

Summer 2024



St. Bernadette

Editor's Note

No Editor's Note in this Issue

Poetry

Spotify By Tane Kim

I.

It wouldn't have been a thing if people didn't need
to drown out the sound of their own
breath.

Please, tell me how I may
turn my life into a playlist of sunkissed
tracks, let it thump as I
become lost in the
grayness
of this dusty subway
pole juxtaposed with R&B blankness.

II.

There is a man on this train who is singing
gospel. He has his boy shaking a cup,
violent.

The boy is forcing eye contact with everyone
standing. A woman inserts her airpod
into her ear. Imagine she is bleeding out
apathy on glassy white pavement, so she needs
music like sirens to mask the red.
Imagine
her blood trickling down concrete
avenues as she closes her eyes, lies still, lets it thump.

Tane is a poet from Irvington, New York whose mission is to spread the art of writing to those around him. As the editor-in-chief of The Incandescent Review and The Stirling Review, he believes in the power of creative expression to spark genuine happiness in those who practice it. His work has been recognized by The Poetry Society, Scholastic Art and Writing, The National Poetry Quarterly, and The New York Times.

Awful Growing Up By Klaryssa Dunwoody

I want a peanut butter
And jelly sandwich
Shaped like a dinosaur
With the crusts cut off.
Instead, I'm eating

A salad with tomatoes.
This awful growing up.
I used to take baths
With duckies and cups,
The towel was so big
It engulfed me like a blanket.
Now I take a quick shower
And fall into bed, exhausted.
This awful growing up.
I want to sit on
My dad's lap
And watch cartoons.
But cartoons turned
To dramas and comedy.
This awful growing up.
My mother used to hum
And rub my back
To help me fall asleep.
Now I lay awake every night,
Overthinking anything
I can manage to think of.
This awful growing up.

I want to play princess
And catch frogs with my brother.
But I'm stuck in a classroom
Learning things I won't remember
In twenty years.
This awful growing up.
I don't remember the last time
I was tucked in,
Mac n cheese no longer counts
As a meal,
And my future begins
In eighteen months.
This

Awful

Growing

Up.

Klaryssa loves reading, writing, painting, and music. She plans to pursue a career in law but continue writing on the side. She would like to eventually publish her own novel.

67 in a 45 zone By Abigail Griffin

Marie's car rolls over railroad tracks like
pit bulls slobber, gnash nails between their teeth.

Her vinyl seat clings to my sweat-slick thighs,
press fresh and scald my bright lower back—

Florida turns her ebony dash white-hot
We scream down Emerson at 1:47pm

to get pomegranate pucker-up refreshers
that make our fingers stick together. She wails

Ice Spice lyrics until her voice breaks
into citrine whines and a rose gold rasp.

It's time to roll the windows down, now, bitch.
Humidity roars in through the sunroof,

to lift our baby hair closer to the sky
and caramelize our green apple skin.

I grab for the handle hanging above the open air,
clutch so tight my knuckles turn familiar white.

We blow through the stop sign before the bridge.

I shriek: a hubba bubba bubble popping,
oozing slimy from my chapped mouth—

The gaping maw of the St Johns River
blurs past me in a kaleidoscope of

crashing symbol waves and oily torn edges.
Pop pumps through her speakers and

Marie laughs: *hand me my sunglasses,*
crispy, mangled plastic frying smokey on the dash.

I relax my death grip on the handle
to snatch them up—she laughs harder as I

bop-bop-bop them, hand-to-hand, hot potato,
before she takes pity and leans across my body,

knobby elbows digging into my brittle ribs,
nothing but knees on her daisy steering wheel

as she scoops them into vanilla coconut palms;
her cheeks are a gentle perch, breeze cool.

The Camaro whips in front at warp speed.
Seatbelt digs into fragile neck folds, bruising,

her hands struggle for the wheel,
lay on the horn so hard it maracas my bones.

Rie! Please slow down- I can't-
She slams on the brakes.

