

Editor's Note



Scratch Magazine is the literary and fine arts magazine made by Champlain students for the Champlain community. Inside you will find, dear readers, artwork and texts created by students and submitted to us.

A special thank you to all artists and writers, we are honoured to publish your wonderful work. A very special thank you to Lee Ann Sévigny who submitted so many awesome pieces, we had trouble choosing which ones to put in and where to put them in the magazine.

I would like to thank every person who participated at some point or another in the promotion and publication of this magazine throughout the year.

Finally, the Scratch Magazine team wouldn't be complete without the amazing Elvina Mae Chern Koay and Isabelle Johnston who coached us into creating the magazine, we thank you very much.

Have a nice reading, dear reader!

Sarah Lavoie
Editor-in-chief

Your Scratch Magazine

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All the wonderful featured artists in this magazine,

And **you!**



Frank Bacon
Senior Editor

Thanks for reading our magazine and participating in Champlain College's cultural life.



Thierry Larose
Senior Editor

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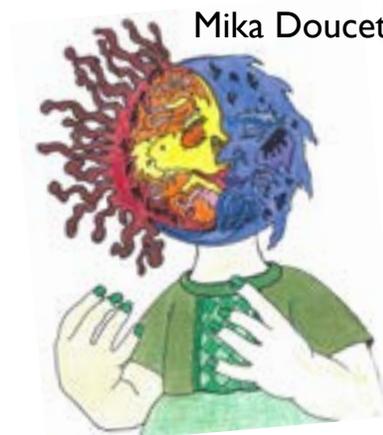
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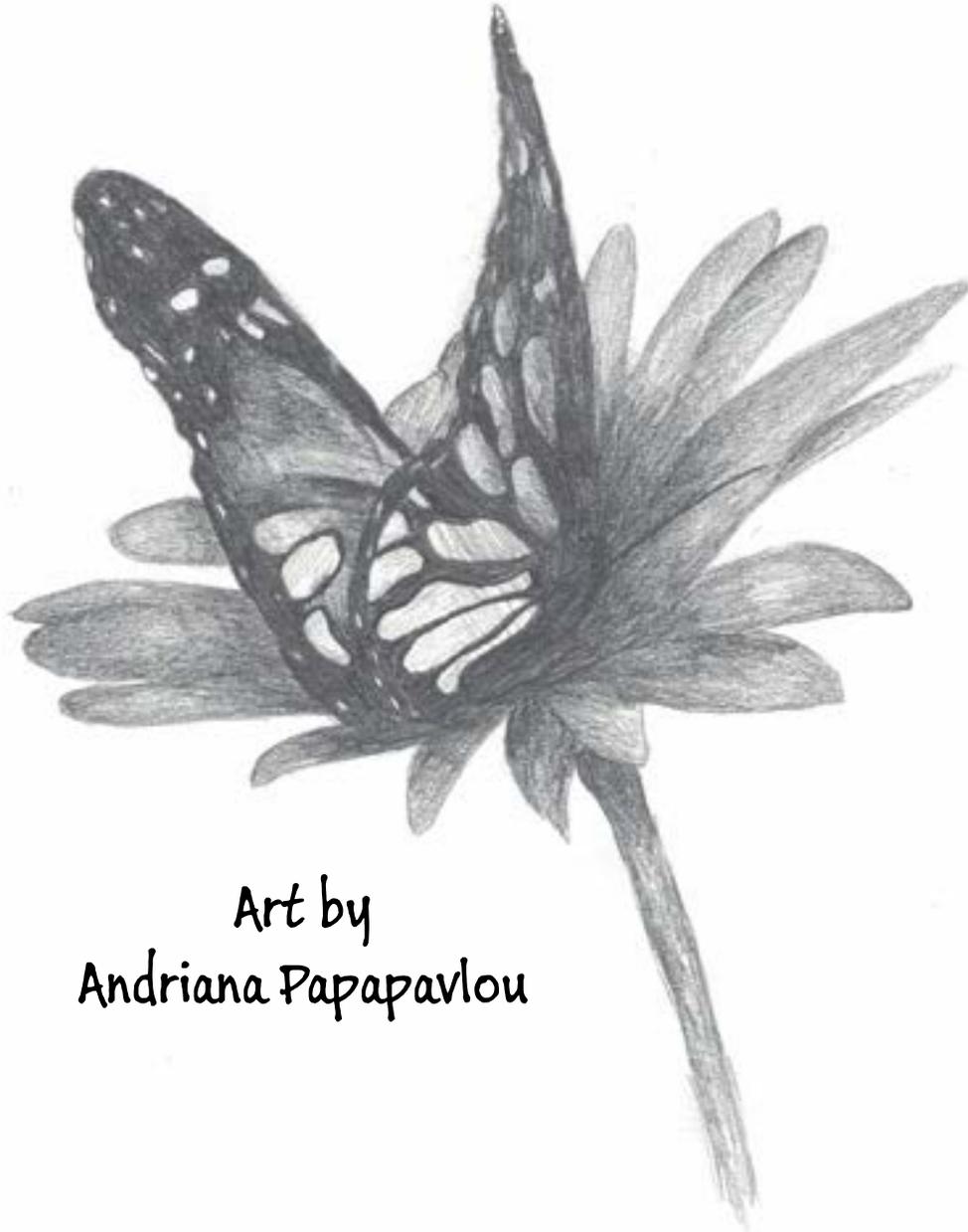
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Art by
Andriana Papapavlou

Winner of the 1st-Year Essay prize: Editing the Truth

by Jacqueline Lumley

Have you ever accepted a Facebook request from an unknown contact? Have you ever wondered why? Maybe it was because you desired attention that you were being deprived of. Like most human beings, the developing young adult has many needs and one of the major ones is the need for attention as well as validation. With the development of social media networks such as Facebook, young adults receive the attention and validation they crave through the creation of online profiles, but these online profiles are not always a positive element in young people's lives. The dishonesty in social media can have a negative impact on young people because it facilitates self-deception, misrepresentation and stalking.

