I'm a drop of water,
Shapeless, colorless.
Yet, only I can take away your thirst.
But we're in the middle of a drought
And I am nowhere near, nowhere to be found.



Joy Is a Stairwell

By Aimilia Tsopela

I.

"How do I love thee?"

Whispered reason to heart's will,

"When farthest from me."

II.

"How do I love thee?"

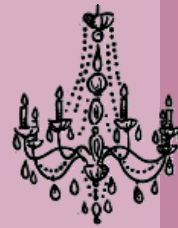
Reached the child for Saturn's ring.

"When farthest from me."

III.

"Why did I love thee?"

Woman wakes to face the dream—
glory's fleeting bliss.





Who Am I?

By John Liatsos

I am a student.

I am a brother.

I am a son.

Who am I?

I am searching...

Yet I always change.

Tomorrow I will be a lawyer.

I will be a father.

I will be a different me.

I think I understand—

Life is change.

We live on to change ourselves.

We become ourselves.

Haiku



A Haiku is a traditional form of Japanese poetry. Haiku poems consist of 3 lines. The first and last lines of a Haiku have 5 syllables, and the middle line has 7 syllables.

The lines rarely rhyme.

Youth

By Adriana Migadi

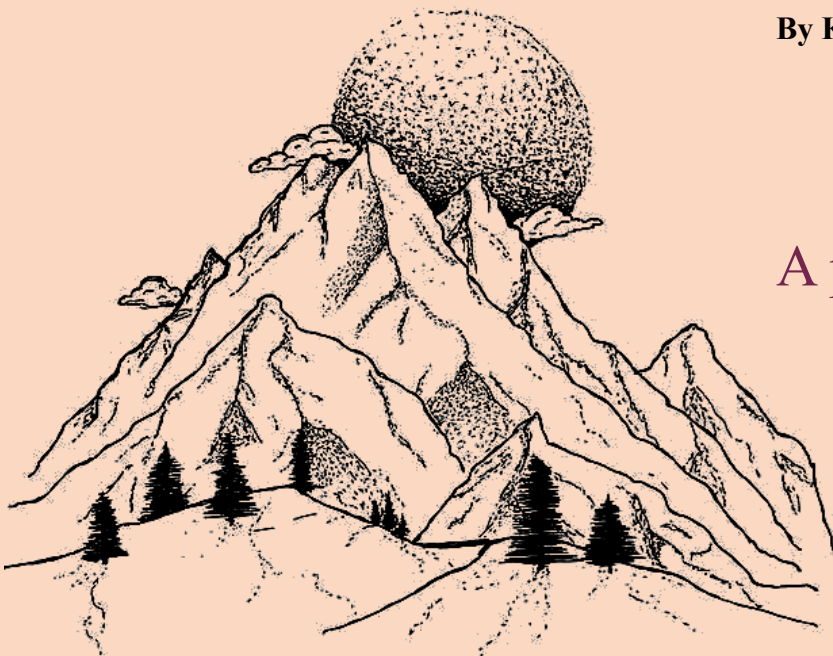
The waves of the past
Smiling, following the dreams
That hold the future.



Winter Sky

By Konstandinos Polychronopoulos

Winter sky at night
A person looks at the sky
Alone in the snow



Why, Danny?

By Athina Jamurta

Danny, a pigeon!

Can I pet the pigeon, please?

Why? It looks fluffy.



Somewhere

By Katerina Kefala

Somewhere I belong;
As long as life will go on...
I'll follow along.



The Most Dangerous Game

By Andreas Despotopoulos

Life is a game, so
Many choices to make—but did
I make the right ones?



Cinquain



*A **cinquain** is a five-line poem that was invented by Adelaide Crapsey. She was an American poet who took her inspiration from Japanese haiku and tanka.*

To Be Is To Be *Free*

By Georgia Rousta

The birds,
Spreading their wings.
Seniors' last year of school,
Ready to face the world head on—
Freedom.





Can You?

By Vasilis Bilis

I hope—
you will find the
truth in your own words.
The one that lies on Life's little
pebbles...

Don't Run Away

By Raphael Zafirelis

Stop it!
Why are you scared?
You are just being chased
by your hidden identity...
Don't run.

Sonnet



*Inspired by Petrarch's sonnets, Shakespeare adapted this poetic form to his own liking, creating a total of 154 sonnets in the late 16th to early 17th century. The structure of a Shakespearean Sonnet—also known as an English Sonnet—is as follows: three quatrains written in iambic pentameter with a rhyme scheme of *abab cdcd efef gg*, ending in a rhyming couplet. Read on to see our own adaptations of this poetic form!*

The Journey of Life

By Alkis Toutziaridis

Life is a highway; it is a harsh world,
And like a wolf, I'm fighting to survive.
My past is my handbook, it is my sword;
Without self-guided growth, you cannot thrive;
Storms exist in life, just as in nature;
The tough times form one's true identity;
Success can't be achieved without failure,
And my mind's free, filled with serenity.
Yet some might think there is no point in life,
However, we can change and control fate.
Nowadays, lack of self-esteem is rife;
Imagine a perfect world, without hate.
In the end, the determined reach the top
Since it's a race that never seems to stop.



Have a Slice of Blueberry Pie

By Ellie Jamurta

Wear your apron, wash your hands, say hooray;

It is time to bake a blueberry pie!

Sugar, spices, and berries you must weigh,

Now mix, mix, mix till you let out a sigh.

Roll the pillow-like dough; handle with care,

Crispy crust is key to any baked good.

The sweet and tempting smell try hard to bear,

I would eat it now if only I could!

A fancy, lattice crust is hard to make,

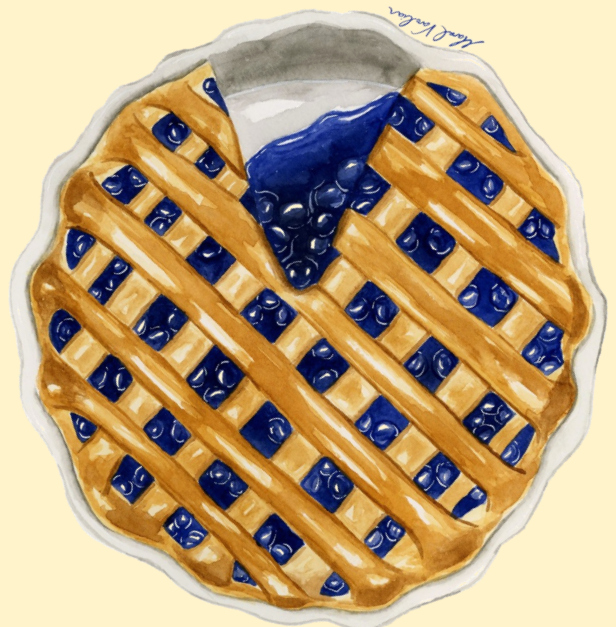
So relax. What truly matters is taste.

