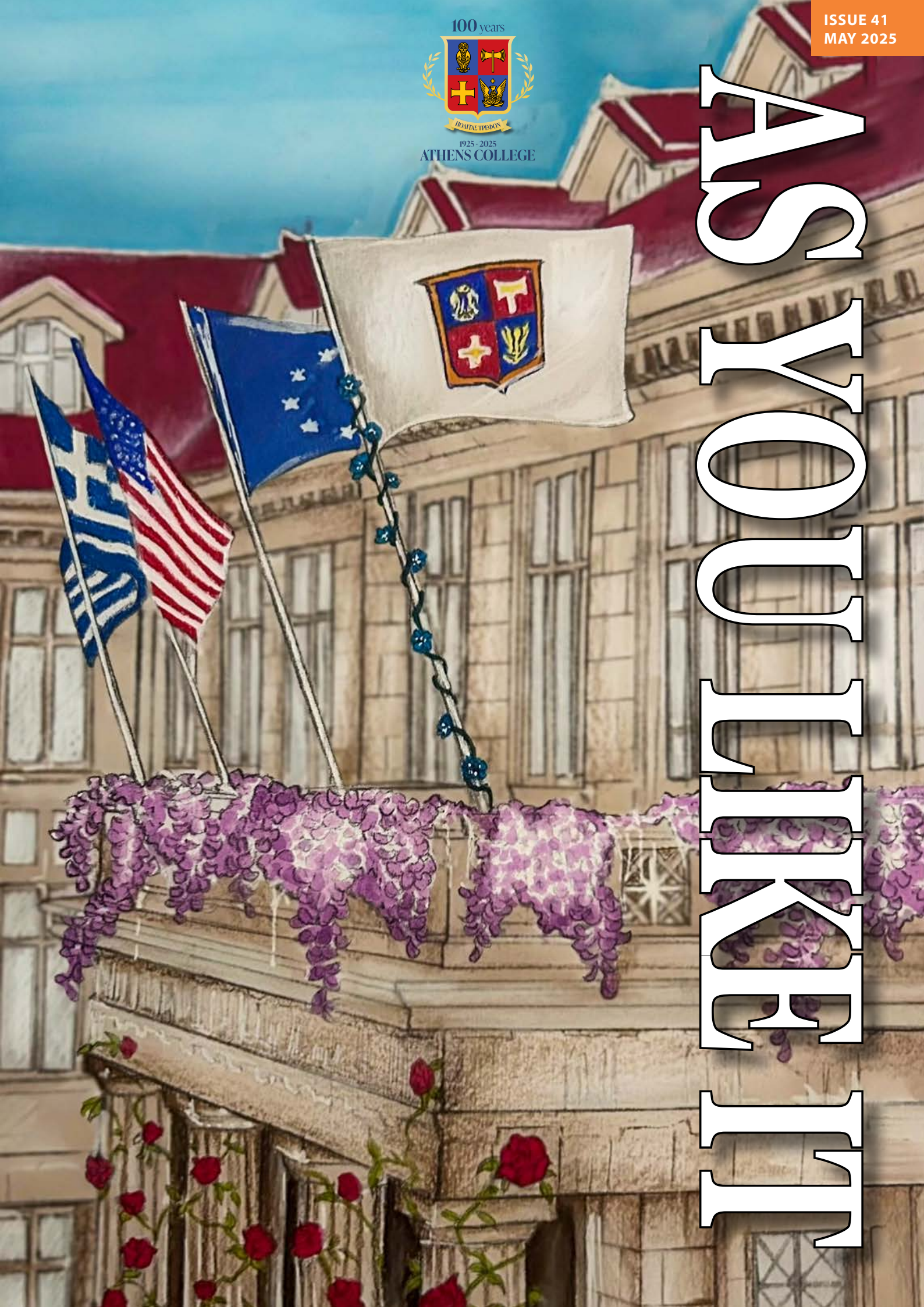




1925 - 2025
ATHENS COLLEGE

ISSUE 41
MAY 2025

AS YOU TAKE IT



This year marks a century from our School's founding, and with that,
One Hundred Years of Bloom.

Paying homage to this theme of flowering and growth,
Our Creative Director Apostolos Vasilikos designed and drew this year's cover.
Our Cover Artist Kallia Gkika brought Benakeio to life, painting in color all the
blossoms that have sprouted, literally and metaphorically, from the soil
of monumental Benakeio.

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From our Editor

As we mark this monumental occasion, the centennial anniversary of Athens College, I am filled with both immense pride and profound gratitude. A century of excellence in education, creativity, and community is no small feat, and it is an honor to reflect upon the legacy that has shaped not only our school but also the generations of students who have bloomed in these hallowed halls.

This year's edition of *As You Like It* stands as a testament to our school's enduring spirit. It is a celebration of 100 years of blooming academic and artistic growth, a reflection of the voices, the passions, and the dreams that have made Athens College more than just a place of learning. Through every page of this edition, you will find traces of our storied past, the echoes of those who have come before us, and the fervor of those who will follow.

In these hundred years, Athens College has been a bastion of ideas, where not only have young minds been educated but also encouraged to think boldly, to question deeply, and to create freely. Our school has nurtured generations of writers, poets, artists, and thinkers, each of whom has contributed to the rich tapestry of what makes us who we are. And through *As You Like It*, we continue that tradition, offering a platform where the voices of today's students can bloom.

This edition is particularly special. We gave all the students in the High School the opportunity to reflect on how the College has shaped them and helped them bloom. We received more than 100 different pieces, from poems to articles, stories to artwork, each showcasing the deep impact Athens College has had and continues to have. However, as part of our tradition, we also curated the creative spirit of the *As You Like It* Team, the legacy of our institution. The themes in this issue speak to the timeless values that have remained integral to our school's philosophy, creativity, resilience, and pursuit of knowledge. From reflections on the past to aspirations for the future, the stories and works here embody the blooming minds of this generation.

As we celebrate the centennial, we also look to the future with anticipation, knowing that the pages of this magazine and the legacy of our school will continue to be written by all of us. I am deeply proud of the contributions of each student in this issue, and I hope that you, our readers, feel as inspired and connected to our school's history as I do.

Here's to 100 Years of Bloom, and to many more to come!

Erica Dritsa

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OUR GIFT TO THE MAGAZINE

In celebration of our school's centennial, and as a late gift for our magazine's 40th birthday, this year's Creative Director, with the invaluable collaboration of the entire team, designed a logo for *As You Like It*.

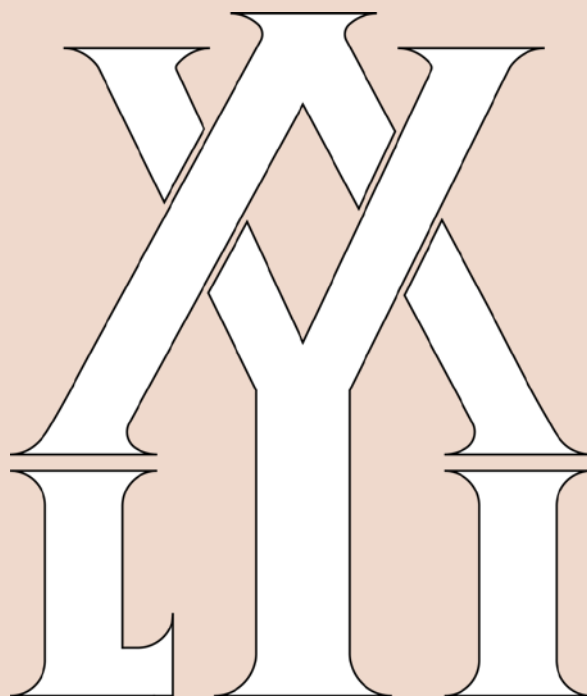
Funnily enough, the creation of this logo wasn't assigned or even discussed. It began as a doodle, birthed in English class (sorry, Mrs. Quirk). Nonetheless, that rudimentary design was appreciated and well-liked. And thus, the logo became...

The logo we designed is a simple one: a composition of our acronym. On the one hand, its defined structure and geometry grant it clarity and legibility. On the other, small details defy the confines of symmetry, as is proper; *As You Like It* is no place for conformity.

And regarding the color? Anything but white would pose an obstacle to freely choosing color palettes for each issue. The identity of *As You Like It* is not defined by patterns or color schemes. It is defined by our mission, to make sure that student creativity will always find a place to bloom within the school community.

We hope this logo will become part of *As You Like It* for years to come.

~The Editorial Team



A refuge is the "place" to which one goes to protect oneself from dangers and threats, from adverse conditions, to hide, or simply to be quiet. Such a refuge of the soul is first of all the dream, to which we turn in order to escape the prosaic reality that surrounds us. It is the mental retreat to another, "second reality," which we create ourselves according to our own feelings and desires (maybe even as a defense mechanism), a place that preserves us, comforts us, helps us endure difficulties and setbacks by nourishing the hope of a better tomorrow.

"What he has never lived, he lives in his dream..."

~Manos Hadjidakis

This second reality of dreams and imagination often becomes motivation for action, which some of us have found through creative expression. Dear readers, *As You Like It* has been the product of this creative expression for more than 40 years, and the following section is a tribute to the school that has enabled us to dream.



For this year's "Panigyri," the club decided to make and sell bookmarks, featuring this edition's poetry, to support the Scholarship Fund. As a tribute to the artistry of the magazine, Apostolos Vasilikos drew the Benakeio column, & Kallia Gkika brought the College bloom to life.

Celebrating 100 Years!





The Garden of Time

by Vanessa Mata

It was a bright morning, golden threads of the morning light inviting the day, when three mysterious figures, as hazy as the early mist, stepped into the garden. Each and every one of its colorful petals seemed oddly alive, alive with time, each vine and stem uncovering secrets of the past, of the moments about to come.

The first figure to appear was Aldo, draped in deep accents of history and memory. Aldo seemed nostalgic, bearing the burden of the years long gone, yet wise, his movements slow, with a profound appreciation for the days gone by. The second, Horatia, lively and colorful, was brimming with a restless energy. The last, Neviah, was the most mysterious of the three, seemingly knowing what lay ahead, her presence evoking anticipation and hope.

Even though the three figures entered the garden at the same time by chance, they felt a connection among them, a feeling that they were meant to encounter each other in the lush and vibrant garden.

The first flower that the three of them encountered was an ancient lilac. Its pale purple petals, albeit faded, were still richly colored.



Aldo spoke first, narrating the story that the lilac had started to tell. "1925 was the year Athens College was established, its creation striving for combining Greek tradition with the American progressive spirit, as well as

striving for the harmonious development of the intellectual, moral, and physical powers and character of students and the promotion of cultural events. Throughout the years, the school has endured difficult times, such as the struggles it faced during the Second World War because of the occupation of Athens by the German troops, and has undergone several changes, like becoming a co-ed school in 1977, 52 years after its inception. And even though time continues to pass, the school's past will always remain a significant part of its legacy."

Horatia and Neviah listened closely to Aldo's words, Horatia comprehending the school's rich history and legacy, with Neviah pondering how these events would determine the future of the institution.

They continued walking through the garden, bathed in sunlight that was seemingly as alive as the waters of a rushing river.

Horatia suddenly stopped at the sight of a bright primrose, a symbol of the school's current state: "Aldo, I recognize the school's history, and, Neviah, I understand your thoughts about how the College will evolve in years to come. Yet, today, the school is defined by its actions and decisions which bridge the past and the future."



The three silhouettes continued their walk until they were stopped by Neviah, who was showing interest in a specific flower, one that was shaped like a peony. As the three of them approached it, both Aldo and Horatia started to understand its significance. The flower didn't have a vibrant hue like the others. It was translucent, almost clear, radiant, and luminous.



Neviah stepped forward: "Aldo and Horatia, I respect your wisdom, yet I would like to add to what you have already said. I recognize the school's history, as well as the events taking place right now. But I would like to convey to you the need for adaptability regarding the changes that are to come, as well as the need to respect tradition. Indeed, only by maintaining tradition will the school be able to shape its future."

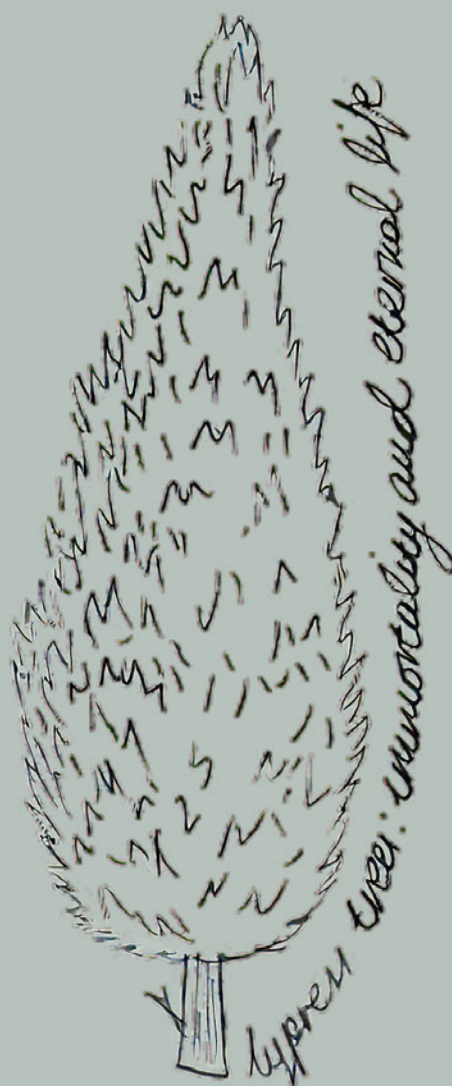
As the three continued exploring the garden, they understood it had been waiting for them all along, feeling the invisible string that linked them together: Aldo, with his nostalgia, reminiscing about the core values that shaped the school; Horatia, focused on the now and the need for change; and Neviah, wondering about how Horatia's actions would shape the days to come.

Their conversations swirled as if they were a cool breeze among the trees, with an understanding emerging, as hopeful as a new day, the understanding of time's cyclical movement, like the garden that surrounded them. The cypress in front of them was whispering in the wind with its deep green foliage. With its roots firmly planted in the ground, the tree stood like a silent sentinel. As if the tree itself were a keeper of untold stories, its presence timeless and enduring, each branch seemed to contain a memory, some reaching into the past, others grounded in the present, and some even seeming to beckon toward an unknown future. That was when the three of them

finally came to a realization. Legacy couldn't be characterized by just one of the flowers they had encountered, but by all of them, a collection of interlinked stories woven together in everlasting time.

Aldo, Horatia, and Neviah left the garden as silently as they had entered it, the only thing left in the garden being the lingering scent of the vibrantly colored flowers. Like a soft breeze, their remarks lingering and leaving their mark on the very soul of Athens College.

Although the garden would continue to blossom in the time yet to come, it had also changed: the flowers, which had once been secluded by their own individual stories, had now been enriched by the knowledge of the three visitors, and the school would always be impacted by the three forces of Time. The flowers of the garden, lilacs, primroses, peonies, each one of them a monument to the confluence of Time, their petals the layers of the time that has passed, that is occurring right now, and that is yet to come.



Artwork by L. Mata

“The method followed at Athens College has as its launching point the idea that a student ‘is taught’ not when the teacher conveys information he must store up, but rather when the student himself acquires this information as a result of his own active thinking.”

~Stefanos Delta

ARTICLES

Photo by A. Tamviskou

AS YOU LIKE IT • MAY 2025

Interview with Professor Alexander Kitroeff

by Erica Dritsa & Apostolos Vasilikos



Alexander Kitroeff is Professor Emeritus of History at Haverford College in Pennsylvania. Born in Athens, he was educated in the United Kingdom where he received his PhD in modern history from the University of Oxford while later, he went on to pursue an academic career in the United States. Before joining the faculty at Haverford College in 1996, Kitroeff taught at Queens College, The City University of New York, Princeton University, and New York University. His research and publishing focus on identity in Greece and its Greek diaspora. He has published eight books primarily on the Greek diaspora and served as historical consultant on several documentary films. In 2022, he received the Archbishop Iakovos of North and South America Award for Excellence. A. Kitroeff's current book project is on Greek-owned diner restaurants in America. AYLI Chief Editor Erica Dritsa (right) and Creative Director Apostolos Vasilikos (left) were eager to talk to Professor Kitroeff because of his knowledge of Greek history, and in particular of the diaspora, to provide us with his unique perspective on Greece 100 years ago and the founders of Athens College.

Professor Kitroeff, what was the political, economic, and social situation in Greece, Egypt, and the U.S. during the 1920s when our school was founded?

Certainly, these countries couldn't be more different. At the time, Greece has this influx of 1.2 million refugees mainly from Asia Minor, but also parts of the Black Sea and a few from Bulgaria. So, it basically is chaos here in Greece with people living in tents. The houses of the refugees, who we know had settled in the neighborhoods around Athens, hadn't been built yet. So, there was great turmoil. There was labor unrest, but I call it creative chaos. The refugees, as we know, within a few

years really propelled the Greek economy forward because they had skills the Greeks didn't have, especially in the textile industry, carpet making, and food production among other things.

For instance, in places like Nea Ionia and Nea Philadelphia, the refugees quickly established their businesses, and the Greek economy actually grew in the 1920s. However, it was very difficult for the refugees to adapt socially, despite foreign and American aid aimed to help refugees make a new start in Greece.

In World War I, the U.S. benefitted from the war in Europe because it didn't get directly involved but participated indirectly by sending

troops over and manufacturing arms and supplies. There were jobs for everyone, both for men and women. But of course, the prosperity will unfortunately come to an end with the Wall Street Crash of 1929.

For Egypt, the 1920s mark the beginning of the country's nationalist movement. Egypt is not part of the British Empire. It's not a colony but a protectorate, occupied and controlled by Britain. The idea is that the British facilitate Egypt's cotton being sent to England's textile factories to be manufactured into shirts and other products, which they then sell globally. However, when, during World War I, the trade routes of the Mediterranean are blocked, Egypt becomes isolated and has to rely on its own economic power which it managed to develop.

After the end of the war, the Egyptians were therefore confident enough to demand independence from Britain. The country sends a delegation to the famous peace conference that takes place in 1919 in Paris, but the British do not formally recognize or engage in talks with the delegation, and this leads to anger in Egypt and a stronger demand for independence. At this same conference, Venizelos persuades Woodrow Wilson and Lloyd George that Greece can land troops in Smyrna. There's a kind of rearrangement of the eastern Mediterranean.

What role do the Greeks play in Egypt at that point in time?

This is one of the most interesting developments we have in the history of the Greeks in Egypt because, before the war, the Greeks were there exporting cotton to England, contributing to the Egyptian economy but also its dependency on global markets. But when the nationalist movement starts, the Greeks are supportive because they never totally identified with the British but nurtured close relations

with the Egyptians.

So now, defying the British, the Greeks, including the Benakis and the Choremis families, help the Egyptians establish cotton industries and manufacturing.

You mentioned that the Greeks had established themselves in the textile industry in Smyrna. Could you tell us more about the position of the Greeks in Anatolia before the Asia Minor Disaster?

The Greeks of both Constantinople and Alexandria deal in imports and exports. Historically, the role of the Greeks in the Ottoman Empire was that of a link between the local economy and the international markets because they had connections with Europe, and they knew the languages. They were also active in the manufacturing sector.

Because our school was founded in the 1920s, we really want to know how much of a priority education was for Greece in the 1920s.

There were two waves of educational reform in Greece: one took place from 1913 to 1917, and the other one from the late 1920s onwards. These are the two periods when Venizelos is in power and has this idea of reforming and modernizing Greece; one way of doing this is through education. Athens College is an example of the efforts made to modernize Greek education.

Greek schools at the time largely focused on Ancient Greek, which is rooted so deeply in the Greek identity. But a country that wishes to modernize itself needs skills, mathematics, and sciences. However, the University of Athens professors who are influential in the educational field are conservative and resist reform. The Greek Orthodox Church also was

skeptical about the proposed changes in education for its own reasons. And because there were a lot of illiterate people in the provinces, there was an emphasis on language instruction rather than any other types of knowledge.

Luckily, it's the Greeks of the diaspora who decide to create a school to modernize education. Alexandria-born Benakis attended Victoria College, a British school, Delta is from Constantinople, and he attended Robert College, which is a very modern, American school, founded by Protestants.

Indeed, many Greeks of the diaspora go to Robert College: poet, travel writer, and journalist Kostas Ouranis, theatre director Karolos Koun, Apostolos Nikolaidis, an athlete, football manager of the Panathinaikos Football Club, and businessman, are just a few of the famous Robert College alumni. Thus, the Greeks of the diaspora create a school in Greece based not on the Greek style, but on the more modern Anglo-Saxon principles of innovative schools such as Robert College, Victoria College, and other colleges of the diaspora. Their hope is to modernize Greek education.

One visible influence of Robert College on your school, Athens College, is the importance attributed to physical strength and sports. The Protestant view of sports at the time favored something called the all-around athlete. Athens College's substantial athletic facilities carry on a century-old tradition.

Could you please tell us about Hellenic American organizations, like the American Hellenic Educational Association? How important were they?

The full title is The American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association, known as AHEPA, and it was founded in 1922 to support the Greek Americans in the face of the xenophobia and racism that existed in America at the time.

AHEPA is created for that purpose and is very successful. They want to promote the education of the Greek Americans. They want them to learn English and become educated in the English language, so that they can become American citizens and show Americans that they are loyal to the country, they speak the English language, not Greek.

However, AHEPA also reconnects with Greece through annual excursions to the motherland. During World War II, and during the Turkish invasion of Cyprus 50 years ago, they help Greece. AHEPA also helps Greek Americans by offering scholarships in modern Greek studies programs and organizing visits to Greece which help Greek Americans preserve their Greek identity.

Now we would like your help in getting acquainted with the female figures in Greece at the time when Athens College was founded. We know, for example, that Penelope Delta, the daughter of Emmanuel Benakis, was widely celebrated for her contributions in the field of children's literature. Are there any other female figures in the 1920s from Greece or the diaspora that contribute to education and societal change?

In addition to Penelope Delta, who is one of the few women who break through, another important woman of that time is Kalliroi Parren, the founder of Greek feminism.

For more women taking important roles in society, you're going to have to wait until the 1940s when so many women joined the resistance movement. What is interesting is that you can find more important women in the diaspora because the Greek diaspora, at least in the Eastern Mediterranean, is less patriarchal. For instance, Constantinople-born author Maria Iordanidou, who writes about Alexandria and Constantinople, and prominent physician Angeliki Panagiotatou in Egypt, the first wom-

an physician in modern Greece to have graduated from a University in Greece.

The third area, apart from education and medicine, where women excel at that time is in philanthropy. The women of the elite Greek Egyptian families, the Benakis – Virginia Benaki in particular, the Salvagos, and others, were involved in the support of the poor, the Philoptochos Fund, as it was known.

Going back to Greek education, we want to know how Venizelos and his modernist movement viewed the founding of Athens College.

Venizelos was a modernizer and is quick to realize that if he can't reform the whole educational system, he can start with one vehicle of modernization, which is Athens College. The school uses Demotic Greek, which Venizelos supports as he hopes to democratize language. His greater plan is to modernize the country by making sure people of good character from every social class have access to education so that they can later give back to Greece.

At the same time, in the hope of democratizing education, Penelope Delta offers hundreds of scholarships to students in the 1930s.

