

THE LITERARY MAGAZINE OF PLEASURE RIDGE PARK HIGH SCHOOL

PRP PULSE

Issue 10 / Spring 2024



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CREATIVE WRITING, POETRY &
ARTWORK BY STUDENTS OF
PLEASURE RIDGE PARK HS

Project direction by
Judy Scott-Berger
& Denise Webb

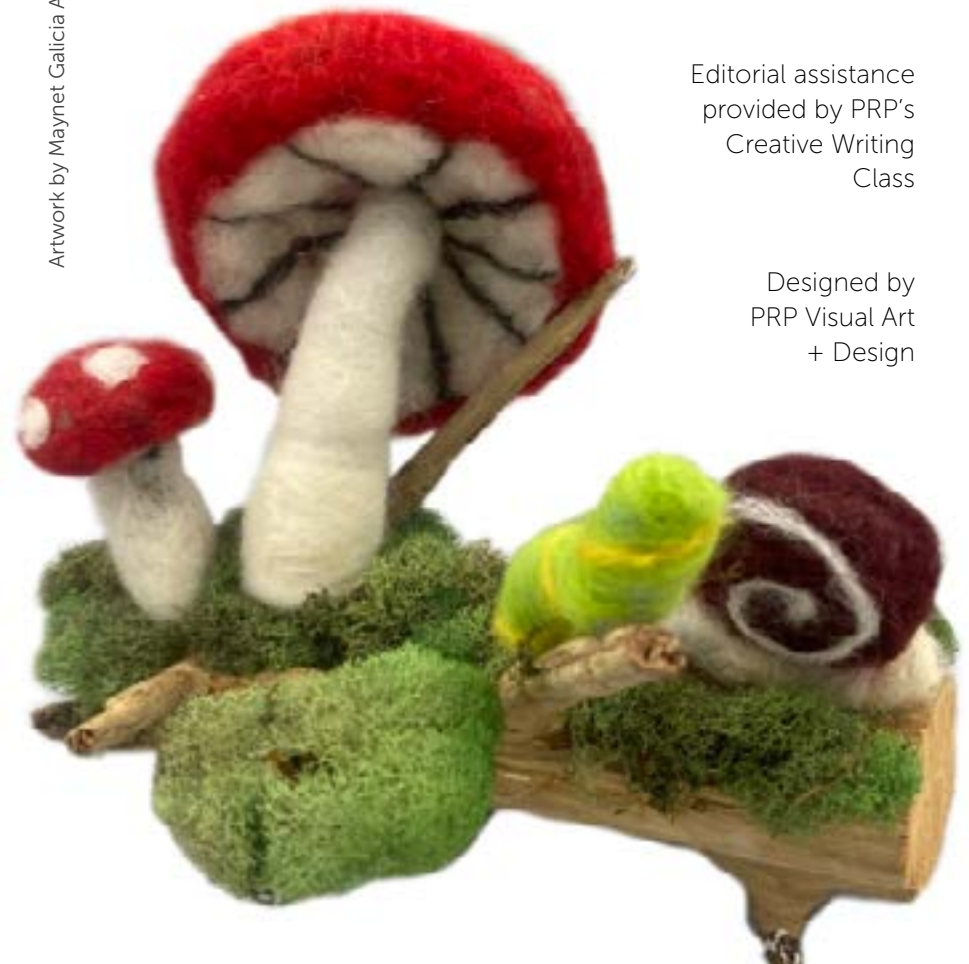
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Artwork by Malaiah Gray
Silver Key, Scholastic Art Awards

Artwork by Maynet Galicia Arrieta





Artwork by Samantha Vega



Artwork by Tabitha Wallace

PRP PULSE

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Artwork by Brianna Heiser

introduction

The PRP Pulse Literary Magazine is a result of continued collaboration between the Creative Writing and Visual Art classes at Pleasure Ridge Park High School. Our purpose is to showcase student work by uniting our Visual and Performing Arts program with our English core content curriculum.

Students continue to be the major players in The Pulse, participating in multiple roles throughout the project: as writers, editors, photographers, painters, sculptors, designers, and more. Our mission is for this literary magazine to provide a cross-curricular, authentic learning experience for the students at PRP.

Students are charged with the layout and design of the magazine, while the PRP English Department has joined forces to solicit written pieces and encourage students who have shown interest and/or potential in creative writing throughout the year. Creative Writing students have taken on the editing and selection process for the submitted written pieces. The hard work and collaboration between departments and students has made this project possible at PRP.



Artwork by Ryan Dallum



Artwork by Jamaal McClain



table of contents

Introduction	3
The Poet	8
Meteor Shower	10
The Volumes of Society	14
Color Me to Perfection	16
Silent Child	18
Letters to Rubén Reyes	22
A Dead Wish	36
That Could Be Enough	38
The Spectrum of Girlhood	44
Everlasting	46
Being for the Benefit of Victor Malgren	50
What Goes Up But Never Comes Down?	58
Special Projects	61
Animal Cruelty: Should It Have a Harsher Punishment?	82
Acknowledgments	87
Index	89

(Left) Artwork by
Ryan Dallum



Artwork by Alliyah Brown



The Poet

By Brooklyn Taylor

She is always the poet.
but never the poem.
She is always the beggar,
can't be the chooser.
She is always on time,
but never quite early.
She knows what she needs,
but lacks what she wants.
She stays up all night,
but runs out of time.
She was born to run,
but forced to stay still.
She is always the romantic,
but never in love.
She remains the poet,
as she wishes everyday to be the poem.

METEOR SHOWER

By Ca'Miyah Martin

I see stars while others see a
devastating meteor.

Please leave the door ajar because
When I look at you I sense a strong presence
of the desire to be alive and loved
and I want to provide that.
But I can't because you pushed everyone away
made yourself the villain.

I despise that because
now what should I do?
Would we survive and be able
to climb out of the deep hole?
I'd bet on it and accept the
consequences time after time
because those consequences
could never make up
for the parts of me you have.



Artwork by Ryan Dallum



THE VOLUMES OF SOCIETY

By Ca'Miyah Martin

The veil that takes on the human body to conceal one's insides.
That, never put aside the result of our bloodshed
and tears engraved on the grounds of society,
1 sentence 5 bullets.



Artwork by Ryan Dallum



Artwork by Joseph Bock

Our deathbeds overflow while you continuously
possess the weapon, yet you're so threatened by me, Unarmed?
Does my face along with my skin look more dangerous than anything?
I am a target in a game I knew nothing of.
Everyone's against me. That's how this game was set to be.
Trying to create our own, we are stumped
the biased rules engraved in the universal playing field.
They have their opinions about our clothes, our music, our language.
Nothing we do ever goes unseen.
And yet once presented under the white spotlight
on the big screen all that shame is renamed.
They are 5000 times ahead of where we are,
but when we ask to take 1 step forward they take 20 in return.

color me to perfection



By James

Wetherell-Milburn

Color me red to simulate
the love I've felt,
color me blue to show
my let down.