Brush on the egg wash, because now we bake.

Cooking takes one hour, do not make haste!

All this preparation, now I must try.

Come and have a slice of blueberry pie!



In the River's Eternal Flow

By Manolis Tolias



I kneel atop a windy shore and hear—
for days and nights while the moon dimly shines—
A river sing with memory or fear.
I plead my search won't lead to hollow pines,
But seeds of what was planted long before:
Ideas, concepts, feelings I used to know,
and not a burden born I so deplore.
So under the water's merciless flow,
I mine—though no matter how much I try,
the cold waters' flow remains eternal.
So the endless search is on with no lie,
For gold lost in watery infernal.
And, though small, a piece of silver is caught.
At last, hope is truly once again brought.



Changes.

By Mikaela Dima

Everybody just always wants to change.
They really do it for the attention—
It's as if they are playing a sick game,
Trying to achieve their recreation.

We are all just clueless pawns in God's plan,
Walking and living, not knowing our roles,
Patiently trying to just understand,
Praying that we may achieve all our goals.

Maybe it's another power above,
Always controlling of all of our thoughts,
Waiting to show us our place in this world,
Helplessly trying to connect the dots.

However, we really are just alone—
Waiting for someone to come show us home.

The Discovery

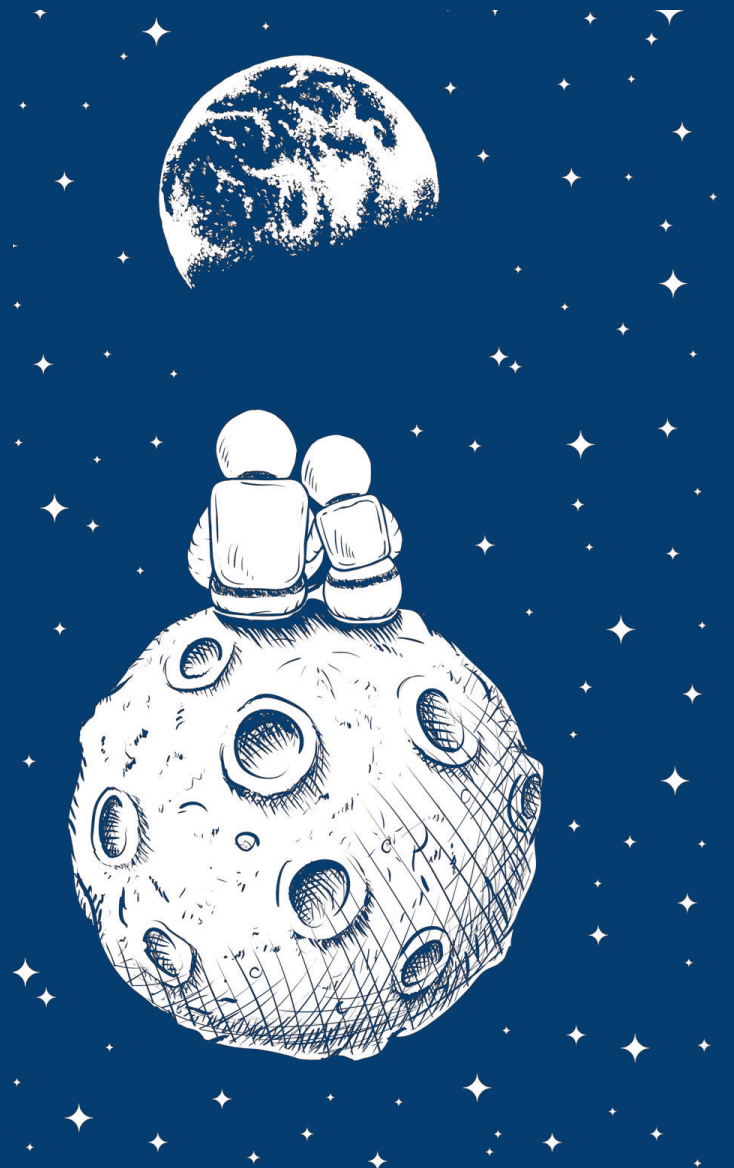
By Kimona Anastasopoulou

Be it a landscape to a blind man's eye,
Or the lost end of an infinite road,
An evanescent vision passing by,
Every memory is a secret code.

Interacting, we progress and engage,
As a combination of our choices,
Constantly drowning in the sea of change,
We reluctantly develop voices.

Yet an experiment to discover,
Silent souls in the endless universe,
As from dark shadows, we shall recover,
Exploring glory uniquely diverse.

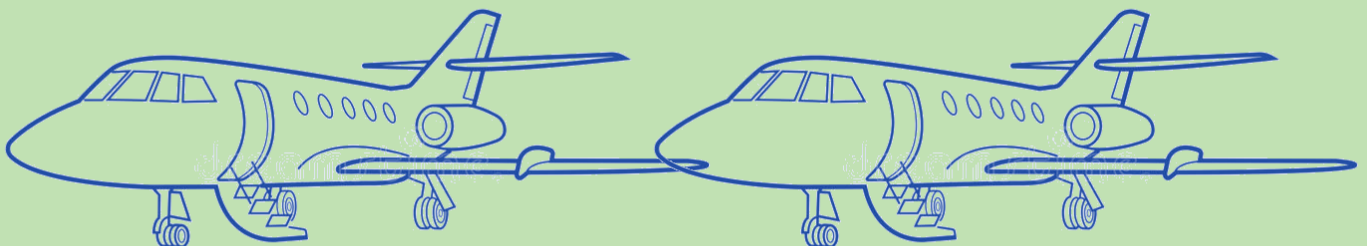
Always a story that remains untold,
Though it's a life-long journey to unfold.