“Travelling back” to the 1920s and 1930s with you was fascinating! Coming to the present, how do you think history should be taught?

German historian Friedrich Meinecke said, “In order to really understand the past, you've got to be able to put yourself in the shoes of the people who lived in the past.” This is very difficult, but when I was in school in England, I had history teachers who made us reenact moments of history. This was really helpful to me as a student and made me really think about big moments in history and what they meant. Another thing is to discuss with students what people their age were doing at the time because that makes it easier for them to relate to the past, it really triggers their curiosity and engagement. And, of course, the third aspect is the “why” questions. Not when, because we can look that up, but *why* – why did the American Revolution take place? Why did the Greek Revolution happen? These are the questions that engage curious minds.

Thank you for welcoming us into your home and talking to the *As You Like It* readers. You helped us learn so much about our school and the world in an era that feels, at the same time, so far and so near.



From Chalkboards to Virtual Reality: The Past and Future of Education

by Angelos Gkoritsas

Education has undoubtedly been the foundation of every modern society, shaping individuals and driving progress. It is through education that knowledge is preserved, critical thinking is cultivated, and future generations prepare for the challenges of their time. As our school commemorates its centennial anniversary, we are given the opportunity to reflect on the considerable evolution of education, as well as envision its future trajectory.

A Century of Transformation

The journey of education mirrors societal shifts, technological advancements, and people's collective aspirations. A hundred years ago, education was a privilege reserved for a select few. Following the First World War and the Disaster of Asia Minor, the Greek state was unable to cover the needs of most schools, leading to an abrupt decline in the number of students. Nevertheless, the minority of children who kept attending were faced with dusty chalkboards in teacher-centered classrooms, where the primary focus was on rote memorization and strict discipline, preparing students for utilitarian jobs that would contribute to the "rebirth" of the nation.

Despite the detrimental impact of the Second World War, the mid-20th century marked a significant shift as education became more accessible, driven by the belief that it was a fundamental right for everyone. In 1964, the government established the Pedagogical Institute, as well as the institution of the "Entrance Exams" (the Panhellenic Exams' predecessor), making higher education free of charge. Those changes, however, were followed by an extended period of stagnancy that lasted until the end of the 1990s. It was the introduction of technology, from overhead projectors to personal computers, that began to reshape the classroom environment once again, offering new tools for learning and instruction. The

digital revolution has also further transformed education as the Internet acts as a gateway to infinite resources, enabling self-directed learning and global collaboration.

Recently, numerous progressive educational theories have emerged worldwide, emphasizing the value of critical thinking, creativity, and student engagement as key components of the school. Classrooms have thus become more dynamic, incorporating multimedia tools and interactive platforms, fostering a more meaningful connection between educators and students. Overall, the weight has shifted towards developing a system that cultivates skills like problem-solving, adaptability, and digital literacy, shaping the "students of tomorrow."

"While technological advancements offer exciting possibilities, the essence of education lies in its ability to inspire and nurture the human spirit."

The Next 100 Years: Envisioning the Future

Looking ahead, education is set to undergo major changes, influenced by emerging technologies and society's evolving needs. Some of the "foreseeable" ones are the following:

Personalized Learning through Artificial Intelligence: AI has the ability to customize learning experiences according to the students' needs, interests, and learning styles. By analyzing data, it can provide customized content, ensuring a deeper understanding of subjects. This, however, will alter the role of teachers, who will have to find innovative ways to incorporate this tool into the educational process. With artificial intelligence transforming industries around the world, schools present a unique opportunity – not to replace human teachers, but to enhance their capabilities in unprecedented ways. The future of education isn't about choosing between human teachers and AI, but rather effectively combining the best of both worlds.

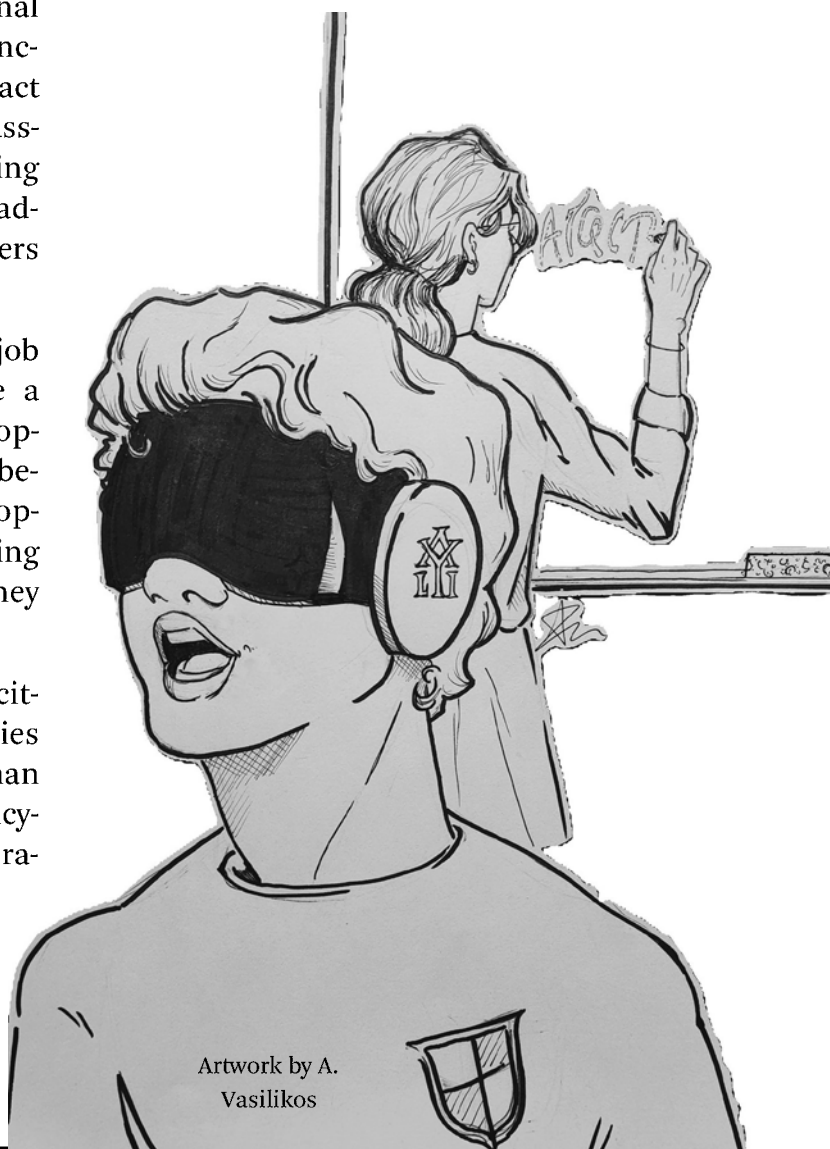
Immersive Learning with Virtual and Augmented Reality (VR/AR): VR and AR technologies have the potential to achieve immense educational impact, by transforming traditional lessons into engaging, multisensory experiences. Concrete visualization of vague or abstract concepts is missing from the modern classroom and, with younger generations becoming increasingly reliant on visual media, such advancements could ensure that education caters to the ever-changing student needs.

Emphasis on Lifelong Learning: As the job market continues to evolve, there will be a growing need for continuous skill development. Education systems will likely move beyond traditional age constraints, offering opportunities for reskilling and upskilling throughout an individual's life, ensuring they remain adaptable in a dynamic workforce.

While technological advancements offer exciting possibilities, the essence of education lies in its ability to inspire and nurture the human spirit. It is imperative that educators, policy-makers, and society as a whole work collabora-

tively to ensure that the integration of technology serves to enhance, not overshadow, the human factor and connections that are fundamental to learning.

As we stand at this milestone, let us remind ourselves that the future of education is not a distant or vague concept but a responsibility we bear today. By embracing innovation and prioritizing the holistic development of each personality, we can create an educational landscape that empowers every individual to reach their full potential. In the words of Stephen Heppell, Professor at the University Camilo José Cela and one of the most established British educationalists: "We've pretended to be doing the best for kids, but we haven't really. We've just done what is convenient for ourselves, and that has to change." Let this be a call to action for us to reimagine and reshape education for those to come.



A Tradition of Giving Thanks

by Nicholas Skevis

The fourth Thursday of November is a special national holiday in the United States: Thanksgiving. Unlike many national holidays that commemorate battles, revolutions, or independence, Thanksgiving is rooted in gratitude and in “giving thanks” to the people who give our life meaning.

Thanksgiving is closely connected to the arrival of English settlers in New England in the 17th century. According to the legend, or myth as it were, of the first Thanksgiving, English settlers—the Pilgrims—arrived in Plymouth, Massachusetts in 1620 aboard the ship *Mayflower*. The motivation for the journey was primarily religious as they wanted to gain independence from the Church of England, but financial factors also played a role. Upon arriving in America, the Pilgrims faced a harsh winter, which they were unprepared for. Native Americans, in particular the Wampanoag tribe, helped the settlers during this first winter, sharing their provisions and teaching the settlers how to cultivate the land, essentially saving them. To express their gratitude and to solidify their friendship with the Native Americans, the settlers organized a three-day feast. This is the Thanksgiving story that American children are taught.

The 1621 Thanksgiving feast, though, was not the first such celebration. In fact, the earliest documented Thanksgiving service in North America took place in 1578 in Newfoundland (modern day Canada). Settlers organized such feasts to thank God for harvest, rain, or prosperity, usually in the autumn. The first official proclamation of Thanksgiving, however, was made by the first President of the USA, George Washington, on the 3rd of October, 1789:

“...to recommend to the People of the United States a day of public thanksgiving and prayer to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many signal favors of Almighty God,

especially by affording them an opportunity peaceably to establish a form of government for their safety and happiness.”

—George Washington

US Presidents continued to proclaim days of Thanksgiving during the next 80 years, but those celebrations were observed sporadically, limited to some states, and, in some cases, not proclaimed at all.

The holiday, in its current form, is primarily the result of the efforts of Sarah Josepha Hale, editor of the magazine *Godey’s Lady’s Book*, who, in the midst of the American Civil War, advocated for a day to commemorate national unity and to express gratitude for all Americans despite the war. Eventually, she managed to persuade President Lincoln of the necessity for such a holiday. On October 3, 1863, President Lincoln declared that Thanksgiving would henceforth be celebrated on the fourth Thursday of November. With the exception of Franklin Roosevelt, who, controversially, changed the date to the third Thursday of November, all Presidents honored Lincoln’s tradition. In 1941, with a Congressional Joint Resolution, Congress officially declared the fourth Thursday of November a national holiday.

However, the story behind the first Thanksgiving, albeit heart-warming and beautiful, does not fully reflect the historical facts. In reality, even though the Pilgrims and the indigenous Americans did collaborate during the winter of 1620-21, their relationship was primarily based on political and strategic interests and not as much on altruism. More importantly, the Native Americans were not invited to the first Thanksgiving; after hearing celebratory gunfire from the Pilgrim camp, they visited the camp out of fear of a possible English attack. Another aspect of the story often forgotten or omitted is that the collaboration between the settlers and the Native Americans soon fal-

tered. Disputes over land and the settlers' expansionist desires culminated in King Philip's War of 1675-1678, during which thousands of Native Americans were either killed or enslaved.

This begs the question: Why do we celebrate

school's dual identity. This is what the Founders of the school wanted: a Greek school inspired by American values. On the fourth Thursday in November, we, Athens College students, learn about the legend of the Pilgrims and the Indians, the modern creation of Thanksgiving, and are invited to reflect on all



Photo by A. Tamviskou

The "Chain of Thanks" - For the 2024 Thanksgiving Celebration, Athens College students each completed an "I am thankful for" link, which was combined to create this chain, displayed as a heart on the stage during the celebration.

Thanksgiving? Why do insist on a fairy tale rather than the true story? These are important questions. Here is what I think: modern Thanksgiving is more closely connected to the events of the 19th century than to the original celebration of 1621. Drawing from its roots in the American Civil War, Thanksgiving reflects the desire of the American people for unity despite their diverse opinions and backgrounds. Thanksgiving has evolved into an opportunity to express gratitude both in a religious and secular context, to reunite with loved ones, and to partake of a feast. If this is the motivation for celebration, it is a worthy one, as long as we remember the facts because in giving thanks, we should acknowledge the wrongdoings so that we can avoid repeating them in the future.

Athens College honors Thanksgiving every year, celebrating the American part of the

that we are thankful for, and indeed, we have so much to be thankful for: our school is exceptional not because of its stunning campus or its reputation. It is exceptional because of its people: our teachers, who stand by us both in times of academic achievements and in hardships or shortcomings and who dedicate their lives to our academic and personal development; our classmates, who join us in every effort, project, or activity; our friends, who, no matter what, are on our side.

The history of Thanksgiving is controversial, and the truth must be acknowledged, but if we focus on the spirit of the holiday, it is a unique celebration that carries a very special message. Indeed, Thanksgiving is an opportunity to do what we should be doing throughout the whole year: say "Thank you" to all the people who give our life meaning.

Let Me Persuade You – Forensics at Athens College

By John Stambouloupoulos



The 2024-2025 Athens College Panhellenic Forensics Team—1st Place in the Sweepstakes & 1st Place in Debate.

Every year, hundreds of Athens College students participate in events from debate to oral interpretation of literature, impromptu speaking to duet acting, group discussion to oratory. Since the foundation of the College's Forensics Club fifty-three years ago, thousands of students have been a part of it. Celebrating the 100th anniversary of Athens College is the ideal opportunity to take a closer look at Forensics, a tradition that is, has been, and will continue to be an integral part of the academic life of the student body. Understanding the history of this important student activity reveals the reason Forensics is a cornerstone of the College.

Forensics was not a part of Athens College from the time it was founded in 1925. In the early 1960s, a Debate Club was established in the school, and in the early 1970s, English teachers from Anatolia College, Athens College, and Pinewood International Schools united to form the Forensics Society of Greece. The first Panhellenic Forensics Tournament was hosted in 1973 among those three schools, and in 2023 we celebrated 50 years of Forensics by hosting the Panhellenic Forensics Tournament at our school.

Since its inception, Forensics has gained in popularity, becoming embedded into our school's traditions, all the while evolving, thanks to the tireless efforts of the administration, coaches, teachers, and alumni who support it because

they understand the importance of this club in helping students to explore all the ways English can be used: to convince, to express, and to successfully move an audience. These are skills that students will continue to leverage throughout their lives.

“Creating life-long memories with friends and coaches, experiencing true team spirit, and making new friends are the best parts of Forensics.”

For those who don't know the specifics of Forensics, there are six different events: Impromptu Speaking, Debate, Original Oratory, Group Discussion, Oral Interpretation of Literature, and Duet Acting. Students learn the art of persuasion through Impromptu Speaking – coming up with ideas for a speech under time restraints, Debate – formulating persuasive arguments on a controversial topic, Original Oratory – writing and delivering an original, persuasive speech, and Group Discussion – exchanging ideas and perspectives to collectively find solutions to a specific issue. Students can also explore the creative expression of English through Oral Interpretation of Literature – bringing a comic or dramatic literary text to life, or Duet Acting – presenting a short two-person comic or dramatic scene.

Not only was Athens College instrumental in creating the Panhellenic Forensics Association, which began with three schools but now has twenty-four member schools, but it has also played a significant role in how Forensics, Debate in particular, has grown and developed within Greece. The College sent the first Greek delegations to participate in the World Universities Debating Championship in 1983, and it was an Athens College teacher who connected with the World Schools Debating Organization and initiated the first Greek National Debate Team in 1999. The College also hosted both the World Schools Debating Championship in 2009 and the European Universities Debating Championship in 2019 on the Psychico campus. Since then, Athens College has had at least one student selected to represent Greece every year, with only two exceptions, at the World Schools Debating Championship. In fact, the first coach was George Vassilaras '87, and the current coach of the Greek National Debate Team is none other than the Head Forensics coach, Kallina Basli '02. Indeed, Athens College is represented both on national and international levels, fulfilling its goal to help each individual achieve their highest potential and unique aspirations.

The College further celebrated the importance of Forensics by creating the Junior Forensics program in 2010, designed to introduce 7th and 8th graders to Forensics. Today, it is still going strong, helping Junior High students learn about the six different events so they are ready to join the Senior Forensics Team, and this highly successful model has now been implemented by many other schools. This was so successful that in 2022, Mini Forensics was established to bring Forensics to the Elementary Schools, introducing 5th and 6th graders to the various forms of public speaking and expression that Forensics encourages. Even during the pandemic, Athens College Forensics stayed strong. Our school's Forensics team participated in seven different international competitions, showing the club's unwavering commitment.

As the College celebrates its Centennial, the Forensics Club had one of its most successful years competitively, winning both the 1st Place Sweepstakes Cup and the Debate Cup at this year's Panhellenic Forensics Tournament, where our school was represented by a team of 42 students who delivered outstanding performances in all events. Members of our team also won the First Among Equals Awards in Original Oratory, Impromptu Speaking, Oral Interpretation of Literature, and Duet Acting, as well as the Best Speaker in Debate Award.



The success of this year's Team is a tribute to the importance of Forensics.

Ultimately, the opportunity the College gives to students through the Forensics Club – the coaching sessions, the numerous tournaments our school's teams have participated in over the years, and, most of all, the people behind the Athens College Forensics Club – is what has shaped Forensics into what it is today: an institution that attracts hundreds of students each year, helping them greatly improve their oral skills in a fun, exciting way. However, developing skills is not all Forensics has to offer. As a member of the Forensics Team, I have come to understand that creating life-long memories with friends and coaches, experiencing true team spirit, and making new friends are the best parts of Forensics.

Forensics benefits its students because it builds the Four C's of 21st-century skills—critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity. We Athens College students have yet another reason to join this club: Forensics at our school boasts a long-standing 53-year history that we should continue honoring, helping it grow in the present and preserving it for the future.

Model United Nations at Athens College

by Angelos Talpa

As stated in an official United Nations document, General Assembly Resolution 77/336, the General Assembly “recognizes the important contribution of Model United Nations to diplomacy and international cooperation, and in building the capacities of young people in the field of international affairs, providing them with the knowledge and opportunities that they need.” For several years now, Athens College has been giving students the opportunity to participate in several Model United Nations (MUN) conferences worldwide through its institution of school clubs.

So, how exactly does MUN work? MUN is an educational simulation of the United Nations which involves students from many countries coming together to discuss important issues concerning the international community. These are topics falling under the United Nations’ Agenda: human rights, climate change, ensuring social equity, or enhancing global stability. The discussions take place during conferences which are organized and run by schools and institutions globally. In these conferences, each school is allocated a delegation, and the students attending are the delegates representing that country. One of the most prestigious conferences in Europe is THIMUN, which is organized by the THIMUN Foundation and takes place in the Hague, Netherlands. Several conferences in Greece, attended by Athens College students every year, are THIMUN-affiliated.

As a school which has always aimed to offer its students the opportunities to become citizens of the world, Athens College created the MUN Club, a Club that counts many members and conferences attended. Ms. Lillian Agapalidou, a former MUN Advisor and firm proponent of the Club’s mission and goals, states: “The subject of history teaches us what has happened

in our world before us, and that’s really good, but there are students who may wonder how that helps them be better citizens today and tomorrow, or how to better navigate the world they live in today. The MUN Club bridges these seemingly different realities.”

Throughout the years, Athens College has participated in a multitude of conferences both in Greece and abroad. Among the many memorable conferences attended are SAIMUN (St. Andrew’s International MUN in Dublin), AMUN (Athens MUN at Athens University of Economics and Business), and of course, THIMUN. As regards Greek conferences organized by Greek schools, Club members have been attending DSAMUN (Deutsche Schule Athen MUN), CGSMUN (Costeas Geitonas School MUN), PS-MUN (Platon School MUN), and ACGMUN (American College of Greece MUN), honing their debating, negotiating, and resolution writing skills, while, at the same time, meeting students from all over the world and often forming long-lasting friendships.

In the conferences attended throughout the years, Athens College High School MUNers have had the opportunity to represent countries as culturally diverse as Japan, Albania, Congo, Canada, Gabon, Malta, the Dominican

Republic, and some of the P5 Members – the permanent members of the Security Council – such as the United States of America, the United Kingdom, and the Russian Federation. In the past, prior to their participation in conferences, especially THIMUN, our students had the opportunity to visit the embassy of the country they were to represent at the MUN conference, meet with embassy staff, and get a small taste of diplomacy aiming to build and maintain political, commercial, and cultural relationships. They thus obtained valuable information regarding the country's policies on various issues connected to world politics. Generally, as part of their participation in conferences, students write resolutions which not only reflect the specific country's positions but also help them enrich their English language skills. While participating in conferences, MUN members practice public speaking while expressing the views of the country they represent. They learn how to think beyond the obvious, make connections, and express their opinions succinctly and with confidence.

Ms. Agapalidou states: “As an educator, one of the most important benefits of the MUN Club was to see the students' growth.” Undoubtedly, MUN contributes to growth in several aspects, such as leadership, research, communication, and soft skills. During their weekly meetings, Athens College MUNers improved their writing

skills as well as their ability to form convincing arguments. Nowadays, the Athens College High School MUN Club meetings take place during the school day, mainly during the time allocated to Clubs.

“Model UN was, and will always be, about the delegates' global mindset, the commitment to justice, cooperation, the meticulous drafting of resolutions in an attempt to bring about positive change, and, of course, the power of diplomacy.”

As the years pass, the MUN community, the conferences, the students attending, may change. What remains unchanged is the values of the MUN club. Model UN was, and will always be, about the delegates' global mindset, the commitment to justice, cooperation, the meticulous drafting of resolutions in an attempt to bring about positive change, and, of course, the power of diplomacy. Indeed, in a world where war is still a reality, MUN is there to remind young students that diplomacy and international cooperation are the only path to resolve conflict. MUN at Athens College will continue to inspire and motivate students to become active global citizens from a very young age, aiming to secure a better future by celebrating diversity, togetherness, and human ingenuity.



One of the many conferences the Athens College High School MUN Club participated in this year was the GMWHO Conference in Geneva (29 Oct.—1 Nov. 2024).

Athens College and Athletic Spirit:

by Christina Danali

The development of athletic spirit has been a significant part of the Athens College education since its foundation in 1925. Students receive excellent physical education thanks to our excellent athletic facilities and experienced, specialized teachers. Through sports-related events, clubs, and competitions, the school provides us with opportunities to cultivate and showcase our talents, excel in our favorite activities, and develop a plethora of skills.

In addition to building and maintaining a healthy lifestyle, physical education lessons help students shape their character. We learn to communicate with our peers through teamwork. We also develop self-control and accountability, embracing the concept of fair play, and supporting sports spirit, which emphasizes participation and effort. Furthermore, students who are on the College's teams gain great experience in competitive environments. We are given the opportunity to participate in international competitions, namely Athletic Conferences of Schools, and Panhellenic Schools Championship games. We learn to value setting goals, and we encourage one another to be proud of our achievements. Students learn about social con-

cerns and demonstrate empathy as they volunteer at events organized in partnership with Special Olympic and Paralympic athletes. The Athens College community also supports the renowned Athens Marathon held every November with great enthusiasm!