To begin, the dishonesty associated with the facilitation of self-deception in social media allows people to exaggerate the truth about themselves on their profiles in an attempt to promote the 'perfect' them. As Gross (2012) noted in his article Survey: 1 in 4 users lie on Facebook, "about one out of every four Facebook users lies on their profile." Imagine that! Twenty-five percent of the friends a person has on Facebook are lying to them at this very moment. It becomes a major issue because one is unable to determine whether or not the user sitting behind the screen is telling the truth or not. How do you know who the 25% are? How can you tell if what they are saying is true? Are you within that 25%? Social media such as Facebook allows its users to alter their identities for personal validation. It is not uncommon for one to think that every post they are reading is true, but the reality of it is that it's not. It is quite easy to exaggerate the truth or alter situations online because there really are not any rules contradicting

this issue. Many young people today face the issue with the need for validation to boost self-esteem and using social media is one way in which these people are able to achieve this. Kross et al. (2013) stated in the article Facebook Use Predicts Declines in Subjective Well-Being in Young Adults that, "the more lonely people felt at one time point, the more people used Facebook over time" (p. 104). This supports the claim that Facebook is used as a method of validation to boost the self-worth of its users. The negative issue with using Facebook to boost self esteem is the dishonesty that goes along with it. Users are no longer loyal and true to who they are in reality. Their online profiles no longer reflect the truth. Users thrive to be noticed and will even go to the point whereby they write posts that stretch the truth to give off a better impression to their online friends or post digitally altered or edited pictures to make themselves seem more appealing. Rebecca Greenfield who writes for The Atlantic pointed out in Gross's (2012) article on CNN.com that, "one can almost be a totally different human on Facebook than in real life." Users are able to alter identities to present the image they want others to have of them. Every Facebook user has probably altered a post at least once in their lifetime to enhance other people's views and or opinions about them and probably at the time thought nothing of it. The issue with altering these posts is that in today's society many people have become accustomed to altering their posts and are no longer afraid to be dishonest online. They will do just about anything to get the validation they crave and it is due to this personal need for validation that the issue of self deception is brought about.

Furthermore, social media can have a negative impact on young people because it promotes misrepresentation. If users are able to adjust and edit their own personal posts, this means that companies and businesses can do it as well. Advertisements are present everywhere on social media and they often influence ones opinions and thoughts about certain products or facts in life. Companies who use advertisements to exploit false and dishonest messages have a negative impact on users' lives because they are exploiting a false view of a certain subject. Greenwald (2010) author of Limiting Democracy:

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The American Media's WorldView, and Ours suggests that "there is a certain set of information, a set of sources to which we are subjected or which we seek out, that provides us with information about the world and shapes our political world view" (p.827). This is to say that media present on social media directly affects a users overall opinion and stance on a variety of subjects. This is a negative aspect because many of the advertisements present in social media have been distorted in some way or formed to promote a specific view and many young users are unaware of this. Daum (2014) states in his article for Inc. magazine that, "these days, you can't stop aggressive promoters and marketers from stretching the truth. They border on misrepresentation when doing battle with competitors." It becomes difficult to tell the difference between what is true and what companies want users to believe is true. Users are subjected to false advertisements that influence their daily lives and promote false information that they themselves are unaware of.

Finally, the dishonesty within social media can have a negative impact on young people because it enables stalking situations to occur. Young adults are sometimes oblivious to the fact that what seems to be a "friendly Facebook request" is really a request for their permission to stalk. The dishonesty comes from the fact that there are fake Facebook profiles out there that have been created simply for the purpose of stalking individuals. Chaulk and Jones (2011) state that "users, therefore, face a number of threats due to the vast amount of personal information that can be accessed through such a profile" (p.245). This is to say that one may think that clicking that accept friendship button is a harmless gesture, but in reality it gives the stalker access to personal updated information such as birthdays, legal names and current locations. Many Facebook users have 'crept' upon someone's wall at least once in their lives so what would make them think that other people haven't done the same to them? When accepting the friend request from an unknown user who does not appear harmful on their profile, young adults can be oblivious to the fact that the person whom they have accepted a friendship with, may not be who they say they are. Chaulk and Jones (2011) explored the issue

of stalking in their experiment and came up with the claim that "Facebook facilitates behaviours that are indicative of obsessive relational intrusion and that such behaviours have implications for users' privacy and security"(p.245). Facebook makes people feel like they are safe behind a screen and creates false impressions of people due to the fact that it is easy to create a fake profile online. One may think that the young 18-year-old jock who just added them is a harmless young adult, but for all they know he could very well be a 40-year-old pedophile who has created a fake account to stalk potential victims.