Color me yellow to
emphasize my happiness,
color me green to
observe my disease.

Color me orange to gaze
at my craze,

Color me purple to peer
at my calm.

Then cover me in black
because

it's what everyone does
to me.



Artwork by Ebreonna Harper

Silent Child

By Harley Patterson

"The damage made you a stronger person"

That damage you think made me stronger- stole my voice,
It stole my dreams, my childhood, my happiness.

It took the joy out of everything.

I had to stay quiet, or it would backfire on me.

It turned me into a shadow,
it made my presence overlooked.

I was a kid,

No kid should have to go through that,

Taken and pulled away,

Only to go somewhere that wasn't any better.

An adult who was supposed to care and
protect me like I was her own,

Part of that damage done by her,

My voice was gone,

She made sure of that.

I was a kid,

But I had to keep secrets,

I never said a word about the yelling, pushing,
locked in the dark screaming,

I never talked about the threats, the fact I had
to sacrifice my education for her kids,

silent , silent, silent.

"Don't open your mouth"
"Your dad isn't gonna believe you"
"You can scream but you will never be heard"
"No one is going to save you"

I was a kid,
I shouldn't have had to sacrifice,
I didn't need to be stronger,
I should have never had to be an adult,
Cleaning the whole house, eating after everyone else.

I was a kid,
A home is never supposed to be scary,
After school a kid should be happy to be "home"
Not me,
I still had an hour before my dad got home,
before I was okay.

I was a kid,
Weekends should be fun,
Not for me,
Bullied by one kid,
Laughed at by the mother,

I was a kid,
Watching the clock,
Staying outside till I heard dad pull in,
Weekends I had to wait all day.

I was a kid,
I was scared to be left alone with this woman,
Anytime dad had to leave,
"Please don't be long, I'm scared."

I was a kid,
I shouldn't have had to be stronger,
I needed to be safe and happy.



Artwork by Emma Price

I survived,
I made it through, not because of the damage
But because I had the strength to face it everyday for 8 years
and tell it-
"You will not make me little."
" You will not destroy me."
"I will be heard."



Artwork by Ryan Dallum

LETTERS TO RUBÉN REYES

By April Mercer

PAST (i)

June of 1991, during a Friday nightfall. Waves drift toward the sand, toward me, and toward the others near it. The sound, mellifluous and familiar, echoes in my ears while I continue to thumb the spine of a book. Right as I plan on reading, an appealing surfer (who I later learn to be you) appears in my sight. With his beige-colored surfboard fitting snug under his armpit and strawberry Fruitopia swishing in a tall poco grande glass he's holding onto, he catches my eye. An adorable smile rises on his stained lips. I find the magic eight-ball and its inky depths to be right: luck truly is on my side.

July, the time of explosive fireworks radiating colors and reflecting on skin. 1991. Sunscreen and sunlit. Lucia stays by my side at a house party and I love her for it; she clasps her hand in mine and I love her for it. She drinks Capri-Sun through her gap teeth while I lie on the host's sofa. But the second you walk in, I lose my usual composure. Though my heart recognizes you before I do, I'm afraid I'm not far behind.

I'm a lover without a love in August of 1991. I spend a lot of my time with my button nose in a book with my reading glasses resting on the bridge of it. My eyebrows start to be in a permanent state of focus; at family dinners, my tío keeps calling me a grumpy

old man — I'm an inch away from losing it but remember that I have an excuse to leave, thank God. A mutual friend celebrates their birthday on a day where I'm not busy with family and invites us both, and must I say, I would have never known if he hadn't told me? You look crazy different with round-framed glasses and recently-washed curly hair.

The first time we have an official hangout is on a Thursday. During said hangout, I trace constellations on your freckles instead of paying any attention to the drive-in movie. Your jet black Subaru WRX is parked right under a Pino de Alepo (pine tree), so we end up slightly away from prying eyes. And when you're practically the other half of me, so close, the smell of your cologne is strong. I interlock our fingers together as I flutter my eyes completely shut and ask if you could hold me. You do, and cover us both with your Mama's handmade quilt from her childhood, which is miraculously in good condition. And so, August ends with me in your arms.

I don't see you again until a week later. Both of our friend groups combine into one, everyone happy to play volleyball and move to stave off the heat, at least for a little while. For the first game, I'm on your side while Lucía and your friend Leo are on the other. We work well as a team together; I go for the far away spikes and you go for the ones near the net and the ones that fall in the middle. Sweat pours off of me as I jug a still-fresh bottle of red Gatorade down. You joke about how I'm your other half and I cannot doubt for a second that I'm blushing, because I'm able to feel it rise on my cheeks. "Eh, you think so?" I ask. You respond, I know so.

In September, my café job is actually eventful. *Dayglow* gets a renovation that turns it from an attraction to curious tourists (but only because of its proximity to the coast) to additionally an attraction for the locals — which is thankfully a wide range, as it's the youth and the elderly. The AC in here runs full blast and my flowery attire blows in the wind. I meet more new faces than the regulars, although that doesn't mean they suddenly don't exist. Just



Artwork by Maynet Galicia Arrieta

two days after I told you about my part-time job, you're ecstatic to bring Leo and a new friend whose name is Elian, who you tell me would want to be referred to with gender neutral pronouns. I give them the nickname Azúcar — sugar in Spanish — and the banter between us flows from there.

You tell me that you're looking into surfing on a professional level on a Sunday morning. I coax you into inviting me with a few words (*"Please? I'll get to know you on a more personal level; if this is your passion, I'll get to see the real you, man."*), so I smile like an idiot the entire time you ride the waves. When you're done and as summery as can be, I place a kiss upon your cheek. But a fury then seems to engulf your eyes, and you tell me only affection that shows friendship is allowed in the open. My hair covering my eyes, I ask you why. "Many, many reasons, dude! Harassment is the



Artwork by Roscoe Lee

big one, though." I was astonished. Could I not kiss who I wanted? Could I not show adoration in the way I knew how? I felt numb then, even in the midst of the heat.

Weeks later is when I realize how sheltered I'd truly been my whole life. Sexuality hadn't been on my mind, only you'd been. You explain that you didn't mind being homosexual at all. I'm so interested that I drop my studying session to answer the door on the third knock. You duck your head under the doorframe, and I apologize so much, even profusely as a result, but you're just confused as to why I am nervous. You educate me on everything you know nonetheless: "And the world isn't kind to people like us. Like, if I tell one of my friends that I feel a sort of pull to you, despite that I've known some of them since our diaper days, they would banish me. It's seen as sin. And if so, I'd much rather sin for you than for anything else, so power to us."

