

# INKLINCS



Volume X - 2024-2025





By: Levi Van Asten ('27)

**To have two too much**

By: Alan Mora ('26)

Ever since I was little,  
I've had two, too much.

My two parents,  
and my two houses,  
both separated,  
both different.

My two siblings,  
and my two guides,  
both older,  
both different.

My two schools,  
and my two beginnings,  
both fun,  
both different.

My two lives,  
and my two languages,  
both known,  
both different.

But just one me,  
only I am.  
Can't find the key,  
nor one path.

Always wondering what to do,  
always wondering what to choose.

Ever since I was little,  
I've had two, too much.



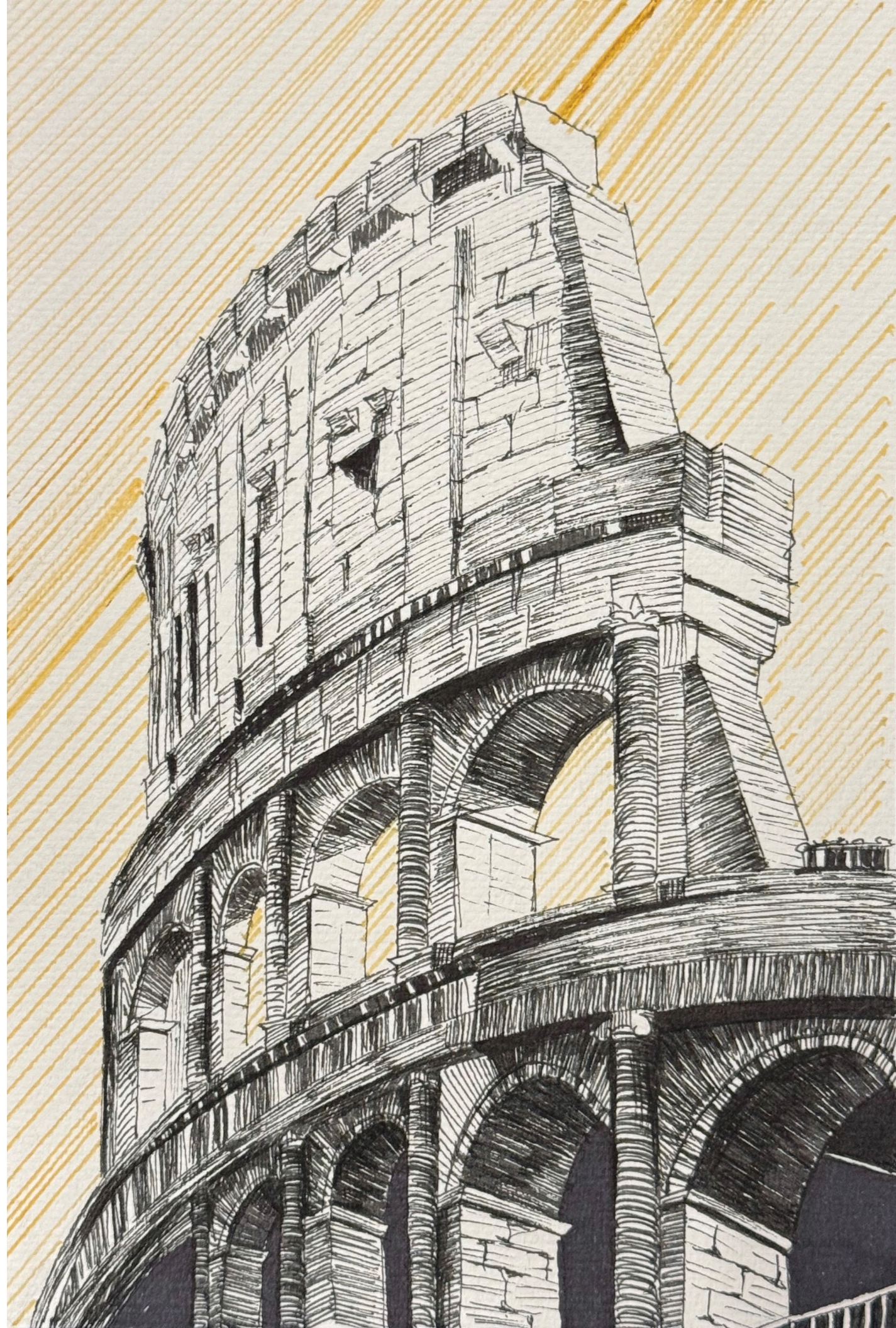


***Disappointment***  
By: Lawrence Gonzalez ('25)



***Stoicism***  
By: Bik Hmung ('26)

***Legendary Mark***  
By: Tony Nguyen ('25)





# Fragments of a Man

By: Tony Le (‘25)