As one can see, all issues presented in this essay relate back to one specific issue: the issue with the dishonesty present in social media. When young users abuse or are exposed to the abuse of the truth online it can have a negative impact on their lives because it facilitates self-deception, misrepresentation and stalking. What a user is exposed to online is not always real or true and the more society allows social media users to stretch the truth, the harder it will become for future generations to be able to filter out the dishonesty they are presented with.

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Alice's Secret



by Lee Ann Sévigny



The Battle of Camlann Sunrise

by an anonymous author

As the sun rose over the horizon, Sir Lucan began his preparations for the meeting that would take place later in the day. Looking into the distance he could see the fires of Sir Mordred's camp situated only a few miles away. He was able to distinguish that many fires burned in the opposing camp, and from that he roughly estimated that about fifty thousand men would be present for the meeting. That amount far outnumbered the men supporting King Arthur.

Since Sir Lucan was the first to rise this morning he promptly started waking and preparing his men for the possibility of the ambush that could occur during today's meeting. They swiftly and skillfully began gathering and preparing the items they would need; the food for the day was arranged, the horses untied and weapons were readied.

Once Sir Lucan had concluded directing the men under his command he joined King Arthur and his fellow Knights of the Round Table. The group proceeded to discuss battle plans and the measures they would take in the event the upcoming meeting did indeed take a turn for the worse. Most importantly, no man was permitted to draw his sword unless one of Sir Mordred's knights had already made a move to do so. The orders were subsequently passed down through the chain of command from King Arthur to his closest knights, and finally to all the knights under each individual commander in King Arthur's army. After briefing his men Sir Lucan returned to his tent in order to write what could very well be his last letter to his family, and to dress in his suit of recently polished armor.

When the time came to leave Sir Lucan sheathed his razor-sharp sword and attached his helmet to his horse. He would be ready if the need for a battle arose. Then, he tied his green girdle to his waist in order to honor Sir Gawain, grabbed his battle-worn shield, hopped on his stallion and headed off to meet his men. He gave some final words of encouragement to his men prior to leaving, ranks were then formed, and subsequently King Arthur's army began its march to the meeting at the midpoint of the plains. King Arthur led his army with his fourteen best knights immediately behind him. Sir Mordred proceeded in a likewise manner on the other side of the battlefield. Upon meeting halfway the leaders proceeded to discuss their issues and tried to settle their dispute while sharing a drink of wine together.

Meanwhile, Sir Lucan scanned the distance for any signs of an ambush, and while doing so he caught sight of the glint of a slashing sword. Suddenly all hell broke loose! Sir Lucan barely had time to grab his helmet before arrows rained down around him from both sides of the battlefield, killing hundreds of men. As Sir Lucan quickly jumped on his horse and began to rally and push forward with his men, both armies began the charge toward one another. Bodies were already littering the ground by the time Sir Lucan was able to get his first taste of combat that day, taking out some swordsmen with his spear while on horseback. In any case, King Arthur's army seemed to have the advantage even though they were outnumbered. Clearly their knights were more experienced and well-disciplined, not to mention better armed.

While on his charge back to aid King Arthur, Sir Lucan's horse was killed in a hail of arrows, causing him to flip over the stallion and land among a group of Sir Mordred's men. With great skill Sir Lucan was able to defend himself and gain the upper hand over the enemy knights even after such a disorienting situation. Tens of thousands of men had already fallen by this point in the battle and Sir Lucan couldn't believe the actual scale of destruction that had ensued as a result of the clash that had started so quickly.

Finally, Sir Lucan managed to return to King Arthur, but only after striking down a dozen foes that attempted to defeat him on the way. By this point, only six of King Arthur's best knights still remained alive, and all were being outnumbered in their fights with the rival knights. Sir Lucan joined them in protecting King Arthur, and as night approached he counted upwards of two hundred men who had fallen before his sword that day.

By the time Sir Lucan's adrenaline had worn off there were only four men standing on the battlefield; King Arthur, Sir Bedivere, Sir Mordred, and himself, all of whom were exhausted and gravely injured. As Sir Mordred attempted to remain standing by supporting himself on his sword, Sir Lucan and Sir Bedivere tried to tend to the worst of their wounds. King Arthur, who was covered in blood, was still enraged and full of adrenaline, and demanded Sir Lucan to fetch his spear, as he wanted to finish this once and for all. Reluctantly, Sir Lucan handed King Arthur the spear as requested, while at the same time trying to discourage the King from his intended goal. He somehow sensed that providing King Arthur with the sword was a choice that he would probably come to regret. Sir Lucan watched as King Arthur charged towards Sir Mordred, spear raised to waist height, he drove it through the body of his rival. However, before falling, Sir Mordred brought down his sword upon King Arthur's head, and without any other noise or movement on the battlefield except the sword cutting through the steel helmet, the King of Camelot fell to earth in a heap of armor and flesh.

In shock, Sir Lucan and Sir Bedivere both disregarded their serious injuries and ran towards their cherished King. Without a word they carried his body to a nearby chapel, where Sir Lucan, covered in blood, set down the body and fell to the ground himself from his severe wounds and exhaustion.