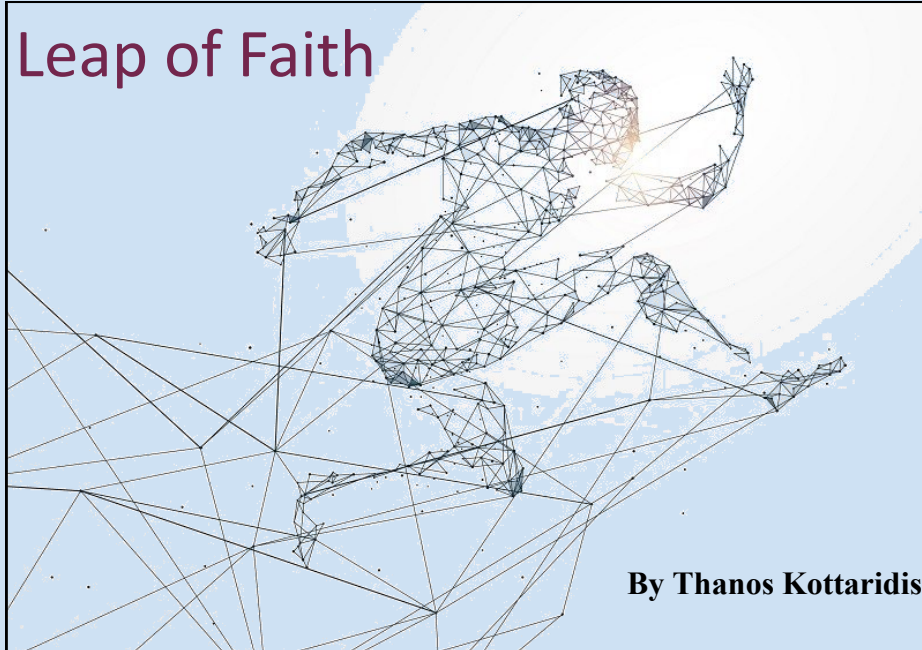
Our Year of Discontent

By Elias Machairas

Our lives have gone awry, no end in sight,
Our trips have been postponed, plans put on hold,
As if a blanket's covered the dim light,
Our hearts have grown fatigued, resigned, and cold.
No meeting, hugging —they're all banned for now,
No family gathering, no sports, no schools,
All craving freedom now, we've no clue how,
Pastimes are banned, there are too many rules.
But hark Zeneca, Pfizer give us hope,
Vaccines that come from all around the world,
They're here to save us from the slipp'ry slope,
Not let our lives become twisted and twirled.
Like flowers sleeping through a deadly war,
We're waiting patiently to bloom once more.



Leap of Faith



By Thanos Kottaridis

The gentle light of summer nights, shines on
A soulless figure fighting for some love.
He does not care or fear his being gone,
So staring down knows how to go above.
The lasting pain and guilt he wants to end,
And find the peace he always wished he had.
His shattered soul feels ready to ascend,
The only way to keep from being mad.
But just before the ending of his woe,
His doubtful mind gets filled with calls of aid.
He takes a glance of the unknown below,
For now he knows the choice he should have made.
One final breath is taken by his wraith,
And finally he takes the leap of faith.

Eulogy to the Old Me

By Stefania Karapanou



A painful realization dawned on me.

I surely am to blame for my demise.

For conformity I left my psyche.

I created the person I despise.

I renounced individuality,

With my conscience screaming in the distance.

I surrendered to homogeneity,

Despite my sound reasoning's resistance.

The lack of my idiosyncrasy

Foreignized the girl in the reflection.

My true self lies under hypocrisy.

I must be hidden in her complexion.

In myself I feel like an impostor.

Who is the real me, and have we lost her?



Found Poems

They say that one man's trash is another man's treasure. Likewise, just by reexamining everyday texts, we can turn one man's prose into our own poetry.

The Leader

By Philip Michail

"We are afraid of losing what we have, whether it's our life or our possessions and property. But this fear evaporates when we understand that our life stories and the history of the world were written by the same hand."

Sometimes, their caravan met with another. One always had something that the other needed—as if everything were indeed written by one hand. As they sat around the fire, the camel drivers exchanged information about windstorms, and told stories about the desert.

At other times, mysterious, hooded men would appear; they were Bedouins who did surveillance along the caravan route. They provided warnings about thieves and barbarian tribes. They came in silence and departed the same way, dressed in black garments that showed only their eyes. One night, a camel driver came to the fire where the Englishman and the boy were sitting. "There are rumors of tribal wars," he told them.

The three fell silent. The boy noted that there was a sense of fear in the air, even though no one said anything. Once again he was experiencing the language without words . . . the universal language.

The Englishman asked if they were in danger.

"Once you get into the desert, there's no going back," said the camel driver. "And, when you can't go back, you have to worry only about the best way

of moving forward. The rest is up to Allah, including the danger."

And he concluded by saying the mysterious word: "Maktub."

"You should pay more attention to the caravan," the boy said to the Englishman, after the camel driver left. "We make a lot of detours, but we're always heading for the same destination."

"I would like to read more about the world," answered the Englishman. "Books are like caravans in that respect."

The immense collection of people and animals began to travel faster. The days had always been silent, but now, even at night, when the travelers were accustomed to sitting around the fire, had also become quiet. One day, the leader of the caravan made the decision that the fire should no longer be lighted, so as not to attract attention to the caravan.

The travelers adopted the practice of arranging the animals in a circle at night, sleeping together in the center as protection against the nocturnal cold. And the leader posted armed sentinels at the fringes of the camp.