For many international students, there's a shared fear—one that haunts us quietly: the thought of losing a loved one, yet being unable to do anything about it, especially not being there to say goodbye. Ironically, last Sunday, my grandpa’s brother passed away, and I found myself in that very situation—unable to attend his funeral. Now that both he and my grandpa are gone, the only elder left in the Le family is my grandpa's sister. I’m hoping to spend some time with her before it’s too late. As I reflect on the people who were close to him, I find my curiosity about their emotions. I also ask myself how my dad would have felt—after all, the last time I saw him shed a tear was at his own father’s funeral. It was five years ago.

Family and friends gathered around my grandpa’s bed, whispering prayers or simply staring down at him in stillness. As a teenager, I couldn’t stand the atmosphere in that room—it was heavy, suffocating, and uncomfortable in ways I couldn’t explain. *I know grandpa is dying. Why are we treating him like this in his final hours? Why are we all just staring at him, like some exotic animal in a zoo, instead of talking to him?* Asphyxiated with everything, I stepped out of the room. That’s when I found my dad, in a corner, his eyes fixed on grandpa. The old man was immobile, his pale, skinny stomach rising and falling with each short breath—the only sign to indicate that he was still alive. My dad’s gaze was different. There was something in his eyes that I still can’t quite understand to this day. I went to bed early that day because I didn’t want to be in

that room any more, to see someone dying in real life is so much different than video games; it’s not cool at all.

I woke up due to the noises downstairs. Walking down, I saw grandpa, paler than yesterday; he was so pale that I could see every single vein in his hands, face and everywhere that his skin showed. Grandpa was dead, yet he looked more comfortable in the cloth wrapped around him compared to yesterday, struggling to even breathe. I was thinking what if he just wakes up like a miracle, just maybe if one of his eyes opens and he will recognize his favorite grandson right by his side. But it never happened, cancer doesn't go away; it just came and took everything from him, from us. People were crying inside, outside the room where grandpa's body lay. Despite how noisy it was, grandpa was unbothered, enjoying his eternal sleep.

The house was a revolving door, with people coming and going at all hours—some to visit, some to say their final goodbyes to Grandpa, others simply checking on us before they, too, disappeared back into their lives. After three long days, the burial finally arrived. The men of the family gathered, their hands trembling as they lifted the heavy wooden coffin together. It was a work of craftsmanship, polished and grand, with a golden cross emblazoned on its lid, my grandfather’s name etched beneath it like a final, sacred signature.

Slowly and carefully, they placed his body—wrapped in a pure, white blanket that seemed almost too bright for this moment—into the coffin. The room fell into an ocean of tears, each one a reminder that this was the last time we’d see his face. The weight of the loss felt like it could swallow the world. Despite the sorrow, I found myself frozen, unsure how to react to everything.



By: Justin Tran (‘25)



By: Levi Van Asten (‘27)

In the midst of confusion, I searched for my father. I found him in the crowd—his face was a mixture of grief, anger, and something else—helping to carry Grandpa toward the chapel, where his final Mass awaited.

We carried Grandpa’s body to the chapel for the last Mass, a request he had made in his final days. I’m not the most devout Catholic, like my father or some others, and often, the long stretches of Mass feel like an eternity. But that day, time slipped by unnoticed. The service was two hours long, yet it passed like twenty minutes. The air was filled with grief and sadness, as people came forward, one by one, to say their final goodbyes to Grandpa.

When the priest dismissed us, a heavy silence fell. We all knew what was coming—Grandpa would be laid to rest in a grave, ten feet deep, swallowed by the earth. The darkness down there, the dirt, the unseen things waiting to consume him...Oh, Grandpa, your body will return to dust, but I know your soul will rise to Jesus. You lived a life that created a legacy, one that reaches through time and space to this moment, to these words I write now, reminding myself—and others—of the man you were.