"Goodbye my brother" Sir Lucan whispered to Sir Bedivere, seconds before slipping into the eternal darkness...

Artist's Statement:

I wanted to go more in depth for the final battle that takes place on the Plain of Camlann as I felt the book did not give enough description for an event that had such a major impact on the full kingdom. I feel that seeing the battle from the eyes of Sir Lucan (one of the last knights left standing) gives us a better picture of what the battle would have been like instead of simply describing the results of the two armies of knights meeting for an enormous conflict. Since I find medieval battles to be very interesting I wanted to try and capture this feeling in a short story, giving a point-of-view from one of the knights who participated in such a bloody battle.



Within Your Grasp
by Frank Bacon



Art by
Amelia
Digaletos

Winner of the 2nd-Year Essay prize:
Analysis of the Definition
of Dysfunction and
Normality
in Irvine Welsh's "The
Glass"

by Holly Fedida

Over the years, countless films have been made and books written about drug addiction and the culture it creates, but none have been as wildly successful as *Trainspotting*. What started out as a novel by Irvine Welsh and was then adapted into a feature film by Danny Boyle captivated a generation of viewers and became a cult classic. Published in 1993, the book, and, more precisely, the episode within it called "The Glass," provides readers with an insight into the definition of dysfunction and normalcy in Renton's world.

Indeed, in their drug-ruled worldview, dysfunction is normalcy. This episode of the novel illustrates the fact in many ways: It exposes the dysfunctions of the people that surround Renton as well as those he has himself, it shows how their sense of normalcy is shaped by their social and economic class, and it explains how impossible it is to escape from the dysfunctional society.

Initially, the episode "The Glass" exposes the dysfunctions of the characters. Throughout the text, we slowly discover the problems and issues that everyone is facing, but they are exposed in an offhand and casual manner, so as to seem almost normal and routine. Renton hardly sees them as abnormal dysfunctions, only that they're all "fuck ups together"

(Welsh 77). Indeed, Hazel, who was raped by her father, is unable to seek help or even talk about her issues with sex. As stated in the text, "rather than get it sorted out, she denies it" and pretends that nothing is wrong (Welsh 76). Although Renton realizes the dysfunctional nature of this behavior, he explains that "she is as fucked up as me" and everyone in his social circle is flawed, so it would be abnormal not to be (Welsh 76). In point of fact, Begbie is described as have many problems, including being unpredictable and violent, and Renton himself is hardly a functioning member of society (Welsh 75). The entire group of friends he hangs out with is dysfunctional and Renton admits this. Being "fuck-ups" is his main way of describing himself and his friends and he uses the phrase repeatedly in "The Glass." The last sentence of the episode is the perfect example: Renton describes them after the event in the bar as "a quartet of fucked-up people together" (Welsh 84). This dysfunction plays a major part in who they are and, in some ways, is the only thing they know. It is considered "normal" because it is so prevalent that it has simply become a fact of life.

In addition, it is hardly surprising that Renton and his friends consider dysfunction to be normal if you look at the social and economic situations that surround them. Indeed, the class and conditions of their background shape people in many ways. The story is set in the late 1980s in Scotland in a lower middle-class area (Welsh 78). As Renton says in his rant about Scotland, they are the "lowest of the fuckin low, the scum of the earth" (Welsh 78). Horrible stories, such as Begbie's brother getting stabbed, Hazel getting raped by her father as a young girl and Julie being harassed until she dies from HIV, are seen as unpleasant but not unsurprising or rare events (Welsh 76-82). Being exposed to situations like this so frequently is enough to harden anyone and it is no wonder that dysfunction has morphed into normality for Renton and his friends. With such miserable and unpleasant cultural conditions and upbringings, how could one not become dysfunctional? Ironically, ending up dysfunctional after growing up in those kind of situations is probably the most normal reaction to have. Additionally, it is not only their economic and cultural context that have shaped

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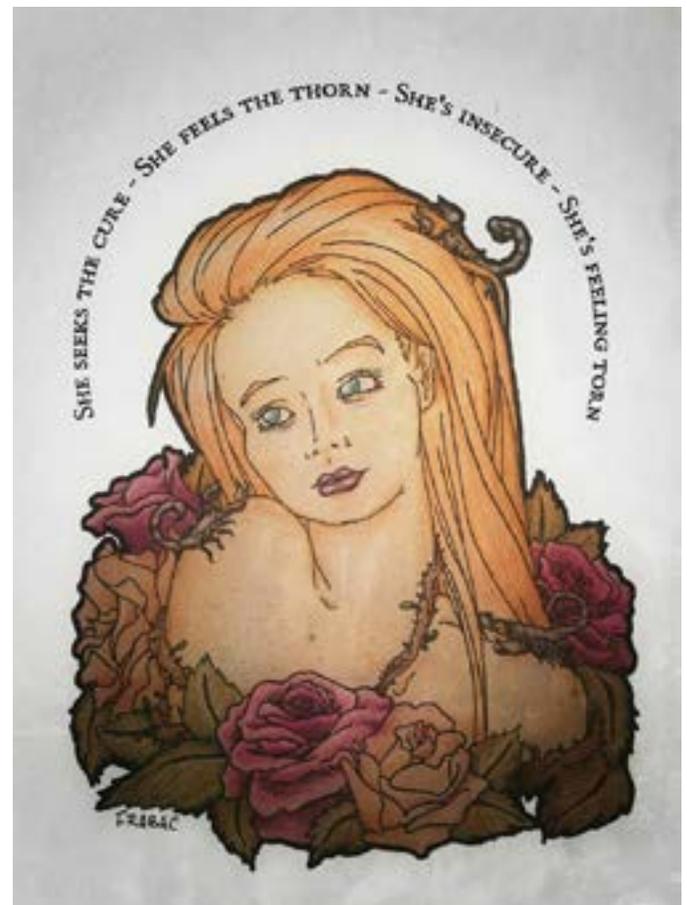
them, but also their social communities and friends. Renton and the people he hangs out with keep the dysfunctional cycle going by justifying the others' behavior and lying. As he explains with Begbie, "It wis easy tae lie, as we all did wi Begbie in our circle" and, furthermore, "[W]e played a big part in making him what he was" (Welsh 82). Indeed, the idea that mates must always stick together and cover for each other only furthers the toxic ideas that they have internalized from their backgrounds. This behavior doesn't solely concern Begbie either; it applies to all of the members of the group. Because it is how they grew up, they stick with what they know and just manage to further their dysfunctions. Indeed, their lower middle-class upbringing has shaped them into believing that their dysfunctional behavior is normal.