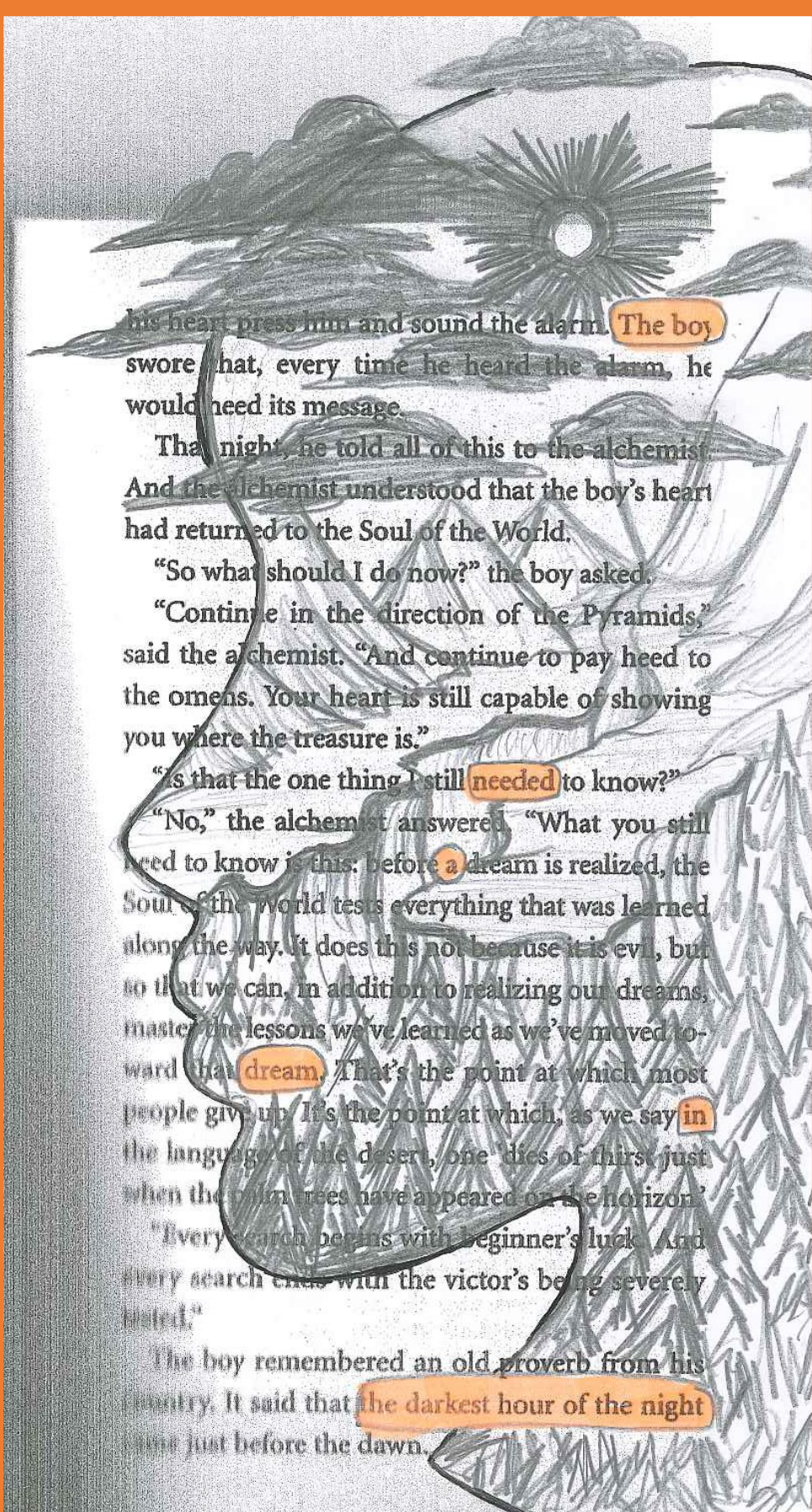
The Englishman was unable to sleep one night. He called to the boy, and they took a walk along the dunes surrounding the camp. There was a full moon, and the boy told the Englishman the story of his life.

This found poem by **Philip Michail** is based on Paulo Coelho's *The Alchemist*, a novel that presents the fact that everyone has goals, but in order to achieve them, there is a long road that must be traversed. This poem sets out to reveal we all have to set our own goals, and each of us is responsible for striving to achieve those goals.

Dream

By Konstantina Zacharaki

This found poem by **Konstantina Zacharaki** is also based on *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho. In this poem the “boy” represents all young people who go through an identity crisis and feel weak and insecure “in the darkest hours of the night” as they sit alone with their deepest thoughts. However, through the “dream,” they can feel free and powerful in whichever imaginative character they choose to be, escaping reality.



his heart press him and sound the alarm. **The boy** swore that, every time he heard the alarm, he would heed its message.

That night, he told all of this to the alchemist. And the alchemist understood that the boy's heart had returned to the Soul of the World.

“So what should I do now?” the boy asked.

“Continue in the direction of the Pyramids,” said the alchemist. “And continue to pay heed to the omens. Your heart is still capable of showing you where the treasure is.”

“Is that the one thing I still **needed** to know?”

“No,” the alchemist answered. “What you still need to know is this: before **a** dream is realized, the Soul of the world tests everything that was learned along the way. It does this not because it is evil, but so that we can, in addition to realizing our dreams, master the lessons we've learned as we've moved toward that **dream**. That's the point at which most people give up. It's the point at which, as we say **in** the language of the desert, one ‘dies of thirst’ just when the palm trees have appeared on the horizon.”

“Every search begins with beginner's luck. And every search ends with the victor's being severely tested.”

The boy remembered an old proverb from his country. It said that **the darkest hour of the night** came just before the dawn.

come from, and where is it going? Did the universe have
beginning, and if so, what happened before then? What is the
future of time? Will it ever come to an end? Can we go
back in time? Great breakthroughs in physics made poss-
ible many by futuristic new technologies, suggest answers to
some of these longstanding questions. Someday these
answers may seem as obvious as the earth orbiting the
sun (or perhaps as ridiculous as a few of the theories. Only
time (whatever that may be) will tell.

A long ago, about 350 B.C., Greek philosopher Aristotle, in
his book *the Heavens*, was able to put forward two good
arguments for believing that the earth was round, rather
than a flat plane. First, he realized that eclipses of the
sun were caused by the earth blocking the sun
and the moon. The earth's shadow on the moon was always
round, which could only if the earth was spherical.
Second, he realized that if the earth was flat, the shadow would have
been elongated, and the shape of the eclipses always
round. The fact that the sun was directly under the
equator at the second equinoxes knew that their
position. North stars were never in the sky when
south of the equator. It did in more northerly regions.
Since the North Star is over the North Pole, it appears to
be directly above an observer at the North Pole, but to
someone looking from the equator, it appears to lie just at
the horizon.