Moreover, one of Athens College's important, long-lasting traditions is "A" Association, a club that consists of our school's top athletes. It was founded in 1937 to promote fair play among students, as well as to help organize and support our school's athletic programs both on and off campus. In order to become a member, student-athletes must demonstrate athletic accomplishment, excellent performance, and ethos. A seven-member council,

A Pathway to Lifelong Skills

chosen by active members who are high school students, primarily in the 11th and 12th grades, are the student-leaders of the Association.

Varsity Teams represent the College at championship games, organized by the Ministry of Education and A.S.I.S. (Athletic Games of Pri-

annual competition among the students in which each school grade competes for the highest overall score. All Middle School and High School students watch the games, alongside parents and faculty members. Before the start of the games, the ceremonial opening program takes place, during which the members of the

"A" Association parade around the track.

Next, the Greek flag is raised while the national anthem is sung by all spectators, and the President declares the start of the games. Over the years, our school's

vate Schools). Students who stand out in athletics and are exceptionally talented make up these teams. Their goal is to promote the College's tradition of good sportsmanship and fair play through the pursuit of individual and group achievements.

The Delteia, which was first held in 1930, is an

main objective has been for students to become healthy, well-rounded individuals who value lifelong fitness by fostering our physical and intellectual abilities and spirit. By participating in our school's unique events, such as championships, tournaments and more, we cultivate this athletic spirit and develop lifelong skills, and we also strengthen our friendships and ties to the community and society.



Photos by P. Simitsi

Letters to the Future: Messages for Students of 2125

by Olga Tzedaki

Greetings, students of 2125!

To you, this is a letter from the past. To us, it's an attempt to create an intergenerational Athens College student link. Quite the challenge, I'll admit.

I find the past as fascinating as the future. Either preceding or succeeding one's era, whatever we cannot experience for ourselves will always carry a certain allure. We are beguiled by what has been, what could have been, and, most importantly, what will be. And when it comes to our school, exciting advancements are surely in store.

The last century has been one of growth, progress, and continuous innovation. It only makes me wonder about the achievements future students will marvel at, looking back at the circle starting in 2025 and concluding in 2125.

Any prediction I might try to make about the next decades – let alone a whole century – will most certainly not depict reality accurately enough; I can only guess what it'll be like. However, I'm positive that some core parts of our School's unique character and personality will perennially remain intact. I'm curious as to what will remain unchanged.

Athens College wouldn't be Athens College without the events that make it stand out. You might be familiar with time spent in the 'Big' Theatre to attend a presentation about philosophy or to hone your First Aid skills. It wouldn't be Athens College without the opportunity to stop by a university presentation between classes or without the ever-long line at the canteen. It wouldn't be Athens College if we weren't able to enjoy playing tennis, badminton, or squash – I personally always get the racket sports mixed up – then replenishing our energy with one of the famous canteen cookies. It wouldn't be Athens College without Panigyri, the culmination of year-long enthusiasm, determination, and hard work. It wouldn't be Athens College without Savvatovrado, the long-awaited night of singing and dancing on the marble steps of Benakeio. It is the essence of Athens College spirit, an occasion when many lifelong memories are created.

This is what a typical day looks like for us in 2025. It's full, intellectually stimulating, and rich in experiences and interactions. It makes for a routine that shouldn't even be characterized as such; there's always something novel and fresh to get our attention. And while my school experience might have been short since I joined Athens College in high school, I've had my fair share of realizations, and so have my friends. I'll share them with you.

Don't stress too much. I know it sounds practically impossible, but life does get easier when you are alleviated of worries and preoccupations. Making time with friends, making jokes, and, sometimes, being

"We might belong to different generations and have distinctly different experiences, but what binds us together is the community we are a part of."

silly is the remedy for stress. Also, make sure you allocate time for rest during the week – whatever that may be. Go out to dinner, watch a movie, or just hang out with friends – these are all meaningful pastimes you can enjoy, finding peace and preserving your mental well-being. Beware, however: don't neglect your studies. Remember that you are now laying the foundations for, and carving out the path to, your future. There needs to be a solid foundation for you to base your aspirations upon. So, find a balance between studying and leisure time, and try to achieve what is most sought-for: equilibrium.



Artwork by P. Christou

I believe that these "lessons" are perennial; no matter how different life is for you (or *was back then*, for us), some things remain constant. And things will, indeed, be different. For instance, we are now just witnessing the rise of Artificial Intelligence. It is not widely used but is starting to be implemented in many aspects of our everyday life. Its presence is preva-

lent in education and healthcare. Other than that, in the high school, there's no school uniform now. Students in junior high school wear it, but we only wear one for PE. For us, classes start at 8:30 in the morning, and the final bell rings at 15:25 daily, except for Wednesdays, when classes end at 14:45. In the afternoon, and on the weekends as well, many students engage in extracurricular activities. These range from athletics to art, and Forensics to computer science.

100 years from now, Athens College will be celebrating its 200th birthday. The Athens College family will have grown exponentially, creating an even more robust and vibrant alumni network. As a prospective part of that celebration, it's in your hands to make sure to "*throw a party*" that is proportional to its prestige and significance. Honor our School by practicing patience, kindness, and productivity. Be empathetic rather than merely sympathetic. Be a lifelong learner and an inquirer whose unquenchable thirst for knowledge never ceases.

We might belong to different generations and have distinctly different experiences, but what binds us together is the community we are a part of. As members of the Athens College family, students experience an unforgettable twelve years and forge bonds that by far outlast our time at school. Even though we are 100 years apart—and this article might seem like something you'd find inside a vintage time capsule—we are closer than we realize.

Class of 2025: Reflections & Hopes

by Nicholas Skevis

Student Council President

As our journey through Athens College nears its end, we are confronted with a variety of emotions: happiness, anticipation, excitement, hope, but also nostalgia for the school we are leaving behind and some uncertainty about the way forward. Just before we step out into the world and leave our second home, *As You Like It* gave us the opportunity to reflect, to remember

the moments which shaped our journey, and to thank the people who made it special. As we leave our school and venture out into the world, let us all remember the bond which we formed and the family we will always have waiting for us – the family of Athens College!

“Growing up, school becomes your second home. In my case, it was more.

Athens College became my second family, a safety net of individuals working together and helping each other evolve and overcome obstacles. Here, I learned persistence and determination. I believed in myself and worked hard to reach my full potential. Athens College is a part of me. It always has been and always will be.

I picture all of us walking down the marble steps of the school’s main entrance during Commencement. We are stepping into the future. We are growing and flourishing. Nonetheless, as we reach the bottom of those iconic stairs, we realize what we all have in common: a shared beginning, the same beginning for thousands of different stories...”

~Maritella Petsa

“Athens College has given me countless opportunities and possibilities to discover who I am and how I see myself in the future. I have gained lifelong friendships and unforgettable memories. It allowed me to interact with amazing teachers and thus shape my current way of thinking. I will forever be grateful for the opportunity to sit the entrance exams for Athens College. Passing this test and attending Athens College offered me the best student life I could have and a score of valuable experiences which I know will help me navigate the challenges the future holds.”

~Sophia Loras

“Athens College has always been a very important part of who I am. It has been my second home, the home where I grew up and learned how to claim my own place in the world. I honestly have no words to describe what the school means to me. It has been a great experience, filled with laughter and joy, great memories and friends, amazing teachers, and unforgettable lessons. Even though we are graduating this year, I will always cherish every single moment. Athens College will forever have my heart.”

~Harry Dimopoulos

“Senior year at Athens College felt like a blur—so fast but so demanding. The Panhellenics eclipsed everything. But still, every day, there were little moments of laughter and relief followed of course by more work, some stress, some self-doubt. But now that it’s almost over, I realize how much this place has meant to me. I grew up here. The campus, the people, the chaos—it’s all part of who I am now. I’ll always be grateful, for the bad times and the good times. For all of it.”

~Kalliopi Patera



Photo by S. Loras

“At the age of 15, I came to Athens College. I spent my high school years here, and I couldn’t have made a better decision. Wherever I turn, an abundance of memories is triggered. Some of my fondest ones include the days we got to go to the Athens College Theatre for performances of all kinds but also to listen to the speeches of the student council candidates, which I thoroughly enjoyed every year. I also loved playing tennis or squash during gym class, and queuing at the canteen while in heated discussions regarding a test we would be taking later on or what snack was the tastiest. However, the moments I hold most dear are the laughs and memorable moments shared in class. As it turns out, the “unremarkable” moments are the ones I’ll miss the most. As our senior year comes to an end, I cherish every day that passes even though nothing singularly unique happened because there will come a day when Tuesday will not be “just another Tuesday”; it will be the last Tuesday we’ll ever experience as high school students.”

~*Olga Tzedaki*

“When asked to recall a fond memory of school, I immediately remembered the days in second grade when our teachers would take us outside to have lunch in the forest. We got to understand how valuable nature is, we learnt so much, and we deeply appreciated all the plants and animals surrounding us.”

~*Dimosthenis Rigos Efraimoglou*

“This year pushed me harder than any other school year. Athens College has always been a place that challenged us, but senior year was different. Between the intense study hours and the pressure of the Panhellenics, there were moments I didn’t think I would make it through. But somehow, I did. We all did. And now, standing on the verge of something new, I feel ready. This school gave us more than an education—it gave us strength. And that’s something I’ll carry with me forever.”

~*Kyriakos Kapatsos*

“This school has been a major part of my life for the past few years, 12 to be exact! Every day was unique and, in retrospect, quite exciting. I still vividly remember our outdoor games in elementary school, the daunting quarantine era, and, of course, the unforgettable high-school experience. Thank you, Athens College, for being my second home!”

~*George Chainis*

“Athens College has been more than just a school to me—it’s been a second home. Every moment here, from shared laughter with friends to inspiring teachers who believed in us, has shaped who I am. There were both easy and hard days—moments of stress, joy, success, and learning. School trips that brought us closer, lessons that challenged us, and experiences that taught us more than any textbook ever could. Walking through its halls, I feel connected to the generations before us, all sharing the same pride and love for this place. Our school’s Centennial this year isn’t just a celebration of time, but of memories, values, and bonds that bind all alumni into one big family.”

~*Irofili Paparrigopoulou*

“My journey through Athens College is filled with memories: playing hide and seek in the elementary school’s forest, staying at school until midnight of Easter Tuesday to complete a satellite project for a competition, performing in many venues in Athens as part of the orchestra, going on field trips around Greece and Europe, organizing presentations in the theatre... Looking back on these experiences, one thing becomes clear, though. What makes these 12 years invaluable and memorable is not the campus, the buildings, or the activities themselves. Athens College is this magical place because of its people: the teachers who would always go above and beyond to help us, and our classmates who were always there, even in the middle of the night, to share every moment of joy or sadness... This is the true meaning of our 12-year journey.”

~*Nicholas Skevis*

“My time at Athens College has been a wild ride, especially this last year. I won’t lie—senior year was rough. Between trying to balance classes, mock exams, and prepping for the Panhellenics, there were days it all felt like too much. But the campus always gave me some kind of peace. Even just walking between buildings or hanging out outside with friends gave me a break from the pressure. It’s weird knowing it’s almost over. As hard as it was, I’ll miss it. A lot more than I thought I would.”

~*Anastasia Stathaki*

“If I had a euro for every time someone said, ‘It’ll all be worth it after the Panhellenics,’ I’d probably be rich by now. But seriously, Athens College gave me a lot—friends for life, some really good teachers, and more stress than I thought I could bear. The campus holds so many memories for me, from running to class late to just lying on the grass pretending we had no deadlines. School life wasn’t a fairy tale; it was real. And I’m honestly proud to have made it through.”

~*Christos Liazos*

“These past years have shaped who I am. Athens College has helped me evolve as a person and pursue my dreams. In my heart, I will hold myriad memories filled with happiness and smiles. I will never forget my years at Athens College and will be forever thankful for everything the school offered me. As for the Centennial, this year isn’t a simple celebration, it is a call for reflection, appreciation, and hope!”

~*Konstantinos Kastanias*

“This year at Athens College has honestly been one of the toughest but most unforgettable years of my life so far. The campus feels like a second home now—every hallway, every classroom, even the spots where we’d hang out between classes. Senior year was no joke. The pressure of the Panhellenics was always there, like this constant weight we were all carrying. Late nights, stress, caffeine—we experienced it all. But through the chaos, we stuck together. We laughed, we panicked, we pushed through. And now, looking back, I’m proud of how far we’ve come. It wasn’t easy, but we made it.”

~*Ioannis Ninios*

CENTENNIAL POETRY



Photo by E. Dritsa

CINQUAINS

*A five-line poem inspired by
Japanese haikus and tankas.*



Photo by A. Tamviskou

Our Home

Poem and Digital Artwork by Maritella Petsa

**Look back:
Men who had faith,
Some children with big dreams,
A great school - a bond from the heart:
Our home.**



In this digital artwork, M. Petsa envisions the Class of 2024 cheering as the Class of 1988, the first year[®] women graduated from Athens College, descends the iconic stairs of Benakeio.

100 Years

By Konstantinos Daskos

**Our school
Echoing past
Lessons learned, dreams that last,
A hundred years paved the way for
Today.**

Athens College

By Athanasios Gargalianos-Kakolyris

**A school
Where cultures meet
Where citizens are born
A century of history
And more**



Myriads

By Katerina Satzaki

To count

One hundred years

Is to count myriads

Those who have sprouted from its soil

Its bloom

Photo by A. Tamviskou

2025 Looking Back to 1925

Classmates

Fond memories

Of a hundred years past

All the everlasting classmates

As one

2025 Looking Forward to 2125

Classmates

The years pass by

The principles remain

The school is growing and we too

Have trust

*By Emma Petsa and
Michaela Verikokou*

Photo by C. Kostaridi

A Century We Learn

By Stratis Rallis

Behold...

With gleeful eyes,

A century of light.

Gazing in awe at its promise -

We learn.

A Vision

By Andrew Rallis

Listen,

One hundred years

Filled with pride and honor,

A school with a vision that did

Come true.

On a Hill

By Ermina Chatzimanolaki

**Our school
Stands tall on a
Hill, looking at the world,
A grand journey awaiting us,
Believe...
Walk through
The entrance that
So many walked through long ago,
So go, dream and find what you have
Longed for.**

Atop

By Olivia Telidi

**Those stairs
I fought to climb
I am now descending.
They were my mountain – now, I am
Atop.**

Photo by S. Loras

PURPOSE

BY BYRON TRIKKALIDIS

Decades

Ten, etched in time,

Lives—choices echoing,

Nothing remains once we fade!

Or does it?

INHERITANCE

BY XANTHI GONTICA

Focus:

To grow up means

To live through the lives of

The people that are teaching you

Welcome

Photo by C. Kostaridi

THE BEGINNING

BY KATERINA YUVANOĞLU

Today
Learning begins
Dust is taking its form
A view etched in the swirls of time...
Our school.

TRAVELS THROUGH OUR CENTENNIAL

BY EVELINA KATSAVRIA

Honored
We are to be
A part of the journey
Which started here - a century
Ago

Photo by C. Kostaridi



A Century

By Kimon Tsigos

Journey

A student's life

For a hundred years we

Progress and learn within these walls

Always.

A Whisper

By Markella Frentzou

Feel it

The century

Of memories and dreams

As you go down the central stairs

Feel it.

Seeking Secrets

By Katia Kouloumpi

Vision
Growth and knowledge
Cultivating dreamers
To seek secrets in the world and
Spread hope

Knowledge Garden

By Linda Charalampi

Knowledge
Is the garden
Around Athens College,
Always cultivating students'
Wisdom.

Photo by S. Loras

MY FUTURE

By Anastasia Stathaki

Today

Our senior year

The last day of high school

My journey begins today –

My Future

A SEED

By Zaira Alexiou

Back then

In Psychico

A man planted a seed

That grew into a mighty tree

Of hope

Photo by S. Loras

MEMORIES

By Eleni Barabouti-Tsagalou

Our school

Athens College

Beautiful memories

Full of love, warmth, and happiness

Always

I SEE THE FUTURE

By Konstantina Tsivra

Vision

Athens College

Always one step ahead

Students have a promised future

Welcome

Photo by E. Dritsa

A Man of Honor

By Angelos Talpa

Delta

College hero

He kept his promises

A great symbol of our great school

Still lives

The Secret of Athens College

By Nayia Pitsiou

Delta,

Founder of our

School, the entrance to a

Journey of wisdom and progress

Thank you

Photo by S. Loras

Story

By Anastasia Tamviskou

Our school

With a story

Of a hundred years – It

Will be remembered forever

By us

School Bell

By Jim Lambrou

Last Day

The school bell rings

Students flood the hallway

Smiles and memories before

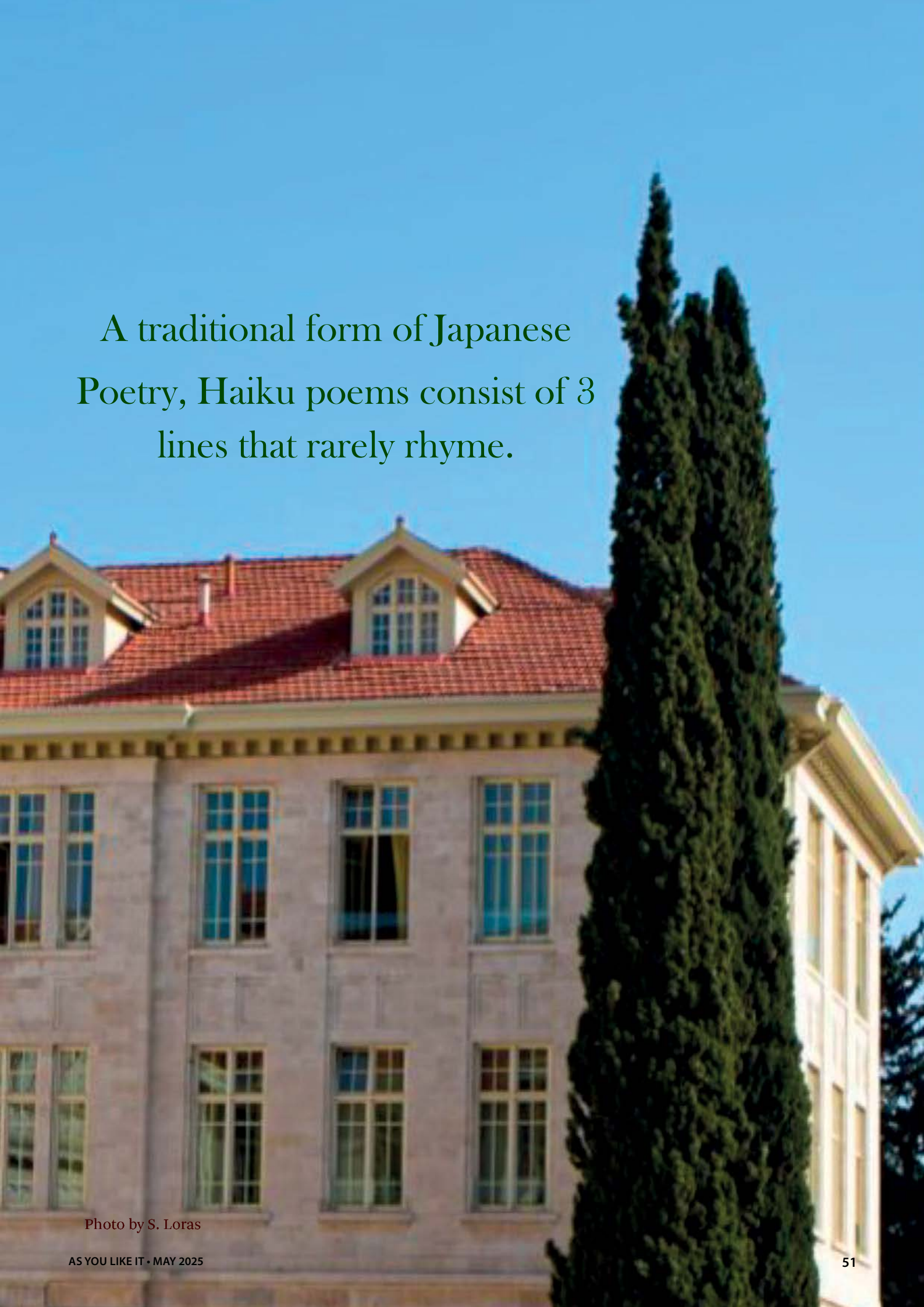
School ends.

Photo by E. Dritsa

HAIKU



Photo by S. Loras

A photograph of a large, multi-story building with a red-tiled roof and a tall, dark green cypress tree in the foreground. The building has several windows and a prominent cornice. The sky is clear and blue.

A traditional form of Japanese
Poetry, Haiku poems consist of 3
lines that rarely rhyme.

Photo by S. Loras



SHAPING

By Adelina Georgiadi

Celebrating the
One hundred years of shaping
The Future's young minds.



ECHOES

By Evangelos Rigas

Classrooms filled with dreams,
Laughter echoes through the
Halls, we learn as we go.



LIKE SPRINGTIME BUDS

By George Tsogkas

Books and minds unfold,
Knowledge blooms like
springtime buds,
Light guides us forward.

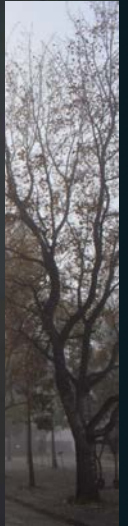




100 YEARS OF GROWTH

*By Artemis Chatzieleftheriadou &
Maria Psarraki*

Little, fragile seed;
A hundred drops of pure love...
Make our family.



CHALK ON THE BLACKBOARD

By George Livanos

Chalk on the Blackboard,
Quiet whispers fill the air,
Learning's gentle breeze.

SONNETS



Photos by S. Loras

Meaning “a little sound or song,” a sonnet is composed of fourteen lines and written in iambic pentameter.



Photo by
A. Tamviskou



The Voice

By Dimitra Georgakopoulou

They show me paths where ancient footsteps stay,
In script engraved, unmoved by Time's decree.
Yet thought, like fire, wishes to forge its way,
Find the truths that slumber and set them free.