She slams on the brakes for me
so the metal groans and I lurch forward

into her hand splayed across my stomach, ready.
My chest heaves in her palm, breath wheezing,

gasping, melting into hiccup laughter
that she echoes, louder, until it mixes together

into a two-part harmony monster and
I can't tell where my skin ends and hers begins.

Abbey Griffin (she/her) is a writer in Northeast Florida currently attending Douglas Anderson School of the Arts. She is super excited to be attending Sarah Lawrence College in New York this fall. What the Living Do by Marie Howe is the book that sparked her love for poetry, and inspired her to devote her life to writing. Her poems have been published in Elan Literary Magazine two years in a row. She loves duck stuffed animals, and hopes that everyone finds their own unique understanding and love of the arts.

mourning is a long morning By Zhao Yushan

mourning is a long morning
of everything glazed over silence.
breath smoother than water,
thoughts slower than prayer.

longing is an empty room with no ceiling,
whole shape faded over into
one name.

Zhao Yushan is a penultimate year Literature and Sociology double-major at the National University of Singapore. After reading one of her poems during her literature class, she was approached by fellow aspiring writers to form a little creative writing circle, with whom she shares words, whims, and waffles. She loves trees, cats, words, music, admiring large bodies of water, being hopelessly cheesy, and the short story collection “The Bus Driver Who Wanted to be God” by Israeli writer Etgar Keret.

First Language Non-Fluency Syndrome By Ayanna Uppal

What do you call a first language you don't write in?

Abandoned. Derelict. A lover in the form of a seashell swept offshore.

I am telling you I do not spit rhymes as much as I take control of

An immigrant narrative like no one else. I don't know anyone as hungry for
A brown girl's desire as a white man behind an editor's desk. I don't know
How to imagine him, other than with a pen in his front pocket &
Yet another brown girl love poem stuck between his teeth — extolling Manasi Garg
As though making himself mythic through cultural osmosis
Tenders him into a more important being. I don't know anyone as hungry
As white men in poetry that click their tongue at each stumbled
Vowel at a slam poetry reading, only to slide a slam poetry brochure
Beneath their desks, and call it: "Opportunity, but easier."
A white man behind an editor's desk would not know opportunity
If it didn't slide across his desk each week, embroidered each time with an exotic name
Of a girl whose phone calls back home are peppered with
Colloquialisms so heavy, she can no longer set down anywhere but atop
His desk. A white man doesn't know opportunity because he bathes in it
Everyday, as he bathes in the words of every brown girl poet that
Crosses his desk. Desperate, desperate, desperate; his approval
Is all the cultural reclamation she needs.

Ayanna Uppal (she/her) is a Punjabi poet and a junior at Germantown Friends School. From Philadelphia, she is a graduate of UVA Young Writers and Kenyon Young Writers Workshop. She is a co-president of her school's poetry club and, in her spare time, enjoys translating and reading Punjabi works.

two friends and I got haircuts on thursday By Caitlin Cruser

we sat in the chairs
capes on our shoulders
looking older than we ever have

my stylist
robyn
sprays down my flyaways
with a bottle of conditioner and water

she smells like cigarettes and rain
I close my eyes and she parts my hair
“my last day is sunday,”
she says

she will go to the next town over
to cut hair for 11.75
plus tips

“what are we doing today?”

she asks

in 5 months I'll graduate

ceili will transfer

and cole will go back to south hills

but today

we are doing long layers

the scissors float around my head

and clipped hairs fall on my face

behind me

cole has taken off his glasses

there's an indent on either side of his nose

ceili's stylist is holding her hair

to simulate curtain bangs

our eyes meet in the mirror

and she nods

when we are done
we pay
and leave big tips

we are both young
and old

both rich
and poor

we are alive
and we are friends
and we have new haircuts

Winner of the Gerald Stern poetry prize and the Joan Didion nonfiction award, Caitlin Cruser lives and writes in Western Pennsylvania.

Today, she is not Iskitimka By Sarah Yang

After the discoloration of the Russian Iskitimka River – January 11th, 2024

I once wrote about rivers of blood.

I didn't think they'd be real.

