

THE FRACTAL 2024





Rebekah Dajung Yoon
editor-in-chief

the ones from before, after

When titling our magazine, the immediate ideas we had were grandiose. Yes, we pored over words such as “clairvoyance,” “denouement,” and other equally long nouns that attracted our senses just as well as it confused them. We—artists, writers, and musicians—wanted a beautiful pronunciation, a beautiful exterior, a beautiful feeling.

But what about a beautiful meaning? The fractal, a term you may have heard in geometry, represents infinity—a shape which repeats itself within progressively smaller, yet consistent sizes. As you zoom into the computer-generated Mandelbrot sets you may discover online, you will see that, no matter how far you go, the pattern remains the same.

This is exactly true of Governor’s School; the cycle of education, inspiration, and creation! Regardless of how long the program remains, our essence is never diminished. Never weakened.

This magazine is a symbol of that truth. As a collection of our student body’s best work, we hope to remind ourselves of how far we have come. We—as creators—must also take this to heart; our places were made because of the formation underneath, and our places will be the foundation of the one above. We (and you) are part of the pattern, the infinity, the fractal. ◆



Zilu Gu
co-manager



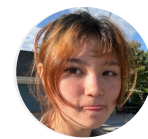
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LA Clutch
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Jes Weaver
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Kylie Martin
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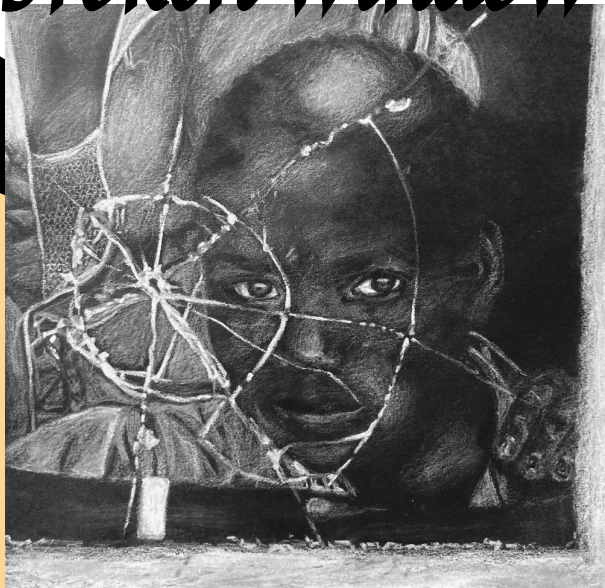
THE MORNING AFTER

River Ohl
humanities student

Thursday June 26th, an inconspicuous letter arrived at a little office nestled on the east side of the most unimportant district in the city. The letter consisted of only three words, none of which were a signature or declaration of ownership.

We all die.

broken window



Nuala Woodall
humanities student

colored pencil
on paper

The startled secretary would end up discarding the letter after a good three minutes of only mild concern. Widespread political unrest meant that notes like these, while uncomfortable, were becoming more standard by the day. Nobody would bomb a building like this anyway. Not when they were surrounded by centers much more significant or insignificant than this one. After that, no more letters would come, and the concept of searching for an explanation would entirely vanish from the minds of anyone who would ever care to reconsider.

That same secretary would go home that night to his wife and their three-month old baby. She was too tired to cook that night, not yet recovered enough to stand on her feet for more than a few minutes at a time. He bought egg rolls and some pork bao buns from a street-stall a block away from their apartment. Simple, but enough so that the nostalgia of older days made the fillings that much sweeter. She had the laugh of sunshine, threatening to take his second eggroll for herself. He fought her off, slipping half the roll onto her plate in the end as she searched for the TV's remote.

A silver-haired man in a navy-blue suit gravely reported on the city's news, mugshots of terrified teenagers and homeless men with bloodshot eyes and unwashed hair flashing up on the screen.

(continued on next page)



Emily Chen
studio art student

PRISONER

Nuala Woodall
humanities student



OF CONSCIENCE

pencil on paper

The man turned over to a woman in a tight yellow dress, nervously shifting under the arm of a stumbling man with a flush down to his chest. Bronze bottles rolled across the pavement, clicking into the backs of her heels.

He tried to distract her as the newswoman screamed, subtly shifting in front of the television as she dug through the corners of the couch cushions, whining as crumbs buried themselves under her fingernails.

She does not find it. She never would, the remote now residing at the bottom of the dumpster outside.

For the sake of maintaining a good night, she conceded to playing ignorant and laughed off the missing item as nothing more than a small inconvenience. He-

-thanked her for it, opening his arms so they could exist together as they always did, making jokes about how such a scene, stolen egg rolls included, was so very like them back when they first started going out. She liked those kinds of remarks, claiming them all kinds of cheesy but pressing closer all the same as he ran his fingers through her hair.

The television had switched back to the older man by now, as he rattled off the active developments of the industrial sector. The raging decline of the agricultural unit as large sets of land were engulfed in flame. He smiled, claiming the charts would switch into reverse any day now, there was hope as long as their faith stood in the system. They could almost respect the effort, but his brows remained furrowed. The smile never quite reached his eyes.

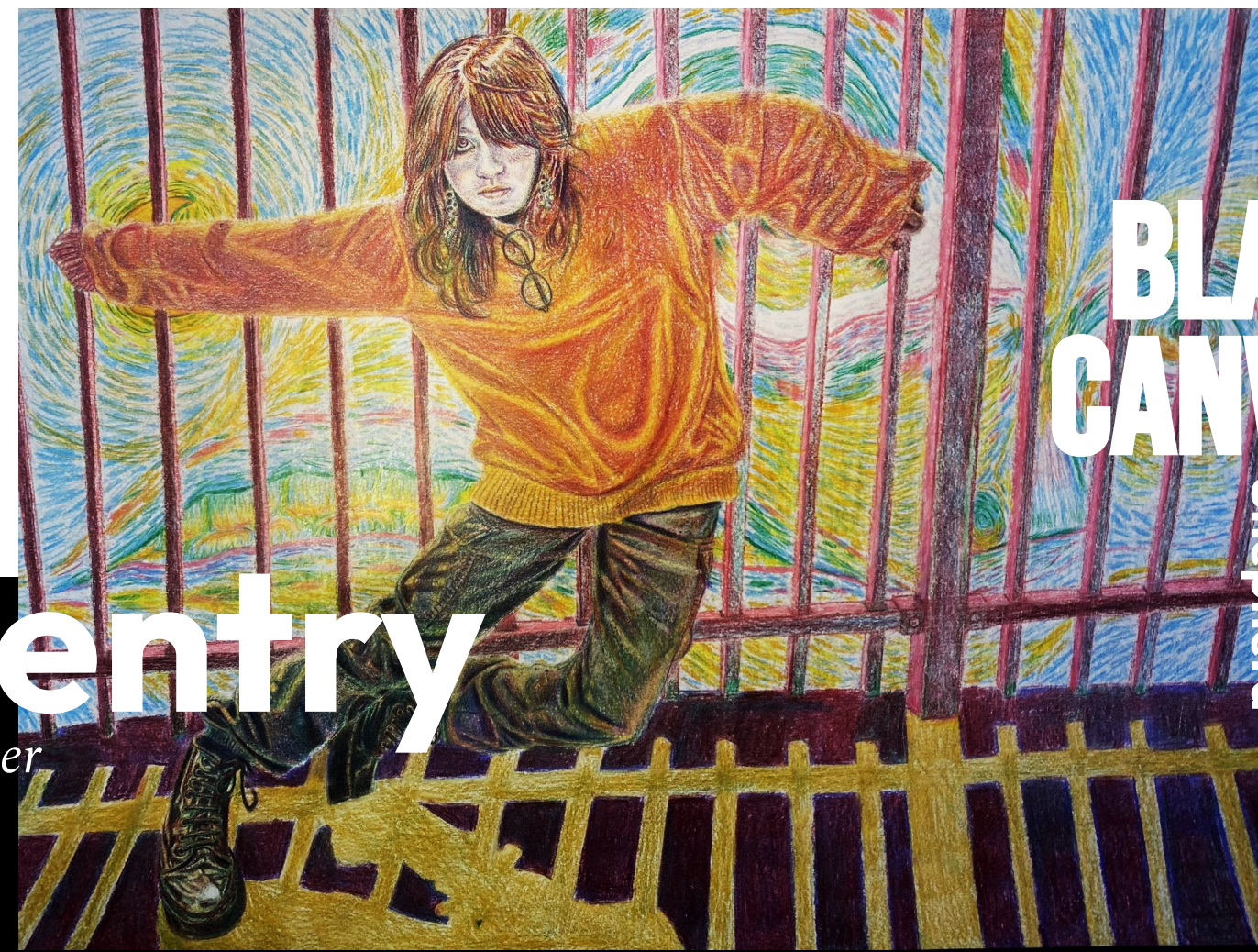
"Do you ever think about the future?" she asked him quietly. He frowned; he did all the time. In fact, she often scolded him for it, claiming such irrelevancies would only weigh them down. They would have all the time they needed tomorrow to think about that future. "We should get a dog, a great Pyrenees, or a corgi, or something."

He did not respond, so she just hummed into silence. Her fingers ripping at the cushions, giving away her racing mind. "It would be good for us, I think. Well, we should wait a little for the baby, but after that? They could be best friends." She smiled dreamily up at him, proud of the image of her little family. He rolled his eyes but entertained the idea for a moment, just for her.

"I suppose with a little organizing, we could probably fit a dog bed by the bookcase," he amended. She beamed at that, her right-hand fluttering through the air as she rambled about the logistics of housing an animal in their apartment, something very much prohibited by their lease.

After a few minutes, she wore herself out, and the stream of words gradually slowed to a pause. She was humming again, her enthusiasm evident despite the slump in her shoulders. He repressed the urge to laugh at her childish behavior, amused, nonetheless. They stayed like that for a while, a long moment stretching between them as the smoke outside dissipated from mind and the passionate declaration of hopelessness from the television tuned out.