Finally, in some parts of the text, Renton seems to be aware of just how dysfunctional his friends and the society that has produced them are. However, through an anecdote about his schooling, he shows the helplessness of everyone stuck in his situation. There is no way to escape since the society itself is so dysfunctional. In the case of this particular narrative, Begbie is this literal personification of the dysfunctional way of life. When Renton tells the story of his schooling, right from the start (in primary school), he is placed next to Begbie and it is the same thing in high school (Welsh 83). It is significant that he was placed next to Begbie as of his first day of school. It shows how Begbie represents the societal conditions that Renton has grown up in and that have a major effect on who he is and what he considers as normal. During secondary school, Renton worked harder at school "tae git away fae Begbie" only to meet him again in technical college (Welsh 83). Renton tries to distance himself from Begbie and from the dysfunctional society, but he has grown up with him and it seems that everywhere he turns, even through education, only leads him backwards. At one point in the past, Renton just resigned himself to that kind of life and started to accept this dysfunction as "normal" and the only way to go on. Renton's episode with school and Begbie really shows how hard it is to escape and to change when the entire society and community in which you have grown up is teaching you that their dysfunction is a normal way of life.

In conclusion, in Renton's drug-addicted world, dysfunction is considered normal and to be expected. As we can see from many instances in the text, everyone that surrounds him is dysfunctional. The social and economical environment that has shaped him is built out of dysfunctional behavior. And furthermore, there is no real way for him to distance himself from his upbringing and his friends and escape the dysfunctional life that has been planned out for him. Taking into consideration all these factors, it would be interesting to see if Renton really does manage to turn his life around after he steals the money from his friends and abandons them, or whether he returns to drugs after a couple months.

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Art by Frank Bacon

Free Spirit



by Lee Ann Sévigny

The Day I Realized I Needed to Learn English

by Maria Luisa Vargas Melo

I want to tell the story of how I decided that I needed to learn English and how that decision changed my life forever.

In August 1999, I was 17 years old and I moved to America with my husband leaving behind my country Mexico, without speaking English, and not knowing how it was all there. When I get to the United States I really liked and I wanted to work but as I did not know the language and I was underage could not work, so my husband and I decided to wait until I was 18 years and started to speak a little bit of English a least to understand the basic for finding a job. I did not tell my husband but I was not really interested in learning English, since I remembered when I was going to high school in my country Mexico, I never liked English class, I felt that it was very difficult to learn.

Anyways I stay at home and at that free time most of the days I was watching television in Spanish I didn't liked the television in English at all, on weekends usually we would visit different friends of my husband but they were Chinese or American so they were speaking English all the time, I always felt very uncomfortable, because I could not understand what they were saying, and what they were asking to me, but I always tried to stay in one place alone to not feel bad about not speaking the language.

On or about December 1999, I found out I was pregnant so would stay at home until my baby would born and then we would decide what I must do. It was at one of my appointment for followed up, my pregnancy that I meet my friend Maggie, she was a nice and friendly Spanish girl, she started talked me

about her life and how she was making money having a day care in her house and the most interested point was, that she doesn't had to speak English as all her customer were Hispanic.

That really interested me as I didn't need to learn ingles, and I can work from my house. After my son was born, I did open my daycare at my house and I was taking care him and also taking care other children, I was very happy; I found a way to work with the Government taking care the children, they take away from their parents.

Government was paying me around four to five thousand a month, a lot of money I was very happy and said it to myself "This is what I want to do all my life". I was wrong because after one full year I of being taking care seven children including my son, I was very tired and frustrated because sometimes I didn't even had time to take a shower because the first child came to my house at 6 am and at night I was finished of cleaning around 10 pm.

One of those days I meet my friend Juanita she brought me her son, so that I can take care of him, for a day because she had an appointment at the dentist. At night when she came to pick up her son, we began to talk and she asked me how old I was, I said nineteen `she asked me if I wanted to continue my studies and I said no because I didn't know how to speak English and in addition I have a son, I tell her how I should do it.