From the difference in the apparent position of the North
Star in Egypt and Greece, Aristotle even quoted an estimate
that the distance around the earth was 400,000 stadia. It is
not known exactly what length a stadium was, but it may
have been about 200 yards, which would make Aristotle's
estimate about twice the currently accepted figure. The
Greeks even had a third argument that the earth must be
round, for why else does one first see the sails of a ship

Honesty

By
Phoebe Moustaka

of my mind; a judge is bound to decide each case fairly, in accord with the relevant facts and the applicable law, even when the decision is not the one the home crowd wants.

Next, I know no better summary than the one Justice O'Connor recently provided, drawn from a paper by NYU law professor Laurence Neuborne. The remarks concern the enduring influence of Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes. They read:

When a modern constitutional judge is confronted with a "hard" case, Holmes is at her side with three gentle reminders: (1) intellectual honesty about the available policy choices; (2) disciplined self-restraint in respecting the majority's policy choice; (3) principled commitment to defense of individual autonomy, even in the face of majority action.

To that I can only say, "Amen."

I am indebted to so many for this extraordinary chance and challenge: to a revived women's movement in the 1970s that opened doors for people like me; to the civil rights movement of the 1960s from which the women's movement drew inspiration; to my teaching colleagues at Rutgers and Columbia; and for thirteen years, my D.C. Circuit colleagues, who shaped and heightened my appreciation of the value of collegiality. Most closely, I have been aided by my life partner, Martin D. Ginsburg, who has been since our teenage days my best friend and biggest booster; by my mother-in-law, Evelyn Ginsburg, the most supportive parent a person could have; and by a daughter and son with the taste to appreciate that Daddy cooks ever so much better than Mommy, and so phased me out of the kitchen at a relatively early age.

Finally, I know Hillary Rodham Clinton has encouraged and supported the president's decision to utilize the skills and talents of all the people of the United States. I did not until today know Mrs. Clinton. But, I hasten to add that I am not the first member of my family to

This found poem by Phoebe Moustaka is based on the late Ruth Bader Ginsberg's autobiography, *My Own Words*. When Ruth Bader Ginsberg died, Phoebe re-read her autobiography, reminding herself of this icon's incredible impact on the world. As a bastion of honesty, Ruth Bader Ginsberg has always been Phoebe's role model.

Ruth Bader Ginsburg was an incredible legal mind, a feminist icon, and one of the most influential women of our time; she will go down in history for fighting for gender equality and opening doors for women all over the world. The selected page is an excerpt from the speech where she accepted her nomination by President Clinton to be a Supreme Court Justice. This speech was really important since she was the second woman to ever be on the Supreme Court.

This found poem by **Adriana Angelou** is based on a passage from E. Lockhart's novel *We Were Liars*. The protagonist of the novel is in love with a boy she cannot be with because of their different social statuses, which connects directly to the theme of loss of identity. The boy lost in fire is devastated and unable to feel any better. However, his cries show a chance at redemption and is a sign that despite the fact that he is "burning," he is not giving up, and he is trying to "stay alive."

did not know him all the way. I will never see his apartment, eat his mother's cooking, meet his friends from school. I will never see the bedspread on his bed or the posters on his walls. I'll never know the diner where **he got** egg sandwiches in the morning or the corner where he double-locked his bike.

I don't even know if he bought egg sandwiches or hung posters. I don't know if he owned a bike or had a bedspread. I am only imagining the corner bike racks and the double locks, because I never went home with him, never saw his life, never knew that person Gat was when not on Beechwood Island.

His room must be empty by now. He has been dead two years.

We might have been.

We might have been.

I have **lost** you, Gat, because of how desperately, desperately I fell in love.

I think of my Liars burning, **in** their last few minutes, breathing smoke, their skin alight. How much it must have hurt.

Mirren's hair in flames. Johnny's body on the floor. Gat's hands, his fingertips burnt, his arms shriveling with **fire**.

On the backs of **his** hands, words. Left: Gat. Right: Cadence.

My handwriting.

I **cry** because I am the only one of us **still alive**. Because I will have to go through life without the Liars. Because they will have to go through whatever awaits them, without me.

Me, Gat, Johnny, and Mirren.

Mirren, Gat, Johnny, and me.

We have been here, this summer.

And we have not been here.

Yes, and no.