When I walked along her bank today, she
wept to me silently and

whispered: *when will it end?*

I touch her shaking hand and the world

stops for a moment. The snowflakes

turn into shards of glass

momentarily, reflecting the flashing

cameras and unblinking eyes.

Then it moves on; fickle and unbending.

God is apparently real.

And he is unfortunately angry.

Beetroot red poison dissolves into

flesh and eats away at the thread-like delicacy.

She asks me why she sees
so many
reflections of her crimson pain, but no
promise of a tomorrow. This
is what we make of a permanent scar
on delicate, porcelain skin.

Once, she had tattoos of ducks:
their necks curved like the unshapely form
of her graceful descent. Below
the surface, she held life more fragile
than I could imagine.

Today, she is not Iskitimka.

She is discolored/a memory/polluted/dis-
turbing/a mystery/poisonous/
She is naked, smearing her intricate duck tattoos
with a bloodied palm.

But, she is not Iskitimka.

She is wounding; crane feathers soaked
With scarlet tar; a velvet scarf that strangles me;
liquid toxicity held in vials smashing on the
white floor.

She is not Iskitimka.

Sarah (she/her) is an eighteen-year-old poet who is completing her senior year of high school. She is an alumni of Yale Young Writers and Kenyon Young Writers Workshops. Sarah enjoys soft sunsets on the ocean and baking cinnamon rolls.

Apricity By Janice Lee

Apricity: The warmth of the sun in winter.

A touch so delicate,
almost indiscernible in presence.

Apricity's soft breaths bloom of
incandescence.

Playful mischief of the breeze unveils
her wide, gauzy strokes
as gray-tinted translucence
bleeds an amber hoax.

Through tenderly clasped wings,
blight dissipates out of sight.
Remnant trails of radiance set
the bleak world alight.

But foreign echos howl across the distance
as gusts and gales blow in their native tongue.
Her warm caress rescinds;
whispers remain unsung.

Beneath the familiar comfort of a
cumulonimbus cloud,
she retreats into bleak shadows
concealed by a wispy shroud.

The path of Apricity in
intrinsic simplicity
commands no less
than pure eccentricity.

Janice Lee is a poet from Southern California. In her free time, you can find her playing tennis or spending time with friends and family.

my mother's breath By Leissa Romulus

how she has shared it with me for all of my existence
I used to think when she sighed in exasperation
I inhaled her frustration, and blew it out as stubbornness
for her to repurpose and the cycle would continue when we were apart

I thought about all places she breathed, wondered
if her happiness or concern could reach me
maybe all breath trickled into the atmosphere

the same way all water pooled into oceans,
and every breeze was a wave intermingled with human emotion

I hoped my mother's breath traveled far
so I could know about all the places she sighed in secret
because of some burden she refused to share,
I could comfort her the way she desperately
needed by simply exhaling

I used to lay my head on her rising and falling stomach
to feel the warmth of her, hear her blood churning, her heart pumping
when I remember those moments, I feel fear,
like sitting under a tree on a silent, sunny day,
breathing in what their leaves exhaled apathetically

I now take into consideration how the plants process
all our carbon dioxide, they refine our jagged sentiments
in their own cycle only incidentally related to ours

the world will continue to breathe without humans,
without my mother and me and our anger and love colliding
when we're apart nothing is connecting or comforting us

we have nothing but our thoughts and the hurt we inflicted
throbbing like fresh bruises.

Leïssa Romulus was born in Haiti and immigrated to the U.S. at six years old. She is a senior at Emerson College studying Writing, Literature and Publishing, a poetry editor for *The Emerson Review*, and an aspiring poet.

Warmth in Winter By Louise Kim

the snow has stopped; frost begins
to thaw. just in time—we bite
into a kouign-amann and call it home.
the glory is in the crunch, the soft light
buttery sweetness, richness folded
in layers. moments are fleeting and
this is one. light unravels as the day ages—
walking home, light footfall, heavy rain.
has our feast warmed the weather too?
i watch the sun set as i reach my door.
i, content, satisfied beyond my means

of description. language unravels beyond
our tongues, but sweetness transcends.
loving hands come together to build a home.