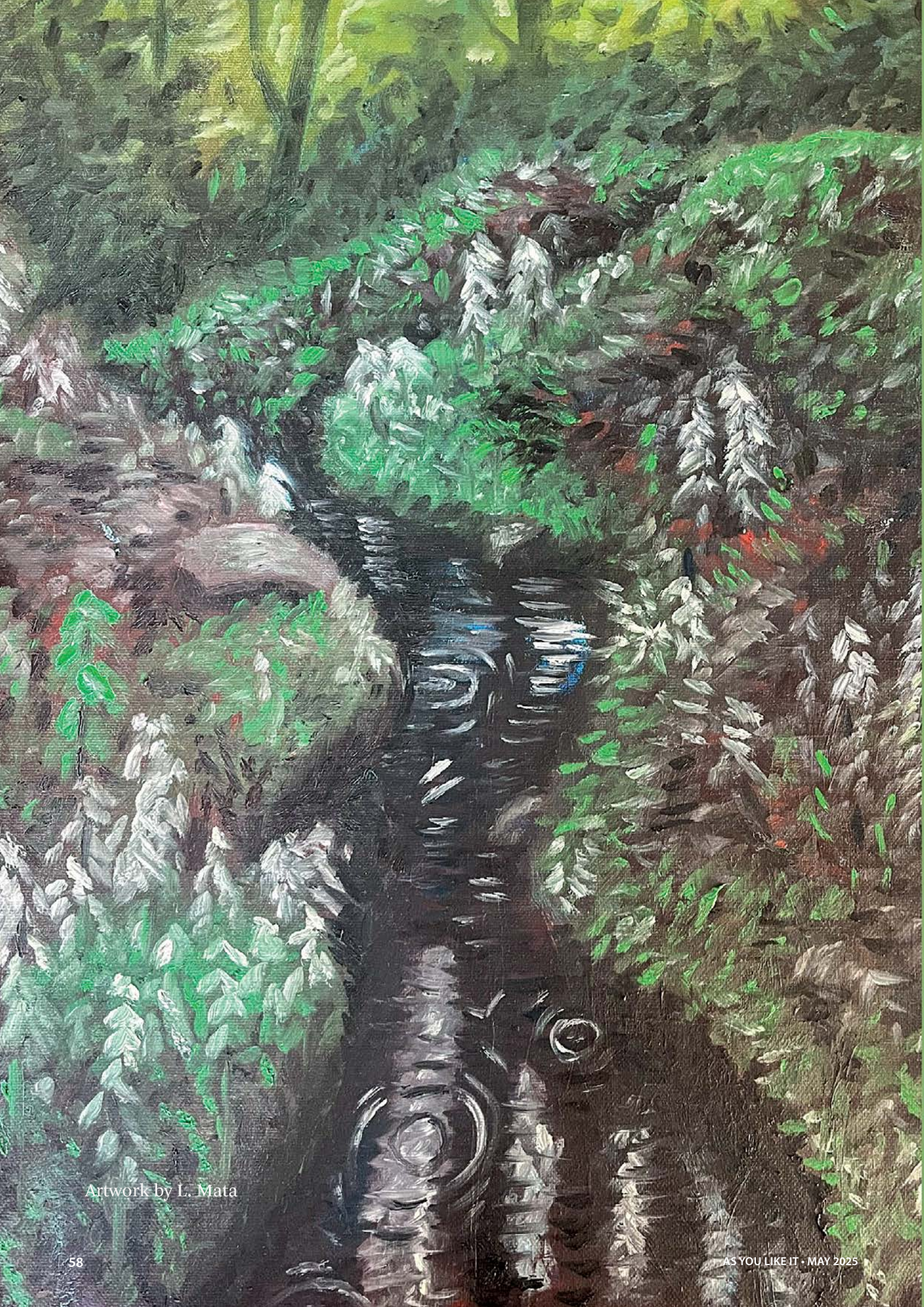
The pages whisper, echoing the past,
Their wisdom bound in words of those before.
Yet in my mind, new thoughts come up so fast,
Like waves that crash upon a distant shore.

And even if I'm quiet, I will not fade,
For wisdom breathes where fearless minds still seek.
I'll find my voice, stand tall, unbound and brave
For truth must rise when hearts and minds still speak.

It won't be lost, no matter how time flows—
A spark within me fights, it grows, it glows.

Artwork by L. Mata





Artwork by L. Mata

Wisdom's Flame

By Rallou Georgopoulou

A hundred years our name in glory stands,
Where wisdom's owl keeps watch o'er our minds.
With torch in hand, we tread these hallowed lands,
To seek the truth that time eternally binds.
The labrys strikes, yet fear it knows not well,
For strength and honor carve our noble way.
The cross stands firm, where steadfast spirits dwell,
A guiding light when dark would bid us stray.
Yet, the phoenix stirs, its wings take to flight,
From embers past, a future fierce and bright.
No tide nor tempest dims our beacon's light,
Through trials forged, we rise in boundless might.
So let the flame of our school ever burn,
Truthful torch which guides each student's return.

Eternal

By Chara Kamarinopoulou

Once upon a time, in a far-off land
Lived a wise princess, called Education,
One hundred years she lived, so king's command,
Time had come for her great celebration.

“Benakeio,” the castle she called home,
A garden of knowledge where seeds had grown,
Bold light of wisdom glowed as she would roam
Through the corridors, where she held her throne.

But the civilians said, “Well, can't you see?
Just like candlelight, her wisdom flickered,”
Little did they know her reign came to be,
“The one time when Education glittered.”
Timeless her spark remained, some acknowledge,
And we all know her as *Athens College*.



Artwork by L. Mata

100-Year-Old Beacon

By Louiza Asimakopoulou

Shall I compare you to the brightest sun?
You've stood here tall, a beacon for the young,
You have given life to the longest fun,
And you have given courage as we've sung.
Like the sun has risen at every dawn
To shine its vital rays upon earth whole,
For a hundred years, the same work you've done
As you have gifted light to every soul.
But your rays shall not cause skin to wrinkle,
They shall not burn those who try to come near;
They shall open doors for eyes that twinkle
And 'tis true, it is warm when you are here.
I know, so long as knowledge is a quest,
Athens College, you'll never be at rest.

Escutcheon

By Mary Chatziandreou

A hundred years, the feeling's still the same.
The halls that seem with memories enslaved.
The children are the ones that keep the flame,
The phoenix in their heart that sits engraved.

An owl that sits outside and waits for prey.
The textbooks in the cupboard, still awake.
The teachers are the ones that lead the way,
While kids wait for the bells to signal break.

Yet when outside, the feeling still remains.
The battle axe still hidden at their waist.
They are all blessed with different kinds of gains,
And none of them can ever be replaced.

The cross that keeps them all together now;
Will be the one that makes the others bow.

A Centennial of Wisdom

By Evangelos Petropoulos-Botsios

The time hath now come, the people all cheer,
The golden beams now gather on the stage.
A place of hope we hold so true and dear,
Our school is now one hundred years of age.

Pupils are replete with joy and delight,
How quickly time takes flight and slips from view.
The ways of learning stay so pure in light,
As the children prepare for dreams anew.

But as years passed by, the future now calls,
A journey bright, where dreams begin to grow.
The lessons learned like whispers through the halls,
Lead us to places only time will know.

We sail ahead like ships on endless seas;
The winds of Knowledge guide us where we please.



Photo by A. Gkoritsas



Artwork by L. Mata



Legacy

By Matthew Zambikos

One hundred years of excellence and pride,
Our school stands tall, its legacy is strong,
Athens College still serving as our guide,
Offering students a place to belong.
Its flame continues to glow bright and grow,
Like a star in the night, it shines its light,
Teaching us all the great lessons we know,
Its wisdom bestowed before we take flight.
But homework we dread and fuss in despair,
We plead with our teachers: “Pray, give less work!”
We tend to complain that life is unfair,
School of high standards that sets the groundwork.
Yet our school’s legacy is tried and true,
Its vision clear, shaping all that we do.



Photo by A. Tamviskou

OH SCHOOL, MY SCHOOL!

By Aristidis Verazzi

Beneath the Attic sky, so wide and blue,
A hundred years have shaped this special place.
Through every classroom, old and fresh and new,
You've helped us grow, with knowledge and with grace.

Oh, Athens College, proud and strong and true,
Your halls have held our dreams, our hopes, our light.

You've taught us how to think, to see, to do,
And face the world with courage, strength, and might.

A century of stories, work, and care,
Of friendships made and lessons we'll recall.
You've shown us how to reach, to dare, to share,
And grow together, standing proud and tall.

So, here's to you, our School, our guiding star,
For all you've been, and all the dreams you are.

On Hallowed Ground

By Steven Papakyriakou

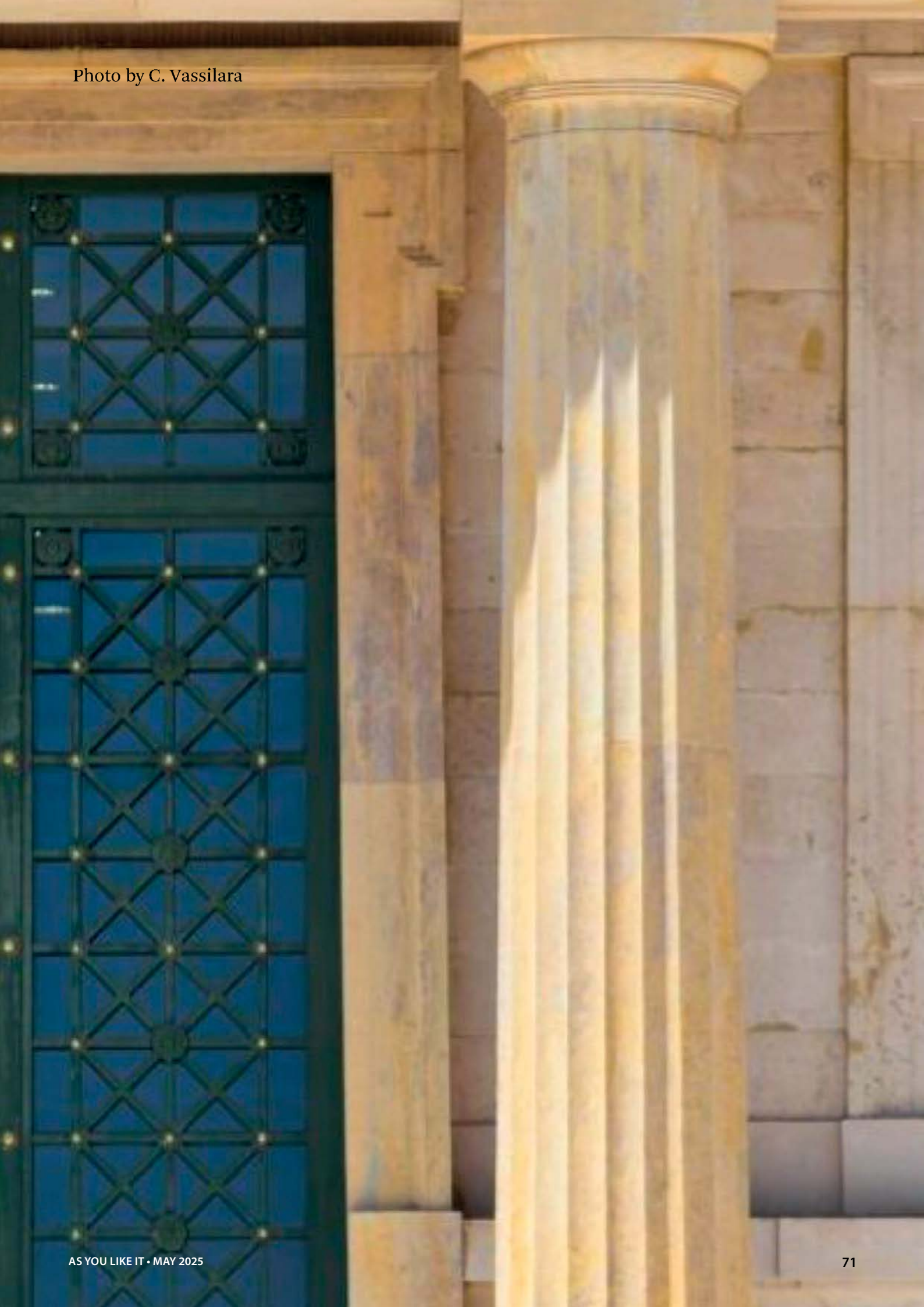
Inside the halls where wisdom's light is sought,
The College stands, a beacon high and true.
For all our education, this school fought,
Truly, all of our lives it brightened, too.

A hundred years, we shall honor the past,
And many more bright years which are in sight.
Foundations and values true, forged to last,
With wisdom, faith, perseverance, and might.

We all walk these paths with an eager mind,
With a thirst for knowledge endless and grand.
Our futures bright, with light that always shined.
A legacy that time cannot disband.

And as we rise beyond this hallowed space,
We carry forth its name with pride and grace.

Photo by C. Vassilara



100 Years, 100 Percent

By John Stamboulopoulos

Anthem: “Now God bring home our minds to school!

Σωκράτης learned here; Πλάτων taught;” Athens

College, belov’d centenarian school.

Safe haven where character growth happens!

Our personalities molded; time well spent.

Ceaseless traditions for one hundred years.

We give each other one hundred percent,

An occasion to get to know our peers!

You bring out the best, as you set out to,

Your buildings are lifeless objects to most,

Yet they welcome us as friends always do!

For 100 years, our progress they host.

Leaving your embrace, we miss you deeply,

Yet we start our life, prepared completely.

GUIDING FLAME

By Spyros Roupas-Pantaleon

As days pass by, in Psychico it stays,
A school so bright where students seek to grow.
Through years of change, it lights our hopeful ways,
Its strength remains through all we face and know.

Through war and storm, it never breaks or falls,
Its halls still ring with voices old and new.
With trust and hope, we walk inside its walls,
And chase our dreams with knowledge in our view.

As Athens College marks a hundred years,
We stand as one to honor all its past.
Its light still shines through joys and through our tears,
A guiding flame that will forever last.

So as we go, we pledge to keep its name,
To guard its light and carry forth its flame.

Photo by A. Tamviskou



Forged

By Panagiotis Vagdoutis

In classrooms old where knowledge paves the way,
Where ancient books tell tales from days gone by,
A spark is kindled with each word we say,
While thirsty minds begin to seek and fly.

As classmates gather every day with pens,
Each word we write, a step towards our aim.
We grow mature and wise, so do our friends.
Each day we live, we never stay the same.

Though we might stumble, trip, feel scared, or kneel,
The road of learning's filled with doubts and fears...
To cross it, we must become tough like steel,
Make use of the sword of a hundred years!

Athens College - what an experience!
The century-old path to our brilliance!

Artwork by A. Vasilikos

Dear Education

By Chrysevgeni Manolaraki

Starting to breathe, my very early years.
Feeling my heart beating on knowledge paths,
Could never imagine how many tears
With all these assignments, including maths.

Writing and studying all the day long;
The day will soon end, and I feel dizzy...
I will get ahead ... I am getting strong,
Luckily, I am not in a tizzy.

But as time is flying quickly away,
Wisdom is getting inside of my brain,
Maybe endless and charming in a way;
Like crazily dancing under the rain.

Enjoy the dreamy ride, my dearest friends,
The long tunnel of knowledge never ends...



Artwork by A. Vasilikos & K. Gkika

INFINITE JOURNEY

By Mary Synolaki

How can a gift be immaterial?
This verdict of life comes through
exploring,
Fallen from heaven so ethereal,
This bewildering concept called
learning.
Exploring different complex
notions,
Release your kraken and let it wander.
Reach depths not seen, feel
burning sensations,
That internal pleasure is now thunder.
Be boundless since the sky is your
limit.
Find what mankind has never found
before,
To claim this treasure, you have to win
it.
Though you don't see it,
schooling offers more.
Combine these endless thoughts with
life lessons,
Horizons unfold – see your
reflection.

DIACHRONIC

By Stefanos Masouridis

The count starts here, a hundred years ago.
A school is built, where nothing stood before,
On the historic hills of Psychico,
A sturdy place where students craft their lore.
Word spreads, and gasps soon echo while joy springs.
Ten decades pass, and now, in present times,
In its halls, children run when the bell rings.
The school's awed stature, no one undermines.
But the famed five scores did not pass blandly
Were walls able to speak, much could be said,
For these years which marked history grandly,
And the place where students wear blue and red.
From World Wars to Gen Z's need for a phone
Athens College has been a second home.

GRADUATION, WHERE TO?

By Isabella Vernicou

Like bees next to a flowering spring stream,
The Campus brims with energy and hope.
As students are planning their next big dream,
While sinking from stress, hope keeps them afloat.
As time passes, memories multiply,
Of students bonding, laughing, and learning.
Nostalgic thoughts arise of times gone by.
They dread the end of what they were yearning.
But they felt weighed down by education
Although freedom was around the corner.
Wanting to have a good reputation,
And wanting to cross the adult border.
What was the deep contemplation all for?
If our dreams change and good friends are no more.

VESSEL

By Nicholas Rokkas

My school, my home, my legacy,
my gift,
At the moment, I feel it like a
strain,
That I must struggle to endure
and lift,
But in the future, it will bring me
gain.
In this Odyssey, this journey, this
strife,
My school is going to be my
vessel,
Which will navigate me in future
life,
It will guide me to work, think
and wrestle.
In two years, my time in school
will finish,
And this scary idea makes me
think,
I should prepare to make fear
diminish,
I have to push on and not
overthink.
Athens College armed me to
never bend,
To pursue more adventures with
no end.



Artwork by A. Vasilikos & K. Gkika



In a joint venture with the Student Council, the English Department designed this poster for the Thanksgiving celebration. It was made into pins, magnets, and mouse pads, which were sold to raise money in support of our School's Scholarship Fund.



FREE VERSE

A poetic form which does not have a meter or rhythm yet allows poets to express their opinions and ideas.

How Beautiful

By Dimitris Chrysikos

How beautiful life can be,,,

I sit on the balcony, admiring the sky
Starlit like Van Gogh's with more strokes

How beautiful life can be...

I listen to the chirping of birds
I feel as if I am walking in the forest
But I am in the monumental Benakeio

Where myriads sat before

How beautiful life can be...

We embark on diverse journeys

Dream about the Future...

How beautiful life can be...

We reflect upon the deeds
Appreciate the flavor of life
How beautiful life can be...

We stretch our wings
Graduates of 2025.

STILL IT GROWS

By Christiana Vassilara

A wrinkled face and heavy eyes
A spirit strong that never dies
A foreign warmth, a fire that burns
For life and knowledge, it still yearns
It's grown and changed but stayed the same
And still stays true, protects its fame
That face has halls and trees and stairs
And eyes that shine with children's cares
Dreams they linger, hopes they rise
Creative spirit never lies
It feeds us knowledge from the start
It teaches us and fills our heart
One hundred years, and still it grows
Its bright lit future now it glows.

Photo by A. Tamviskou

Love Letter

By Michaela Loutska

I used to hate you
Oh, I used to hate you
All the early mornings
All the late nights
All your little games
Your little challenges, your rules, your lies
I used to hate all the tears I shed for you
I used to despise all the tension,
The haunting feeling that I would never be enough for you
Never good enough
Trapped in a golden cage
I used to dream of freedom
People say... "That's when you really start living"
So, I waited...
I waited for the day to come,
To leave and never look back
Hoping that I might, one day, forget
The way you made me feel
The way you shattered me
Hoping that one day, I might forget
I used to hate you
Oh, I used to hate you
Finally, I'm leaving
But I don't want to go
I don't want to go and forget you.

I now know I'll miss you
I'll miss your little challenges, your games,
I'll miss the small adventures
I'll miss the way you made me smile,
The way you made me laugh
The way you broke my heart
You might forget me over time
I am one of many
But you are my one and only
You shaped my life,
You watched me grow up, fall down
and get up again.
You were there, always...
So thank you for the challenges,
Thank you for the games
Thank you for the great adventure
Thank you for making me laugh
Thank you for breaking my heart
Thank you for standing beside me
I will miss you
But it's time to take the next step
So, I bid you farewell
As I now know:
I used to think I hated you
Oh, I used to think I hated you
The truth is
I grew up loving you

That's all.

Just Another School Day...

By Panayiotis Papandreou

Just another School Day begins ...

Morning sends its warm

Rays reaching me through the window of the bus

The greetings and smiles of the guards at the entrance

Of my school, Athens College

Just another School Day begins...

But when I arrive and enter my classroom

I find a class filled with colors...

Red for Passion and Warmth

Green for Health and Environmental Awareness

White for Trust and Confidence

And Blue for Hope and Dreaming...

I am still in bed

The alarm clock rings...

Just another School Day begins...

A New Life

By Orestis Anagnostakis

Enter this school,

A new life begins,

In here it is different.

Enter this school.

A new life begins,

Nothing will ever be the same.

Our School Play

By Nicholas Skevis

Mesmerized by the stage lights,
And the actors' extravagant costumes and masks,
Reminiscent of days and people long passed,
I stand in awe of a play describing a century.

Tales of peace and war, the
Effort to form citizens of tomorrow,
Leaders, scientists, artists, playing myriad roles,
Leaving me to dwell on the last 100 years,
And how these shaped Athens College.

Please, make no mistake, fellow spectator,
Even if this seems an extraordinary play
To have reached an ordinary end, the next
Scene is yet to be written.

And as we venture into the world,
We bear the responsibility of writing the play,
Of the next 100 years.

Photo by A. Tamviskou

100 Years

By Aigli Chatzidaki, Anastasia Boniakou & Ellie Botoula

100 years

36,525 days

Since a new community was created

More than a school

A vision

A tradition

A Home

Photo by
A. Tamviskou

A CENTURY OF GROWTH

By Lucy Papakyriakou

At first, half a giant rose
from the ground,
Ready to help the new life
grow,
Later came the twin.
Seeds were planted by each,
Now standing tall and
imposing, guarding them.
Their branches reaching for
the sky
And every year, new seeds
Are watered by the older
trees,
Offered shade and support,
Until they grow and grow
and grow,

Always reaching for that
same sky.

100 years since the very first
seeds were planted.

100 years since the giants
were given life,

100 years of growth,

100 years of nurturing and
cultivating new seeds,

Until they flourish,

Until their time comes

To grow tall and big and
strong,

To offer their own shade to
the new seeds,

Roots shared and
intertwined,

Helping each other grow,

Until the twin giants are em-
braced by forests of
every color.

Unwritten History

By Apollonia Tzalokosta

Yellow curtains gust in the wind

Students come and go

Doors opening and closing

Time passes

100 years go by

A century of unwritten history

Millions of voices

Echo through the halls

So many stories

A lifetime of experiences

The unwritten history

We will never know

Memories tie us together

Bring us closer

And in the end

We always return

To our roots.



A C R O S T I C

Photo by A. Tamviskou

Jubilee

By Sophia Loras

Amidst the preparation for

The 100-year celebration, seniors

Hum and holler,

Enamored and

Not yet ready to depart the

School that stole their heart.

Commendable of praise, our school serves as an

Oasis

Leaving lasting memories,

Lifelong friendships formed.

Every moment cherished, the

Graduating class of 2025 takes flight, prepared for what's to be

Experienced.

Legacy

By Irofilí Paparrigopoulou



Developing responsible global Citizens and future leaders,
provided with the essence of Education
and achieving their highest poteNtial, and aspirations.
Individuals with a sense of civic duTy, respect & ethics.
Inspiring and transforming into graduatEs,
Distinguished by creativity, critical thiNking, and a spirit
of teamwork and discovery
A dream of enlightened Greeks and distiNguished Americans
a century ago,
An aspiration that came true, that is our lIfe today, preparing us for
tomorrow -
A golden ticket to our future, a diAmond in the world.
How can we continue this great Legacy?



Benakeio

By Julia Zaglaniki

dyna**M**ic

su**Π**portive

d**E**velopment

Nurturing

rel**A**xing

Kollaboration

excellenc**E**

divers**I**ty

devel**O**pment

FOUND POEMS

Our poets bring to light their own beautiful
poetry discovered in the narrative of
Homer Davis, Principal and President
of Athens College,
recorded in
*“The Story of Athens College:
The First Thirty-Five Years.”*

Photo by A. Tanviskou

Vision

By Alex Koukos

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This inscription was Dewing's one contribution to the tradition of the College. It struck just the right note, making a deep impression upon the thousands who through the years have paused for a moment to take in the inscription at a glance and to reflect that the College is an institution dedicated to public service. It is also true that among the various tributes inscribed in bronze and in marble to the memory of Emmanuel Benaki there is none that is so impressive; and continues daily to remind so many people of the services of the greatest benefactor of modern Greece.