She began to tell me about a special school for moms with children, and if I wanted more information she could go look for it. I said no to her, that did not interest me, I'm working fine and did not need to speak English, I earn good money and I'm happy, at the bottom of my heart I find it very interesting but I didn't wanted to accepted in front of her. That same weekend we went to a party and as always everybody were speaking English, everything was going well at the party, when suddenly some girls approached my husband and started to laugh and joke with him, I approached to them and the girls told me something and started to laughing again, I did not know what they were saying to me but the only words I knew

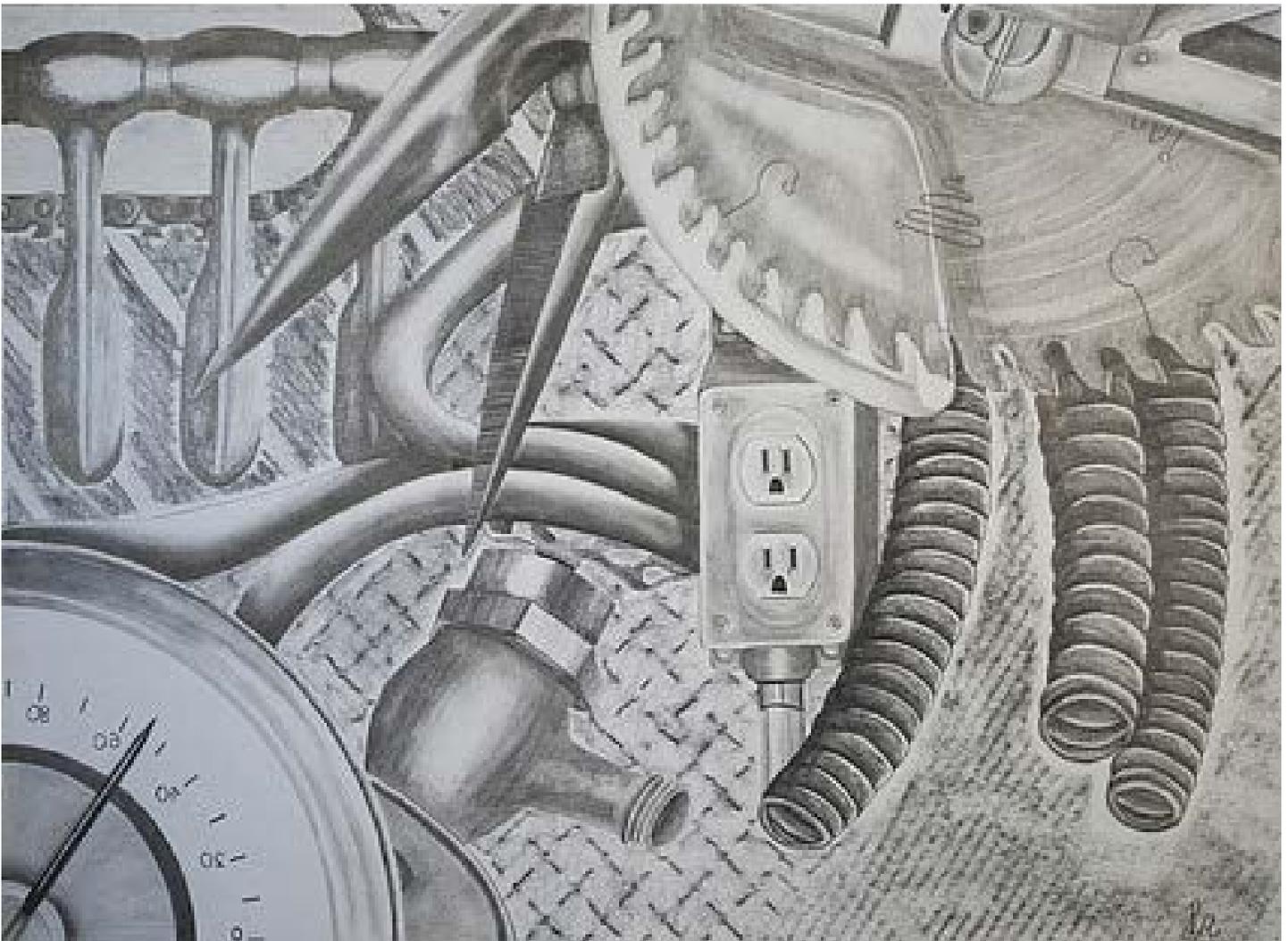
were “yes” and “thank you” what a shame.