I spray-paint my clothing, eventually forming the word 'PRIDE' on all my tees, and jump the moment the door to the backyard is swung open, the culprit being Luce. She snickers, "Your Mama told me that you'd be out here. Hmm . . . But not what you'd be up to. So?" I fight the urge to just say oh, nothing. Instead, I tell her, "Spray-painting for fun. Ain't much else to it, Cía. Gives me sumin' to do, that's all." One word swirls in my head: *pride pride pride*. 'Toni, it means a lotta things. Acceptance or self-respect or connection. In our case, it's loving ourselves for who we are. Easier to say than act when all is against us, I know.'

1991 is ending. Your most-used tape is quickly plopped into the cassette deck during the long-awaited trip to your local surfing competition (first ever). I manage to keep you happy, stress prevalent but not overbearing. Your laugh is an effortless reminder of my adoration. We arrive fifteen minutes early, and I spend the entire time gluing my eyes to the movements you make. In the end, I am stupidly excited to watch you surf.

December 30th. The coastal waters freeze over and you ask if I want to spend some time with you and your family, and I hesitantly agree, as the eventual promise of a filling home-cooked dinner from Spanish natives has me practically drooling. You have a small family, consisting of you, your grandparents, and then your tío. All of them seem to be attentive to what I'm saying, saturating like there are suns before me. Every portrait on the wall features your smile, gummy and sweet — from toddler to teenager. I feel comfortable enough with you to dig into the paella, patatas bravas, and bits of the Tarta de Santiago.

Same day, midnight. Outside your house, we lean against the brick wall. This is after I'd seen your third place trophy. I cannot express how alive I feel. Birdsong and fireflies, wildlife and so much else, make the sound of nature. They've been harmonizing since we made our way out here, but I can't hear anything but our synced heartbeats. Thump thump thump. It echoes in my mind as you whisper honeyed-words right into my already ringing ear. You cradle my precious God-sculptured face in your calloused hands as you shake and burn bright. *You're a gift. You're so necessary for happiness. How can you be so perfect? I envy you as I envy life itself. I'm so lucky to have met you.*

PAST (ii)

February of 1993. Changes are happening, and some are in your appearance — others in life. I cry a lot more. The tears, caused by trivial things like becoming older, dry up and you tell me that I look tragically beautiful, and whenever I'd finally gather the courage to ask you what in the world that meant, you crack a smile and tell me my melancholy and sadness can create a masterpiece. Still confused, I roll my eyes, brush it off, and continue working on making your iced coffee. It seems as though you have more freckles now, but I'm not one to count them anymore.



Artwork by Shyel Macaspac



Artwork by
Lilly Zagula

I'm a little confused here because the paragraph starts in Feb. and the next paragraph is in July without a note that time has jumped ahead.

We celebrate your birthday two days before it comes, more precisely on the 4th of July. I make us both punch before we head out, and do so by putting chilled orange juice in a bowl with sparkling water for some extra flavor. Then, we essentially stargaze before the fireworks closest to your house are fired off. Under the blanket of stars we lie in a field not at all far from your two acres of a backyard. You go back to your house after ten minutes and arrive with an old blanket, a picnic basket, and snacks. Per request, you hand me a Little Hug fruit barrel, poking a straw through as you outstretch it. As usual, I take small sips as you carefully bite into your cheesy sandwich, and we collectively enjoy the first firework show of the night. That, as well as the stars above, remind me of your blue, astral eyes — the way they shine when you catch sight of me — and the freckles that dot your skin.

July 15th, and I write an excerpt about us: *'Well, I figure we grew up too slow. Finally, the child in me dies at twenty-one, on the fourteenth of July. The realization of how little I've truly done. I shift from dependency to independence. I'm way more behind on knowledge than I thought. Mama tells me that a remedy to this could be change, and I rebuttal it instantly. Change does not work for me. Change comes in a negative manner. I am certain most change I experience is negative. The love for simple things doesn't fill all of the space in my heart. Some of it does, I presume; like the love for summer evenings, and pie, and kind human nature, and you. Especially you. For a while now, you've been my favorite constant in life. Constant as in you aren't one to leave. I believe so, and I hope I know so.'*

July 26th. Summer. I believe in luck again, so I awake early, earlier than usual, and quickly find the five a.m. breeze is something that sends a cold shiver down my spine and also

reminds me of folk music. The kind that feels as though you're walking through a forest with your lover's hand clasped in yours, worn with age and work. The kind that is made by Hozier with quotes such as *'There is no sweeter innocence than our gentle sin' as well as 'We'll lay here for years or for hours — your hand in mind, so simple and discreet.'* As I hum, I walk to a nearby water fountain. I believe I'm lucky in my own right. I'm lucky to have lived, to be brought upon this earth. I am lucky to have learned how to live and not just exist in this world, and learned how to make the most of my time. That's all I could ask for.

On August 4th, I bump into Elian, your other comfort person, and snicker after calling them Azúcar like old times. As a quip, they playfully squint their eyes and walk around me, but not without jutting an antique leather notebook in my face. They laugh at my pinched face and I roll my eyes. "Here, for the chico amante." Eyes wide, I ask, *Lover boy? Whaddya mean?* "He's got his eyes set on you," they say matter-of-factly, "and his love language is gifts. If he asks, tell him that you came to me." I shake my head and when I do see you again, I tell you the truth and a pink blush appears on your face nonetheless. "They really called me lover boy?" is all you ask. I nod, *Yeah. I don't blame them, though. They might be right.* A week or so later you tell me you've been writing about me in that same notebook in a passing comment and I just about melt into a puddle on the floor.

August 15th. I walk to a thrift store called Thrift-O-Rama to find you an actual gift from me, and my thought process is like: *Okay. What does he like? Or always talk about . . .* Eventually, I decide to look around instead of overthinking. Most of what I find is used clothing and DIY crafting supplies, but then I set my eyes on a box of cassette tapes in the back, otherwise hitting the jackpot. After flipping through the entire thing, I leave with five new pieces; they range from Nirvana to Radiohead, and I test each one on the ride to your house — thankfully, they're all A-okay. I



Artwork by Lilly Zagula



Artwork by
Addison Brayden

listen closely when Aerosmith's "Get A Grip" plays. Five minutes later, you join me and I continue on with no destination in sight, the windows rolled down and you singing along with the music, laughing wildly when you mess up.

I go to Lucía for advice days later. In her small apartment, she comes to the door after hearing me knock on it. The smell of burnt candles and sugar cookies wafts in the atmosphere. Breathing in the scent, I sigh wistfully as I walk further in and ask what she's up to. She tells me that she'd been baking and reading feature stories in a magazine. When we're done with the nonsensical chatter, I ask her if the feelings I've been having are normal. "What do you mean 'normal?'" Because yeah, they are normal, as in it's not weird or unworldly to have them. It's human behavior, and innate in general. By the way, who is it? Mm? Rubén?" I scoff and resort to childish instincts, crossing my arms, but that only makes her smirk. And then, through a mouthful of cookies: "Yeah, you're a madman who madly adores him. It's impossible to miss."