Crying Fire

By

Adriana Angelou

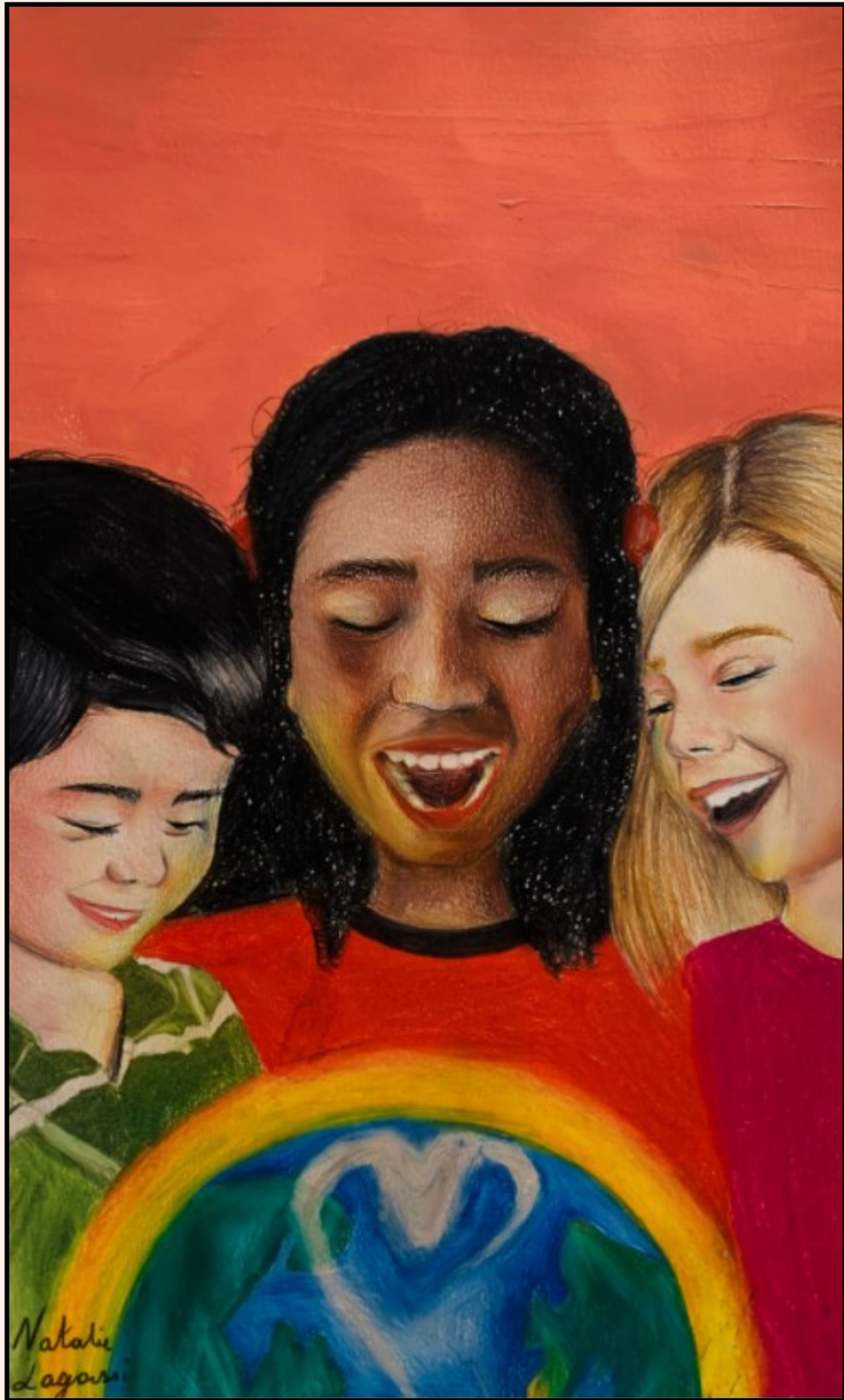
Art



This year students were invited to submit their vision of Identity for the cover of *As You Like It*. Despite the fact, or maybe because of the fact, that we were stuck at home this year, we received more cover submissions than ever before.

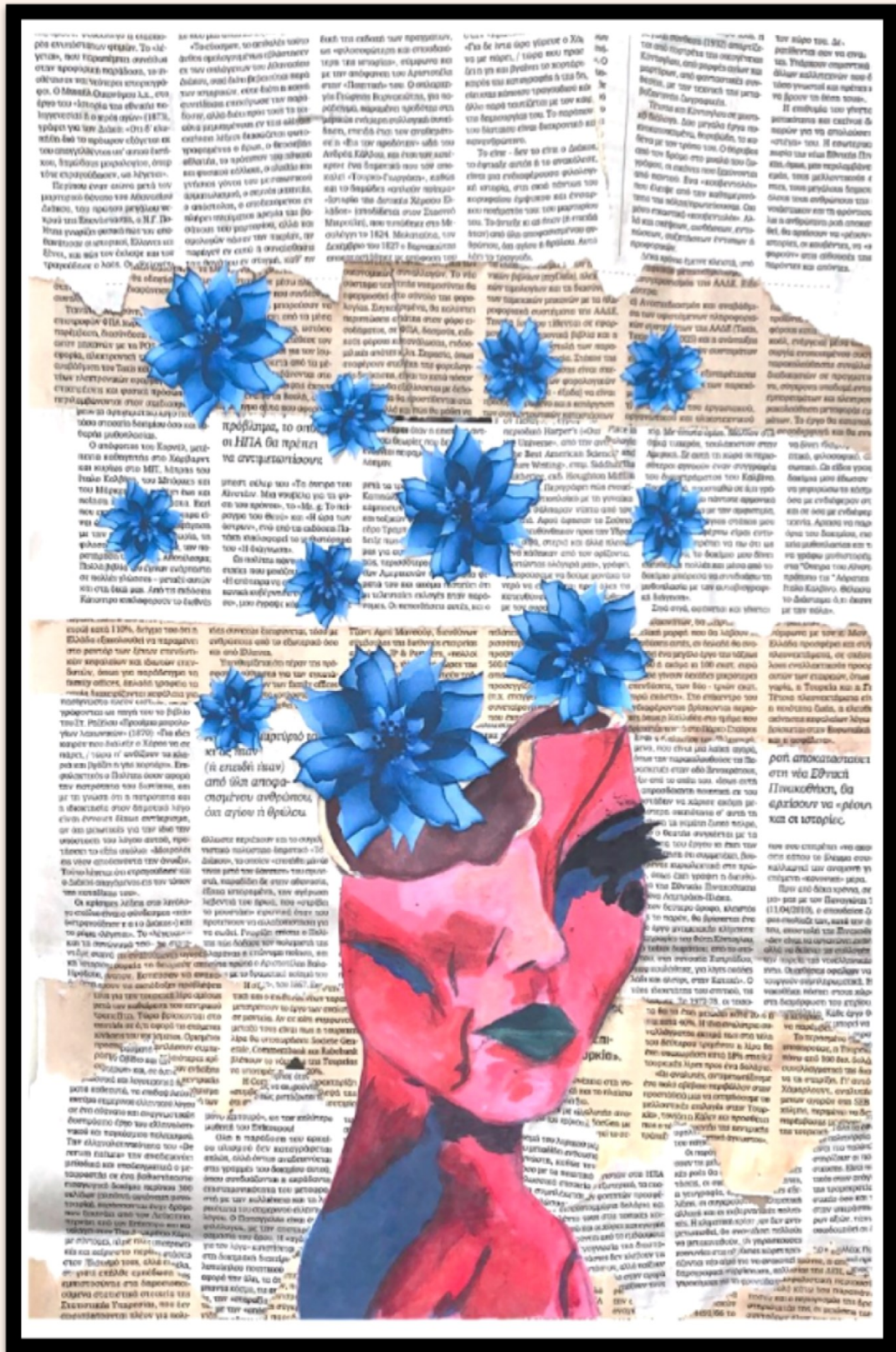
Choosing the cover was a difficult task voted for by the English department!

The following pieces of artwork received an honorable mention! What a beautiful vision of identity the students of Athens College High School have!