During the burial, I was looking for my dad,

and when I found him, I saw his true emotion for the first time. While the women, children, and his brothers were crying out loud, saying their goodbyes to Grandpa’s coffin, Dad stood there with a faint smile, his eyes filled with hot tears that slowly trailed down his cheeks. In that moment, I understood why he was smiling, despite everything. He was relieved—relieved that Grandpa, after years of suffering from lung cancer, was finally free from the pain. His journey had ended, and a new one had begun. Seeing my dad so vulnerable broke me into pieces. I had never seen him like this before, and even after the funeral, I struggled to find any words to speak to him. I was trying to eradicate that image from my head.

Even now I still feel embarrassed to recall that day, that image of my dad crying. It's not because it is bad for him to cry because he’s a man or anything like that. I just felt embarrassed and regretted all the moments that I showed him my anger, not knowing all the burden he had carried. His dad was dying, company struggling during Covid-19, and problems that he had to deal with, and I was being a little brat. I hope that I can be useful to him, be by his side as much as possible, until death parts us.





***Demure***

By: Tony Nguyen ('25)

***Hopes of Reality***

By: Patrick Tran ('27)

**What If?**

By: Sebastian Montemayor ('25)

The earth may shake, the oceans rise,  
the stars might flicker from our eyes.  
What if tomorrow's just a dream,  
A fragile thread that starts to stream?

What if the winds refuse to blow,  
And every sunset starts to slow?  
What if the hands of time unwind,  
Leaving us frozen, lost, and confined?

I tremble at the thought of night,  
Where shadows stretch beyond our sight.  
The world, it spins, but where's the end?  
Will we survive, or just descend?

A whisper deep inside my soul,  
Is this the end, or just a toll?  
A fear that grips, and won't release,  
A world undone, a final peace.

But maybe in the chaos found,  
A truth will rise above the ground,  
That even when the end is near,  
We'll stand together, face our fear.







By: Levi Van Asten ('27)

By: Levi Van Asten ('27)







By: Immanuel Xaviour ('26)

# The Consequences of Love

By: Edgar Regalado ('25)

A big heart isn't always a safe heart.

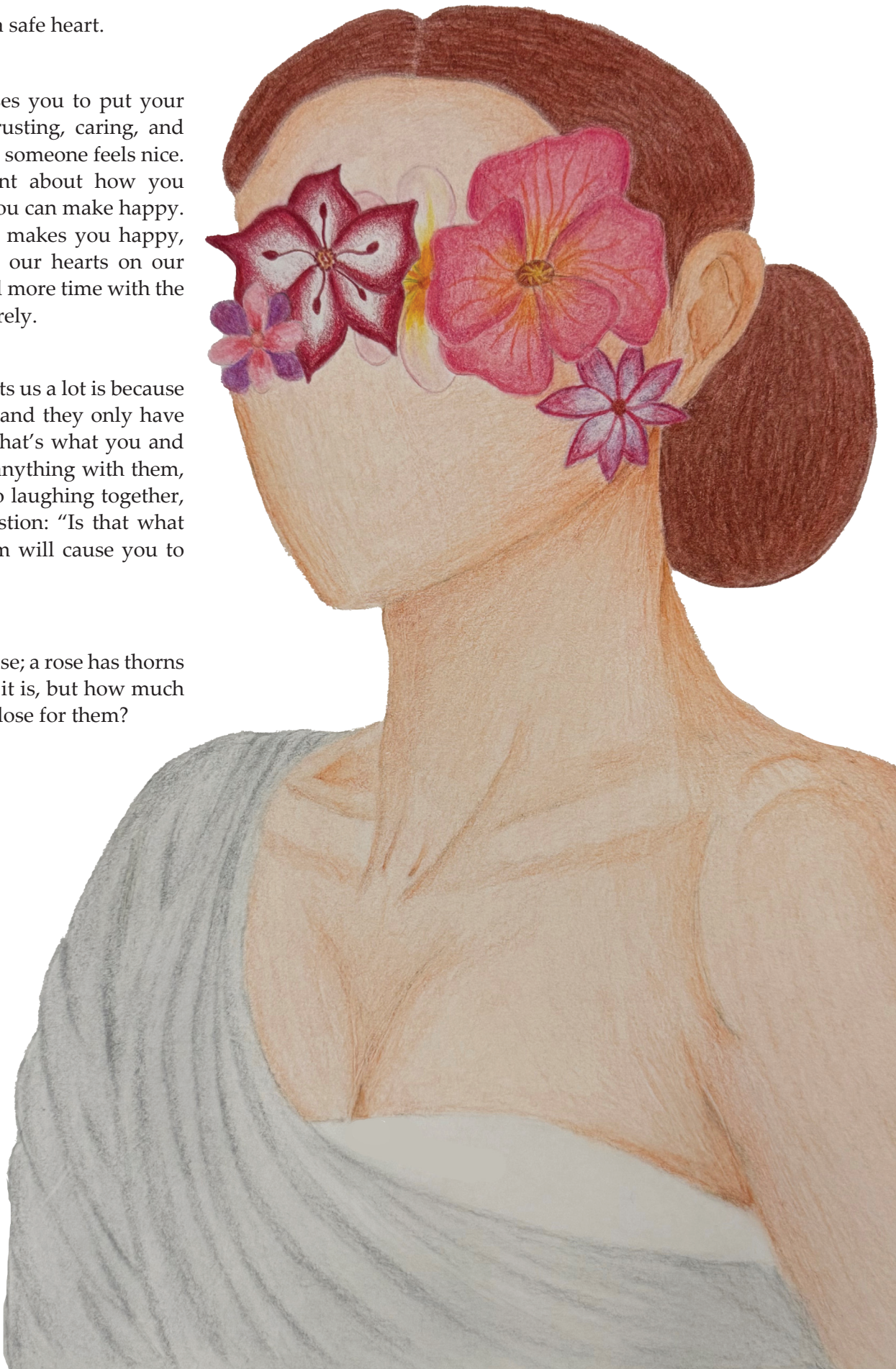
Having a big heart causes you to put your feelings on anybody. Trusting, caring, and spending your time with someone feels nice. You think for a moment about how you found that person that you can make happy. Seeing them happy also makes you happy, but sadly, since we put our hearts on our sleeves, we tend to spend more time with the people who hurt us severely.