It's over I need to learn English, nobody is going to humiliate me this way again, so I'll go to school to learn English. This is the way I did it, I registered in a special high school for mothers with children, were they have day care inside the school and they take care you child while you are in class but at lunch time you have to go pick up your child and take lunch with him at the cafeteria and when mealtime is over you have to change the pampers to your baby and take him back to the nursery you would pick him up at the end of the day. To continue my studies it was not an easy thing to do, because

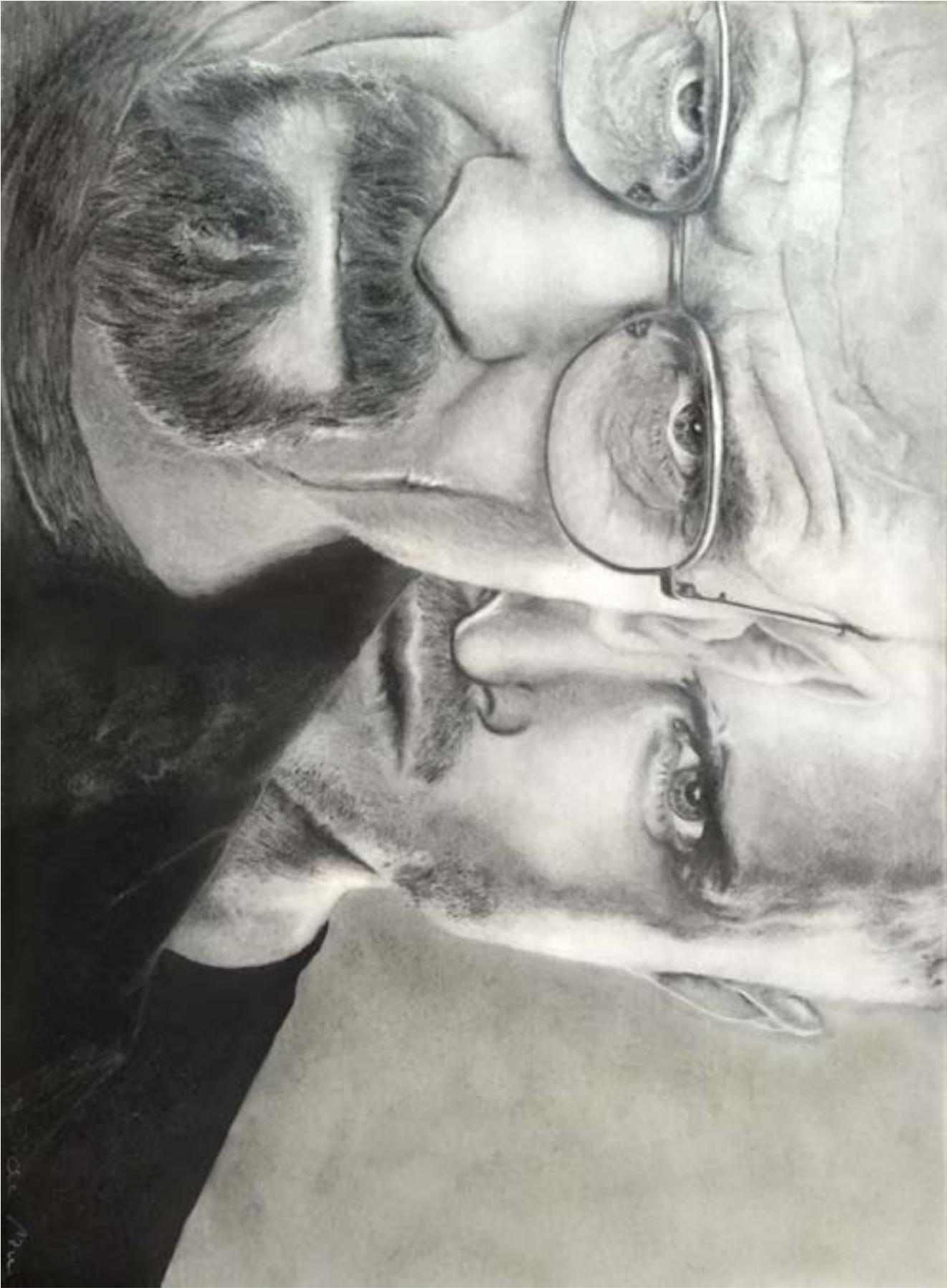
I had my son who was one year old, and I had to take care him, at the same time when I was in school because I didn't have any other choice.

I think it was worth it to have made the decision to return to school, learning has been and always will be one satisfaction for me, I do not regret having done, because until today I continue my studies and learned lots of things that surely will use in my future. For me study is a privilege and I feel very fortunate to have the opportunity to be better, and feel proud of myself and my accomplishments.

À contre-courant



by Lee Ann Sévigny



Art by Nicholas Bui

One Year in the Country of the Samurai

by Eve Dutil

Japan is a land full of mysteries and charm filled with both amazing history and praised pop-culture. I had the chance to discover Japan in a whole new light, by living among its people and experiencing for a year the Japanese lifestyle. Throughout my voyage, I discovered so much more than what I had anticipated from this fascinating country. I got to comprehend a slight part of what it is like to be Japanese and understood how different it can be from living in Canada. I unraveled a culture with its traditions, breathtaking sceneries decorated with history-packed monuments and an intricate yet beautiful language with just as intricate people. This is my short account of one year in the country of the Samurai.

I got to know this country like many others through pop-culture, that is, through manga and anime (Japanese comics). I soon got fascinated by what I was seeing and made up my mind to go to this strange place. I enrolled in a student exchange program of one year and in August 2014, I found myself in the Japanese archipelago. I had no prior experience in the Japanese language than my very quick study in the 14 hours long plane that had taken me there. I was nervous, excited and didn't know what to expect. My first culture shock happened a few hours after getting there. I was exhausted from my long flight and just wanted to take a shower and sleep. I was at the time in Tokyo and was going to sleep there two nights before going to my host family in Nagoya. Many other students from all over the world were there as well in the same conditions as I was. With a very broken English the girl responsible for us explained that we had to go in the public bathrooms to take a shower. Girls and boys each in their own

sides had to take a communal bath together. Many were shocked and even I was a bit destabilized. First night in this strange country we had to get naked and take a bath with a room full of strangers. This made me understand that the most simple thing, like taking a bath, was going to be much different than home. Two days later, I was on a shinkansen, a bullet train, ready to meet the family that would host me in their house for a year.