The inaugural ceremony was followed within a month by the first Commencement for a class of six, all graduates of the Commercial School. We had many reasons to be grateful to the first alumni, since they had, as a class, always seized to the full the opportunity of setting an example of responsibility, making their influence felt throughout the school. The first Commencement ceremony, a landmark in our development, was charged with emotion but also with a feeling of satisfaction, not unmixed with relief, that the long hard year had ended.

When the College opened in the autumn of 1929, Benaki Hall, except for the west wing, had been completed and had the minimum essentials of furniture and equipment. The advantages of a spacious building and a country campus could now be fully seized.

Student activities sprouted and flourished like the proverbial green bay tree. The main playing field was still in the process of being levelled but there were great open spaces taken over by the students with the enthusiasm of a victorious army. Physical edu-

Ambitions

By Amalia Ieronymaki

When it was proposed in 1911 the American practice of choosing a Valedictorian assumed that the criteria would be the highest scholastic averages. After some days of reflection, however, Darbishire objected to this assumption on the grounds that this purely mechanical method of selection could, and often did, result in the choice of a laborious drudge, a brilliant pedant of a one-sided genius. He thought that we should honor the two students who most closely approached our ideal of the Athens College graduate. In evaluating scholastic standing, one of the very important considerations, we should place emphasis on quality of achievement. He had in mind the criteria for the choice of Rhodes scholars and proposed that character, motivation, sense of responsibility, initiative, civic mindedness, good sportsmanship should count heavily in the decisions. In short, he proposed that the Valedictorians and Salutatorians should be those whom the faculty is, taking everything into consideration, most delighted to honor. The unanimous acceptance of Darbishire's proposal emphasized through the years our ideal of all-round development and the marble tablets bearing the names, placed at the entrance of the Assembly Hall, have been daily reminders of the meaning of the honors.

During the second year of the College a badge displaying the Greek and American flags was devised and the students wore it on the pocket of their blue jackets. There was some criticism of it on the grounds that it was too blatant and a rather crudely designed attempt to symbolize the cooperative nature of the College. In 1934, as a result of the initiative and proposal of Phylactopoulos, the College adopted a new badge. It is in the form of a shield, divided into four red and blue sections on which appear the Cretan double axe, the classical owl, the Byzantine cross and the renascent phoenix, the symbol of modern Greece. These symbolize, on the one hand, the Greek boy's nobility of descent from Mycenaean times through classical antiquity and the Byzantine period down to the Greek revolution and, on the other hand, the aims of the College which are the physical, mental, spiritual and civic-minded patriotic education of youth. Above the shield appear the words "andras trephon" which is translated as "we nourish men". The governing boards

The Glorious Marble Tablets

By Angeliki Milopoulou

THE STORY OF ATHENS COLLEGE

rican classroom desks tended to obscure the fact that the building was still inadequately furnished and equipped.

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type of organization, its financial position, its peculiar character as a cooperative Greek-American undertaking, its aims and purposes and the generosity of donors, especially Emmanuel Benaki and the American friends, ignoring his own donations which exceeded – and forty years later still exceeded – that of any other individual. He pronounced the name of the main part of the building to be Benaki Hall and, in appreciation of the generosity of the endowment fund, he named the entire building Benaki Hall.

All of this was in the inaugural ceremony. A booklet published at the time but brief quotations, such as the following (in translation) from Delta's address, deserve a place in these pages:

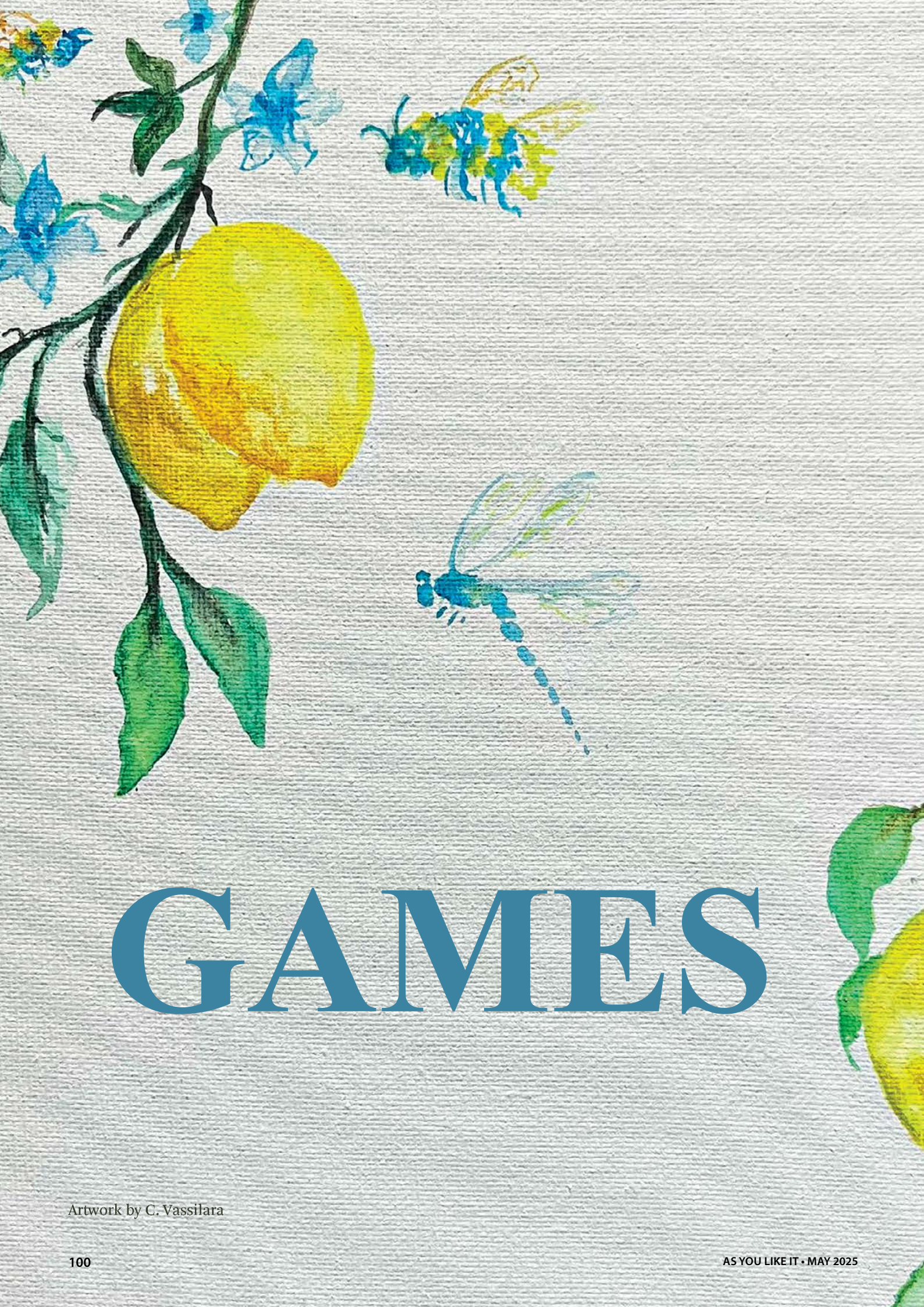
«For you all, starting from nothing, have arrived at what you see today. I agree with us. I feel that we must persevere with the same determination we will complete the work. Goodwill, courage, optimism and confidence in the right course, these are our guarantees for success.

Our conviction in the importance of the effort is fully stated. In other words, we are convinced that Athens College is very beneficial to our country because it fills a gap in our educational system. This is not the moment to discuss educational theories but the fact that the College fills a need for the education of many of our sons to us. We have boys from all over the world. From abroad, Greeks have brought their sons to us. We brought up in the Greek spirit. It is with pride that I mention that we have boys from America, from various European countries, from Sudan and Central Africa, as well as from China and India. I confess that I have a special sympathetic interest in these boys and I send their parents, wherever they may be, our heartfelt congratulations.»

The next speaker, Herbert Goold, Chargé d' Affaires of the American Legation, was an unconventional diplomat with an original turn of mind inclined to be uninhibited in expressing himself. He surprised the audience by beginning his address with speculation about the likelihood that «in some future age» archaeologists might uncover the ruins of Benaki Hall and pronounce the building «a very good example of the architecture of the twentieth century».

The Branches of Our School.

By Chrysana Gavriilidi



GAMES

Artwork by C. Vassilara

The inspiration for our games was a
humble doorbell.

A member of our editorial team noticed a
doorbell to the left of the main doors at the top of the
marble steps of Benakeio, a remnant from a time when
our school was much smaller.

This discovery led to the creation of the
Do You Recognize This? game and two more games
to form this fun portion of the
Centennial issue of *As You Like It!*

WORD JUMBLE

BENAKIO
CENTENNIAL
EMBLEM
CREATIVITY
DAVIS
DELTA
SCHOLARSHIP FUND
PHOENIX
OWL
AXE
CROSS

B	O	L	G	F	Q	U	E	I	D	A	V	I	S	S
S	C	O	O	K	I	E	M	M	P	E	N	E	U	L
C	S	A	L	T	F	E	B	E	N	A	K	I	O	O
H	O	O	D	S	I	G	L	E	U	Y	K	S	I	S
O	P	E	R	A	N	D	E	M	U	N	D	D	W	K
L	O	R	A	C	O	I	M	O	O	N	E	V	R	E
A	X	E	T	E	M	B	L	I	Y	W	A	B	F	Y
R	I	V	E	N	O	L	N	J	G	O	L	D	E	A
S	H	O	O	T	I	N	R	O	A	D	S	E	E	S
H	A	L	L	E	M	O	C	R	E	A	T	I	V	E
I	Z	A	B	N	O	K	I	A	P	I	V	I	A	T
P	H	E	O	N	I	X	O	O	L	I	P	O	I	T
E	R	I	S	I	T	O	R	M	H	D	E	L	T	A
F	U	N	D	A	V	E	J	U	M	E	N	E	M	R
K	P	O	O	L	O	N	I	T	U	R	K	Q	K	D

Do you recognize this?

1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



6.



1. Benakeio main entrance door bell, 2. German machine gun base in Psychico campus perimeter, 3. Iron boot-cleaner outside Benakeio, 4. Bronze bell in Benakeio Guards quarters, 5. Oldest book in library's collection, 6. Hair-cut chair in Glafka (former students dorm rooms)

CROSSWORD

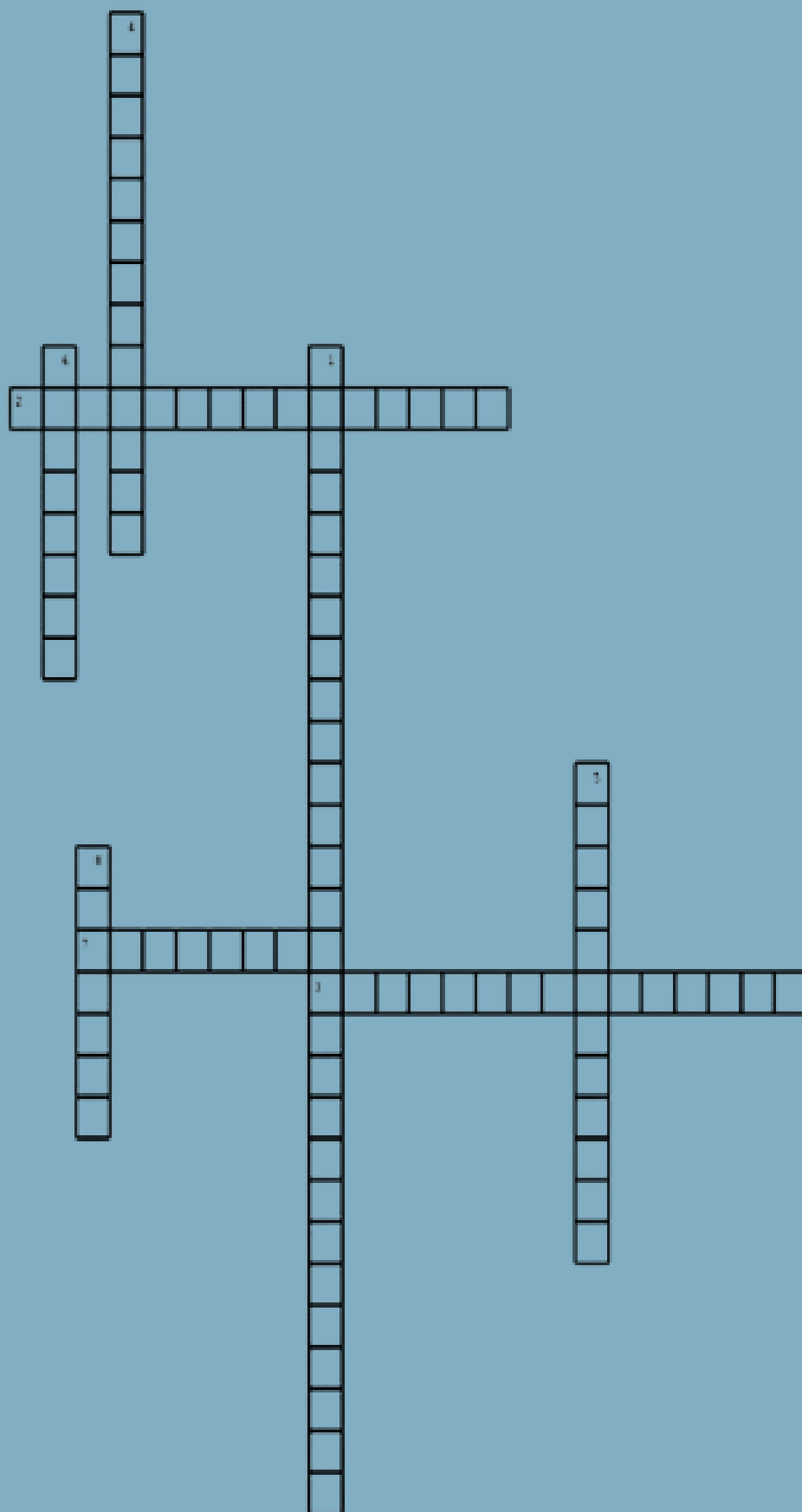
DOWN

1. A new educational programme introduced in our school in 1996.
4. We celebrate it on October 18.
5. After being an all-boys school for 52 years, in 1977, Athens College became a
6. The annual student fair we're all waiting for in April.
8. The Interschool track and field sports event known as...

ACROSS

2. The athletic club known for its red shirts.
3. Built at the same time as the school to house students from around the world.
7. Where all the knowledge is kept.

1. International Baccalaureate, 2. A' Association, 3. Boarding school, 4. Founder's day, 5. Co-ed school, 6. Panygiri, 7. Library, 8. Delta





THE BLOOM

Since its inception, *As You Like It* has endeavored to give all students the opportunity to express their creativity, to bloom. We have dedicated this year's edition to the Celebration of the Centennial through stories, poetry, and artwork. However, true to our nature, we want to continue to nurture and cultivate our seeds of creativity, a further legacy of the College.



SHORT STORIES

Photo by E. Dritsa

Simple

By Elissavet Tsoli

By the time she finished college, she had decided she was over it.

By the time she finished college, Marcella had decided she had learned to leave things behind. For one, she was leaving college. She couldn't tell if she'd learned much. She'd learned how to be a businesswoman, sure. But she knew neither what that entailed, not truly, or how that would contribute either to her own person, or to the society she had been placed in, without a specific aim for a position to occupy, without anyone ever teaching her to aim. It was ironic; if she'd learned one thing after college, after her first experience dabbling with the life she was to lead, it was that being aimless was more common than she'd thought – hoped even – back at the time when she'd used that as a reason for leaving him behind.

She heard about him, occasionally. Some of her old schoolmates who had wound up in the US maintained contact with him, brought her back news she never asked for, but they always knew to inform her of. It wasn't news, not really; nothing she learned about Lefteris's life without her was something she couldn't have predicted for him. He hadn't gotten into any trouble, not really, but then again, he was never the kind of person to truly get into trouble. Rather, he was the one to watch it happen with a smirk, and that was perhaps all the more infuriating. He hadn't really gotten up to much in general. "Georgetown fails to excite him," Artemis had told her once when visiting her in London.

"And what is it that does excite him?" Marcella had asked then, and Artemis had sipped her coffee and turned her eyes to the bustling street instead of giving the answer that Marcella understood she knew but didn't actually want to know. Lefteris never had a true defining trait; she could still define him by that lack of definition to this day. In a setting as plain, as simple, in retrospect, and overly complicated at the time as school, he was the

boy no one would ever speak badly of, but also the one no one would ever have anything too good to say about either. He had always been a drifting presence, like a summer breeze gusting across the beach: comforting, refreshing, but never lasting for long, never changing the climate. On the rare occasion that a summer breeze does linger, Marcella had thought once a short while after they'd broken up, it inevitably becomes unpleasant, the sense that it doesn't belong is overwhelming. It chills rather than refreshes.

In Paris, she saw Lucas first. Lucas had always been hard to miss, especially when he was alone. She remembered how, on that first occasion, she'd noticed Lucas first. He had a great way of making himself seen, both with his physical appearance – his blond curls and blue eyes setting him apart from his dark-haired peers back in Greece – and the way he carried himself. And ironically, it was because of this, because of the way Lucas had impressed her but the way Lefteris had approached her, that she'd ended up gravitating towards Lefteris. In Paris, Lucas had given her his charming smile; Marcella now knew that this would forever be the way Lucas approached others. They'd hugged, exchanged news; within minutes, she'd reprimanded him for a distasteful comment, and she knew he hadn't changed a bit. He was traveling, wandering around with no particular destination, in true rich kid disappointment fashion. Marcella had barely suppressed a half smile.

"What is it that brings you to Paris, my dear?" Lucas's eyes glinted in a way that suggested he knew he wouldn't receive an answer better than one he could concoct.

What was it that brought her to Paris? Lucas's question was somehow something for her to reflect on. When she arrived four months prior, she'd resolved not to let herself wander. Perhaps, at the time, she'd perceived not wandering to be precisely the reason she had come in the first place. Her

father had a number of job interviews lined up for her, an easy task for a man of his stature and power, and it was exactly because of this stature and power that Marcella knew it would be an easy feat to land any of these jobs. A privilege reserved specially for the rich college graduates, Artemis would say. Back then, not that long ago, but already it felt like eons, she could still assure herself that she had a plan. She would put her degree to use; she would learn, in the process, what her degree really entailed. She would get a job. She had to; she would do something useful until it was time for the next step, until she knew what direction her next step would take her in. But even the best laid plans fall apart, and Marcella's wasn't laid with particular caution. She could have gotten one of the jobs, she knows that for a fact; but there, in the quiet restlessness of Paris, in the midst of the city of lights, ambition, and certainty, she'd found herself overcome only with the restlessness, which soon turned into a deep disillusionment. This disillusionment seeped into her professional ambitions to the point that she was still wondering whether those ambitions had ever truly existed in the first place. Marcella supposed that people like her – or like Leteris – never truly knew ambition apart from the definition of it they'd been provided by their families; she wondered, briefly, if she'd left him behind under the illusion that she was different. She wasn't different, a little voice in her head she didn't want to hear would sometimes now tell her. It had been six months since she'd turned down the last job offer; six months she'd spent drifting, engaging in social circles of people she knew from private school, who had also somehow found themselves in Paris, and people who resembled them.

"You're not the first aimless person to end up in Paris," Artemis had remarked when Marcella had expressed surprise at the number of familiar faces she'd encountered.

"I'm not aimless," Marcella had protested, but her voice had a lot less conviction than it had had when they had parted four years prior.

She wouldn't even think of telling Lucas any of this, of course. She'd smiled at his question with all the sweetness he probably expected of her and told him she was hoping to find her path there. "It's the city of lights after all, isn't it? Maybe I'll find mine." Lucas had tossed his head back and laughed, his blond curls ruffled by the gentle November morning breeze.

"Classic Marcella. Always so ... oriented, so prop-

er. The art of disappointment still escapes you, I see."

Marcella's laugh had been awkward, but if Lucas had noticed, he didn't say a word. He was smart, she knew, smarter than he ever let on, especially where people were concerned. It was through his smarts that he managed to charm so many.

"Don't laugh, my dear," he'd said, his eyes still glinting. "I'm the youngest son of a disgustingly wealthy family. I have a fate to fulfill."

"The fate of the decadent disappointment."

"Exactly. Did you ever expect anything else of me?"

"But it's not disappointment if I expected it."

"My father would disagree with you. My lifestyle is, by definition, disappointing. I'd invite you to take a look, but I respect you too much."

She'd laughed more freely now. Was he alone in his quest of fulfilling his fate? she'd asked playfully, and he'd chuckled. "Am I ever alone, Marcella, my dear?"

And she knew, at that moment, that she'd be seeing Leteris for the first time in four years, soon enough. It wasn't just that she knew him and Lucas to be practically attached at the hip since long before she met them; it was that she knew that Lucas's quest of disappointment, his world of fleetingness, the meaningless enjoyment of it all was exactly the kind of distraction that Leteris still craved. It was the thing that had bound the two boys together even as they'd grown, the ground from which their childhood friendship had sprung as they tried to blossom; Lucas was a master of distraction, and Leteris needed it more than anything. She'd tried many times, back then, to delve into the things he wanted to be distracted from. But he'd always shut her out with a laugh that was too loud or with an aloofness that was like a wall people always advised her not to try to climb. She'd tried to distract herself from it too, until it had become too tiring; she'd wondered, in retrospect, how tired he must've been all the time.

Lucas had confirmed he was, in fact, in Paris with Leteris. "I'm supposing that, after divulging this bit of information, this will be the last I see of you," he'd followed up with, in a tone more cautious than she'd ever heard him use. Of course, for

Lucas, that was relative.

She'd chuckled again. "Your perception of me is very one-dimensional. I have no hard feelings."

"Hard feelings can be more than anger, you know."

She hadn't known what to say to that.

Lucas had mentioned in passing that he and Lefteris would be attending a party in Paris in a few days, a party that she had also accepted an invitation to.

"I hope you gentlemen have learned to control yourselves a little better since I last saw you," she'd said to him.

Lucas had chuckled. "I'm not sure how much he'll be able to control himself when he sees you again." And then a tense silence had cloaked them, and Lucas had laughed because Lucas could never stand tension or silence. He had that in common with Lefteris.

Marcella remembered the last party she'd attended with Lefteris, a while after his father had died. Her comment to Lucas had been pointed; he'd never been particularly good at restraining himself, and that night had solidified a divide between her and Lefteris, one that had been coming for a long time. She'd failed to learn from Artemis whether he'd changed his habits. In fact, she'd failed to learn, come to think of it, whether he'd changed at all. She wondered to herself to what extent this was a conscious decision.

Artemis had laughed when Marcella told her Lefteris would be at the party. "A likely place for him to be," she'd said, and Marcella had resisted the urge to ask her to elaborate. Marcella sometimes envied Artemis more than she enjoyed her company, for Artemis was never aimless. She knew what she wanted, and the world knew it, too. Even now, wandering Paris with Marcella on those long, bright autumn days, Artemis had a purpose: the purpose of having no purpose. Artemis would go back to the US after her travels, manage things for her father there. Marcella couldn't help but envy the complete contentment her friend had found in the future. It was that same contentment that Lefteris had resented but never steered away from.

"Did you go to parties with him at Georgetown?" she'd asked Artemis as they grabbed their coffees from the counter of yet another overpriced store tailored to the needs of exactly the kind of people

they were.