Gabriella Peranski



gated entry

colored pencil on paper

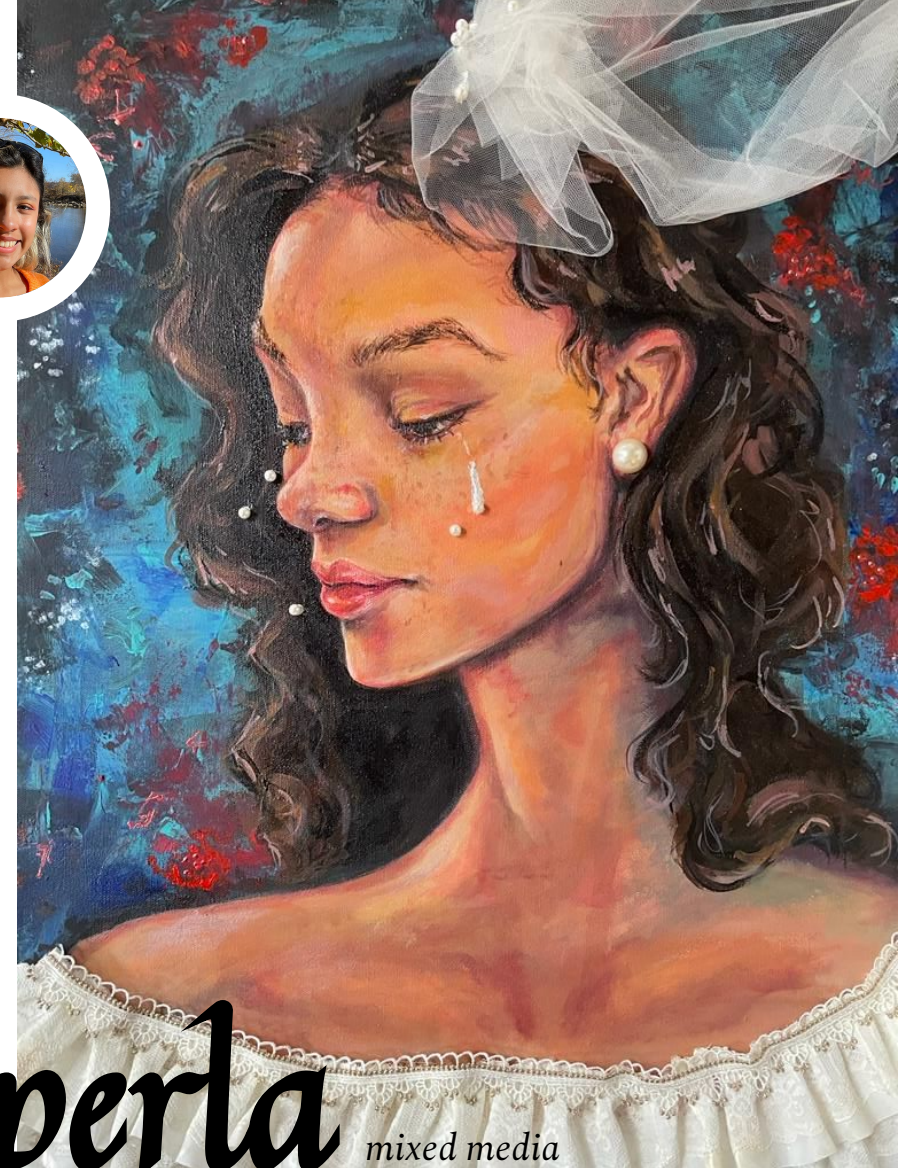
"Why did you throw away the remote?" she whispered, and for a brief second, he tensed. A sigh, a shake of the head, an apology. Not for the action, but for the answer she did not ever receive. "Okay." She knew that he saw her as something needing protection. This was just one of the things she was not welcomed to partake in, for him, she could live with that.

Had tomorrow the world ended, the sun swollen red, prepared to burst into an all-consuming pit. Non-forgiving, non-pitying, not hesitating as it took and took. She wanted that night to be the kind in which could define a lifetime. Maybe it had been. ◆



Sarah Sofia Piñeros

studio art student



studio art student

perla

mixed media

acrylic on cardboard

BLANK CANVAS

Shelby Shepherd
studio art student



THE WORMS

Amelia Haws
humanities student

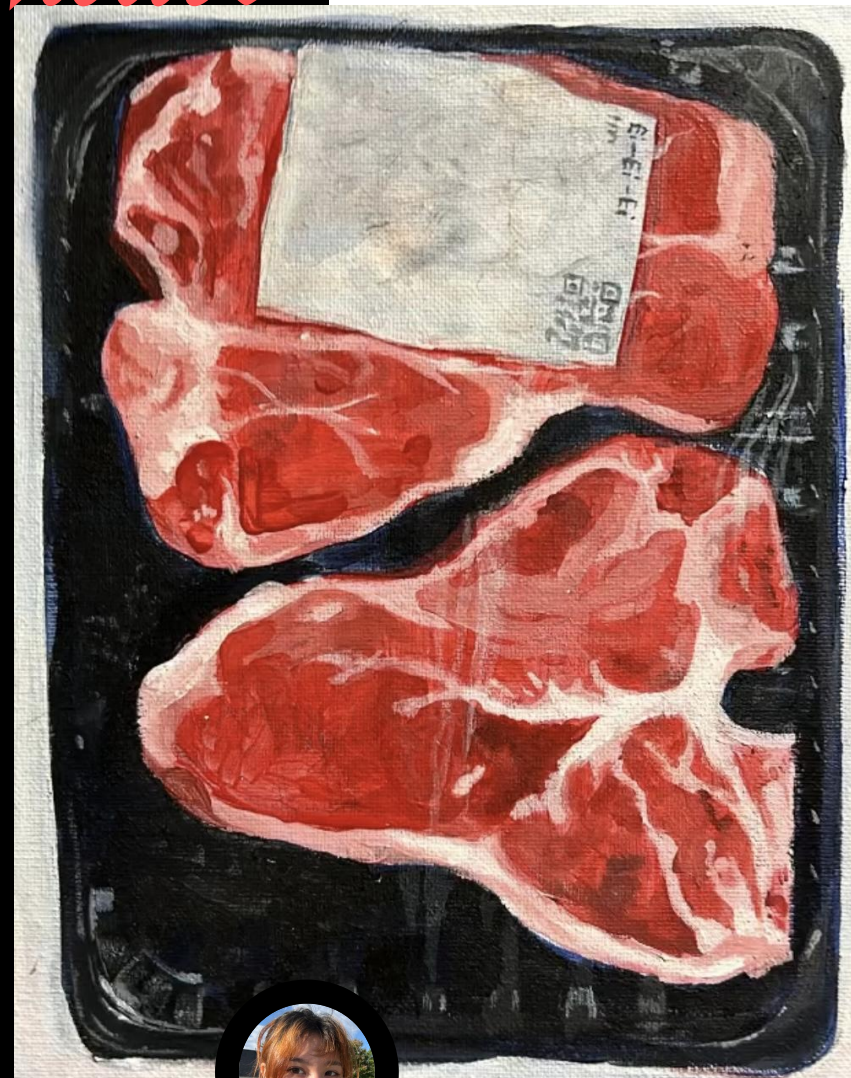
The worms surface in the rain
They come out to find the moisture that keeps them alive
It is their home, you see
They seek a dance that will set them free

Some say they feel no pain
But they have never watched them writhe
Never seen the pain caused by you and me
By creatures that cannot just let others be

They live and die in our brutal reign
Under our unknowing scythe
That comes in the form of our two feet
For we don't watch where the we and the pavement meet

And those lucky ones who may remain
Our humanity now survived
Do not yet have a guarantee
The test of time still holds the key

For when the sun comes out again
And the rain they sought has dried
They will be scorched without reprieve
The rain was never what they believed ◆



acrylic on canvas

meat?



Jes Weaver, studio art student

A LETTER TO MY FATHER

Audrey Ryan, humanities student

You never hit me,
But you hurt me all the same

I never cried in front of you
Because you never made me feel like I could.

When I was little, you yelled.
Then I grew up and you didn't yell as much.
But you still hurt me.

You kept secrets from me
And when I found them out
You yelled.

So I did too.

Even though you were right in front of me, you were never really there.
You never asked me how I was,
And I never asked about the woman you always texted.

And now we don't talk.
But as I sit here and write this,
I wonder if we ever really did. ◆

grasp

digital media



Casper Dudley, studio art student

the maw

acrylic on canvas



Casper Dudley, studio art student

THE HUNTRESS

Nolan Liang, humanities student

You were hunting me
 red arrow notched upon, double
 recurve bow
 flightless and plightless
 unfortuitous, inevitable, evanescent.
 we were trapped in
 a bog of nocturnes and pomegranates and
 cattails,
 the cat's tail all eaten away by rabid mice,
 because you were a twisted knuckled man
 who shot at, the sky
 when birds no longer swam
 in clouds of fungal fumes.
 Two gaping craters
 turned me inside and out
 my flesh becoming worn in the dryer,
 shrunken and disheveled,
 cracking where skin melds,
 creating the liquor of bone.
 it reminded me of apple butter
 butter made from the milk of an apple
 so bitter and bug infested
 it turned honey to mildew.
 You pulled me in, spat me out
 as if nothing more, than frayed ecstasies,
 remnants of a fish bone broth. ◀▶

reflection acrylic on canvas



Kaia Jansen, studio art student

bed head

Casper Dudley
studio art student



room



Kylie Martin
humanities student

Do you hate me, too?"
 This I ask to the wall.
 The sterile room echoes the
 question.
 A mockery, I'm sure.
 I don't know. Do you hate yourself?
 A dreadful response.
 "Well, you see, I'm not quite sure. I
 have plenty of reasons to hate me."
 Give me some of those reasons, then.
 I'm sure none of them are valid.
 I straighten and cross my legs.
 "I'm not the most attractive."
 That's it?
 "I wasn't finished yet."
 A strand of onyx drapes over my
 face. I fight the instinct to push it
 back.

you used to be pretty

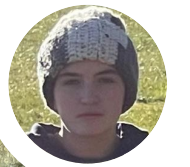


studio art student
Aurora Anne Lavelle

multimedia foam
sculpture

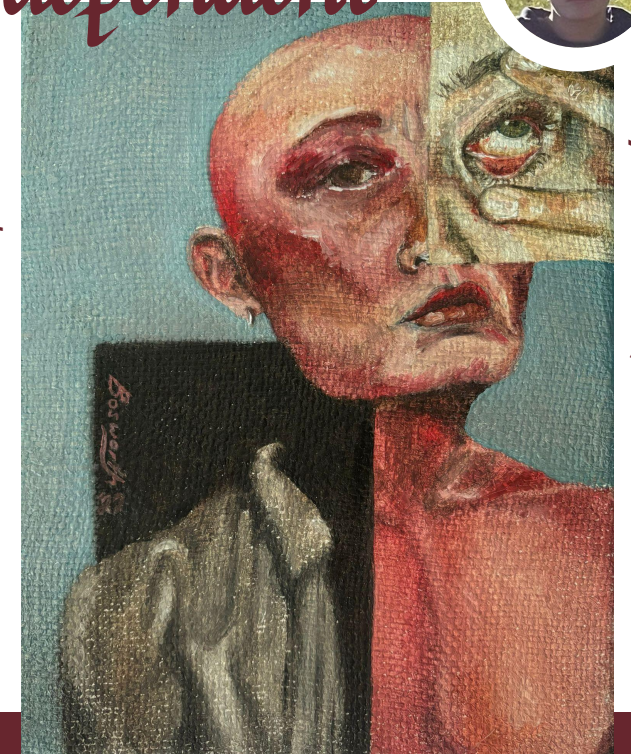


dependent



Grayson Bosworth, studio art student

oil on stretched burlap



"I have terrible clothes. My taste in
 music is strange. I don't fit in
 anywhere. I have no friends-"
 Are you done yet? I'm quite sick of your
 complaining.