Fall. October 1st. The morning after a sleep-over, as Rue wanted to watch a movie but stayed much longer than planned. A note crumpled at the foot of my bed reads 'No one resembles the calmness of the sun in the same manner as you do' when unfurled but all I can see is 'I love you.' Smile bearing a resemblance to all things bold and bright, I pin it on the board against my wall that's titled Notes from Rue. Others include reminders to eat, important grocery items, gift ideas that contain many hints at what Rue wants, and adorable quotes (*You're my muse; A night of stargazing, yet I'd still rather gaze at you*).

PRESENT (i)

December 7th, 3:12 a.m. Mama helped me move earlier; she kissed my cheek and told me, "Peace'll find you." I hummed in agreement and thanked her again, not just for helping but for everything else she's ever done for me. You and I had a coffee

date where we talked about our future and life-dreams. I realized my job wouldn't hold up and you reminded me that it's supposed to be what I'm passionate about. Something I'd find worth doing for a long time. The job of a freelance painter came to mind, and I began looking up steps on how to start. I got in contact with a web-designer yesterday, and their name is Rene Laurier. Donned in rings and piercings, they intimidated me at first, although they're too sweet in text for that mindset to stick.

—Toño Cortez, *My Proof of Existing Love (Letters to Rubén Reyes)*

1994. February 29th. Following the last writing piece, Toño gradually got sicker. He lost weight and the crisp, cold taste of fall lays flat on Rubén's tongue. A notebook is cracked open on his lap. Its cover is carefully littered in small drawings of constellations and other relevant doodles. Toño Cortez passed away months after he found out he had skin cancer. His notebook is only one of many things he's left behind, including Rubén, who, after reading it all aloud to himself and the silence around him, writes this ending entry to complete the pages because their love ends up being the total opposite: incomplete.

—Rue (*his loverboy*)

"Perhaps Apollo let him fall. Perhaps he kissed Icarus' wings with sun-soaked lips and burnt him into a legend so that he may hold him forever in a kinder world," was then uttered by the online username Lucem, years after writing the short poem on Tumblr.



Artwork by Ke 'Ayziah Johnson



Artwork by Angelie Urbino

A Dead Wish

By Sayde Norris

A Dead Wish.

Oh,

how I wished to forget you.

To forget the wall stained smell of cigarettes.

To forget the certain rhythm of your footsteps

alerting me to your presence, as I hid away.

How I wish to burn that leather belt

with metal hinges

that you would occasionally brand my body with.

You left me with red mountains and darkened trees

I left you

and you lingered from within.

Oh,

how I wished for your death

because I was fading away.

Wished so hard for the pain to stop

and eventually it did, it stopped.

Along with your heart.

No warnings, no words left to be said

just how I wish not for your death

but for your life, instead.



Artwork by Sydney Duncan



That Could Be Enough

Fairy Tale Rewrite; Beauty and the Beast

By E.N.G.

"Wow," was all he could say, barely a whisper as she walked down the stairs. Had he still been human he was sure his face would be a bright, cherry red.

Months had led up to this, what felt like a heart-warming eternity by her side as they navigated life next to each other, her reteaching him how to handle society, him... he doesn't even know what impact he's had on her life, if he even has at all, but he thinks he's content with that. If nothing else, he's happy to have been in her life at all.

He watches helplessly as she walks up to him, a smile on her face as she stops. She curtsied dramatically, the yellow-gold dress she was wearing catching the light beautifully.

Everything about her was beautiful, really, but he can't bring himself to care about the probable bias in the statement.

She looks up at him through her eyelashes and that in itself might be enough to send him to an early grave, but she's waving her hand, almost subtly if but for how violently she was doing it. It clicks, he blinks, then follows her instructions and bows.

When they rise, she smiles again--this one more teeth, almost

wolfish in its playfulness.

"Thomas." She greeted, almost mocking, though he could feel the warmth in her voice.

"Elizabeth," he plays along, a faux regalness to his voice. "How lovely to see you." The act isn't dropped, but he can feel his face burn as the earnesty in the statement bled through.

She hears it too, evident by the almost stunned look she gives him, her face slightly flushed.

"You as well." She breathes, her smile sheepish.

He held out a hand to her, the gentle piano that'd been playing growing louder as she took it. The two came together for a waltz, her hand rising to rest gingerly on his shoulder, his own gently holding where her waist met her hips. She holds his other hand with a firm grip, and he's not sure if she even realizes.

"You look," he's scared to say, he notes, so he whispers it like a secret, "beautiful."

It feels so much more intimate than it should, in the candlelight, lovely piano music and the rest of the orchestra echoing around the room, it almost feels like a confession. And maybe it is.

She laid her head against his chest in lieu of an answer, and he was alright with that. Only now he realized just how much he towered over her. Even in her heels she barely reached his shoulders. He couldn't help but wonder how much that would change if he was still human.

They stayed like that for what felt like hours, though he knew it couldn't have been more than a few minutes. The orchestra continued to play, and the two never stopped dancing all the while.

"When did you become such a sap?" There was a bite to her tone, but he could have sworn her words almost sounded watery around the edges.



Artwork by Lilly Zagula

"Maybe it's the music." He tries to joke, his voice soft and unconvincing. He prays to long-dead gods she'll ignore the pounding of his heart.

She shakes her head with a scoff.

"If I knew it only took some music to get you to stop acting like a bitch I would've done it ages ago."

He lets out an offended squawk, smiling at the laugh it causes.

"Maybe I'll go back to being a bitch then, hm? Take back my damn library while I'm at it."

"You would never." She challenged, leaning back to look him in the eyes.

"Watch me." He grinned, moving to let her go and walk away.

"Wait no, please--" she held on tighter, suddenly looking nervous he would actually do it. He moved his hand from her waist to the small of her back, still grinning smugly at her, pulling her

flush against him as they spun, keeping up with the tempo still.

"Uh-huh, exactly. You can't get enough of me, admit it."

"Don't get cocky now." She scoffed, a laugh lining her words.

"What was that? I couldn't hear you over the sound of you begging me not to leave."

"I don't beg." She countered, raising an unimpressed eyebrow.

"Whatever you say."

She rolled her eyes, smiling softly as he spun her again. The song slowly came to a close, and the pair followed suit, hesitantly slowing to a stop as the last tune quieted out. Tom didn't want the moment to end, not when she was looking at him like that--her eyes wide and heartfelt, something deeper within them he didn't have the courage to dwell on.

He turned to look at the orchestra, equally as non-human as him on the outside, his face expectant. They understood quickly, another string of notes filling the room again.

"You sure it's not you that can't get enough of me?" She teased as soon as he turned back, laughing loudly as he dipped her to get out of responding.

They fell quiet after that, content as they continued to dance, hours passing them by.

Only slowing when she had yawned one time too many, and he had been blinking tiredly for one minute too long, the orchestra followed their lead and led the song to a gentle close.