The main reason this hurts us a lot is because most of the time you, I, and they only have a conversation because that's what you and I want. You want to do anything with them, from walking together to laughing together, so ask yourself this question: "Is that what they want?" Losing them will cause you to hurt greatly.

To you that person is a rose; a rose has thorns no matter how beautiful it is, but how much blood are you willing to lose for them?

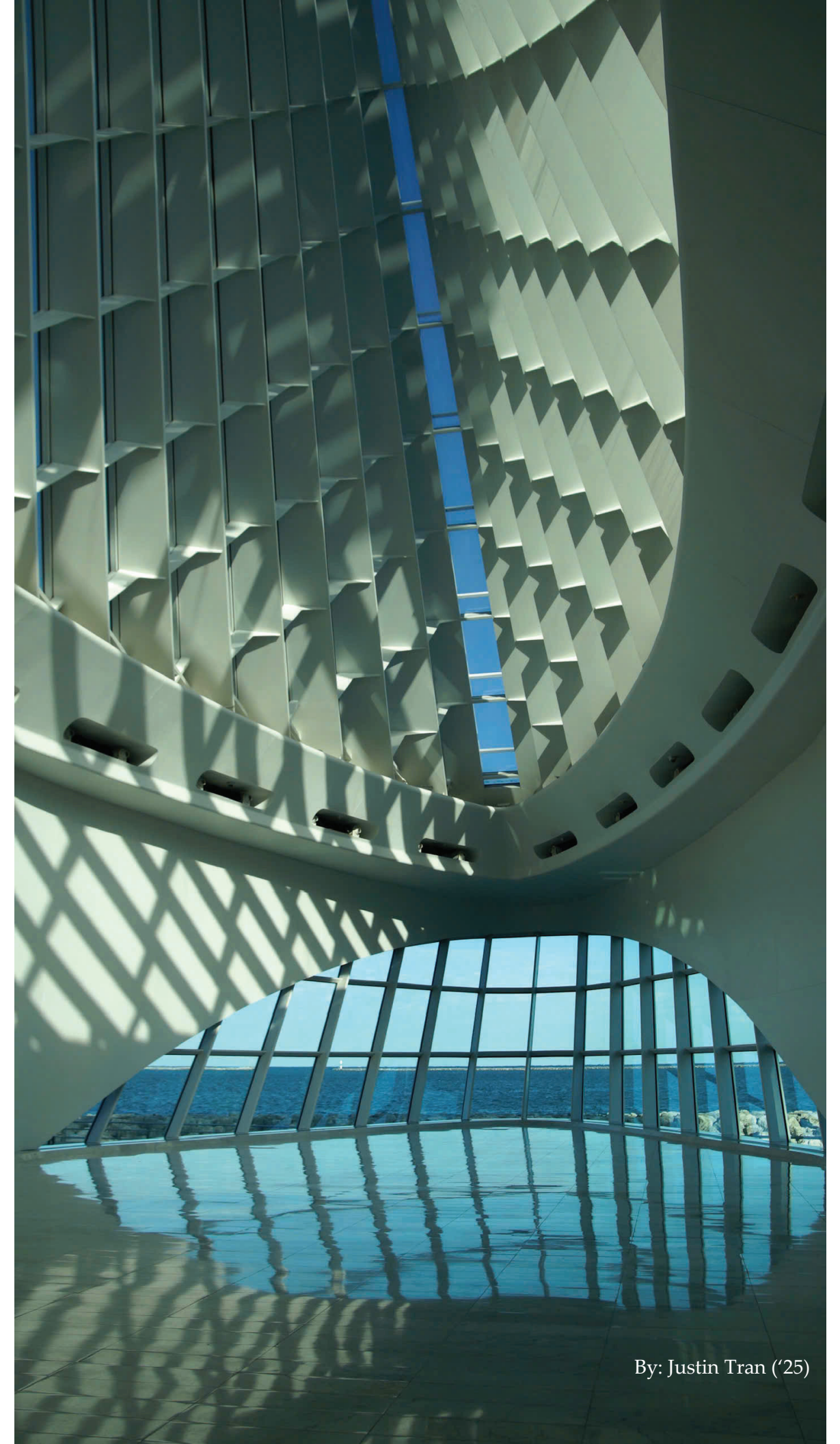
## Silent Beauty

By: Justin Tran ('25)





By: Jonah Lim ('26)



By: Justin Tran ('25)





By: Levi Van Asten ('27)

## **Snap!**

By: Thienhanh Mai ('25)

*Snap!* In an instant, a breath of life has just been put into your small, infant body.  
*Snap!* Your parents take photos of your first steps and funny moments.  
*Snap!* You begin to pick up the language and mannerisms of your parents and teachers.  
*Snap!* The quick and unforgettable sound of your parents scolding you.  
*Snap!* Put them in a rhythmic pattern, and you're with your date at the middle school dance.  
*Snap!* Mark your calendars: GRADUATION DAY!  
*Snap!* All of your years of school are over, and it's time for you to get a job.  
*Snap!* Now people are taking photos with you because of your great accomplishments.  
*Snap!* You've started a family, and you see the remnants of yourself in your children.  
*Snap!* You notice your bones slowly breaking down as the unforgiving demon of age takes over.  
*Snap!* All of a sudden you get into a life-threatening accident.

*Snap!*  
And like that, it's over.  
Life goes by as quick as a snap,  
and every day, you wish each of those snaps could last a little longer.

## **Jazz**

By: Mark Tran ('26)





## Writing Exercise #1 (De Gustibus Non Est Disputandum)\*

By: Max Trinh ('25)

Something is awry  