"You asked me for reasons. I gave
 them to you."

Fine, then. Whose fault is it that these
 things are such significant problems?

Gravity weighs down on my
 shoulders and I slouch.

"Certainly not mine."

Then whose fault is it?

I sit and think for a while.

"My parents. Most of this is their
 fault."

And why is that?

"Genetics."

And where does the remaining fault lie?

I sit for longer.

“Others. Everyone, including myself, is shaped by society and those they interact with.”
 If none of your problems are your fault-
 “Nothing is ever my fault.”
 Fine. If nothing is ever your fault, then why would you hate yourself?
 I fall quiet.
 Sounds to me like misery craves company. And pity.
 “Pity?”
 Yes, pity. You want attention.
 “Attention?”
 I stand.
 “You think I do this for attention?”
 Yes, I do.
 “What an accusation!”
 I am loud. My anger has become too large for my body. I expel it at the wall.
 I hurl insults and profanities until my energy is properly depleted.
 Until words morph into incoherence. Until there is nothing left but wrung out feeling in the room.
 It takes me a full seven minutes to realize that the wall has gone silent. ◆



TESTING SEASON
 acrylic and oil on canvas

Kendra Van Le
 studio art student

perception
 acrylic on canvas board

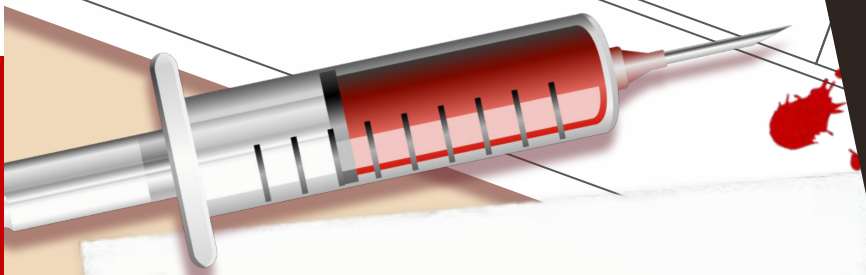


Beau Dono, studio art student

FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH

The ceiling is white and the fluorescent light is bright. But it's fine because it's a temporary stay, and he will be out soon. His mom and a nurse come in with applesauce and a reassuring smile. They draw his blood. Day Two, and he is not out. But he will be because he is bright and young and he will be fine. He's recovering fast, his nurse tells him. He has more applesauce, and they draw his blood. Mom smiles. More days, and he is not out. Even the soft white of his bed covers are brighter, but Mom tells him he'll be out any day now. Her smile is reassuring and she promises to visit. Soon he will be out and he will be fine. He has more applesauce, and they draw his blood. More days, and he is not out. He... is not fine. But she is more bright. More... young. Mom smiles and gives him more applesauce, and they draw his blood. glaring to his eyes, now. He... The ceiling is whiter and the light is brighter. Mom doesn't visit. He looks to the window and is blinded by a field of white, but... remembers blooming flowers when he first came in. He catches his reflection in the window and his eyes... are not bright. He balls his fists in the sheets and notices that... his hands... are not young. He doesn't want to take the applesauce. They will draw his blood soon. ◆

Zilu Gu, humanities student
 Incident Report: FTY-038
 Date: 12/1/37
 Patient BY-13
 Additional Comments:



ROCK STARLET

mosaic

Nuala Woodall, humanities student



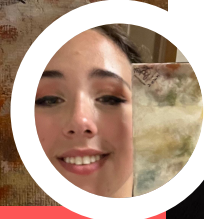
stones on canvas

little fairy

oil on
canvas



Madelyn Bromley,
studio art student



LACED UP TOGETHER FOREVER

Julisa Obregon,
studio art student



I WORSHIP THE GIRL

Lillian Parker, humanities student

I worship the girl like she is a goddess from hell,
Like a fool witnessing true beauty for the first time,
Like someone who will never have a moment like this again.

It is all consuming.

I think that I should start a garden.
Let me protect without responsibility.
See it blossom and feel void of joy or agony,

Only this immense, casual stillness.

I'll plant an apple tree in the backyard,
With the hopes of her slithering in.
I want the fruit to taste like freedom,

And then, I want to never see her again. ♦



FALL OUT

Julia Egnot, vocal music student

The morning after the World Ended
Warm light trickled through my
bedroom blinds

Illuminating the fallout left behind.
Downstairs, the dog barked, and coffee
brewed,

My father read the morning paper
with his toast half-chewed

My mother hummed a tune she knew as a
child

As she folded the laundry stacked and
high-piled

Both were unaware that a single set of stairs
separated them from ground zero.

The morning after the World Ended
Foxes weaved through rusted drain
pipes

And flashed through the misty
morning air
Old ladies tended to their gardens out back
Blissfully unaware of the brutal
attack.

How strange that no creature big or small
seemed to notice the ending of it all.

Yester-night was filled with dread
As I heard the planes fly overhead.
They did not crack or crash or boom or
bash

Instead, they whispered things as I
lay in bed.

Whispers turned to yells turned to shouts
turned to SCREAMS

But the morning after,
Bees buzzing from flower to flower
Made the meadows sing
Alarm clocks went off
sounding their annoying metallic ring

The World had Ended the night before,
But the morning after, life moved forward
evermore ♦



acrylic on
stretched canvas



rapture

**Grayson
Bosworth,**
studio art
student



love at sea



oil on stretched canvas

Grayson Bosworth,
studio art student



rerun



acrylic on stoneware clay

Rebekah Yoon
studio art student

Noor Swanson, humanities

BE HOME FOR DINNER

Did you suspect your husband before you found...?" the policeman trails off, pity shining in his eyes.
"The body. You mean before I found *the body*," I deadpan. This isn't real. This can't be happening. I'm not sitting at the police station with the white walls and the white floors and the cold metal seat that seems to seep into my bones. I'm not here right now.

"You're going to be late," I say with a light laugh as my husband pulls me in one last time with a kiss. He pulls back, tipping my chin up to his. "Fine, but—" "I know, I know. Now go," I tell him with a smile. Frank grins in that boyishly innocent way of his and grabs his hat as he walks out of the door. I watch his tall figure retreat into his shiny convertible. I spare one last look outside our front door at the line of identical suburban houses, the shiny convertibles, and the wives sending their husbands off to work. Let the boys do their work and make sure that we do ours. Just in time for dinner. Nothing was questioned outside our little lives.

Emily Chen studio art student



gouache on paper

still life of a cupid

"If you're asking if I ever thought my husband committed murder, then the answer is no," I say mechanically. Not my Frankie. I press my fingers to my lips, willing my hands to stop shaking.

Frank walks back up to me with two sticks of cotton candy, handing me one of them. The carnival lights are bright, and he looks so happy. I wish I could freeze him in this moment. I wish I could take it all back. I feel like I'm underwater—the sounds of the crowd are muffled, only the sound of my beating heart. Does he know what I know? Can he see that it's written all over my face?

"How long have you been married?"

"Almost a year now." Not my Frankie.

I jump when large hands encircle my waist, turning to find my husband. I force out a laugh. "Goodness. Frankie, you scared me." His smile fades a little, replaced with a concerned expression. "I just forgot my briefcase, love." Frank smiles again, but there's a still wary look in his eye. I kiss him then watch his car leave the driveway this time.



PSALMS 106:3

BLESSED ARE THEY WHO MAINTAIN JUSTICE.
WHO DOES WHAT IS RIGHT

JUSTICE OF THE COURT

digital media



Apollo Chang, studio art student

“How did you find the—body?” he asks.

I take a shaky breath. “I was dusting his office. I don’t clean that room often—he doesn’t like me in there.”

The man shuffles through a couple of papers in front of him. “And, if I understand this correctly, you found the body under the floorboards.”

“Yes.”

The policeman maintains a collected expression, but not before slightly shaking his head as if in disgust.

All I had ever wanted was this life—the car, the neighborhood, and the ladies at the club. I had only ever wanted Frank. But it had all been threatened: my perfectly manufactured life. I was happy, but the blood seemed to taint the lace curtains now. The ugliness of it all at odds with our manicured lawn or the kisses from Frank.

“Did you ever see any evidence of a weapon? The autopsy hasn’t come in yet, but if you’ve seen something—”

“No,” I force out, “I haven’t.”

I snap the blinds shut, hearing the familiar sound of a car engine fade off into the distance. Drying the potatoes off with a towel, I begin cutting them. I grip the knife, my knuckles turning white. Blood. So much blood everywhere, still warm and—. I blink, and it’s all gone. Just the rhythmic slicing of the potatoes, just in time for dinner.

The policeman is silent and then eventually stands from his seat. “My condolences, ma’am.”

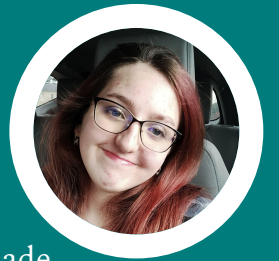
I nod in acknowledgment, my breathing evening out.