The lights had dimmed by now, a few of the candles had gone out completely by now.

He held his breath. Maybe if he didn't move, the two could stay like that forever. She just kept looking at him with an expression he couldn't read. She slowly let go of his hand, reaching with both to grab the lapels of his overcoat. She studied the patterns in his tie, and he was grateful--he didn't know how long he could take her watching him again.



Artwork by Desireé Robear

Swallowing his nerves, he took a breath, and spoke.

"We should..." he swallowed again, suddenly nervous as she looked back up at him, still holding his jacket, "we should probably head out."

She looked disappointed for a brief moment, then blinked, and gave him a soft smile.

"Yeah, no, you're probably right." She nodded, almost seeming to convince herself.

He held out his hand to her once again, his hold gentle as they began to walk the length of the ballroom. Soon they would reach the hallway, and they would split, and he would have to watch her walk away and know he could never be brave enough to be honest with her. But for now, her hand was warm in his, and she's walking just as slowly as him, and that could be enough. It would have to be.

the spectrum of girlhood

By Shae Reed

They joke that girlhood is a spectrum

Where are you today?

They joke that girlhood is a spectrum, but as I progress in my
femininity I can see it was no joke

I traded my pink tracksuits for crushing corsets and
pants two sizes too small because if I can just get them
over my belly no one would know I own a body

And the infatuations of comics are replaced
with poetry that does nothing but make me sad
because being a girl means to hate yourself



Artwork by Ryan Dallum

There are no more butterflies when a boy looks at you,
there is only attachment and whispers of "what are we?"
Because your father never treated women right

And now you can't look in the mirror without gagging, your friends
become blueprints for your next plan to be pretty
and you feel terrible for not having a personality of your own.
But don't worry, You are just on the spectrum.

The spectrum of girlhood.

Everlasting

By Roscoe Lee

Your lovely smile
Heart shaped lips
When you smile
I dive in
My lovers eyes
Funny feeling
Every time you smile
(I'm in deep)
Deep within your eyes
I'm stuck in your light
It's pulling
Everlasting

Can this moment last a little longer
Can't this moment last forever
Can this second be a little longer
I don't want time to pass
Just leave it here to linger
Won't you be here with me for a little more
(Won't you)

Won't you be here with me till we're laughing on the floor
(Won't you)

Be here with me is all I could hope for
(Hoping)



Artwork by Roscoe Lee

Here in this little place
This house is so cold and lonely
Till the sight of dawn
Won't you stay here to warm me
Lay beside me forevermore
So I can see your beauty
Everlasting
This feeling when you
Lay here with me
A love not found in stores
Only on T.V.
My darling hold me close
Won't you be...Here with me
Won't you be...Here with me
Everlasting and forevermore

It's just you
And everything you do
It's just you
With all of your moods
It's just us and everything we are
It's just you for heaven isn't far
I'm locked in
I'm deep inside your mind



Artwork by Maynet Galica Arrieta



Artwork by Serenity Harris



Artwork by Parker Robear

We're talking the way you speak is sublime
Funny feeling
How you look into my eyes
The most comfort in your lovely light

Heart shaped lips
Rosie Red Tinted
When you smile
I'm stuck in
My lovers eyes
Every time you laugh
I'm in deep and time flies
I'm stuck in
My lovers eyes
I'm stuck
(here with you)
I'm stuck
(here with you)
(I'm stuck)
In your light
Everlasting beauty
Going on for miles
I'm stuck in
(My lovers eyes)
Nothing more pretty
(Gorgeous eyes)
Won't you stay with me
(tonight)
Won't you hold me
(Hold me tight)
Come be... Here with me
Forevermore
Cause we could be...Something
Everlasting

Artwork by Jamaal McClain





Artwork by Elijah Godfrey

Being for the Benefit of Victor Melgren

By Madison Yates

/// An Excerpt From "I Hate You: A Novel"

The True-Hurst hotel lobby was divine; it was like the bubbles in a rich glass of white wine, clean and crisp with an old-fashioned taste that lasted on the tongue. It was decorated in white and gold, the type that made you feel like a millionaire, even if you didn't have a lick of money to your name. The true centerpiece was a grand piano, perfectly centered and tuned, free to play for guests and musicians who come to make their fortune.

People didn't play there often though; the eye of a rich man is the worst kind of judgment.

The piano is illuminated in the two-a.m. light when Victor Melgren finds himself gazing at it. He plays sparingly, having given up the keys for his work at Donver's Analytics, but he sometimes wishes in the dead of night that he hadn't. He daydreams of days at the opera with his father, watching his mother in her finest silks, sitting on their laps, and being mesmerized by pianists rather than singers.

He runs his fingers along it when he is suddenly startled by the clearing of someone's throat.

"Caring to play Mr. Melgren?" questioned one of the hotel butlers. A night staff man he assumed, looking him over suspiciously.

"Can I? It's," Victor checks his watch and scoffs, "my God, it's already 2:23, I need to be in bed."

The butler raises an eyebrow and smirks, "Of course, you can sir, you know the piano is open at all hours, and the rooms are noise-proof. If I recall, you used to sneak down and play it when you were a teenager."

Victor shoots him another look, this one out of curiosity, "I did, I guess. But I'd always—hmm," he cuts himself off, looking at the keys one more time. He thinks of his mother. She would sit on the couch opposing the piano, listening to Victor play when she couldn't sleep. Victor practically gained all his core memories with his mother here at the True-Hurst. He chuckles a bit to himself, "I don't have anyone to play for anymore."

The butler ponders this for a moment, then upturns his lips, "What about that fine fellow you're staying with? I'm sure you could play for him."

Victor turns pink, frowning a bit. He's never played for anyone but his mother, father, and siblings. People outside his family were never fully deserving of his repertoire. But Gabriel? That's a different story. Just because Victor wants to play for him, it doesn't mean Gabriel deserves it. One rekindling kiss does not a deserving man make.

"No, I don't think he'd care to hear me play," He responds as he sits on the stool, "I suppose I can just play for myself."

"Very well. Just ring if you need any more," The butler finishes, then walks off, finding another corner of the hotel to lurk in.

Victor ponders what to play, before settling on "Midnight, The Stars and You," something he'd used to play for his mother and father when they wished to dance around the sitting room. He glides around the keys, melting into the familiarity of it all. Even if his life falls into chaos, even if the sky falls and knocks him out into a coma, he always has the piano and the memory of his mother's applause.

She was the reason he got into the piano to begin with. His uncle Hermes, her brother, conducted an orchestra. When Victor was all but four years old, he would go and watch them play, falling in love with melodies and tight rhythms. He knew from a young age he would never inherit anything by being the youngest, but if he could be the most talented, he would get somewhere. Music was that somewhere for him.

But then his mother had to die; that put a pander to teenage Victor's plans.