Artemis had let out a laugh. "More often than not. He'd found his Lucas substitutes to drag him there, too."

"He was always getting dragged into things, wasn't he?"

Artemis chuckled again. "After some point, you drag yourself. That is what my dear cousin does. Say, I'll be coming with you to the party."

Marcella raised an eyebrow. "I don't need you to protect me."

"Who said anything about protecting?" Artemis shrugged. "You forget that Lefteris is my cousin. And I haven't seen him since we left Georgetown. Nor Lucas, for that matter, in over a year. It'll be good to catch up."

Silence fell between them. Marcella knew better than to ever fully believe Artemis; she also knew better than to ever truly doubt her.

"You know, I talked to my aunt recently," Artemis said. "It seems like his father's side of the family wants Lefteris back in Greece as soon as possible. They want him to take on some responsibility, think he's avoided it for too long. If you ask me, they're not too happy about him wandering around French parties."

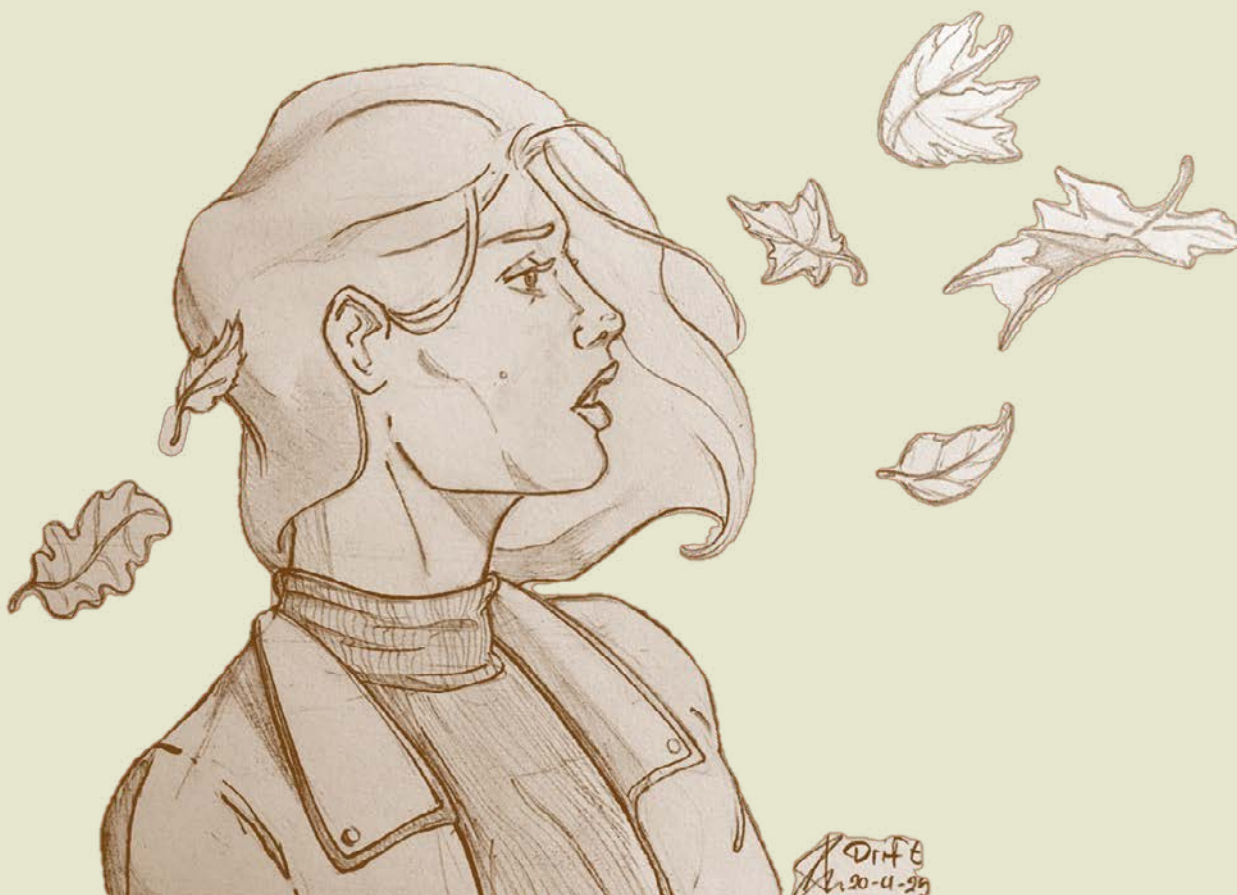
Marcella exhaled softly, "They want him to take over the company?"

"Usually, that's what an heir does when his father dies. And his has been dead a good while now. But I understand, to an extent. It's strange to become your dad."

Marcella took a slow sip of her matcha, slowly licking foam from her lips. "Do you think he'll go back?" she asked, though she already knew the answer, and she knew that Lefteris probably knew it, too. He was always inclined to take the path of least resistance, to distract himself from unwanted obligation but never truly manage to avoid it. It had weighed on him in a way that he refused to acknowledge; it had weighed on their relationship in a way they never overcame. "You think they'll really ... make him into his dad?"

Artemis pushed her sunglasses up her nose. "I think families like ours don't let you be aimless forever."

Marcella remembered Lefteris's grief. It wasn't loud, external, and raw the way she'd imagined a



son would mourn his father. Upon meeting Lefteris, one would never suspect the loss that affected every aspect of his life. His grief emerged in the quiet moments, in the little things, creeping into the corners of his mannerisms and etching itself into his patterns, engraved along the lines of his choices. His silence had been both fascinating and infuriating; Marcella could never fully understand how he could express so little, how he could devote so much energy to masking his pain instead of channeling his energy into truly facing it. She'd wondered more than once if this form of grief was what had led her to leave him. He'd always been so full of energy, of emotion, but he'd never actually learned to control that emotion, to make it into something, and that force untamed had exhausted her. She hadn't known how to help him channel it, hadn't even known whether it was her place to try; when he'd tried to take his grief out on her, she'd left, leaving him to laugh and drink his way through their last fight.

"You know, no one's forcing you to go to this party," Artemis was saying now.

Marcella narrowed her eyes. "Why wouldn't I go?" she asked, although again, lately she had trouble

finding a point in most things she did.

"I don't know. Because you hate Michelle and Elliot. It wouldn't be a lie, and you know it."

Marcella had turned her eyes to the park outside the café, the park where she'd encountered Lucas the previous day. There was a quiet aura to it. Paris was quieter than she'd expected, she'd found within the past few months, or maybe, in those few months, something in her was actively making an effort to drown out its noise. Maybe, it would explain why the quiet was far from serene.

"I don't hate anyone," she'd said. Her voice, too, she'd found, had grown quieter over the months she'd spent in the City of Lights.

Artemis had sipped her coffee, turning to face the park, too. "Hate is a simple feeling," she'd remarked. "You don't do simple, do you?"

Marcella knew. She knew that nothing about the party that night would be simple. Nothing about the park was simple. Nothing about her, her past, present, or future would ever be simple.

Nothing about him would ever let her feel simple.

THE SONS THEY LEFT BEHIND

Story & Artwork by Apostolos Vasilikos

When Achilles, the greatest of the Greeks, defeated Hector, both Achilles himself and Troy were soon to fall. Most brutal among the men who participated in the sacking of the city was Achilles' son, Pyrrhus or Neoptolemus, brought up and brought to war by his grandmother, the sea-nymph Thetis. After razing Troy, he commanded that Hector's only son, infant Scamandrius, be thrown over the walls, and he took Andromache, Hector's wife, captive.

Hector's Son

IT'S FASCINATING what ambrosia does to a mortal body. Neoptolemus' height was daunting, towering over me as he lounged on his throne picking his teeth with a bronze dagger. His curly hair was a scorching red that put even the pyre of the greatest hero to shame. He wore long gloves that reached all the way up his biceps, yet his calves shone bare and veinous. He had inherited the speed that had given Achilles his fame. In my mind, Apollo's voice echoed: *Aim for his heel.*

Before me, I saw the man whose father killed my own and desecrated his body in an act of wrath. For what? Because Hector slew his companion? Because my father defended his home? *You didn't start this war*, Smintheus reminded me. *The blame's on them.*

Above me loomed the man who had murdered my grandfather seventeen years ago. The man who slaughtered my aunt as if she were an ox on the altar. He made my mother his bed-slave. This monster murdered the infant that Achaean coward replaced me with! *This man thinks you dead.*

"Pyrrhus," I demanded. "This is my gold you are sitting on." My fingers caressed the hilt of my sword in anticipation.

He didn't face me, instead turning to some guard, on his face a derisive smirk.

"This child does not know whose legacy he is addressing." Legacy. That was one thing we had in common, he and I. But for the mural of myth, our fathers would have been to us mere names.

He looked at me directly now, his gold-flecked irides reflecting the flickering torch-light. "Go away, boy. You don't wish to challenge me to a fight."

I responded, sternly, teeth grinding. "I wouldn't call myself a boy. You were five years younger than I am when you sailed from Troy. Now, I shall ask: where are you holding my mother?"

His eyebrow twitched and arched, his back jerking up from the chair. "Impossible..." he uttered as if to himself, amused but shaken. "Who are you, child?"

I drew a breath and stated, determined, "I am Scamandrius, son of Hector, son of Priam. Your darkest hour in the night."

The Molossian king's stare was piercing mine, ablaze. His quivering mouth struggled to feign a grin. So haughty a hunter wouldn't be afraid. No, it was something else. Could it be – the mere thought excited me – that all this time, truly, I had been... haunting him?

"Bring the Trojan princess," he mumbled.



"It can't be ..." said a woman with rent cheeks as she was escorted into the hearth room. She wasn't chained or shackled, yet she looked very much enslaved; her eyes empty black vessels and her milky skin defiled, stretched from child-bearing. "Son?"

"Mom," I rushed to her embrace. A meeting for one, a reunion for the other.

"But... how?" Andromache inquired as she stroked my hair, and I began telling her everything that had transpired over those past seventeen years: my journeys across Phrygia; the silver-bowed god and his talks of destiny and revenge. The Scaean Gate in ruins. My intentions in Molossia.

"No," declared my mother in a quiet, disapproving voice. "The war has ended, my boy. No more bloodshed is necessary. It will only bring the fury of another orphaned son upon you when age consumes you, too."

As she was speaking, Neoptolemus approached and cupped her shoulder with his gloved hand. She cringed, and my rage seethed. In the blink of an eye, my blade had slashed through his thigh, and a dark orange liquid spilled from the wound, leaving the marble-white bone exposed. I reached for his glove, swiftly removing it and throwing it aside, along with the dagger. Achilles' bastard

nodded for the guards not to engage.

Fingertips to elbow, Pyrrhus' forearm was stained scarlet, with patches of ashy black: the mark of death and fire. I let him collapse to the floor and pointed at his arm with the tip of my sword, my gaze fixed upon the woman who had birthed me.

"He destroyed us, Mother. Your own kingdom was laid to waste by him and his kin. Father was slaughtered by men who came to us seeking riches and honor. How can you stand by, their brutalities unpunished? How can you forgive them after everything they've done to you?"

"Forgive?" she wore a crooked smile. "I could never – ever – forgive." She exhaled, ready to speak a lie she had convinced herself was true. "But if there were retribution to be meted out, don't you think the gods would have intervened?"

"What do you mean? That we deserved to be wiped out? That they have suffered enough?" I felt betrayed, and my vision became blurry with tears. "Your husband once dreamt that I would grow up to be his glorious heir! That I would march through our walls triumphant, and the crowds would chant my name. They'd say I had surpassed even him. And you'd look at me and be proud of your offspring." I paused, still searching for what had clouded her judgement so much, why she refused to look me in the eyes. "They took it all away!" At that, the cold, sharp metal sunk into the skin of the perpetrator's neck, just enough to draw out more of that wretched blood-ichor mixture.

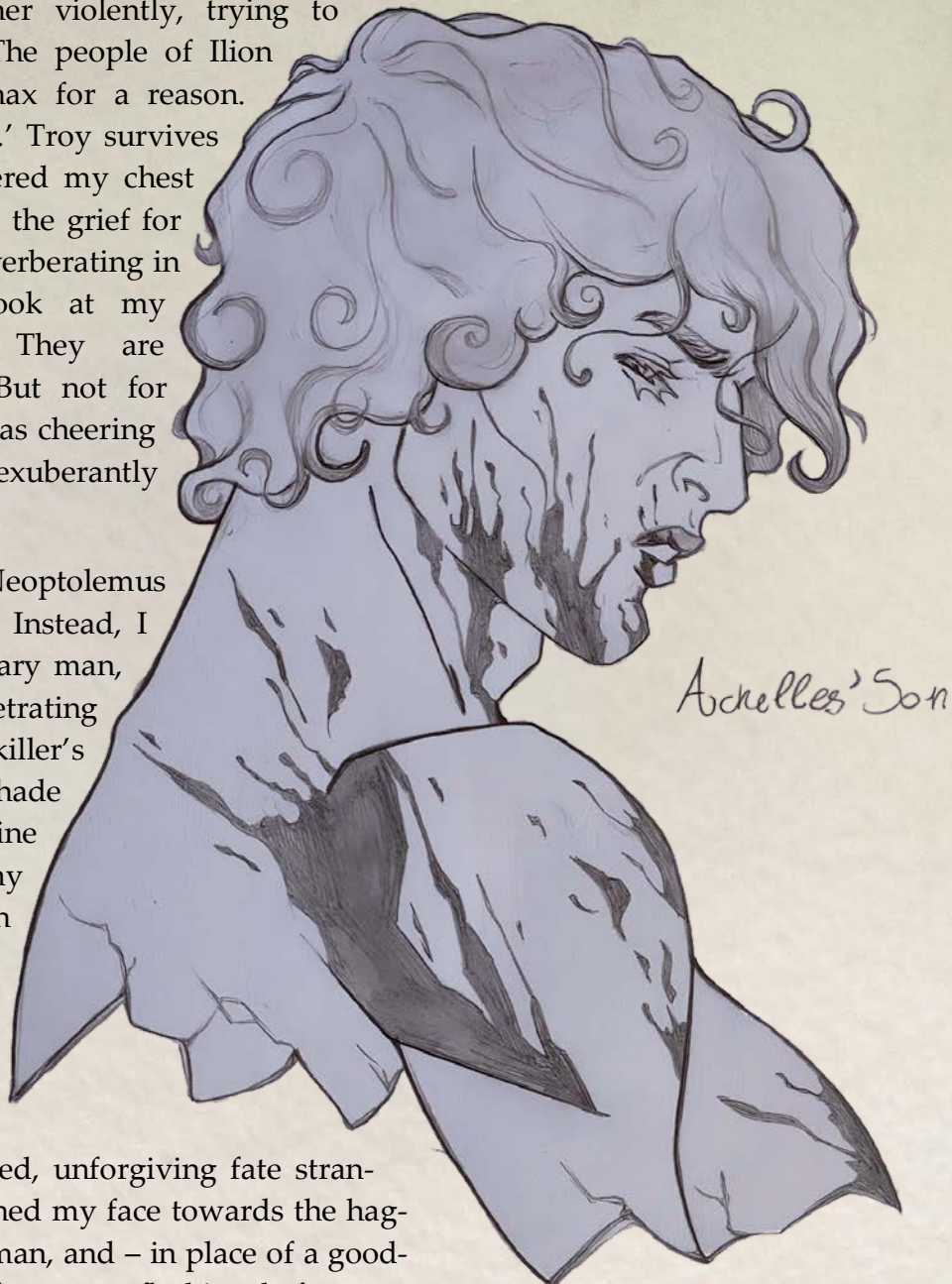
"Don't you see?" Hector's widow pleaded. "Your father is long dead, and so is his dream. Troy fell, Scamandrius! You are fighting for what? The ghost of what used to be? It's burnt, son. Blaming a youth who arrived at our shores to exact vengeance in his own father's name won't change that."

I felt naked hearing her say that, stripped of skin and purpose, of any destiny in this world of savagery. *All this travelling and planning and training, culminating in what? Just letting go?* Smintheus retaliated, enraged, and his light spun and wove into a blinding veil.

"You are the one who cannot see, Mother," I knelt beside her, clasping the fabric of her dress, shaking her violently, trying to wake her up. "The people of Ilion titled me Astyanax for a reason. 'King of the City.' Troy survives in *me*!" I hammered my chest with my free fist, the grief for all those gone reverberating in each shout. "Look at my arms, Mother! They are clean, spotless! But not for long..." Apollo was cheering me on, hissing exuberantly behind my back.

I spun towards Neoptolemus to finish the job. Instead, I found him, a weary man, his bronze penetrating my chest, his killer's hands the same shade as the carmine blooming from my wound. A son killing another. History looping around herself, ravenously biting her own tail, the noose of fabled, unforgiving fate strangling us all. I turned my face towards the haggard, hollow woman, and – in place of a goodbye – I lamented, arrows flashing before my setting eyes:

"You were right, mana; Troy *has* fallen."



Achilles' Son

SHE DOESN'T KNOW the pain it takes to wash it off. The futility of every scrub. And just when I thought it was over, that this was the darkest these hands would ever get, her son came to wet them with his own blood, too. I have prevailed, grandmother. Wholly, now. Have you had your vengeance and your honor and your solace found? Have you had enough?



The first name I was given was a mockery. Pyrrha was my father's alias when he was disguised with a woman's veil, a fugitive in my mother's palace. Before he left for war. Before his sea-nymph mother tore me from my mother's loin the moment I was born and dragged me to the bottom of the Aegean, passing me from bosom to bosom until all ambrosia milk of every fertile nymph had saturated me.

When she deemed that I, by way of track and swordfight and godly might, had shaken off the disgrace Achilles' earthly living (and earthly grieving) had brought upon 'our line,' she baptized me with the name I was crowned by: Neoptolemus, 'Young to war.' All I was, by divine dictum, a child sworn to murder. I honored my name well.

Thetis hasn't visited me in a while. Seems she had forsaken her false belief that the prophecy would pass from son to grandson. Once, drunk with grief and indignation, having failed to cut her hair (for it was of the water she dwelled in) and feed it to her boy's memorial pyre, Thetis called me 'son' that night. But she knew. And I knew. I was not the son destined to be greater than his father.



I stagger to Andromache, watching as she cradles her son, mourning him a second time. The thought that dawns on me is a grim one, cloaked in the very color my hands are soaked in: I should have let the child do away with me – if not to liberate me, at least to make me pay. For the things I've done to her. The wails I've wrung from his mother's neck. Why didn't you stop me, grandmother? When I mimicked the force with which you were thrown to mortal arms. When she whimpered and evoked you, you did not answer. Maybe it truly is a line of monsters, 'our line.' Maybe that is why you felt that dad betrayed 'us.' Or, maybe, I'm mistaken. What would I know about him? I never met Achilles. I never met the man I was supposed to be.

THE END

The Lost Atlantis

Story & Artwork by Ino Georgiadi

The moment a single stone crumbles, even the strongest shall perish because Time stops for nothing. Civilizations disappear while Time passively watches, granting no second chances to anyone or anything. And the concept of Time is more complex, less linear, than mortals believe. Yet Time always sees the cause, the reason for the downfall. Perhaps it was greed...

Or perhaps it was a chain of seemingly inconsequential actions that led to the fall of a utopian land, actions carried out by seemingly disconnected people...

It could have been the half-god, half-human King of Atlantis who, overwhelmed by the death of his trusty soldier, stumbled upon the ruins of Zeus's temple, his own father's temple, and forgot to make a sacrifice, enraging Zeus, who, as the king of gods, could not withstand the disdain and ignorance of one who should not have even been deemed a demi-god.

It could have been the mighty soldier, a warlike man who fought bravely during the conquests in the Mediterranean but who failed to carry out the King's command to slaughter the leader of the Athenians. Upon his return, the waves slammed into the cliff protecting the cove, paused, then attacked again with venom, striking the rock's base before pulling back, the greedy, salty lips eager to engulf the city. The threat of the sea pulsed through his veins, but nothing compared to the trembling fright he felt at appearing before the ruthless King of Atlantis. Despite the warfare and atrocities he had endured, this marked the final time he would ascend the stairs of the castle.

Truly gruesome what hubris can do.

It might have been the trader, thriving in one of the largest urban centers known to humankind. That smug look and raspy voice that echoed through the influx of customers had once caught the attention of the soldier, awaiting the departure of his ship for the unknown (for most, but peculiarly familiar to this soldier), the lands of the Mediterranean. It had become quite a tradition, dare the soldier consider it a ceremony? Before each battle, he would sharpen his steel sword, a family token, at this same trader's den. After all, this trader was a skilled swordsman, deftly parrying every attack thrown his way and thwarting the enemy's forays with ease, sidestepping grace-



fully each time. Over the years, the soldier had nicknamed the trader 'Winning Sword.' Admittedly, the soldier wasn't the best at bestowing titles or nicknames, but he was kind-hearted and thoughtful.

"Would you perhaps be interested in joining the King's blades men? Your talent is truly unique," the soldier had once proposed.

"However flabbergasting this may appear to you, my talent could only benefit a market like this one," the trader absently replied, still marveling at the seemingly endless crowd of people surrounding them. (The soldier never learned about the trader's secret skill, which is for the best, I think.)

So, before departing on this, his most important quest to date, he wished to bid farewell to his friend, to sharpen his blade as he always did, but he found the trader's stall empty. Could it be that his sword wasn't sharp enough or that his superstition led to his downfall?

It couldn't be...

It could have been the foreigner, a Sumerian astronomer who breathed heavily, unable to utter a complete phrase, stuttering in a rough voice, "Excuse me. I was t-t-told I c-could get a sword here," cutting through the trader's daydreams. He turned to see a broad-shouldered man, a few years his senior, who had the air and despair of a foreigner, however handsome and intimidating he attempted to appear. Thankfully for him, the trader had trained as a rookie blacksmith amongst Sumerians. After all, a merchant ought to know the language of his customers.

The trader wished to prod right into the foreigner's story. But instead the trader asked, "Should I suggest a meal before a sword, sir? You seem famished. Didn't you carry provisions on your journey?"

"I did. I just," the foreigner replied reluctantly, "...ate it all."

"Well, here in Atlantis, one must try our specialties; wait a moment."

The trader never reappeared. He skillfully pickpocketed the foreigner, a hidden talent, nabbing his belongings before the Sumerian noticed anything, and then fled the city, leaving behind only a whetstone. His only friend's whetstone to be exact. The whetstone that had always brought the soldier good fortune.

If the trader had known that the soldier would not make use of the whetstone, he would have taken it with him.

It could even be a little boy who sped through the crowd and fetched his mother, begging her to purchase a telescope from the market so that he could see the sky. Just an ordinary business day. The floodwaters that had recently invaded the city were gone now, the Sumerians who had been asked to delay their visit had returned, and the market was buzzing with the laughter of children and the cries, almost wails, of the merchants who were back in business. Until that little boy, whom no prophecy had foreseen, altered the course of history, bringing his people to their knees. What could he have possibly done so catastrophic that it led to a civilization as

glorious as Atlantis crumbling to pieces and getting swallowed up by the abyss of the sea?