So when my life had been threatened to be altered forever, what choice did I have? The past should stay in the past at all costs. He had no right to come back, demanding all that he did from me. Not when I was happy. Not when I was happy with my Frankie.

I was safe. It would all end according to how it’s supposed to be.

In the end, it had been so easy to kill him. Effortless, really. The simplicity of using a kitchen knife, and the secrecy that came afterwards. Now I could be happy. I would get my Frankie out of this place, go home, and we would be happy—just in time for dinner. ◀

You're gone.
I remember so many things:
how it felt to love you,
to be loved by you,
to hold you, kiss you,
to just enjoy being with you
Each memory is a new razor blade,
too sharp to feel its slice
until the wave has passed
and I am forced to confront my thoughts head on
only then do I notice the damage
caused by you, despite your desire to
never hurt me
only then do I feel the burning
become aware of the
drip
drip
drip
of my blood
but by then it's too late
you've cut me too deep
and I will bleed to death
drowning in thoughts of you. ▶



SHARP

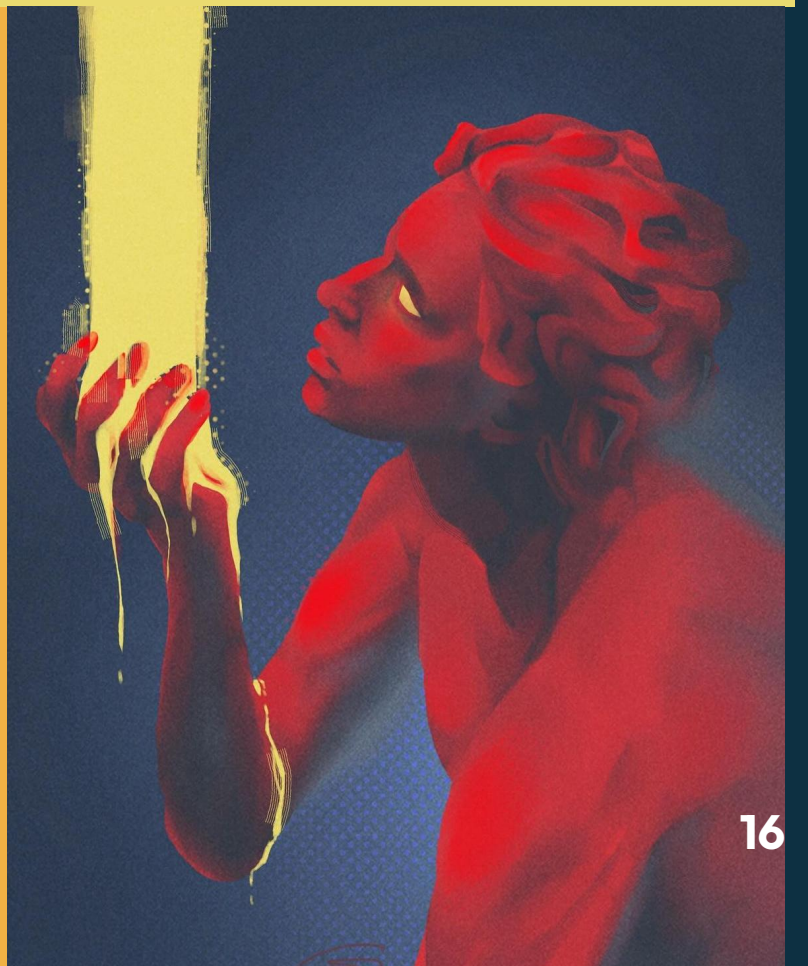
**Adriana
Bartoe**

instrumental
music student

A STROKE OF LIGHT

digital art

**Caroline
Snyder**,
studio art student



UNSAVORY SAVIOR

Clare Mullins, theater student

“I see.” I nodded. “I have dispelled the spirit from your body. I’m sure your wife and son will be thrilled to see you sane again.” I helped him stagger out of bed. I led him down the hallway and each precarious stair.

“Oscar! Thank the gods!” The farmer’s wife sobbed. The farmer and his wife embraced, both weeping.

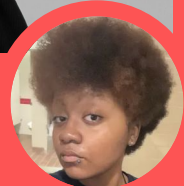
What’s with the waterworks? I wondered. *It’s not like there was any doubt I would fail...right?* I side-eyed the wife. She interpreted my glare as a look of concern.

me, myself, and I

plaster/paper mache bust



Preshyara Goudy,
studio art student



“Thank you, good priest!” She grabbed my hands and shook them.

“...Right.” I looked back and forth across the room. I was never a fan of the huge, tearful celebrations after my job was done. I’d been paid, I’d done the good deed, couldn’t I just walk out? No, I couldn’t, because nothing could ever be that simple. Instead, I had to provide countless “oh, it was my pleasure,”s, “it was nothing, really,”s, and “of course, ma’am,”s to the client. It was the worst part of the job. I did exorcisms because it’s the right thing to help people, not because I want to blubber with a group of strangers.

“Of course. It was really no trouble.”

The woman wiped her eyes.

Oh, great, let me guess, she’s going to say “how could I EVER repa--”

“How could I ever repay you?” The wife asked.

MONEY.

“You’ve compensated me plenty. I can live on two gold pieces for a week!” I laughed good-naturedly. Inside, I groaned. Anyone with sense would know that was a total lie. Two gold pieces could maybe buy me dinner. Maybe. Live off of two gold pieces for a week? Not with the kind of inflation we had nowadays.

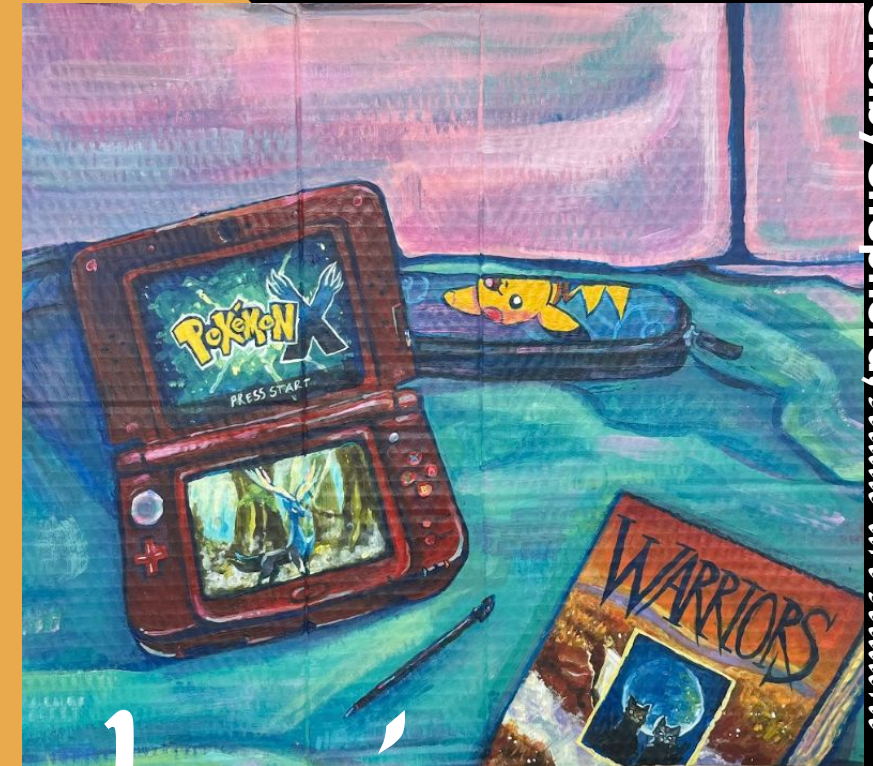
“You’re too kind, good priest!”

“Nonsense, nonsense. It was my pleasure to help. Really.” I scooted further away from the woman before she spilled her tears all over my freshly-cleaned robes. “Anyways, if you ever get possessed again, be sure to send the word, and I’ll come running!” I made my way to the door. “Pheasos bless you both!” I shouted, slamming the door behind me before they could lengthen the thanking ritual any longer than necessary.

The night was dry and crisp. Farming villages were nice, because all you could see for miles was fields of wheat. Gently swaying feathers of the crop dotted the horizon. The rolling hills of grass and crops lay before me, ready to carry me to my next destination. Well, I couldn’t leave just yet.

Where did I put it? I wondered.

Aha. A dim blue glow caught my eye. My lantern staff leaned against the doorframe of the farmer’s rickety house, waiting patiently. I grabbed it. As I did, the lantern’s light pulsed with energy, glazing the entire field in a gossamer glow. I spun the staff like a baton before settling it in the crook of my neck.



obsession

acrylic paint on cardboard

Shelley Shepherd, studio art student



dinoland

Nicholas Shaller, studio art student

CONTINUATION OF UNSAVORY SAVIOR

A dark shape swooped down on me, screeching and hooting. I barely flinched. The owl kicked the lantern off of my shoulder with her talon--it was her spot, and she took great offense to it being occupied. The owl was a gorgeous, black brindled owl with striking gold eyes and equally-striking gold streaks in her feathers. She was also my best friend, Kintsugi. She nestled up to my face, nuzzling the underside of my chin.

"Miss me?"

Kintsugi startled nibbling at my ear.

"Ow. No. No. Stop." I said, scrunching my nose in pain. When she finally relented, I decided it was time to hit the road. Hopefully, I would find somewhere with a tavern before I dropped dead from exhaustion.

The walk was long and droll. As usual, Kintsugi didn't mind a bit. She bobbed up and down on my shoulder, swiveling her head around every time she heard a field mouse scurrying around somewhere. Occasionally, she'd fly off for a few minutes, and return with two mice. Or two rabbits. Or two voles. It didn't matter to me, they always looked equally gross and dead. Whatever she brought, she always brought two. Kintsugi would wolf down the first and then look at me expectantly. She'd tilt her head and raise the dead animal to my lips. Or, try to. I'd usually scream and smack it to the ground before she could do so. But, regrettably, she did get lucky from time to time.

Tonight was one of those nights. I screamed at an embarrassingly high pitch as Kintsugi pressed something to my lips. Something...wet. I slapped whatever it was to the ground and shooed Kintsugi off my shoulder.