It wasn't until he met Gabriel that he considered playing again. It was a form of therapy for him when they broke up all those years ago. Gabriel reminded him of his mother, with soft features that draw blood in the deepest parts of your heart and a smile that kills the most immortal of men. Victor hated it, so he complained to the keys about it.

Once he finished his song, he was breathing heavily. He hadn't noticed just how intense his playing had gotten, getting too lost in his mind to even care. He didn't see the figure standing by the archway behind him, their shadow illuminating the nightlights of the hotel lobby. Once he calmed himself and looked forward, though, he grimaced and sighed.

"Come here Allaband," he hissed, almost growling. So much for Gabriel not deserving to hear him play. The thing was, Victor couldn't figure out why he was so angry about it. Maybe it was how Gabriel thought he could just saunter into anything Victor did,

feeling like he was so self-righteous in his apology that he could do whatever he pleased in their partnership.

"You play beautifully," Gabriel whispered as he sat on the bench next to Victor, holding a blanket around his shoulders, "I could never play music, was never interested in it. But you, wow, you could play me a symphony and I'd never get bored."

Victor gave him a dead stare, not impressed with his romanticism this late at night, "Charming, how romantic, you want a kiss on the cheek now?" He snorted. Gabriel yawned and smiled sleepily at him.

"No, I just want you to get back to bed. You only got five hours of sleep last night along with three cups of espresso," Gabriel softly grabbed Victor's hand from where it rests on the keys, rubbing it with his thumb.

"I—hmm," There he went again, Victor wanted to say what he felt, but he couldn't find the words. He's thinking about his dead mother, he's mad at being in love with Gabriel, he's upset that he gave up music, he wants to crawl into bed with Gabriel and sleep intertwined, but that's losing. Isn't it? So, he simply turns and leans forward, resting his head on Gabriel's shoulder.

"You don't have to tell me," Gabriel softens.

"Start simple. I know it's probably not simple but try. Tell me the smallest of your problems."

"Tomorrow. Right now I just want to forget every complex emotion and let you turn me into softened butter."

This elicits a chuckle from Gabriel, "Fine. Come to bed."

Victor looks up at him and misplaces his anger. He's in love with this man and that should be the end of it. He knows it's complicated and it's horrible, but it doesn't matter at two in the morning in a rich hotel lobby. All he wants now is to curl up by a fireplace and kiss Gabriel to bed.

"Oh no," Gabriel whispers.

"What is it?" Victor whispers back.

"Bedroom eyes."

Victor rolls his eyes and kisses Gabriel. They melt together, like a kettle of tea being made. It's quiet, soft, and theirs. Maybe Gabriel does deserve a melody if he continues to kiss Victor the way he does, placing light pecks at the corners of his mouth. Running his fingers through Victor's hair, smiling as he pours every apologetic love sonnet into his actions.

Victor giggles like a stupid teenager and playfully pries Gabriel off, "I think you're the one with bedroom eyes, sir."

"Maybe," Gabriel smirks as he stands up, taking Victor with him.

Victor gets all giddy and follows Gabriel to the bedroom, forgetting why he was even angry in the first place.

He had the best sleep of his life that night, intertwined with a blonde fool.



Artwork by Roscoe Lee

What Goes Up But Never Comes Down?

By Madalyn Lazarini

My age
continues to rise
It will never fall
When my age was undefined
With no clue of a world beyond
I fall to my knees
From the clouds of concrete
Emotions felt so decided
Being proud to not cry
Was the only way to fight it

My age
continues to rise
My mind builds a dam
I keep there a reservoir of dreams
Released by the electricity
of my silent screams
Exposing my deepest creatures
from the waters extremes





Artwork by Samantha Vega

My age
continues to rise
The metamorphosis of the creatures
Now light and free like I once was
Whisper tainted air into my ears
Til I am full of memories
And my dam fills again from the tears

My age
Continues to rise
I step on clouds of smoke
And seem to fall whenever I choke
But my light peeps through the layers
I grab instead of fall
Instead I rise beside my lover
A reflection of me and no other



Artwork by Samantha Vega
Gold Key, Scholastic Awards



Artwork by Maynet Galicia Arrieta



Artwork by Alexis Basham

The Memory Project

For the second year in a row, Visual Art students participated in a global art initiative known as The Memory Project. Started in 2004 by Ben Schumaker, the project’s purpose is to connect youth around the world through art. This year, students created portraits of orphaned children in Columbia to help build cultural understanding through international kindness. Students received photographs of each child, along with each child’s name, favorite color, and favorite toy or activity. They incorporated this information into the one-of-a kind portraits they created. Portraits were hand delivered to children in December, 2023. To learn more, visit www.memoryproject.org/about

“The Memory Project gets its name from its first intention, which is to provide handmade, heartfelt portraits as special memories to children in orphanages. Now our intention has expanded to touching the lives of youth around the world facing many types of challenges while opening our hearts and minds so they can touch ours in return.” –Ben Schumaker



Artwork by Ryan Dallum, Silver Key Scholastic Awards



Artwork by Riley Pollard



Artwork by Jamaal McClain



Community Weaving Project created by students for Bullying Prevention Week



(Top Left) Artwork by Jamari Gant, (Top Right) Emma Price, (Bottom Left) Ke'Ayziah Johnson, (Bottom Right) Emma Price

Weaving with Louisville's Little Loomhouse

Last fall, PRP hosted during a two-week, in-class workshop with visiting artists from local treasure, Little Loomhouse. Students created weavings on laplooms, and then combined their work into a larger, community weaving using a "friendship loom." They added their weavings one-by-one, and wrote anti-bullying messages on ribbons which which were woven into the overall design. The finished artwork was displayed at school in honor of Bullying Prevention Week.

This project was made possible through a grant from The Little Loomhouse, Louisville Visual Art Association and the City of Louisville. Special thanks to Michele Amos, Director of Little Loomhouse, for her support in leading the workshops, organizing the grants, and to teaching artist Norma Drish, who worked with students to facilitate the project.



Artwork by Sayde Norris



Artwork by Jamaal McClain



Artwork by Gracie Gomez



Artwork by Makayla Henderson

Exploring Mammoth Cave through Art

In Fall of 2023, PRP Visual Art students participated in a national project for Mammoth Cave National Park. Students researched Kentucky's Karst topography and studied Mammoth Cave's role in the biosphere, as part of the park's designation as a UNESCO World Heritage site.

Students created artworks inspired by their research.

Many of the works were selected for a special exhibition featuring student work across the nation, and these works were displayed from November 2023–January 2024.

Works may be viewed online at ifcprojects.com.