Artwork by Nefeli Athanasiou



Artwork by Myrto Alexopoulou and Amalia Tzoutziaridi



Artwork by Maria Argyrakopoulou

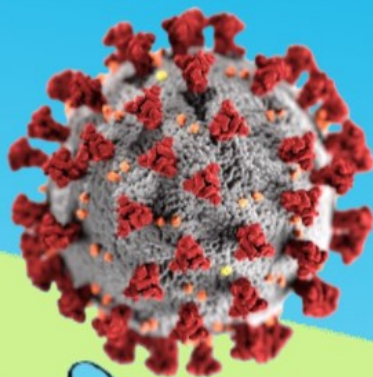




Artwork by Eleni Kousiounelou

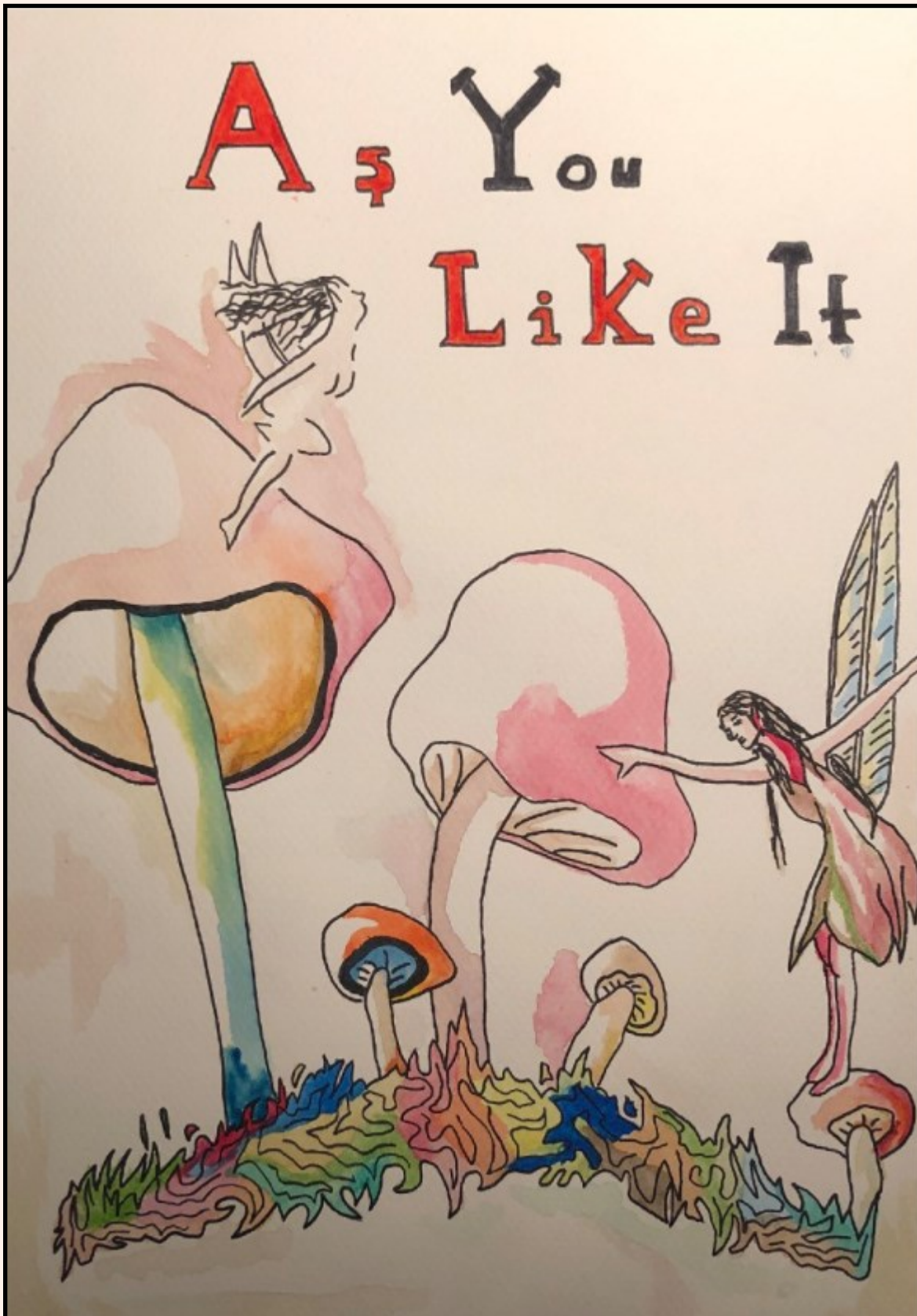


IDENTITY

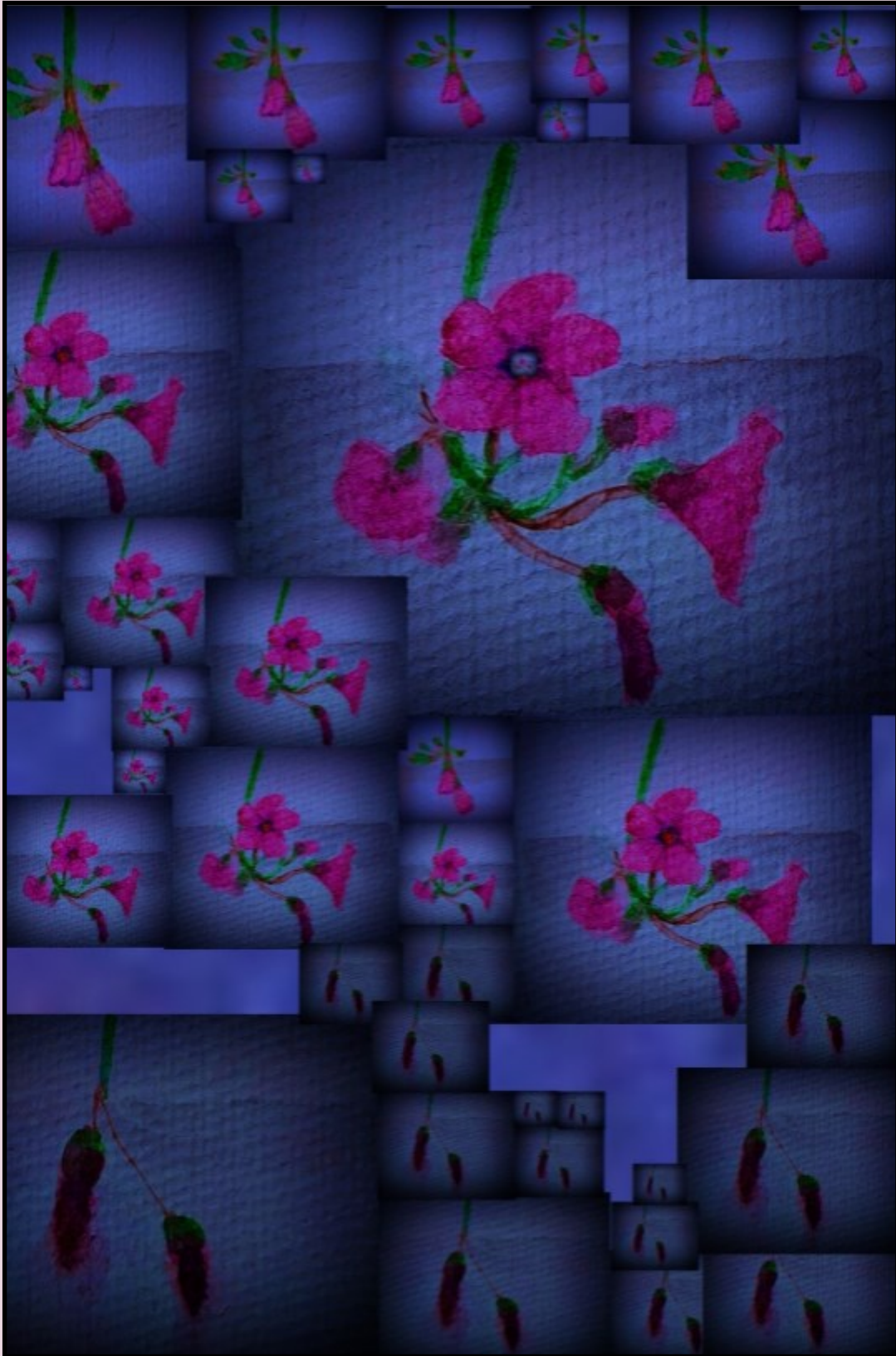


A SOCIETY RESHAPED