"BAD girl. BAD." I scolded. I glanced down. What had she brought back this time? Dead bird? No, I hadn't felt feathers.

What was it? I scrounged through the grass for Kintsugi's gift. It wasn't a dead animal at all. It was parchment. A discarded notice? It was wet from dew or rain. I could read it well enough, despite its soggyess.

"Hear ye,

By orders of the Grand Council, Gallashol will be evacuated by the beginning of summer. This evacuation is due to increased sightings of aggressive undead in the area, and is for your protection. Please spread the word to your friends and neighbors. Anyone remaining in Gallashol following the evacuation will no longer be under the protection of the Grand Council. To reiterate, you may stay in Gallashol if you please, but it will be done at your own risk and the risk of your family. Please heed this warning.

Signed,
Don Luriscura, messenger of the Grand Council"

My eyes widened. An undead infestation? Interesting. An undead infestation so rampant and problematic that it could force an entire village to relocate under orders from the Grand Council? Now that was something really interesting. I stuffed the poster in my satchel.

"Gallashol, eh?" I said, grinning from ear to ear. Kintsugi hopped back onto my shoulder. I scratched her gently on the head. "Good girl, Kintsugi. Good girl..." ♦



VEILED WOMAN

charcoal on paper



Serena Guo
humanities
student



SCOUT
scratchboard

Aidyn Alexander, studio art student

Preshyara Goudy, studio art student



EXPRESS YASELF

graphite drawing



JACK AND THE GIRL

Lunchroom - Midday

JACK and TAYLOR, 2 elementary school best friends, are sitting together at a table; the only ones there. Jack looks quite depressed, while Taylor is talking to him.

TAYLOR: I don't know what you're so scared of, Jack. You can just go talk to her.

JACK: But what if something goes wrong? What if she laughs in my face and tells me to get a brain?

TAYLOR: [chuckles] Oh, you've got a brain. One that's so full of stuff that I don't even know how you function.

Jack rolls his eyes.

TAYLOR: You're always imagining magical places and daring adventurers, but you can't even imagine talking to Mary?

Taylor points. Both boys look at MARY and her table of popular kids.

JACK: That's different. In my mind, I can be anything I want to be! I can be a space explorer, or a master spy, or even a knight in shining armor!

As he talks, we cut to fantastical shots of him dressed as all of these things. When he becomes a knight, he stays that way and the scene opens up into a castle throne room, transitioning the scene into Jack's fantasy.

Crystal Chambers,
theater student



LINK acrylic on wood
Shelby Shepherd,
studio art student

Castle - Day

TAYLOR THE WIZARD: You have almost completed your training to become a true knight. Your last trial is to rescue Princess Mary, trapped in a 50-foot tower. Take this sword, and journey through the Enchanted Forest. Goodbye Jack, and good luck!

Jack nods and starts on his journey through the forest, cutting through vines. He is determined to find his princess. Cut back to reality, where we get a shot of Mary, then Jack.

cerulean stallion

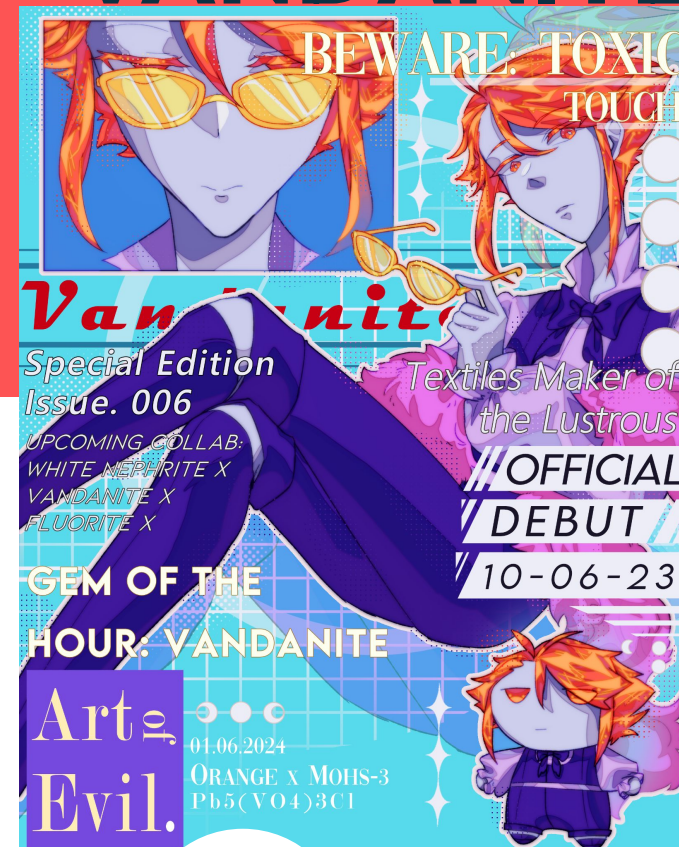


lino print

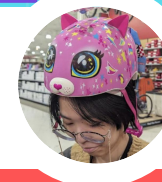
Julia Hoover,
instrumental music student



VANDANITE



digital media



Apollo Chang,
studio art student

Lunchroom - Midday

JACK: Alright, I'll go talk to her. Jack gets up with Taylor cheering him on. He walks to the table. He is very shy as he speaks.

JACK: Hey, Mary. Can I talk to you?

Mary seems confused, and the other kids at her table are laughing.

KID 1: You? What are you doing here? You're just some nerd.

KID 2: Yeah! What makes you think you can impress Mary?

JACK: Well... My mom says that I've got a big imagination.

KID 3: Oh really? Your mommy told you that?

The scene shifts to the fantasy world again, where Jack is still trekking along through the forest. Suddenly, a group of bandits blocks his path (same actors as kids).

Enchanted Forest - Day

BANDIT 1: Where do you think you're going with that beautiful sword?

KNIGHT JACK: I'm going to rescue the princess from her tower.

BANDIT 2: Not if we have any say in it! We want your sword!

BANDIT 1: It's the best in the land!

KNIGHT JACK: I need to go!

BANDIT 3: You'll never make it out alive!

That bandits pull out swords. Jack starts running, the bandits follow him. They chase him down and Jack hits them with his sword, transitioning back to reality.

Lunchroom - Midday

MARY: Hey, guys, lay off of him. What is it that you wanted to talk about, Jack?

JACK: Well, I was wondering if you would want to sit with me at my table at lunch sometime.

Mary thinks a bit and is about to say something, but before she can, she is interrupted by RICHARD, school bully, who bumps Jack on the shoulder to get to her.

RICHARD: What do you think you're doing with my girl, pipsqueak?

We get a big, menacing shot of him before transitioning to the fantasy world, just as Jack reaches the tower. He marvels in the tower's beauty before racing to it. But before he can get there, he is blocked by a dragon.

Ext. Tower - Day

RUBBER DUCKY



acrylic on canvas

Gabriella Peranski,
studio art student

DRAGON: If you want the princess, you're going to have to get through me!

JACK: I'll pay any price to rescue this maiden from your tyranny!

DRAGON: So be it!
The dragon breathes fire, and Jack rolls to the right to avoid it. He runs under the dragon and tries stabbing it with his sword, but its scales are too tough. The dragon laughs tauntingly.

DRAGON: Your demise is inevitable!

We come back to reality as Richard shakes Jack from his trance.

Lunchroom - Midday

RICHARD: Did you even hear me? I said: What are you doing with my girl?

MARY: Lay off him, Rich!

RICHARD: What? I'm just trying to make sure he's not bothering you.

MARY: Well he's not, is that good enough?

Richard stares at Mary disbelievingly. Jack looks very uncomfortable.

MARY: I'm sorry, Jack. I don't know why he's always like this.

RICHARD: I'm like this because I care about your wellbeing, that's why.

MARY: If you really did care, you'd let me talk to who I want to talk to. I don't need your protection, Richard! Go away!

RICHARD: [scoffs] Well fine then. Have fun on your own.

Richard stomps away.

MARY: Serves him right. Clingy. Oh, right, what were you asking?

JACK: I asked if you'd want to sit with me at lunch.

Mary smiles.

MARY: Sure thing, Jack. I'll sit with you.

Jack beams. The scene swells back into the fantasy world. Jack climbs up the dragon's back and runs across it to his head, where he stabs the dragon in the mouth, slaying the dragon and melting his sword in the process. He enters the tower and sees the princess.

Int.Tower - Day

KNIGHT JACK: I've come to rescue you, princess!

PRINCESS MARY: My hero!

She hugs him, and we cut to when they are back at the castle. Taylor the Wizard appears.

TAYLOR THE WIZARD:

Congratulations! You have completed your journey and rescued the princess. I now pronounce you Sir Jack.

Taylor the Wizard taps his staff on both of Sir Jack's shoulders as we enter reality for the last time. Jack, Mary, and Taylor are sitting at a table, talking and laughing. We close in on Taylor, talking to Jack.