Louise Kim is an undergraduate student at Harvard University. Their Pushcart Prize- and Best of the Net-nominated writing has been published in a number of publications, including Frontier Poetry, Chautauqua Journal, and Panoply Zine. Her debut poetry collection, Wonder is the Word, was published in May 2023. You can find them on Instagram at @loukim0107.

Chalkboard Blossoms By Leah Wu

i draw flowers on chalkboards
during math class,
but I can't get them perfect.
petals bent out of shape, shaky stems,

i guess my tears have never been
the best for watering.
slowly my flowers become wilted
– at the end I snap
and scribble them all out.
just disaster persists.

through dusty journals i learn
that my grandfather had a garden
in the mountains, full of
chrysanthemums and orange trees.
he spun perfume out of orchids
and gave the bottles to his children.
my mother's has been lost to customs,
but i still smell the hope
kept safe in his breast pocket
and the tea he brewed faintly
on her clothes.

someday when i'm old
and wrinkled, i'll sink to my
knees in the mud and dig

with my hands, fingertips raw,
and my childhood tears will blossom
into chrysanthemums and oranges
and perfect flowers with
perfectly-shaped petals and
perfectly-straight stems.
my own garden to bottle up.

will it all be worth it, in the end?

Leah Wu is a high school student in Chicago who has most notably won a National Silver Medal in the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards. When not writing poetry, you can find her playing the tenor saxophone or spending time with friends

oran gaoil iteach By Eartha Davis

Now, my love wakes
to a christening of
birds // his feathers
flutter face-
like // nurse

the dawn's
receding // if I
hold him, yes,
the world
foams // bloats
under mountain
breath, snow
stubble // worships
the gentle glimpsing
of a human's
face // what is
waking? // a chapel
of unborn // cotton eyelids
warming themselves,
seeding, a breathing
ache // & little bodies
unwrapping
lightbeds – all that
tendering, all those hands
within
hands, *dreaming* ...

Eartha wishes to live simply, kindly, and most certainly by a river. Her work is published or forthcoming in Wildness, Rabbit, Minarets, Frozen Sea, South Florida Poetry Journal, JMWW, LEON Literary Review, Arboreal Magazine, ELJ Editions, Boats Against the Current, the Basilisk Tree, the Stirling Review, Where the Meadows Reside, Eucalyptus Lit, Uppagus, Discretionary Love, Sour Cherry Magazine, Revolute, & Eunoia Review, among others. She is a poetry editor at three journals and dreams of birds.

Perhaps If The Traffic Light Doesn't Change Neither Will We By Haynes Melchior

Red light.

we're stopped at the intersection
of Past and Future.

time is frozen for a moment –
our lives hang suspended in a
fragile balance under a
wash of crimson light.

raindrops refract the carousel
of headlights whizzing past,
making them look like blinking
strands of Christmas lights.

music dances faintly out of the radio
and our linked hands rest
on the center console between us.
I want to capture this moment
preserve it in a jar, like an ant
perpetually suspended in
a teardrop of amber.
tuck it into a corner of the world
where time will never tarnish it.
please don't change
please don't forget me
please don't let go
Green light

Haynes is a writer and editor for her high school's literary magazine. Her work has been published by the Florida chapter of *Poetry Out Loud Gets Original*.

Today's theory

or rather, hypothesis:

one's trajectory changes
completely every 1095 days.

Evidence:

2190 days ago,

I stepped foot upon this foreign

home. 1095 days ago,

you materialized in my life's script,

your radiance disrupting my procedural
existence. Today,

we passed by, mere silhouettes

not a word more than "Excuse

me." Variables:

How many cycles of 1095 days compose one's

youth? Where will we be, after the next 1095

days?

~~do you still think about me too~~

Yufei (the word itself depicting the poetic imagery of rainfall in Chinese) is a high school student and aspiring writer living in northern California. She relishes in weaving her daytime reveries and nighttime fantasies into the assuaging tapestry of literature. When away from the pen, you can find her playing Studio Ghibli music on the flute, exploring local mountainous trails, or watching a captivating courtroom drama.