All it took was the theft of a telescope. See, the Sumerian, who was left utterly bewildered by the theft of his possessions by the trader, still famished but without the promised meal, stood, in the midst of the market, his only remaining possession a bronze, elegantly engraved telescope slung on a leather strap, nestled on his back. He carried this telescope everywhere, treated it like his child. Had he known that this boy would make him stumble, deftly cut the leather tether, snatch the telescope, and vanish into the crowd, he wouldn't have set foot on the island. Much to his despair, he was left penniless, starving, and without his telescope in this foreign land. Alone.

That is when he swore, hammering his chest with his right fist, "No one shall ever set foot on this cursed island ever again!" This time he didn't stutter or mumble. This time, he cursed Atlantis, but amidst the noise of the market no one heeded his words. Not a single soul in an Empire so grand and honorable cared about this defiled foreigner.

It could have been me. Time tricks mortals into a never-ending labyrinth of fates all entangled and set to cause chaos. Time doesn't interfere in the mortal world. I watch as civilizations come and go, letting Nature cover up everything in the wake of one to clean house for the next.

What is fated must happen.

I must oversee what mortals dare do yet not interfere. But Atlantis, the land of mighty warriors, of splendid craftsmen, lively traders, and petty thieves, was cherished amongst the Gods. Why did Zeus show his wrath in such a cruel manner?

"In a single day and night of misfortune all your warlike men in a body sank into the earth, and the island of Atlantis in like manner disappeared in the depths of the sea. For which reason the sea in those parts is impassable and impenetrable,"

recorded Plato for all posterity.

Only I had the power to stop it. But I didn't. Once a single stone crumbles, even the strongest shall perish. Every Atlantis will be submerged beneath the sea because all great Empires are bound for obliteration. I always see the cause, the reason for the downfall. Even you could play a role in the downfall of your Atlantis.

Rose

By Margaret Christopoulou
& Mary Chatziandreou

8:32

The morning sun was dazzling as it streamed in through the bedroom window. Amelie opened her eyes, her gaze immediately meeting Adam's. *We are in this together*, their eyes said. Ten years they'd been together.

As they rose from bed, their usual rhythm took over. Amelie reached for her brush, her hand moving in a motion that Adam had become accustomed to. Adam simultaneously turned to the bathroom, moving with long strides towards the sink. This was a dance learned over the years. Today was not just their 10th anniversary, it was the day they would be welcoming a new member into their little family.

Years of waiting, of trying, of tears, of loving each other, of longing, had led them to this moment. Years they had endured the ups and downs together, always together. Today, they were happy, unbelievably happy. This baby would bring new life and happiness into their lives. They could hardly believe their luck.

A soft, barely audible whisper escaped his lips, "I love you," before he headed towards the kitchen. A warm chuckle escaped her lips at his sweetness, and with a shake of her head, she abandoned her struggle to control her hair and followed him, her footsteps light and eager, like the love between them.

The soft morning light painted the kitchen in shades of gold as Adam moved with ease, preparing eggs and toast. From the doorway, Amelie watched him, her heart swelling with tenderness. It wasn't just his handsome features or the way his muscles flexed as he worked that made her feel like that; it was the absolute attentiveness with which he completed even the smallest tasks. He cooked with the same devotion and dedication he loved her with.

Glancing up from the stove, Adam found himself captivated by Amelie's compelling aura. He saw her like no one else could. She was his. He was hers. He

knew with absolute certainty that he could spend a hundred lifetimes loving her.

When they got the news that their adoption application was successful, they could not believe their luck. They loved each other, and that could have been enough, but they wanted to share that love, to make a family. They thought it might never happen, and that upset them. They knew other couples who had applied unsuccessfully. But they were lucky. They were always lucky. They were so happy, however, that they were afraid. And this fear made them superstitious. That is why they decided not to change anything in the house, to make any arrangements for their child until she was truly theirs. And this was the day. There was a lot to do before welcoming the baby to her new home.

A lingering kiss marking the end of their morning and their upcoming day.

9:47

Amelie was going to pick up the remaining items they needed. A surge of excitement bubbled up within her as she slid into the driver's seat. Her first stop was the store where she would choose tiny clothes and soft blankets.

Each item was a representation of their new family. Happiness overwhelmed her as she filled her shopping cart.

Adam remained at home. He was buzzing with anticipation, happy anticipation. He'd invited a few friends over, a last hurrah of sorts, to crack open some beers and celebrate. They had to face the daunting project of assembling the crib.

The whole idea was still surreal to him; he was going to be a father. As he chatted with his friends, the familiar company washing over him, a little flicker of melancholy touched him. He knew these relaxed evenings, filled with laughter and shared stories, would soon be over and replaced by the beautiful yet chaotic life of parenthood. He knew he already loved her, like he loved her mother. This image pulled him into the future with an irresistible power, the force ever in his favor. Joy overwhelmed him.

Amelie returned to the car; a sense of purpose settled over her once again. Today, she would be a mother, she thought, as she packed the clothes and toys and blankets into the trunk of the car. She glanced at her watch.

12:08

She had just one stop to make before heading home...

Adam and his friends made short work of assembling the crib, the mobile, the changing table, and the baby monitors. The nursery was now ready for its occupant. The silence in the house was a stark contrast to the energy that had filled it just minutes before when his friends had been there. Now, only the quiet ticking of the kitchen clock marked the passage of time.

12:39

He went to the garage and retrieved the highchair, setting it at the table. It held a promise of family dinners. He had just one more job to do. He stepped outside, the chilled evening air a stark contrast with the warm cocoon of home.

12:42

The car door clicked shut as Amelie stepped onto the soft grass. A wave of calmness and tranquility washed over her as she strolled along the path. The wind played with her tangled ponytail, and shivers ran through her body; she tightened her coat to create a sense of protection from the cold gusts. Despite the cold, she paused for a moment to listen to the music of life around her: birdsong mingled with children's laughter. She had often found herself at the playground. She liked to listen to the mothers laughing, to watch the children squeal with joy.

A sudden blur of pink interrupted her deep thoughts, and a little girl with bright and curious eyes was suddenly standing before her, a single rose clutched in her small hand, held out to Amelie.

"It's my birthday today!" the girl excitedly announced. "So I'm giving everyone a rose, because it's my name!"

Amelie's heart melted. She accepted the flower, and in that moment, it clicked. She and Adam had danced around the idea of names, not wanting to jinx themselves before she was in their home, real, and theirs. But at this moment, the name was clear: Rose. Their patiently awaited baby would be called Rose.

"Thank you, Rose," she said kindly to the little kid, who jogged away.

Adam glanced at his watch. Their baby was coming at 15:00, and Mrs Andrews was never late. He wondered where Amelie was. He thought about calling her but realized his phone was on the counter.

He climbed the ladder, holding the banner his friends had brought: Welcome. He descended the ladder, admiring his work, excitement growing. Just then, the first fat raindrop splattered onto his cheek, then another followed, and another, and another, until the sky opened. The banner sagged, the colors running, the letters no longer legible. Adam stared, frustration washing over him. He stood, water dripping from his hair and clothes. It was too late to take it down. He grabbed the ladder and ran back into the house.



Artwork by E. Tsampi

14:23

Amelie saw with shock how late it was. As she turned back towards her car, the first fat raindrops splattered against her cheeks. Mothers scurried with their children, seeking refuge from the deluge, children tucked protectively beneath their coats and umbrellas. But unlike them, Amelie didn't seek shelter. Instead, she welcomed the rain. What a glorious spectacle. Her joy turned into a spontaneous jump and continuous twirls under the raindrops. She didn't notice the rose she had been holding, a pink blush contrasting with the grey sky, slip from her fingers. The rain sweeping it away.

Adam listened to the familiar clank of the radiator as he adjusted the dial, sending warmth through the metal veins of the house. Outside, the wind howled, and the rain pelted the windows. He

looked at his watch again. It was 14:24. Where was Amelie? He settled onto the couch, and with a deep breath, opened the book: *The Contented Little Baby*.

14:31

Amelie was soaked but radiating with energy as the engine purred to life; she turned the car towards home, her fingers instinctively turning up the radio and belting out “Perfect” by Ed Sheeran. She smiled; it was the same song she and Adam had swayed to on their wedding day. She reached for her phone, lost in the moment, and dialed his number, yearning to share that moment with him.

When his voicemail picked up, she didn’t hesitate, rambling about her day, each detail painted with the joy she was feeling at that moment, right there. A soft smile touched her lips as she finished her voicemail with her final declaration, as she whispered, “I love you.” The echoes of the song were still swirling around her ...

14:38

Adam heard a noise upstairs. He realized he had forgotten to shut the window in the baby’s room, so he rushed up the stairs. With a sigh he slid the windows shut, instantly taming the curtains, sealing out the ruthless weather and locking himself into his safe space.

Luckily, not much rain had gotten in. He admired the baby crib, a simple white structure in the corner, holding ahead a future unknown to all. He ran a hand along the smooth wood, picturing the tiny person who would soon claim it. Their baby girl.

The wind picked up, sending rain swirling, creating an eerie atmosphere. From the living room, he heard the sharp digital ding of a new voicemail cut through the house. Adam knew it was Amelie, probably telling him she was on her way. He would listen to it later.

BANG!

Another window slammed shut, and he rushed to close it. He made his way through the house, checking to make sure that all was secure.

14:38

Amelie concentrated on the road. The rain relentlessly attacked her windshield, blurring her world outside. Visibility was near zero. Then a shadow emerged from the nothingness. Time seemed to

slow, a breathless moment where everything else stopped, dissolved. A sharp, instinctive turn of the wheel...

BANG!

A crash. Her world became pain and dizzying chaos. Then nothing but a single thought: the baby, her baby, their baby, the girl, her girl, their girl, their rose, their little flower.

14:53

Adam wandered into the kitchen to retrieve his phone to call Amelie when the doorbell jangled. *Finally*, he thought as he headed to the door. They would have to hurry to get everything into the house before the baby arrived. But it was not Amelie; it was Mrs Andrews, cradling a tiny bundle.

He ushered them into the living room, the baby safely settled in the bassinet where she continued to sleep. Adam flicked on the baby monitor so that he could show Mrs Andrews the baby’s new room, prove to her that they were ready.

After the tour, Adam left Mrs Andrews in the living room while he went to make tea, then settled in with her to discuss the final stages of the adoption. The rain continued to relentlessly drum against the windows, yet the baby, now awake, peacefully clutched Adam’s thumb in her tiny hands.

14:58

Amelie still had not come. Adam was worried but didn’t want Mrs Andrews to know. She needed to leave, but she promised to return soon.

And just like that, she was gone, leaving Adam holding the greatest gift he had ever received: their daughter. He couldn’t wait for Amelie to return, to see her joy. It was then that he noticed something in the baby’s hair: tiny clips shaped like roses. Adam suddenly knew her name: *Rose*.

15:00

Adam picked up the phone to call Amelie, ready to listen to her voicemail, annoyed that she had missed this moment, their moment.

A knock on the door interrupted him. All his anger and worries vanished into thin air. Finally, Amelie was here. He looked lovingly at his daughter.

“Rose, you are about to meet your mom.”

The Midnight Masquerade Ball

By Maria Stavropoulou & Kleio Papanastasiou

One hundred years ago, Montague's mansion was the jewel of the aristocracy. Built on a secluded hill, it was surrounded by forest and a sense of mystery that seemed to weigh down its walls. Rumors of family feuds, secrets, and intrigue have always stained the family's reputation, but no one expected what would happen at one of their famous masquerade parties.

It was a cold winter's night when the guests arrived in their glittery costumes and masks, ready to enjoy the evening. The storm raging outside did not deter them—it just added a mysterious atmosphere to the evening. The grand ballroom, with its chandeliers shining, was abuzz with laughter and music, until the fun came to an abrupt halt.

Right around midnight, Lady Vivian Montague, the hostess, ran from the ballroom screaming. She had found her husband Lord Henry Montague dead in his office, a knife, clearly the murder weapon, discarded next to his lifeless body.

The news of the murder spread quickly among the guests. Inspector Charlotte Ashcroft, who had been invited to the party as a friend of the family, immediately sprang into action. The party was stopped, and all the guests were kept inside the mansion for questioning.

The office of Lord Montague was in a dark and overly-decorated room. A large wooden desk dominated the space, and bookcases full of leather-bound volumes adorned the walls. Montague's body was found lying on the floor, with a wound on the back of his head.

Ashcroft stood in front of the Lord's body. His office was in disarray: scattered papers, a spilled glass of wine, and his blood, staining the cream-colored carpet.

She observed the objects carefully. A gold button was next to the chair, and, on the desk, she saw a note which looked like it had been written hurriedly, barely legibly: *"I know what you did. You are going to pay for it."*

The door to the office was half open like someone had left hastily.

"Who had access to the office tonight?" Ashcroft asked a servant.

"I don't know, ma'am. The door was shut most of the time, although... there was a little bit of traffic earlier. I didn't notice who entered or who left," answered Arthur, the secretary.

Ashcroft nodded. "I need to talk to the guests."

Lady Vivian was a stunning woman, though her eyes were swollen with crying.

"Lady Vivian, where were you at the time of the murder?" Ashcroft asked.

"In the ball room. I was dancing with Robert Stanton. He can confirm it," Vivian answered in a trembling voice.

"Did you know about your husband's arguments?"

Vivian lowered her head. "Henry had enemies. He was hard with his enterprises, but ... I didn't expect someone would go to such lengths." Ashcroft noted the answers and moved to the next guest.

Sebastian Gray was the victim's business partner; he was nervous. He was wringing his hands.

"Sebastian, tell me about your relationship with Lord Henry."

"Henry and I had some fights about how to run the business," he admitted.

"But I didn't want him dead. I would never do that."

Ashcroft pulled out the gold button. "This was found in his office. Is it yours?"

Sebastian stiffened. "Yes... but I lost it earlier in the evening. I have no idea how it got there." His answer did not convince Ashcroft.

She continued with Daphne Clark, the victim's ex-girlfriend; she was calm, but it was clear that she was hiding something.

"Daphne, can you tell me why you were invited to the ball?"

Daphne crossed her hands. "Henry invited me. He wanted to discuss some things from the past. I knew that I shouldn't have come, but... I couldn't say no."

"Did you have an argument with him tonight?"

Daphne smiled. "No. We had already said everything we had to."

Next in line for questioning was Dr. Harrold Green, his doctor, who was stern but polite.

"Dr. Green, can you tell me, what was your relationship with Lord Henry?"

"I was his doctor. He had health problems but nothing serious. It was mostly stress which tortured him."

"Were you in his office tonight?"

"Yes. He asked to talk to me half an hour before he died, but I left when others arrived."

Last was Arthur Blake, the Lord's private secretary.

"Arthur, tell me what you know about Lord Montague's financial situation."

"The Lord had financial difficulties. He was trying to save his businesses, but things went from bad to worse. I didn't get mixed up in his financial issues."

Ashcroft noticed that he was playing with his hands, which showed that he too was hiding something.

Inspector Evelyn Ashcroft examined the answers. Every single suspect had something to hide—no one seemed to be telling the entire truth. She went back to the crime scene.

While examining the documents on his desk, she found a folder marked: "Confidential." Inside were financial documents in the name of Sebastian Grey, revealing that he had withdrawn large sums of money from the Lord's enterprises.

Next to the folder was a small bottle. Its content looked like medicine, but its color and texture indicated that it was something else.

"I need to examine this," Ashcroft thought, putting the bottle into an evidence bag.

Shortly, Ashcroft called the suspects into the room. The atmosphere was heavy, with all of them trying to hide their worry.

"The murderer is in this room," she announced. "One of you had motive, the opportunity, and the ability to commit this crime. The victim had proof of fraud, personal betrayal, and immoral acts."

Vivian lowered her head, relieved.

"Sebastian Gray had financial motive. The Lord had found out about his fraud, and he was planning to denounce him. The gold button found in the office connects him with the crime scene. Although his nervousness shows he is not the murderer, he is a man trying to cover his illegal activities." Sebastian lowered his head, but he didn't say anything.

"Daphne Clark had motive, too. She was the Lord's former girlfriend; their relationship had ended badly. But her movements throughout the night show she didn't have the chance to commit the crime either."

Daphne sighed.



Artwork by M. Resti

"Dr. Green had access to the bottle with the suspicious liquid. He was the only one who could build a weapon. But the evidence shows that the victim was not poisoned; he was stabbed."

Dr. Green remained silent.

Lastly, Ashcroft turned towards Arthur Blake. "You, Arthur, had the greatest motive. You were his secretary, had full access to all his financial activities. In the documents I found on his desk, I discovered that large sums of money were missing from the Lord's accounts, and all the evidence pointed to you."

Arthur jumped up. "That is a lie! I have no idea what sums of money you are talking about!"

Ashcroft took the folder with the evidence out of her pocket. "The documents clearly prove that, for months, you have been embezzling from the Lord, covering his activities with false expenses. And when the

Lord found out, he started to write you a letter, which clearly you didn't know about: *I know what you did. You are going to pay for it.* I found this hidden among the papers on his desk. This is what led me to you."

Arthur froze. His eyes revealed his terror. Minutes passed, and then he whispered, his voice trembling, "He would have ruined my life!"

Ashcroft gave him a cold look. "Justice is inevitable. It is too bad that the Lord had to pay for your crimes as well."



Arthur was arrested. The guests left, relieved that this night was finally over, whispering about the secrets revealed, relieved that they themselves had escaped, wondering if their own secrets would ever come to light.

100 letters

By Dimitra Michalopoulou & Marina Tsomlechtsoglou

The rumble of the engines was so loud that you could barely hear anything; only the sounds of grieving mothers and children saying their goodbyes permeated the din. It was a gloomy afternoon in January of 1942 and even though it was only six o'clock, darkness fell like a velvet curtain, quiet and complete, as the night set in. The atmosphere was depressing, the cold excruciating. Within the chaos, a young couple was saying their final goodbyes.

The woman's face reflected her pain, her eyes red and swollen, filled with tears. Her whole body was trembling. She wasn't ready to say goodbye. Tears were also streaming down his face as he held her tight in his arms, savoring their final embrace.

"All aboard!" The shout echoed through the crowd.

"It's time for me to go..." the man said reluctantly as the train whistle pierced the air.

"I don't want you to. I can't live without you," her voice barely audible.

"I love you; never forget that," he whispered reassuringly.

"Me too." Her head sank onto his chest, and she breathed in his scent one last time before they had to part ways.

Carter boarded the train with the rest of the soldiers, and all he could think about was how he would miss his home, the home he had spent all 21 years of his life. Despite the dangers that awaited, he was still hoping that one day he would return and see his wife's beautiful smile once again. On the platform, Olivia dreaded the departure of the train, sensing a catastrophic turn of events.

They had promised to write each other one letter each day, no matter what, no matter how long or short it was. As soon as she arrived home, she began her first one.

January 3, 1942

My love,

Saying goodbye at the station was the hardest thing

I had to do. Know that I will be here, waiting for you, loving you, always. Writing you every day will keep you close to me. Reading your letters will take away some of the pain of your absence.

She sent her first letter just two days after his departure. He was being sent somewhere in Asia, the opposite side of the world. She didn't remember exactly where. It didn't matter; all she wanted was for him to come home. His absence was already taking a toll on her; she could neither sleep nor eat properly. She had nightmares of him on a battlefield, running from the enemy, scared, hurt, or lying dead somewhere.

Her friends tried to cheer her up. They were so convincing that she actually believed that he would come back safe soon, and they would continue their life together.

After a few weeks, his first letter arrived. He mentioned he had arrived safely, and they were soon beginning missions into enemy territory. He told her not to worry and that he loved her. Time passed; they continued to exchange letters. When she held them in her hands, joy bloomed in her chest, like spring after a long winter. Sometimes, his letters were late, which compelled her to agonize: Where was he? Was he okay? Why hadn't he written her back? But then a letter would arrive, and her worries would subside.

One month melted into the next, the cold days were over and she began to notice some unusual symptoms. Initially, she didn't think anything of them as she always felt sick. But then they started getting more and more intense. The doctor confirmed that she was pregnant.

She was so excited to write him the next letter to announce the big news. She prayed for him to come back as quickly as possible so they could share the birth of their baby.

My Dearest Olivia,

You being pregnant was the happiest news I could have down here! Something tells me we are going to have a beautiful little boy, and he is going to look so much like us both. If I am right, can we call him Michael after my father? ...

Nine months later, she gave birth to their beautiful son. The previous night she was urgently rushed to the hospital, and now she was holding their son tenderly in her arms. It was the most bittersweet moment of her life. She was overwhelmed with love for baby Michael, who reminded her so much of him. His eyes, his tiny smile. She wished Carter could be there with her, to hold their son in his arms. When she returned home from the hospital, she wrote him a letter.

My Precious Carter,

I am back from the hospital where a miracle happened. I gave birth to our beautiful son, Michael.

Every day, she kept hoping she would have some news. She just wanted to know if he was okay. She didn't write as frequently because Michael took up so much of her time. The daily letters turned into three letters per week, then into one letter per week, and eventually, one letter a month.

Michael grew day by day, filling her with joy, giving her strength to push through this terrible time for her. Michael's first birthday passed, and still no word from Carter. Then, his second. Now, he was three. He started asking the question Olivia dreaded: "Where is my daddy, mommy?"

How could she talk about the man she loved, the man she had lost? Even though she felt a lump in her throat, she covered her sorrow with a sweet tone, telling Michael reassuringly,

"He is on a mission, but daddy loves you very much." Her voice cracked as she fought to keep back the tears.

As the summer of 1945 came to an end, some astonishing rumors circulated; then, those rumors came true. World War II was officially over. It was September 2, 1945, a warm, bright evening. Olivia was sitting in the back garden, watching Michael play. She switched on the radio, as was her habit. She thought of Carter. *Is he alive?* she wondered. *Why isn't he replying to my letters?* She knew the answer, but she tried her best to push it away for the sake of their son. Suddenly, she snapped back into reality:

"Hostilities will end officially at one minute after midnight tonight, and the Channel Islands are also to be freed today."

She was shocked, ecstatic. After the birth of her son, this was the best day of her life; she couldn't hold back the tears. But this time, they were tears of happiness. Consumed with hope, she took Michael in her arms and kissed him. Maybe Carter would come home.

A chilly evening some weeks later, she heard about the first soldiers returning from war the following day. *What if he doesn't come back?* she pondered. But she was not the same girl she had been three years before. Now, she was a mother, she had Michael, and she was stronger. She could bear the truth. Whatever happened, he was always going to be a part of her.

At the crack of dawn, Olivia roused Michael and put him in the stroller. A crowd of people had already formed at the station. She could hear their laughter, their happy voices, and their joy, but she knew that she shouldn't get her hopes up. Soldiers were returning home, people were reuniting with their families, everyone was happy. But there she was, with a heavy heart. She couldn't see him nor could she feel his presence.

A serious-looking soldier was approaching her. As his steps grew closer, she could see his various medals. He was holding a dark blue box. She wondered what it contained.

"Hello, ma'am. Are you Olivia Baker?" he said in a deep voice. "I am Sergeant Audie; your husband and I were in the same regiment. I recognized you from your photo he carried with him all the time." He paused. She wanted to stop him before he could speak again.

"Sergeant Carter fell in the line of duty." The blood was pounding in her ears. Her eyes watered, her heart sank, her whole world turned upside down. He continued talking, but his voice was just a distant, distorted sound. She had a sudden urge to run away from this man, the man who had destroyed her hope. "These are his belongings and medals. I am so sorry for your loss." He handed her a box.