Artwork by Brooklyn Smothers



Artwork by Dravon Love



Artwork by Summer Wendolowski



Artwork by Angelie Urbano



Artwork by Jade Trumbo



Artwork by Emma Price



(TOP) Artwork by Layla Hendrickson
(BOTTOM) Artwork by Shyel Macaspac



Artwork by Roscoe Lee



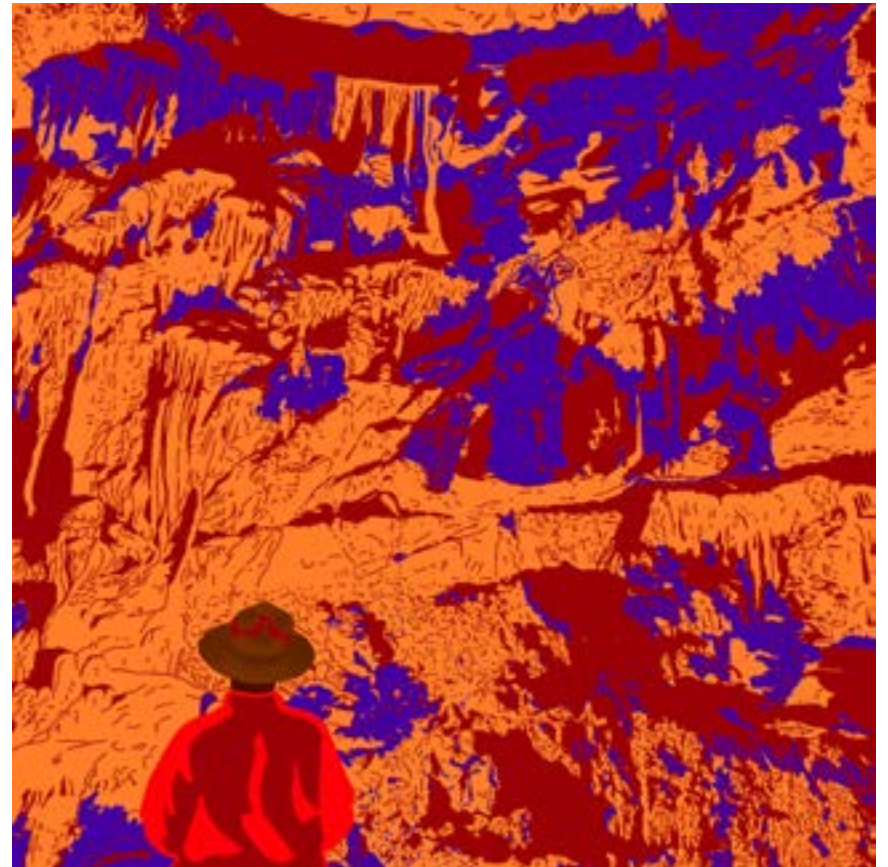
Artwork by Rayanna Davis



Artwork by Emma Bunny



Artwork by Summer Wendolowski

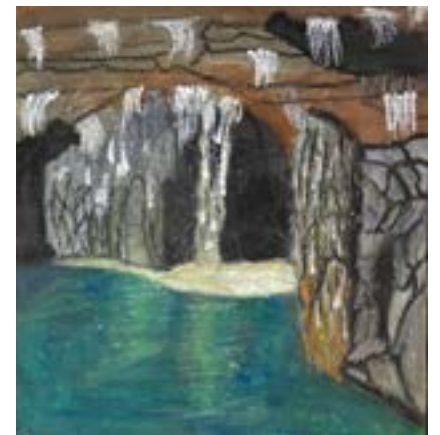


Artwork by Alexis Basham

Artwork by
Jade Couch



Artwork by Raeghan Cotham



Artwork by Alexa Ziegler



Artwork by Na'Shyia Taylor and Ke'Ayzieh Johnson



Artwork by Allison Brooks



Artwork by Maynet Galicia Arrieta



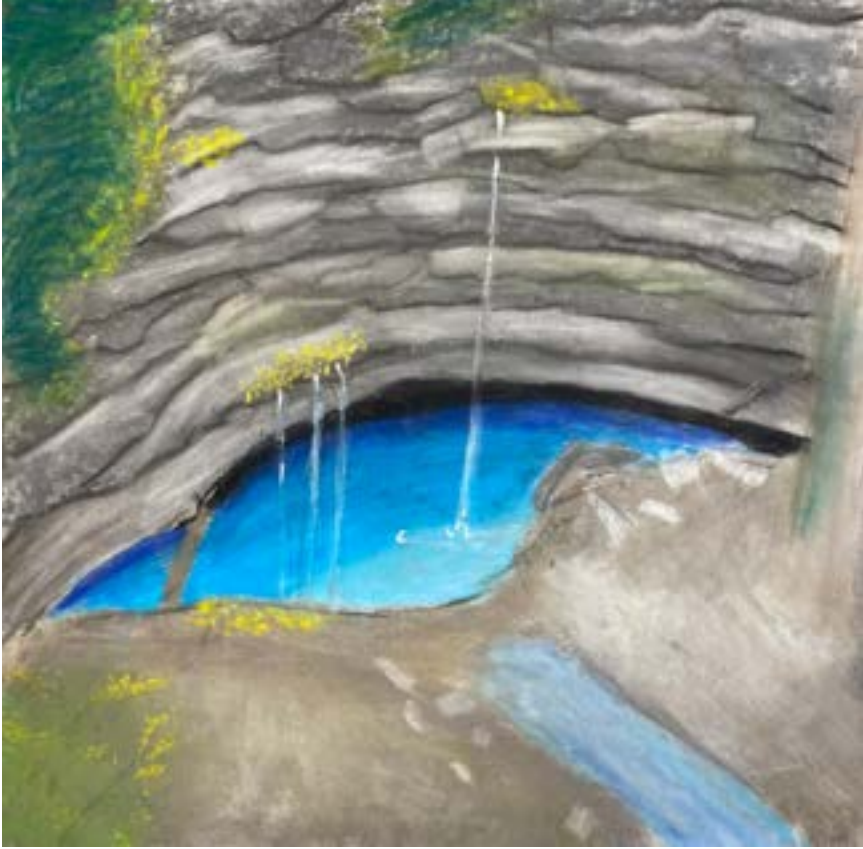
Artwork by Gracie Jeffries and Sydney Duncan