TAYLOR: Told ya so. ♦

lead the way



Julisa Obregon,
studio art student

Fish Painting II



Mawulawoe Melomey, studio art student

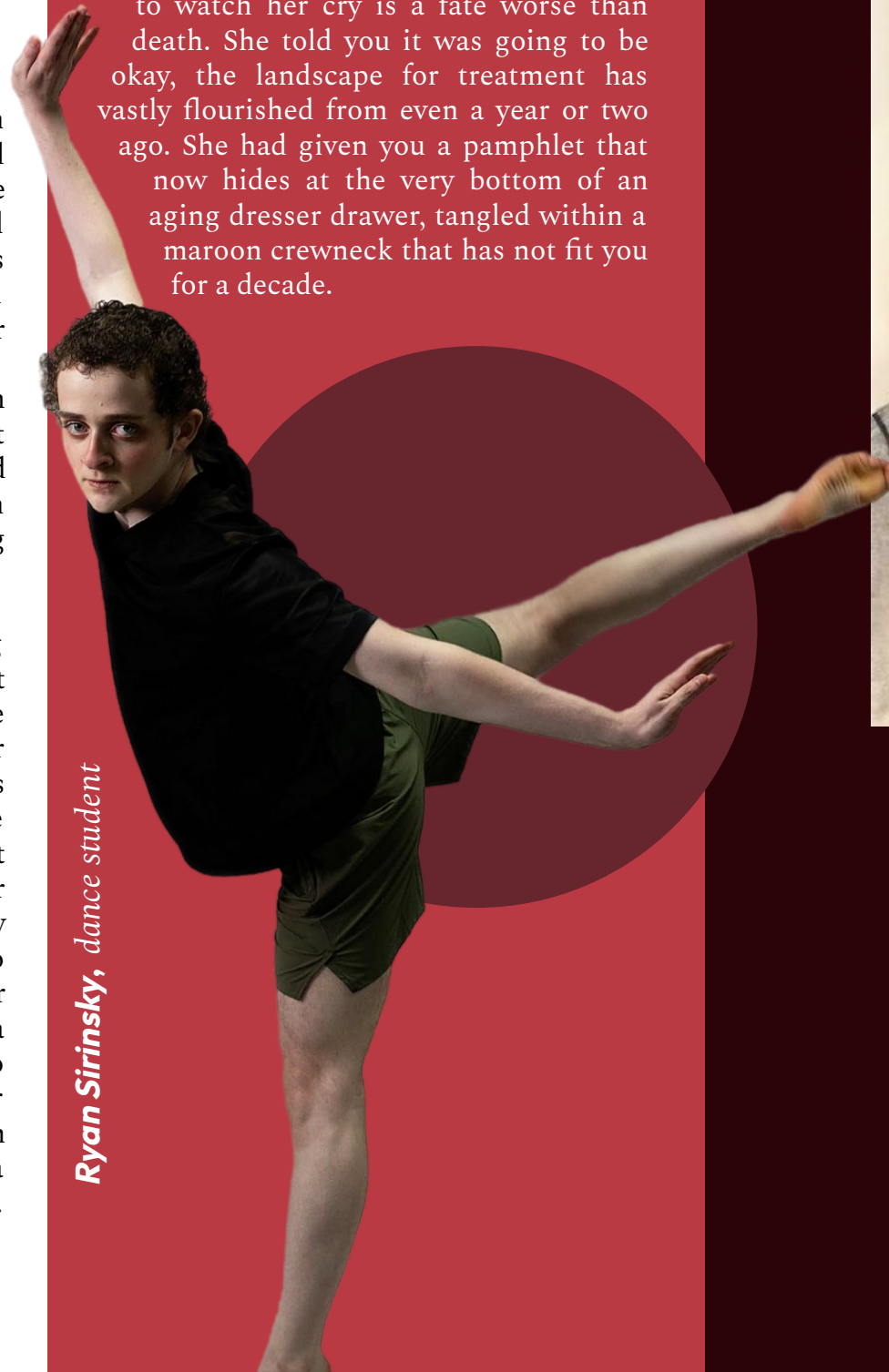
100 WAYS TO SAY I Love You

River Ohl, humanities student

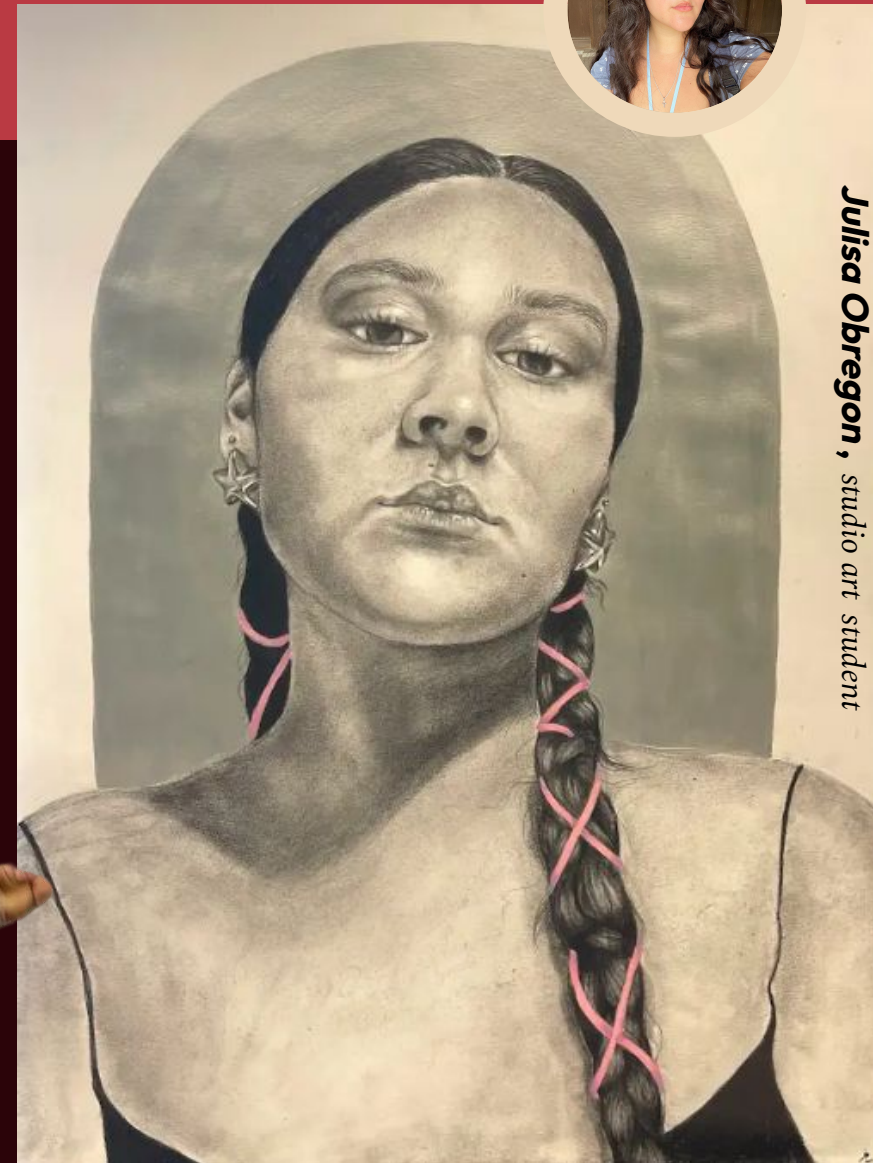
The Lakeland rail station in Chicago, Illinois, witnessed a train depart on a precise five-minute timer. It was with unwavering confidence that your ride would whirl to life and begin its trek through the city the moment the grand clock's metal finger clicked into place, monotone shades flashing across the station's time directory. A little chime would ring out, a cheer for another job well done, before the board rearranged its order and the cycle began again. A Lakeland train would be the most dependable public transportation you could find. Today was no exception, the train shifting forward as the time sang 8:20. Now, you could lean back into the plush seats.

Your wife sits across from you, looking out to the windy city and decidedly not at you. The air sizzles, stagnant between the both of you who remain unmoving, but for the droplets which tremble on her cheeks as they have for days. You force away the memory of her muffled tears that were just loud enough to find their way back to your shared bedroom in the crisp hours of early morning, the bags under her eyes a shade too dark for her to fully conceal. The tips of your fingers trace across the glossy edges of a complimentary magazine. 35 Genius Hacks to Prevent Aging. Another couple glances over to eye your wife as she watches herself cry in the window's reflection. The man's eyes ask a question to which he won't find an answer. The woman only screams an accusation.

Ryan Sirinsky, dance student



Your fingers curl back into themselves to form a tight lock. Perhaps your aggravation is cruel, but there is a particular pang that has stabbed your side since the moment she gripped your hand and asked you to sit down. Her eyes flicker to yours through the reflection, and you pointedly turn away to analyze Top 10: Eateries Locals Do Not Want You to Discover. You feel guilty, you truly do, but to watch her cry is a fate worse than death. She told you it was going to be okay, the landscape for treatment has vastly flourished from even a year or two ago. She had given you a pamphlet that now hides at the very bottom of an aging dresser drawer, tangled within a maroon crewneck that has not fit you for a decade.



Julisa Obregon, studio art student

TRENZAS WORN WITH PRIDE

She cries like she does not believe it either, coiled up small, almost reminiscent of a child. One too small, too frail, and too vulnerable to be in such a rowdy train car. You cannot be the one who is there for her. You are the true child, too young to dance with another demon. She is an adult, one who can carry herself, one too young to die like this. You're too young to hold her hand while she dies like this. In a cold room, far from home, only nine months after you married. Old people get sick, wither away, fall apart. Not her, barely over the age of twenty-four. Fourteen Meditation Exercises for Moving On. You can't do this. The lights flicker, humming like the beat of a drum, matching the rhythm of your racing heart, before, with one final flickering warning, they crash completely. Cast in total darkness, a hand timidly finds your own, and in the silence, you clutch it tight, not yet willing to let go. ◆

digital
media

RECOVERY



LA Clutch, studio art student

LUNA

violin quartet
composition



Anthony Amaya,
humanities student



the sound OF HOME

Avery Uhle, humanities student

In 6th grade, my grandma came to visit me at my home in Stafford, Virginia. With her, she brought her purse that, similar to a bag from Harry Potter, has the magical ability to fit any item up to 20 times the purse size inside. Usually, she brings cookies, games, and even one year a whole turkey, but this year she brought me a pair of navy blue earbuds that she had bought for herself yet never used. I'm now a junior in highschool, and it's been almost 5 years since I came into possession of those earbuds; I've taken them everywhere to school, soccer practice, sleepovers, and now to Governor's School at Radford University.

My first week at Radford was filled with new everything. New friends, a new home, a new schedule, essentially a new life. During that week, making a new life for myself at Radford didn't feel that hard. Maybe it was because I had the support of my peers who were all in the same boat as me, maybe it was the counselors who worked day in and day out to help students adapt to life on campus, or maybe it was the 45 minutes of yoga I went to every morning. I really didn't know.