In a weak voice, she thanked him, took the box, and slowly pushed the stroller home. Her steps were unsteady and her mind blank. She found herself walking in a trance, lost in her sorrow. She didn't know where she was going until she was there, a familiar place she hadn't visited in a long time. It was a breath-taking spot Carter took her before he had left for the war.

One day, she came home from the shops and found Carter waiting for her with a basket.

"Are we going somewhere?"

"I have a surprise for you. I am giving you five minutes to change and then we are leaving," he answered mischievously.

It was the very spot she was standing at right now where they had had a picnic. They had sat, facing each other, sipping wine, and admiring the view. From where they had set up their picnic, they could see the entire lake with its shining waters and the verdant forest surrounding them. She had never felt more peaceful and relaxed. Returning here, all the memories came flooding back, along with the pain of her realization that all she had left of him now was memories. But he had given her Michael, the greatest gift ever.

She set the box Sergeant Audie had given her down, took Michael in her arms, and sat on the grass, the sun warming her. She gazed at the box, afraid of what she would find inside. It was a standard green, wooden box with a number on it. Olivia placed Michael beside her, and then slowly removed the lid and placed it gently on the grass. She peered inside and the first thing she saw was Carter's military cap. She took it out and placed it on Michael's head. It was comically large and they both giggled. Underneath were his medals – he must have been very brave to have been awarded so many. There were at least 10. Then, it was as if her heart stopped: beneath the medals, there were two stacks of letters.

She picked up the first stack, recognizing them immediately. They were all the letters she had sent him. She opened one randomly.

September 5, 1942

My Precious Carter,

I am back from the hospital where a miracle happened. I gave birth to our beautiful son, Michael. He has your eyes, Carter, those magnificent blue eyes. He also has your smile. The smile that used to make me the happiest girl in the world. I truly wish you were here, with me. . .

She was sobbing now. He had treasured every one of her letters. They were all folded over and over again, obviously read more than once. But then why didn't Carter reply? she wondered. She put the stack of her hundred letters aside and picked up the other stack. She stared at the letter at the top. It was addressed to her. She gasped as she recognized Carter's handwriting. With trembling hands, she tore upon the letter.

August 30, 1944
Guam

My sweetest Olivia,
Tomorrow is our last mission, and if all goes well, I'll finally be coming home—to you and little Michael. Not a day goes by that I don't think of your smile or wish I could hold you. I know you must be wondering why I haven't been writing to you. Our missions have been so secret that they did not allow us to contact anyone. I hope you can forgive me. But as I promised, I still wrote you. And our boy—my heart aches knowing I haven't met him yet. Your letters have kept me strong. Thank you for every word, every glimpse into the life waiting for me.

All my love forever,
Your Carter

She counted them – 100 letters. He had written her 100 letters, replied to each of hers, kept his promise. She couldn't wait to read them all and to share them with Michael.

She sat there, gazing at the peaceful landscape. If only Carter could be here with them...

They sat there for a long time, holding the letters. She knew the truth now, and she also knew that she had to make a fresh start. She wondered how.

She set the letters back in the box. Then, she turned to their son: "Michael, let me tell you about your brave, sweet father..."



BLOOM POETRY

Photo by E. Dritsa

Blooms' Aroma

Poem & photo by Kallia Gkika

In verdant glades where gleaming rivers flow
A quaint village sprawls 'neath the azure skies,
As Eden dances in nature's dress aglow
And blooms' aroma in dreamy realms thrives.

Ivied cottages in the Sun's embrace lie
While laughter's piercing through the morning air
And swaying boughs in beauty's mantle cry;
Their scent entwined with whispers of despair.

As avarice ignites the hearts ablaze,
Houses that once held love now breed disdain.
When envy brews within, kinship decays
And trust shall lie in blood's shadowy stain.

A sylvan paradise shall bear the woe
That ambition's gall makes the blossoms grow.



Photo by K. Gkika



Zephyr

By Marina Giannakopoulou

Once zephyr laps at your exhausted soul,
Which you by custom thought was fairly fine,
Become a leaf and witness routes unroll.
The wind will help you feel what's thought divine.
Your scenery will form your set of mind,
All; valleys, mountains, rivers, seas, shall aid
You thrive, since each of them in their own kind
Determines how your rationale'll be made.
But, dear leaf, be careful who are your suns;
Not all cool breezes help you really fly.
Know all of them, yet only trust true ones,
For those will thence offer you stimuli.
Chances are there when you open your eye.
The onus is on you, so jump and fly.

Artwork by Mikaela Resti

The beauty of it all

By Angeliki Lykiardopoulou

The sky will be made of sodalite
The sun a glimpse of dynamite
The rustling of the leaves will never stop
The rain from the sky will still drop
That is the beauty of it all,
People love, empires fall
Within an endless wind everything lies,
So open your weary eyes
Etch lines in your future map
Build the universe of your soul
Fight for your future goal
Find the beauty of it all.



Against

by Andromachi Zosi

The whistle just blew, and the race begins
Anxiety grows on the crowded field
Is it me or fear who finally wins?
I try to stay strong behind my frail shield.
Each step, I feel a whisper in my ear
While my muscles scream and beg for relief,
Telling me to stop, to give in to fear
In this endless fight full of doubt and grief.
But I stay strong, continuing my fight
Despite obstacles and challenges faced,
Because my passion is as clear as light
Ensuring my dream is never erased.
After every race my soul will prevail,
Through every battle, I never will fail.

You Escape Me All the Time

Poem & Artwork by Natalia Konti

Let us grow together and venture
to new depths -
Not for a moment will we part,
everyone knows,
And after then,
you'll be the moon
Always reaching for your youth.
We'll always be as one.
But careless rebel,
I've been floating beside you
for a decade,
And we have been played
for fools
The fables and the magic
have drifted away.
You've been my brazen catcher in
this golden age,
Standing guard beside
the tarnished gate,
Now your innocence is
frail and grey.
I ache to ask you if you're fine,
But you escape me all the time.
We shared the same path,

Our paths diverged.
Your dreamed dreams
Shrink.
Your fever of joy
Wanes.
You amble alone
Unnoticed.
You are in the distance -
I remain,
Reciting nursery rhymes
to your reflection
On the framed glass
of dust-stained smiles,
Beside the altar of past lives.

*Once upon a time
and
Dream*
Recollections supersede.
So long..
You have wandered alone
Cursing at the moon
Hunting thrills like a monsoon,
You escape me all the time.



TRANSITION

By Alex Koukos

Autumn rain and clouds
Wet soil, fallen tree leaves
The wondrous beauty

NOSTALGIA

By Amalia Ieronymaki

White and blue houses
Long awaited summer breeze
Children are playing



Photo by D. Nikolopoulou

SUMMER

By Ioli Klabani

Summer is coming
Ivy and roses blooming
The sun is shining

THE ART OF SUMMER

By Maritina Agoranou

Flourish of nature
Hot weather and cool blue sea
Salty hair, tanned skin

A Silent Mourner's Call

by Natalia Konti

Childlike eyes, a stolen glance, as if fools and decades past

Painting blue skies the darkest grey

As he surrenders to the dark

Haunting echoes flash before him,

Empty apartments and notes adrift:

A silent mourner's call, "To dream!"

Devoid and desolate, among constellations of near-fatal flaws

Deep blue nights, fading lifelines, an unatoned course

Captivation, true bordeaux, remembrance and prose

Candlelit walls, shadows, longing, loss:

Easy come, easy go, the train arrived after the long haul

A new beginning, hope, pleading, to once belong

Downtown lights, achievement,

Endless greed and sins absolved

Optical illusions, alibis and feats:

Empty words that burrow deep

Defeat, amiss, aspiring to the mercy of belief

Wilted hope, so it goes, from restless mind

To newfound dream.



Winds of Change

Inspired by the Scorpions' song "Winds of Change"

Soar.
The wind
Gusts under your wings.
Do not fear.
Lose control.
Soar without fear.
Soar on the wind of change.
Listen to it,
For it has a song to tell
Listen to the winds of change
For you are changing.
Soar.

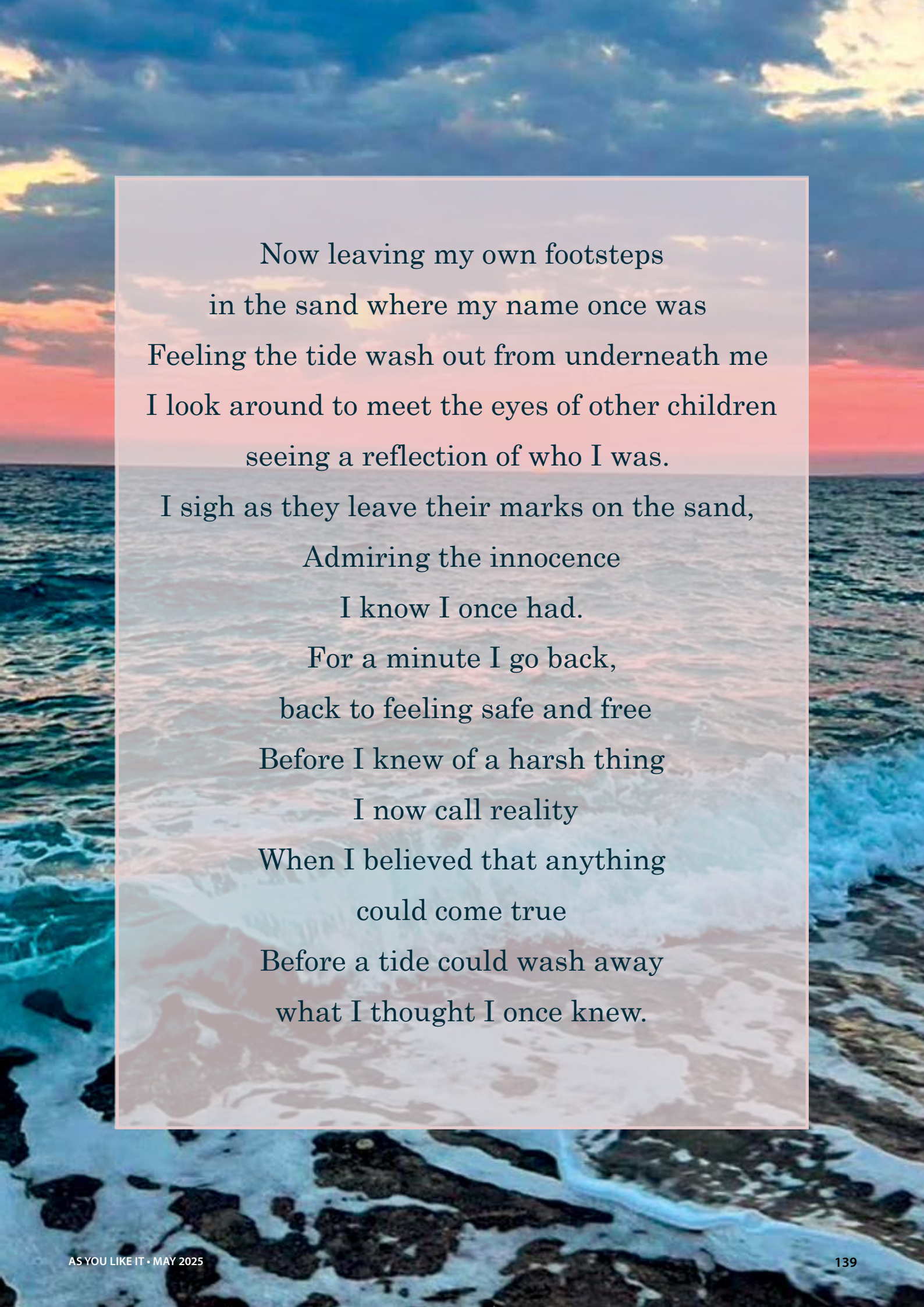
by John Kesisiklis

Artwork by M. Resti

The Tide

By Joanna Papadodima

When I was young,
I used to trace my name in sand
My naive mind believed it wouldn't wash away
That 100 years later,
footsteps sinking in that same sand
would wonder who I was
But my signature didn't even last 100 seconds,
It barely lasted 10
Within moments, my name
was swept away by the tide
Now part of the past, alongside billions
of other equally insignificant people.



Now leaving my own footsteps
in the sand where my name once was
Feeling the tide wash out from underneath me
I look around to meet the eyes of other children
seeing a reflection of who I was.
I sigh as they leave their marks on the sand,
Admiring the innocence
I know I once had.
For a minute I go back,
back to feeling safe and free
Before I knew of a harsh thing
I now call reality
When I believed that anything
could come true
Before a tide could wash away
what I thought I once knew.

Don't Take Offense at My Innuendo

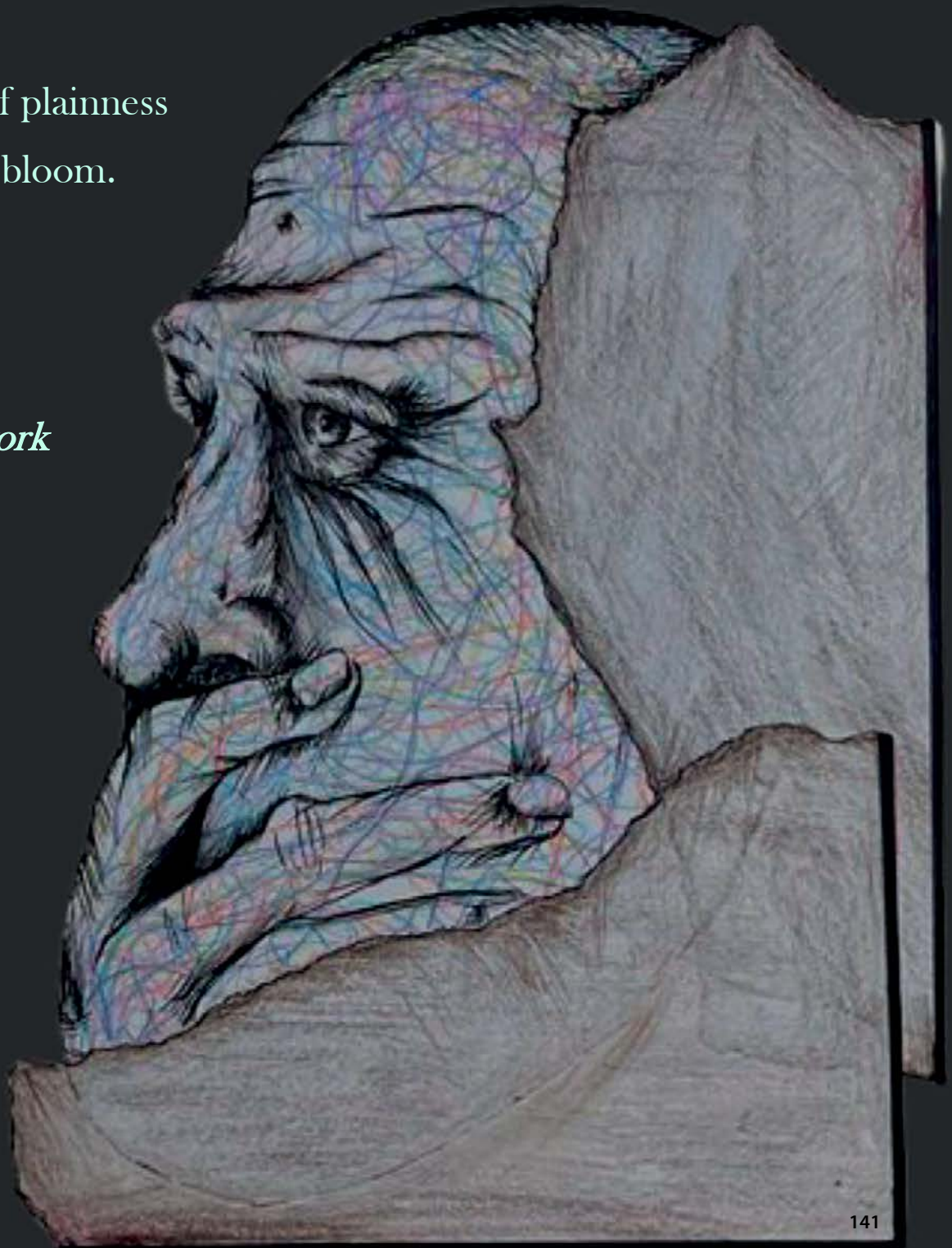
...inspired by Queen's song "Innuendo"

As long as words reside in cotton fields,
Where sharp meanings are dulled
And truth in the face of image yields,
We, too scared to offend,
Tiptoe on eggshells, veiled in the fog
Of verses vague and volatile.
Cutting through the pretense,
A jest, a smile, a sharp glint upon one's eye
Spikes through the defense.
Cutting through tradition, superstition, false religion,
Innuendos of innocence
Break through the façade.
For under the guise of propriety,
The hideous can flourish, thrive, prosper.
If there's a god, or a queen, to oblige fair play,
To them politeness, respect is paid
Through words of pudor safeguarding
The graveyard of raw truths.

*Through the sorrow, all through our splendor,
Don't take offense at my innuendo*

Embracing the shadows
And the jagged edges,
We'll give way to prose
For only in the mess
of our words,
In the chaos of plainness
Will the truth bloom.

*Poem & Artwork
by Zoe Laou*



FOR YOU

Poem & Artwork by Apostolos Vasilikos

One hundred deaths I offer you.
One hundred grieving moms.
One hundred crosses raised for you.
My own two blood-stained hands.

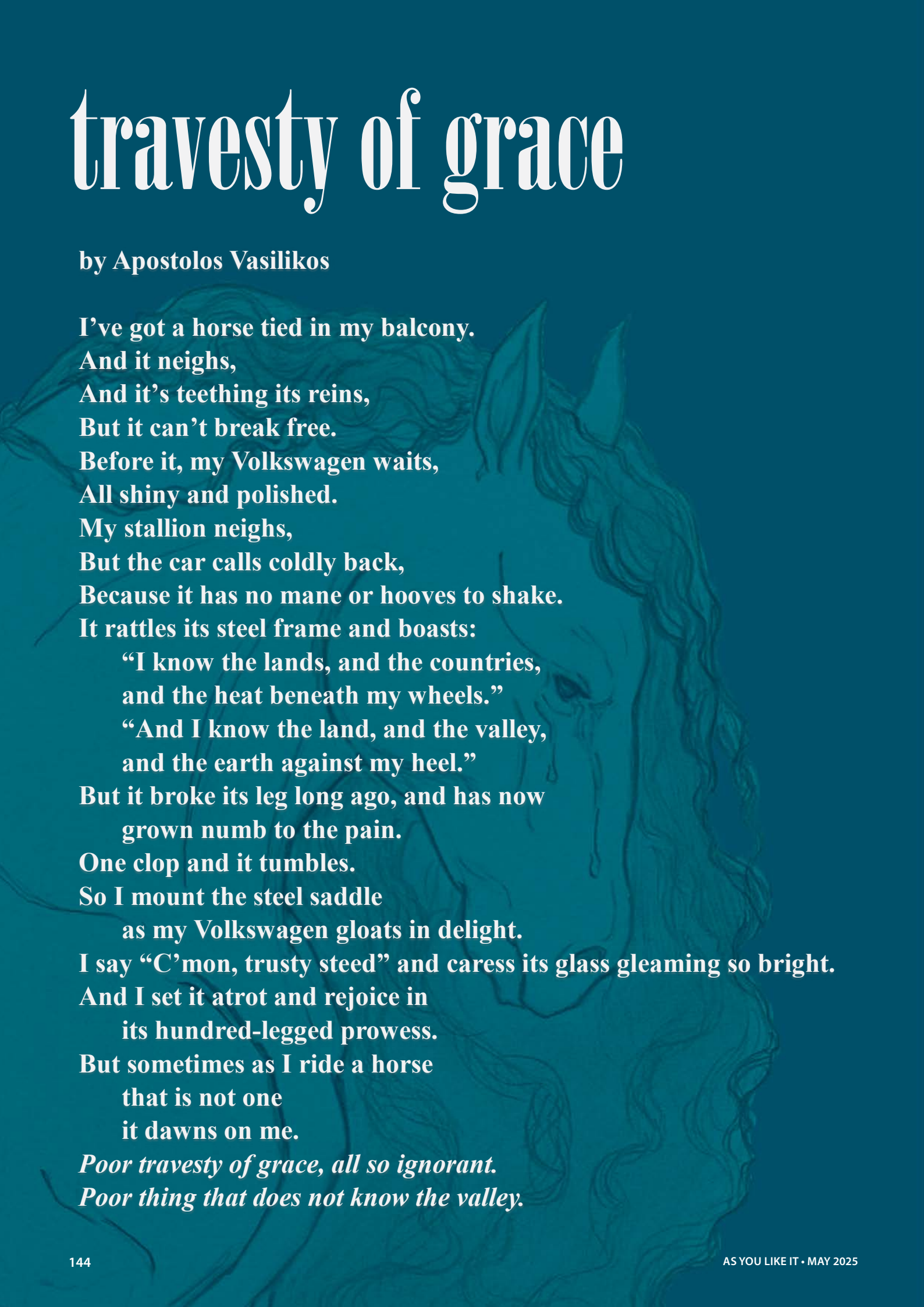
One hundred deaths I die for you.
By a hundred sinners stoned.
If you'll have skin from steel wrought blue,
I'll wear the blade you honed.

For you.
Marred, and mortal, and murderous,
a hundred times over.



travesty of grace

by Apostolos Vasilikos



I've got a horse tied in my balcony.
And it neighs,
And it's teething its reins,
But it can't break free.
Before it, my Volkswagen waits,
All shiny and polished.
My stallion neighs,
But the car calls coldly back,
Because it has no mane or hooves to shake.
It rattles its steel frame and boasts:
 "I know the lands, and the countries,
 and the heat beneath my wheels."
 "And I know the land, and the valley,
 and the earth against my heel."
But it broke its leg long ago, and has now
 grown numb to the pain.
One clop and it tumbles.
So I mount the steel saddle
 as my Volkswagen gloats in delight.
I say "C'mon, trusty steed" and caress its glass gleaming so bright.
And I set it atrot and rejoice in
 its hundred-legged prowess.
But sometimes as I ride a horse
 that is not one
 it dawns on me.
Poor travesty of grace, all so ignorant.
Poor thing that does not know the valley.



isthmus

by Apostolos Vasilikos

I'm a fish of the deep, crafted with fins
and sleek scales to flaunt to the seaweed.

The great Isthmus ahead,
all thick with its dreadful seduction
and the promise of deeper still waters.

I must follow the path of the cod and the marlin,
of the legless and wet.

The weathering of sand the current guided us to
unavoidable.

The crawling, the heat, and the wisdom of parchedness.

All there ever is to know,
the squalor of man and of creature,
the pride of a purposed perversion.

The affections to torturing Sun,
and the casting of Circean forgetfulness,
“It is kind here; ’tis a blessing, the writhing on land.”
And the well-foreseen end, the cliff-edge taught to be dreaded.
The Waters and the merciful cool of the waves.

Don't be mistaken.
Once we have passed the Isthmus,
no fish yearns back for the shore.

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"Just remember in the winter,
Far beneath the bitter snows,
Lies the seed that with the sun's love,
In the spring becomes the rose."

-Bette Midler, *The Rose*

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Until next year, keep blooming!

Photo by D. Nikolopoulou

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