Artwork by Cassidy Mendoza-Newton



Artwork by Aron Bowers



Artwork by Johnathan Malone and Izzy Tindall



Banner Design for KY School Board Association by Ryan Dallum and Samantha Vega,



Artwork by Victor Aldrete



Artwork by Akira Sargent

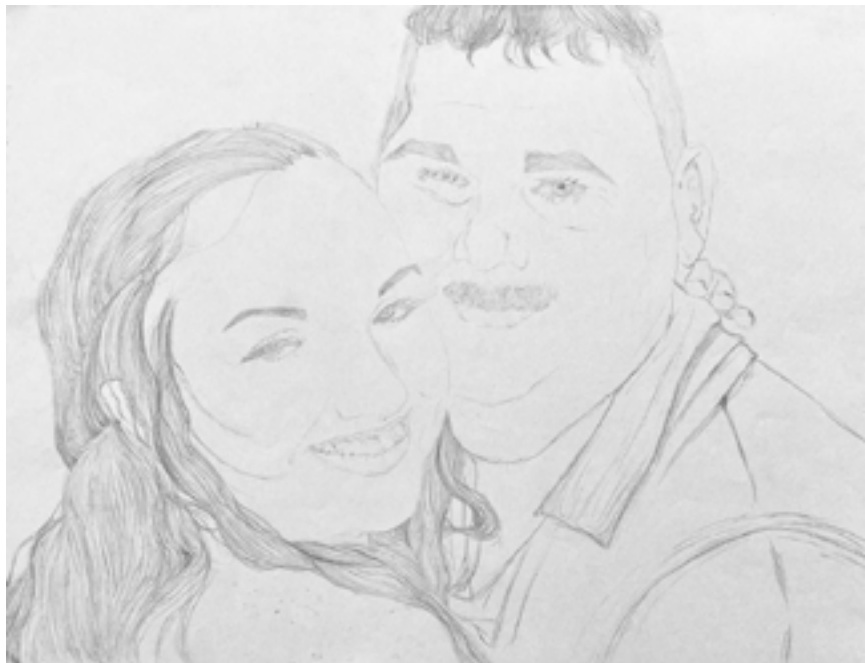


Artwork by Elijah Godfrey

(OPPOSITE)
Artwork by
Elijah Godfrey



Artwork by Alexis Basham



Artwork by Brooklyn Smothers



Artwork by Jamaal McClain



Photo by Kaitlyn Webb

ANIMAL CRUELTY: SHOULD IT HAVE A HARSHER PUNISHMENT?

By Jordan Wheeler

On a regular day, I was watching some TV. advertisements come on and usually, I don't pay attention to ads, but today was different. There was an ad showing dogs being left out in the cold weather, DURING CHRISTMAS. As someone who loves animals, I was irate because I couldn't believe people had such cruel hearts to do these things to animals. So I propose that Congress should inflict harsher punishment on animal cruelty.

One reason is because according to the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) cold weather can worsen some medical conditions like arthritis. Also according to PETA eight dogs have died due to harsh cold temperatures from being left outside, and that's just in two months from this year. "Every year, PETA receives reports about dogs, cats, and other animals who died or had to be rescued after being left outdoors in cold weather—and these are just the incidents that were reported. Most aren't."

Another reason why Congress should inflict harsher punishment is because according to Kentucky.gov, "Torture of a dog or cat is a Class A misdemeanor for the first offense and a Class D felony for each subsequent offense if the dog or cat

suffers physical injury as a result of the torture, and a Class D felony if the dog or cat suffers serious physical injury or death as a result of the torture," which in my opinion is too light.

My third and final reason is because most people who do get charged for animal cruelty, either have the money for the fine or are out of prison in a month or two. According to Cron, Israel, and Starks Attorney law, if convicted of PC 597.7, it's a misdemeanor crime that carries up to six months in county jail, and a fine of up to \$500. And like I said, SOMEONE CAN PAY THAT FINE EASILY, and most likely get bailed out quickly

Now some people might say that it's not the person's fault that the animal died. But some people do it intentionally, also known as neglect, because they don't want to deal with them. I mean, if you bought the dog or cat or whatever pet it may be, you should've known that you had responsibility and had to take care of it, feed it, and clean up after it, among many other responsibilities.

So these reasons and more are why Congress should inflict harsher punishments on the charge of animal cruelty.

American Veterinarian Medical Association <https://www.avma.org/resources-tools/pet-owners/petcare/cold-weather-animal-safety#:~:text=Cats%20and%20dogs%20should%20be,generally%20should%20be%20kept%20inside>.

PETA <https://www.peta.org/features/animal-companions-winter-freeze-death/>

Cron, Israels and Stark Attorneys at Law <https://www.cronisraelsandstark.com/animal-abuse-and-cruelty-california-penal-code-597#:~:text=Penalties%20for%20Animal%20Abuse&text=If%20convicted%20of%20a%20PC%20597%20felony%20animal%20abuse%2C%20you,cost%20of%20housing%20the%20animal>.



Artwork by Elijah Godfrey



Artwork by Gevar Harris



Artwork by Samantha Vega



Artwork by Isabella Olea

Artwork by
Analucia
Casey



project organizers

Judy Scott-Berger
Creative Writing Teacher

Denise Webb
Visual Art/2-D Design Teacher

Sheri Duff
Principal, PRP High School



Artwork by Lily Zerwekh



Artwork by Madalyn Staub



Artwork by T'asia Wright

index

Aldrete, Victor	78	Malone, Johnathan	76
Basham, Alexis	62, 65, 73, 80	Martin, Ca'Miyah	10, 12
		McClain, Jamaal	5, 12, 51, 63, 67, 81
Bock, Joseph	15		
Bowers, Aron	75	Mendoza-Newton, Cassidy	75
Braden, Addison	32	Mercer, April	23
Brown, Alliyah	7	Norris, Sayde	36, 66
Bunny, Emma	70	Patterson, Harley	19
Casey, Analucia	87	Pollard, Riley	63
Cotham, Raeghan	73	Price, Emma	21, 64, 68
Couch, Jade	72	Reed, Shay	44
Dallum, Ryan	4, 6, 11, 14, 22, 45, 63, 76, 77, Inside Back Cover	Robear, Desiree	43
Davis, Rayanna	71	Parker Robear	49
Duncan, Sydney	37, 74	Sargent, Akira	78
E.N.G.	39	Smothers, Brooklyn	68, 80
Galicia Arrieta, Maynet	1, 25, 38, 48, 62, 75	Staub, Madalyn	88
		Taylor, Brooklyn	9
Gant, Jamari	64	Taylor, Na'Shiyah	74
Godfrey, Elijah	52, 78, 79, 85	Tindall, Izzy	76
Gomez, Gracie	66	Trumbo, Jade	68
Gray, Malaiah	Inside Front Cover	Urbino, Angelie	35, 68
Gutierrez Ramirez, Jocelyn	8	Vega, Samantha	Cover, 2, 58, 59, 60, 77, 86
Harper, Ebreona	18		
Harris, Gevar	85	Wallace, Tabitha	2
Harris, Serenity	49	Ziegler, Alexa	73
Henderson, Makayla	66	Weatherall-Milburn, James	17
Hendrickson, Layla	69, 88	Webb, Kaitlyn	83
Heuser, Brianna	3	Wendolowski, Summer	16, 68, 72
Jeffries, Gracie	75	Wheeler, Jordan	83
Johnson, Ke'Ayziah	35, 74	Wright, T'asia	88
Lazarini, Madalyn	58	Yates, Madison	53
Lee, Roscoe	26, 46, 47, 57, 70	Zagula, Lilly	29, 32, 41
Love, Dravon	68	Zerwekh, Lily	87
Macaspac, Shyel	29, 69		



Artwork by Alexa Ziegler



Artwork by Ryan Dallum



Artwork by Layla Hendrickson