That first week I was engulfed into a different world, but one item I brought allowed me to bring a piece of home to Radford. When I turned my earbuds on and music started playing in my ears, suddenly the sound of golf carts driving around campus transformed into the sound of my dad mowing the grass, and the walk to my classes turned into walking through the halls of my high school. When I had my earbuds in, my life at Radford and my life from back home collided and intertwined themselves. This sense of familiarity helped me to navigate my first few days of going to classes, the dining hall, the gym, and all the other adventures my friends and I got up to. *(Cont'd on next page)*

NOSTALGIA

oil on
canvas

Zoë Feit
studio art
student



My second week at Governor's School was busier but I, along with most others had fallen into routine. During the second week, my left earbud died. No matter how much I charged it or tried to make it work, no sound would come out. I was down to one earbud. After this loss, when I would run in the quad, it didn't look as much like my normal running route at home. The squirrels began to less distinctly resemble my cats, and my bed in the dorm, even though it was decorated similarly to my bed at home, felt less like my own every time I laid down to go to sleep. Even with the mild annoyance of a broken earbud, my life at Radford continued steadily. I went to yoga in the morning, to classes, the dining hall, and hung out with friends. While going along with my daily life I became more aware of my surroundings on campus. With only one earbud, my other ear picked up on things I'd been less aware of before. Nothing changed in my routine, but when I walked to class, the splash of the fountain I passed sounded more and more akin to a raging waterfall; when I walked to yoga at 7 am, the chirping of songbirds worked itself up to a crescendo from a simple whistle.

My third week welcomed a more rigorous schedule; with my final project being due the next week, there was always something to be done. It was at the end of my second week at Governor's School that my remaining earbud began to grow quieter. Without notice, I turned the volume up on my phone until I no longer could. It was only when I called my mom that I realized how bad it was. Even with my phone volume all the way up, my mom's voice came through my earbud as only a whisper. It was at that point I became aware of just how loud everything around me was; the people around me were talking, and the sunlight seemed to dance with the grass as gusts of boisterous wind blew through the quad. Everything was so loud, everything except for my mom's voice in my right ear—the voice of home.



Julisa Obregon, studio art student



siempre están conmigo

time capsule



Eileen Nguyen, studio art student



charcoal

After 5 years, my earbuds are finally on their very last leg. I've brought them to almost every summer camp I've been to in the last 5 years, but this will be their last. As they've slowly died during my time at Governor's School, I've been able to realize a fundamental part of the college experience. I'm away from home. With my earbuds, I can keep a part of my life at home with me, whether that be watching videos from home, listening to music, or calling my friends and family. Those earbuds served as a connection between my life on the Radford campus and my life at my home in Stafford, but the quieter they get, the easier it is to get caught up in campus life.

The quieter that voice gets in my ear, the easier it is for the chatter at the dining hall and the laughter in my dorm to overpower my connection to my life back home. What will I do when my last working earbud eventually dies? Will the campus life become too deafening and scare me away or will it be too enticing and I risk losing that special piece of home that I cherish? Or can I find a balance by letting my earbuds go? Allowing my sibling's chatter, my parent's voices, and my friends' laughter to intermix with the wind that sweeps through the quad and the bustle of the campus. Letting both ears experience the life I lived at home, the life I'm living here, and the life I'm going to live. ♦

nightfall

Avery Uhle,
humanities student

photography

Reflections on a Lifelong Wonder

Sabrina Lu, humanities student

The Seven Wonders of the World reflect the magnificent works of man, and the new wonders highlight seven different monuments around the same ancient periods. One quote states that the actual wonders are the ability to laugh and love, along with the five senses. My experiences at the Summer Residential Governor's School for Humanities at Radford University have equipped me with a deeper appreciation and respect for all aspects of life, and not just those we have been born with and later foster. The unforgettable adventures, bonds forged, and lessons learned throughout our four-week period at Governor's School are transformational.

I first heard of the wonders of this program from a friend and then again at a presentation at our school. The elaborate stories of the magic of Governor's School were my shortcomings, which led me to apply and ponder how fulfilling an experience like this could be. Looking back three weeks in, that was one of the best decisions I ever made. Gratitude fills my heart for my teachers, family, and friends back home for making this all possible. It is thanks to this program that I have found a new sense of myself. We students are fortunate to be guided by the kindest counselors, who provide unwavering support, and to be instructed and reinvigorated by one-of-a-kind professors. I, too, am lucky to have made some of my best friends here.



Picture Courtesy of Alex Mais

During Governor's School at Radford, students pursue one of five disciplines, ranging from visual and performing arts to humanities. The combination of multi-talented peers creates an inspiring yet welcoming atmosphere. While there are countless activities to keep busy with, there is always a place to explore passions and hobbies, new and old, whether through entertaining Shark Tank showcases, morning yoga, journaling on the Quad, arts and crafts, or learning French and American Sign Language.

This year, the focus of Governor's School lies on wicked problems: issues that are too challenging and indefinite to be solved in just one way. This theme engages all students, counselors, and professors to think differently and with a purpose. As a humanities student, I have carried away real-life lessons from our professors and classmates on societal functions and critical thinking. From understanding the roots of

political polarization to demystifying the Electoral College, every class and discussion challenges us to think beyond what we learn at school. Then again, Gov Stock, a month-long research project culminating in a conference-style presentation, presents a unique opportunity to tackle wicked problems with solutions of our own.

Some humanities courses include playwriting, creative writing, understanding how humor makes us human, applying solutions to wicked problems, and delving into wicked problems in political engagement. Visual and performing arts

students can explore graphic design, sculpture, theater, vocal training, instrumental and orchestral performances, and star in performances. The weekly tradition of hosting an open mic night on Friday evenings highlights the insurmountable talents of both counselors and students. Open mic nights are highly anticipated events with a special lineup of musical performances, skits, and acts, from playing the marimba to heartfelt poetry.

Open mic is just one of many traditions. The one-day trip to Radford's outdoor observatory, Selu Conservancy, is a time to build upon collaboration and deepen our trust with whom we spend one month. As our perspectives broaden and grow, one aspect remains constant throughout these four weeks: there is always something to learn, whether from others or ourselves. When meeting with the art and literary magazine team, my love for content creation deepened as I learned about graphic design

from students in the art discipline. Being a part of the magazine under Rebekah Yoon's leadership has inspired me to take back hard and soft skills to school in the fall. The social media committee I participate in has allowed me to see and appreciate through photography the various ways our peers express creativity while enjoying their time here.

Outside classes, student-led clubs, recreational activities, and counselor workshops are other ways we become involved with the Radford and Governor's School community. Workshops like the "Art

of Lying" and "Overtaking the World for Dummies" align with the wicked problems theme. Through the student council, the art and literary magazine, and the kindness club, I have found like-minded classmates who share similar interests and

passions. Adjusting to a life away from familiarity can be challenging. Although I miss my family and friends back home, I have found my friends and peers at Radford to be a great source of comfort as a second family.

The keynote speakers cover topics spanning from both the humanities discipline to the performing arts. From "How to Predict the Outcome of the 2024 Presidential Election" to "Bringing Down a Dictator," Radford University professors share their research and experiences while empowering the next generation of leaders to leap into government and be agents of societal change. The performing arts keynotes have covered "Creative Approaches



to Wicked Problems” and “The Messy Magic of Making.” Along with these presentations, performing arts students showcase their pieces every week to demonstrate new songs and music pursuits.

My time at Governor’s School so far has been nothing short of inspirational and life-changing. I have learned to be bolder and to share a part of myself that would not have been uncovered without this experience. Every walk on campus, every shared meal at the dining hall, and every little moment like a smile and the sound of laughter are memories to cherish and hold onto. Few programs like this exist, and attending Governor’s School at Radford is remarkable. I am every bit grateful to be able to share this experience with my peers and friends. It is not only a privilege to attend but also a gift. I hope everyone who can attend Governor’s School takes every opportunity to learn and grow without having the fear of regrets stopping them from doing so.

Some problems are inherently wicked. What if we could rename the wonders of the world for ourselves? Perhaps the idea of that is a wicked problem. However, if renaming was the case, my time at Governor’s School would be a wonder—a lifelong wonder—on the top of that list. ◀▶

THE VIRGINIA GOVERNOR’S SCHOOL: ILLUMINATING AND ENLIGHTENING

Lucy Shadel, humanities student

When I first heard about the Virginia Governor’s School, applying was a no-brainer. As a bookish, historically-minded student interested in law and politics, I knew I would feel right at home in the humanities program. So, I wrote my essay, asked some teachers for recommendations, and waited patiently for my results. I received my acceptance letter a couple of months later, celebrated, and promptly signed up for all of the most lawyer-y classes they offered: political engagement, communications, politics in pop culture, etc. But when I received my schedule, I was surprised to see some unexpected classes on my roster. I still had my politics-law-history-whatever classes, but they appeared alongside classes about the philosophy of humor, fighting climate change, and even improv. At first, I balked. “I’m going to school for law,” I thought, “What use am I going to have for these classes?” But now, after experiencing these classes, I have a very different perspective. The most magical thing about the Virginia Governor’s School is that it forces you out of your comfort zone and allows you to learn multidimensionally through your classes, your counselors, and from the other students around you.



Picture Courtesy of Kaitlyn Hsu

A student studying humanities at the Virginia Governor’s School has a rotating four-block schedule. The first two blocks are dedicated to two classes the student takes throughout the month, while the third block cycles through four week-long classes. The fourth block is dedicated to working on “Gov Stock” projects, an open-ended assignment where students identify a topic they are interested in researching, culminating in a ten-minute capstone

presentation given at the end of the four weeks. The program also offers optional and mandatory keynote speeches and presentations on topics ranging from how to take down a dictator to whether or not marching band should be considered a sport.

Because of how many topics are covered in the Virginia Governor’s School, students are bound to encounter unfamiliar material. For me, this was

Dr. Turner’s How Humor Makes Us Human class. Before taking this class, I had never thought about deconstructing humor, and although I could recognize when a joke was funny, I couldn’t tell you why. The first week of that class made my head spin. I had never heard the terms “synchronic” or “relief theory” or “mechanical inelasticity,” and I felt silly for initially assuming a class about jokes would be...well, a joke. Even though I may never directly use this information in my adult life, this class made me think critically about a topic I rarely consider, which is invaluable to me.

This information has also affected me in another way. I had an interesting moment during the third week of my humor class when I noticed that I was unconsciously applying the material I was learning in class to my everyday life. Now, when one of my friends tells a joke, I can identify multiple theories of humor that explain why people laugh. Although this has only directly affected my life by making me slightly more of a buzzkill at parties, it has wildly changed my worldview. I realized this class made me think differently about something that has always existed around me but that I've never noticed. Taking classes at the Virginia Governor's School feels like shining thin shafts of light into a dark room. Although the light illuminates information I didn't know before, what it really shows is how big the room is, and how much I still don't know.