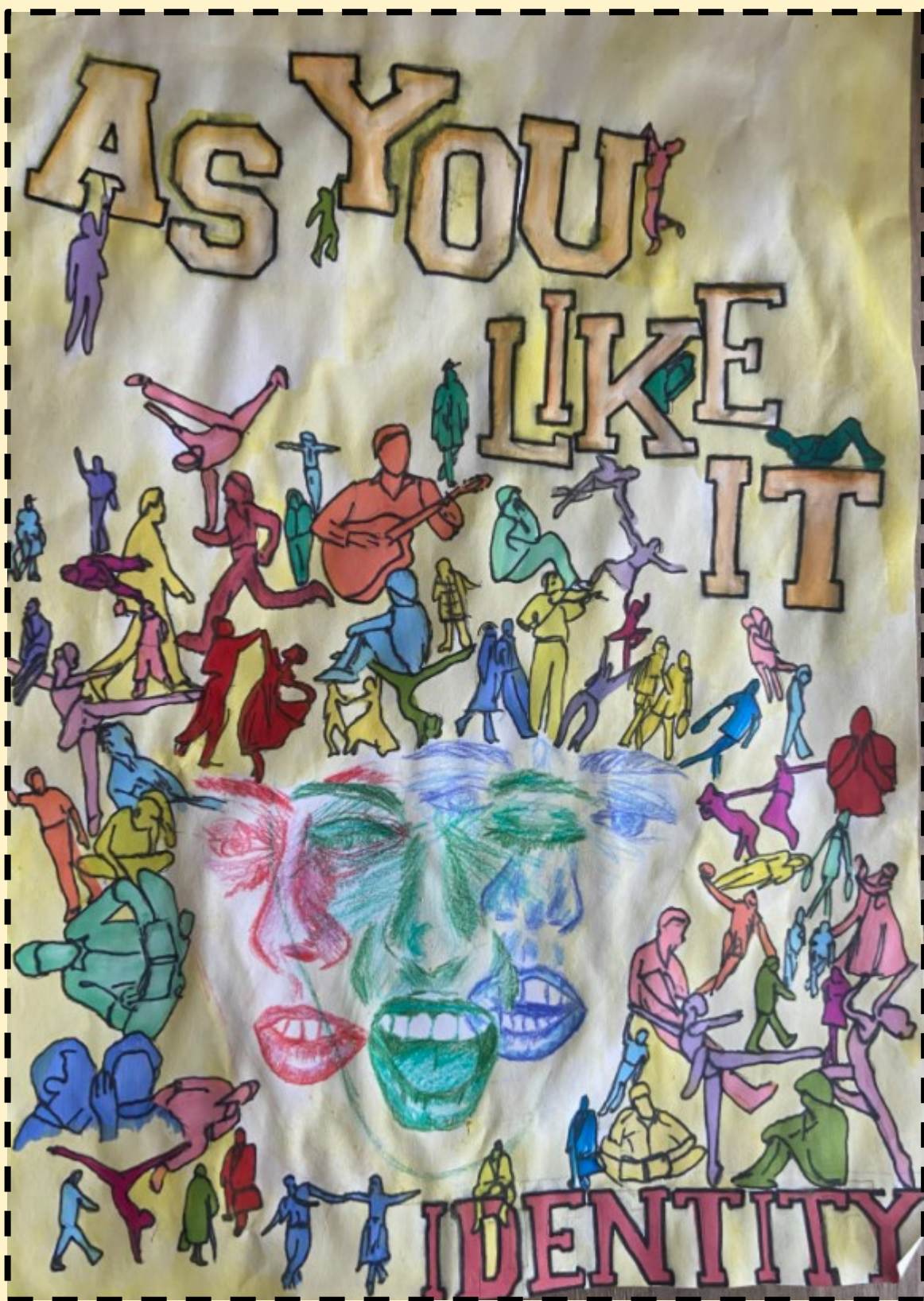
Artwork by Alkis Tzoutziaridis



Artwork by Irene Papakyriakou



Artwork by Maria Lazaki



Artwork by Anna Gkioka

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THE END

“Everything has to come to an end, sometime.”

—L. Frank Baum, *The Marvelous Land of Oz*

Until next year!