In the Commune d' Versailles  
Though I can't tell with full confidence  
Because I, myself, don't know why

The English language is a fascinating find  
But it messes with your head and plays with your mind  
How it goes and it flows and sometimes doesn't even rhyme  
Therefore, I don't assent; no, not eye  
Aye, eye  
The witness of history and fall of pompous Troy  
All just the deception of optics - trompe-l'œil

I travel the world through hills and tunnels  
Circumnavigate the globe on my sailing vessel  
One man watch of the forecastle and the gunwale  
Against the waves, the storm, and the wind, I wrestle

Call me not a captain, for I have no crew  
Call me not a colonel, for I lead no corps  
No army, no coup, not a single debut  
But I've accompanied the viscount and tended to his sword

In the blistering heat of the evening  
I've seen soldiers solder their weapons  
I've seen my fellow workers suffer from ague  
Albeit inadvertently esoteric, can be understood by a few

Thus commence the segue to my denouement  
Rejoice! Satisfy yourself with victuals and  
Terpsichorean footwork to playful fiddles

From the vineyard, quinoa and fresh açai  
Waiting for my rendezvous at the quay  
To set the anchor and roll up the topsail

I've traveled the world  
From Bangkok to Bali, from Worcestershire to Paris  
I've seen the bourgeois and macabre vehemence  
Behind the façade, where society is full of faux pas

As I enjoy the decked halls of holly boughs  
I attend the festimony, a portmanteau  
To aver a draught of a dossier  
And a coup de grâce to the one who preys

\* About taste, there can be no disputation

By: Justin Tran ('25)







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Front Cover Artwork: *Tear* by Justin Tran ('25)

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