In addition, the variety of students from different backgrounds I've met at the Virginia Governor's School have broadened my perspective. As a person born and raised in rural Central Virginia, I don't often have the opportunity to talk to people who have drastically different perspectives from my own. At the Virginia Governor's School, I've met people from both Southern and Northern Virginia, living in both cities and the countryside, who are both liberal and conservative. The only thing we all have in common is our passion for the arts or humanities.

However, even though we are all different, that hasn't stopped us from bonding and forming a community. One of

my best experiences at the Virginia Governor's School was during the first week of the program when a group of humanities students got together to watch the first 2024 presidential debate between Donald Trump and Joe Biden. I've never had the opportunity to watch a political debate with a group, especially not a group with so much passion. No matter what people believed politically, we all came together to analyze (and make fun of) both candidates. I have never felt so connected to such a disparate group of people, and I left the gathering beaming.

My experience with the Virginia



Governor's School has altered my way of thinking and has shown me that I have so much left to learn. I'm so thankful to have had this phenomenal opportunity to learn more about the world and make lifelong friends. If you are considering attending

the Virginia Governor's School, take a chance and apply. Once you're here, take every opportunity and seize every moment. If you do that, you'll leave better than you arrived. ◆

Picture Courtesy of Tara Bhogaraju

MY GOV REFLECTION



Brooklyn Phillips,
vocal music student

Radford's Governor's School was the dream I never knew I had until my teacher saw the potential in me for it. I never dreamed of being accepted into something prestigious like this. Especially since this was the first year of the Choir with no prior experience with music. My teacher didn't sugarcoat it when she told me my chances were slim, because I would be contesting with other students who have been singing for years and have had vocal coaches. Yet she pushed me to try anyway, and I prevailed. It was a huge confidence booster!

Being among so many talented peers has been a wonderful experience because not only does everyone possess superb skills. We also all share the same drive and enthusiasm for our craft.

My teachers have been nothing but enlightening and kind for the entirety of my stay so far. Having accomplished so much it is both humbling and inspiring to be able to learn from our mentors who have so much life experience. Not only is the environment



in the classroom extremely informative and inviting but outside of class, it's very heartwarming to be around people who all come from different walks of life. I come from a small town not far from here and everyone is a cardboard copy of each other but here I'm surrounded by people who are not the same and who aspire to be more. Where I come from you would get judged and ridiculed for being different but here my differences are embraced with open arms. I've made so many new friends and it's probably an experience that I will hold dear to myself for years to come.

The counselors are all very fun and engaging. They are the backbone of the operation here so I would like to take this opportunity to thank them all so much for making us smile and helping us have a fun time. Also, a huge thank you to the kitchen staff and housekeeping for making us wonderful meals and for keeping everything clean and functional. ◆



Governor's School From the Perspective of the Student

Andrew Stevens,
instrumental music student



The Governor's School is such an incredible experience.

It's the people you meet, the things you do, and the great times you have here. At the Governor's School, I have met so many talented peers and have collaborated with a few of them too. I am a part of the performing arts discipline since I am a guitarist. Our teachers are professionals in what they do and teach us, but they also are good people to work with. Everyone is also just so skilled in what they do. I remember that in the first performance we had, I was just in awe of everyone who performed. I don't think I've ever heard someone sing like that, or someone play the piano that well. These musicians were willing to work together to create amazing music. I've played with guitarists, cellists, double bassists, trumpets, and so many other amazing musicians while I've been here.



One fond memory I have was during practice time. It was me and a few other instrumentalist friends in the band room. I started playing a chord progression and the other players joined in improvising on top of what I was playing. Quickly some incredible music was being made, all of it was spontaneous! That experience stood out to me so much since I've never really done that before. It takes a certain skill level to be able to do that and the students here have it. We are also led by an amazing group of professors here. The guitar teacher here has taught me so many valuable skills that aren't only technical, but also practical. He's helped me become a better performer and showed me how to create a good show for my audience. The best example of this I could think of was with the warm-up routine and the stage anxiety solutions he had. He showed us a warm-up technique for guitar that allowed me to play more freely and to be less stiff.



For stage anxiety, he told us that it comes from having so much adrenaline and that to get that adrenaline out of your hands, you need to stretch out the back of your leg muscles. I've never even thought of these things before but they've already helped me so much. In the instrumental and vocal disciplines, we are given so many opportunities to perform. I have taken many of those opportunities as I enjoy playing in them. But what's different with this crowd from what I've had before is the support I received from the students. Every time I walk out on that stage and every time I finish playing, I am met with enormous applause and enthusiasm from the crowd that I haven't gotten anywhere else. Everyone here is just so supportive of each other, and it allows me to grow so much.

While I've been at Governor's School, I haven't just become a better musician, but also a better person. The way I interact and connect with others has improved so much these past few weeks. Everyone here has been thrown into an environment where there are no familiar faces and you have to build relationships from the ground up. I have made so many great lifelong friends here. Not only that, but we've connected and bonded in a close way that I haven't before with anyone else. I've been a part of meaningful and deep conversations with people I've met here.

One night, while we were on the quad outside, my friend group sat down in a little circle. We went around taking turns asking the group deep meaningful questions that sparked a discussion about ourselves that I didn't even know was possible. Some of us got advice on problems in our lives. Others got comfort about certain things that happened in our lives. That kind of bonding that happened that night was completely different than the conversations I had with

friends back home. After talking with the group afterwards they would also agree with me on that too. The fun I have had here is also incredible. The counselors here do an amazing job at creating activities that are enjoyed by all the students.

On the 4th of July, we played capture the flag, kickball, Mario Kart, trivia, and so many other things! Another time, they took us down to the river to have fun in the water and do some team-building challenges. One of the most exciting things was when we spontaneously filled up kiddie pools on the Quad. A friend, my counselor, and I just decided to inflate one of the kiddie pools and bring it over to the lawn. We then ran back and forth from the dorms with buckets of water to try and fill it up. By the end of this, it had attracted so many other students that it was a whole thing! In addition to the friend group, you will find on your own, you will also have your assigned counselor group.

You'll have so much fun with this group as well! As part of the group, you will need to create a chant and a group name. Mine was "The Lakehouse" and our group chant was the theme song from Total Drama Island. We had a blast doing it! Another thing I noticed while I was here, was how nice everyone was. Everyone seems to have the same goal of just having a good time. The students are so friendly that you don't have to worry about being judged when approaching others. Meeting completely new people here and being able to approach them has led to so many people finding great friends and maybe even some love.

These four weeks I spent here have been so special and awesome. Overall, Governor's School has been such a unique and pleasant experience for me. I have grown as a person, expanded my musical abilities, and simply had an amazing time! ♦

FOUR WEEKS AT GOVERNOR'S SCHOOL

Zilu Gu, humanities student

She was standing in line when she felt a light tapping, or rather, poking on her shoulder from something that seemed too stiff to be a finger.

“Do you like...my hand...?” A voice drawled from behind her, and turning around, she came face to face with a wooden...model hand. One covered with colorful writing, at least. And grinning at her was a girl holding up four differently colored pens, who then asked, “Would you like to sign?”

This girl, who walked around asking friends, counselors, and random students to sign her wooden model hand during the last week of Gov School, is me. Intrigued, mildly horrified, amused, and most often a mix of two or more, were among the responses I received on this campaign.

But why bring this up? It seems out of left field, doesn't it? It's because while everyone here delighted in signing their name, with a few even curiously approaching me when they saw a wooden hand sticking out from my backpack's side pocket, I wouldn't have gotten these responses at my high school. This open, friendly environment is what impacted me the most at Gov School, and what I'd like to talk about here. Let me start by saying this; we are all more passionate than the average student. This is proven by the simple fact that we're all here, we all applied for an educational program in the summer when most would be excited to take a break from



anything school-related. And because we all chose to be here, we initiate clubs and projects, enthusiastically engage with each other, and enjoy it. Many times I've gone up to someone who simply looked cool and struck up a conversation, and all of those times I walk away with an interesting story, newfound knowledge, or just the joy of conversing with someone who shares my interests.

To expand on that last point, humanities and the arts are interdisciplinary

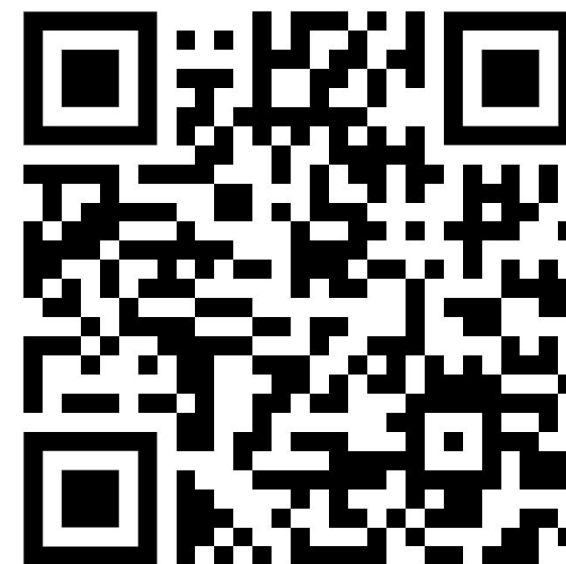
in nature, which makes Radford's Gov School a melting pot of diverse people with similar pursuits. Many of us finally get to relate to peers and exchange ideas freely that are sometimes seen as too weird or eccentric, or just let our inner, eccentric selves go all out and have fun. I can talk about unethical things objectively without people assuming I support them, people can perform silly, nonsensical acts to a captive audience, and we can indulge in our most creative ideas with the freedom the self-directed approach gives us.

Comparing that with the disinterest in my classmates' eyes when my teacher brought up Gov School, the indifference performing arts kids face at some schools, and the challenge of finding classmates who share niche or unconventional interests, Gov School is practically paradise for me, and many others.



Applying to this program was one of the best decisions I've made. I think I was more motivated these four weeks than the entire school year, and the people I met will stay in my memory forever. During my stay at Gov School, I only have one major complaint; that the program only lasts four weeks. ◀▶

THINK OF LUKE: PHANTOM OF THE OPERA (THINK OF ME)



Rebecca Clark, vocal music student