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Because I've been blasting that Sabrina Carpenter song By Sally Young

I'm espresso

As the romantics say

In the way that I energize & entertain

Add some cream and you'll be set

I'll be sweet

It'll be brief

But, as I've learned,

I'm espresso also

In the way that too much of me

Makes you jittery

A punch in the gut before I leave

No, I know you'll hightail it

At the tail end of your high

After a bit of steam

And the hope of being held—

it gets to be enough, too much

And then I put you to sleep

Sally Young is an emerging poet studying Creative Writing at Dartmouth College. She has previously published a poetry collection titled *Light Through the blinds*, and hopes to keep refining her craft to better the world.

Fiction

No Fiction Stories in this Issue

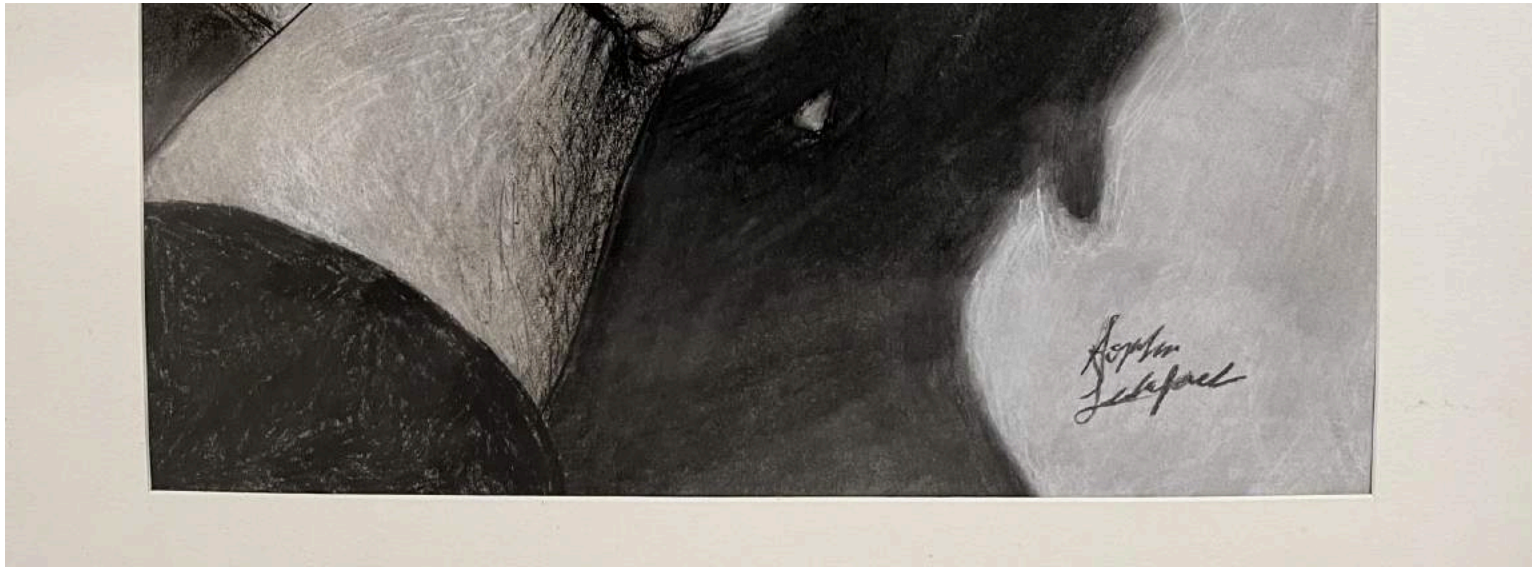
Nonfiction

No Non-Fiction Stories in this Issue

Art

The Performer By Sophia Lekeufack





The Performer

Sophia Lekeufack is a first-generation high school junior based in the Washington DC Metropolitan Area. She has been published in Roi Fainéant Literary Press as well as recognized by the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards. Through the mediums of poetry and prose, Sophia amplifies not only her stories but the stories of those who came before her. If she is not lying in her bed reading a Patti Smith memoir, you can find her at the local Thai restaurant devouring some drunken noodles.

St. Bernadette By Rana Roosevelt



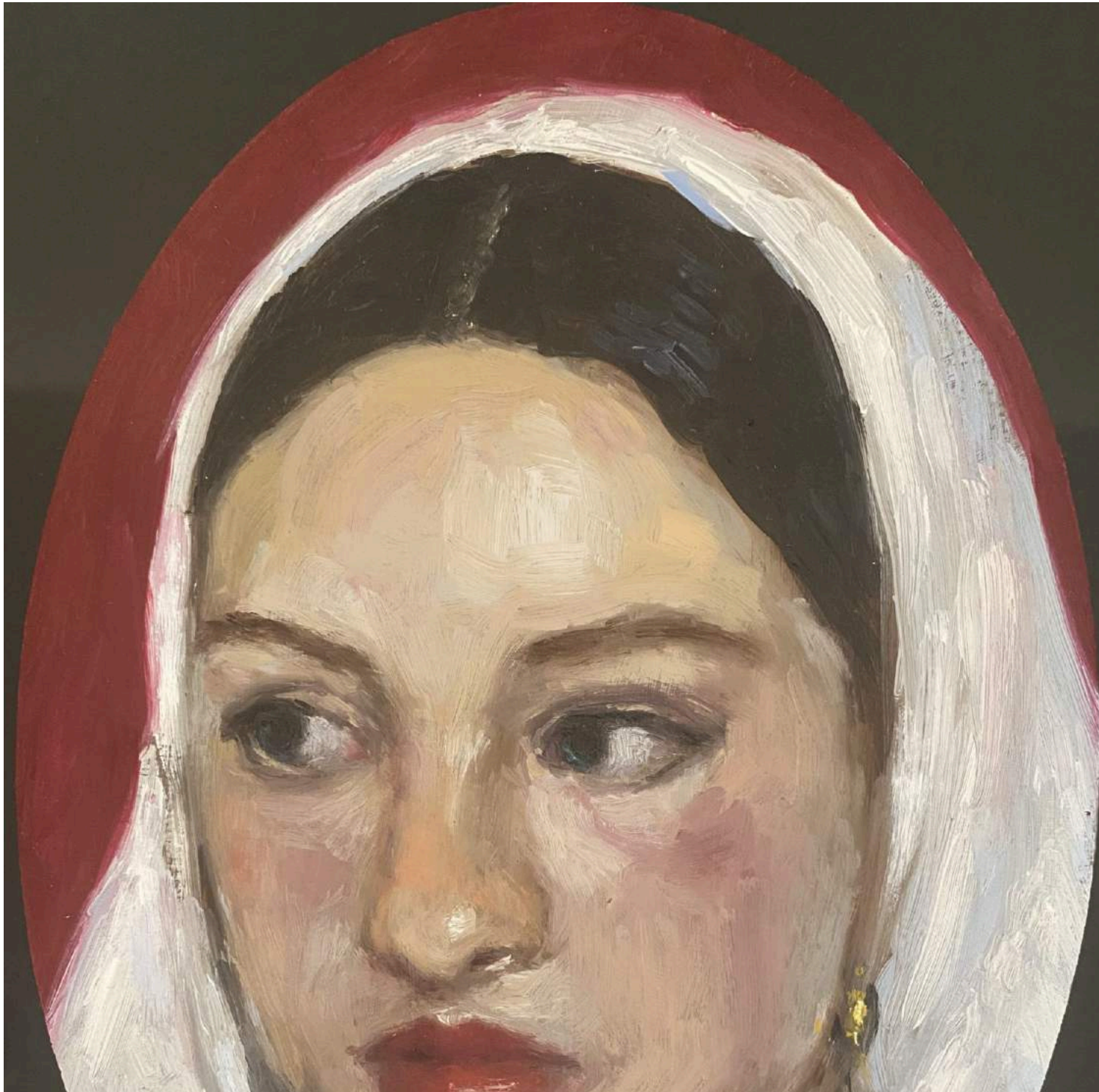
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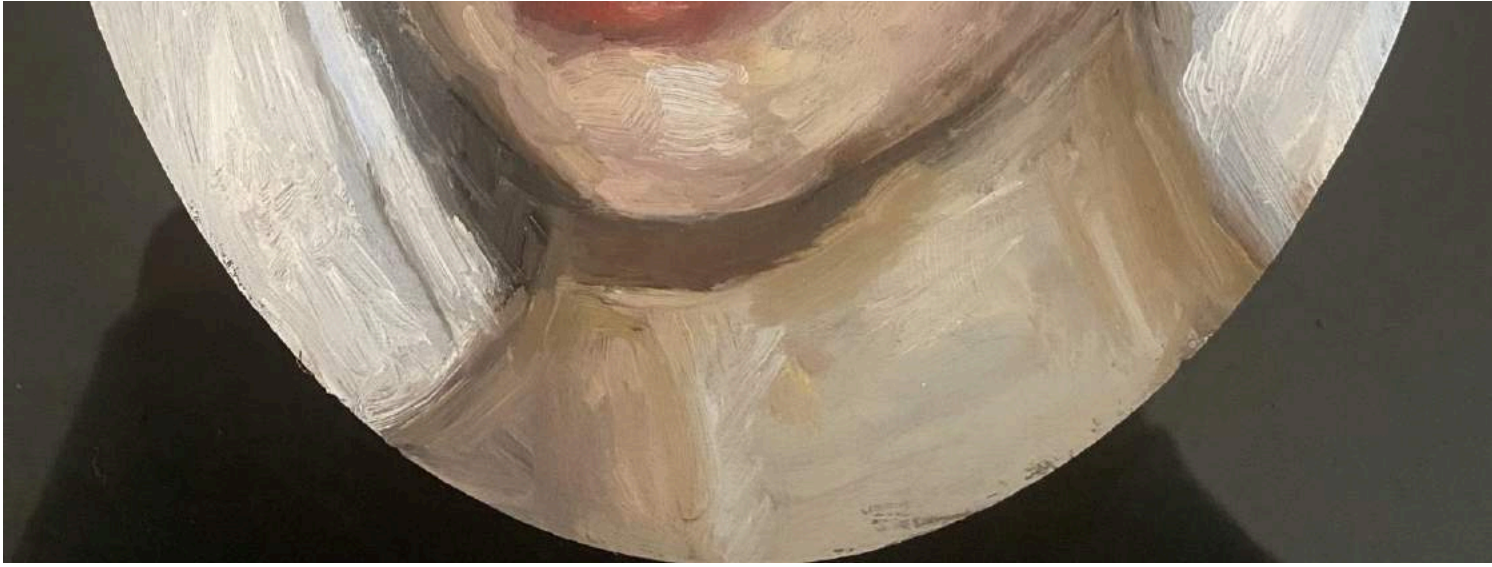
You must shelter your flower to help it
grow eventually developing a bud and
blooming when the plant dies.
The leaves die and the whole body
will shrivel releasing the center
of the flower seeds to
grow a new
flower.
provide your flower
with lots of shelter
a wall for
support.

St. Bernadette

Rana Roosevelt is a digital and traditional artist in Philadelphia. She is a rising senior, and hopes to continue creating pieces in college.

Innocence, Food for Show By Michelle Chen







Food for Show

Michelle is a high school student from the West Coast who wants to make art with a variety of mediums. In her free time she enjoys painting, urban hiking, and watching Netflix.

Village Life By Nikita Juneja



Village Life

Nikita Juneja, a sophomore from India, has a deep passion for artistic expression. She holds a diploma in visual arts from the National Institute of Fine Arts and has participated in several competitions and exhibitions, showcasing her talent and dedication to her craft.

(Not) Quite Human By Emerson Chang





Not Quite Human

Emerson Chang is a high school sophomore from Palo Alto, California. She works with traditional as well as digital art mediums. Her goal as an artist is to transcend cultural and temporal barriers by creating art that resonates with individuals at a highly personal level.

Book Review

No Book Reviews in this Issue.