I met my host family at the train station in Nagoya, there I met my host mother and my host sister. We went together to their home where I was introduced to my new room and the new house rules. I soon got very well along with my host mother, a sweet and gentle lady. She would be the one to help me in this new country, teach me my first lessons of Japanese and guide me through the magnificent Japanese culture. With my host sister, however, came my first struggles. We did not get along very well and it led to many misunderstandings and arguments. Not all could be perfect, but I worked hard and kept my head high to face the difficulties. Aside from those small struggles, I had the most wonderful experience with this family. With them I was introduced to the delicious world of Japanese food. My heart was taken with the tasty foods my host mother made and luckily she though me how to make most of them. For anyone going to a foreign country: keep your mind open and taste everything! My favorite dish was takoyaki, dough balls with octopus inside them served with dry fish flakes and mayonnaise. I most definitely miss traditional Japanese food like miso soup, okonomiyaki or the classic sushi. Having sushi here is just not the same! With my host mother I had the chance to have Kimono classes. A kimono is such a beautiful clothing that represents the traditions of Japan, but the kimono is so complicated to wear that classes are provided. I had a very hard time at first since my Japanese was not yet very good, but I am so grateful to have had this opportunity. My host family was also responsible to help me with school. I went for a year at Tsushima high school, a very strict school where no jewelry, no nail polish or colored hair was allowed. I had a very cute sailor uniform that I had to wear at all times and would go to school by bike and train every morning. With school, I got the chance to

study my Japanese and soon became comfortable to speak it. I even joined a tea ceremony club where I was introduced to matcha (green tea). Once a week, I would prepare and drink this succulent tea with Japanese friends. I made at school some marvelous friends with whom I discovered sushi places and much more.

During my year in Japan, I got the opportunity to travel around and discover many beautiful places. With my school I went to Okinawa where I saw aquariums and the Ryukyu style castle. I visited Kyoto and its gardens and visited Osaka with its historical castle and temples. I went to Hiroshima where the terrible atomic bomb was sent and discovered its traditional dishes and pagodas. I got to see hundreds of deer in Nara where they are sacred. I went to live one week in Nagano and saw one of Japan's oldest castle with impressive Samurai armors and weapons inside of it. I made sure to go to as many places as possible and in each one of them eat their most famous dish and see its most famous buildings. I will never forget the beauty of the Japanese style castles, their uniqueness and all the history they have to teach. I will forever remember the shrines, I have payed respect to by bowing and by clapping my hands to pray to them. These Shinto shrines are a bit everywhere in the archipelago. My exchange year was a once in a lifetime experience I will always remember. A year away from your family teaches you responsibility and confidence. It made me a more open-minded person as well. Anytime would I go back to this amazing country and experience all over again the unique Japanese culture.



Art by Frank Bacon

Inspiration by
Lee Ann Sévigny





Through time
by Lee Ann Sévigny

Art by Mika Doucet



Kalopsia

by Natasha Levesque

Sweet sunshine grabs at me from the sky. It takes the most pleasant parts of my soul and carries them to my mouth where they become a brilliant smile. Golden sky eyes lock with mine. He has concave dots in his cheeks. How I became so enchanted by his charm, I couldn't tell you. But I can say this: He is the reason for the pleasant parts that swallow the darkness in my soul. He is the reason for the brilliance illuminating my face.

The day we met, the trees were heaving with transparent ice. They perched with hunched backs and once strong, branches succumbed to the pressure, cracking and eventually collapsing to the cold ground. Everything was blended into the gray clouds that followed me into the dimly lit bar. I took a seat at the black marble, on a broken stool that sunk below the others.

He eyed me in the shadows from across the bar. I shot a flirtatious smile his way. Without hesitation, like the sneakiest of snakes, he slid into the seat right next to me. He was short, but dark, with hazel eyes that flowed like an icy liquid. As petite as I am, he was just the right height. Though he was short, his figure indicated he possessed great strength. Just what I needed. He shot a smile right back at me. A rush of euphoria washed over me and my cheeks blushed. He knew all the right things to say and something in his smile made me trust him. He was genuine. He took my hand and guided me out of the dimness of the bar and into the dancing warmth.

The ice on the trees glistened in the sunlight, peeking from behind the gray clouds that were slowly vanishing. The ice began to melt under the warmth

of the sun, and the trees felt free. They could move and breathe again as the afternoon sun caressed them soothingly.

Now, his arms wrap me up with warmth and I ask for a kiss. Oh, how sweet his kisses can be. I am always wanting more of them. Always, just one more. As his lips touch mine I can feel the darkness cowering, hiding from the warmth of his touch. I want more, and soon we are in an inferno of kisses; hard and passionate. I feel a sting in my lip, it's sudden. He bit me. He's grabbing at my chest now, like he's attacking my heart. He chokes me. I'm suffocating. I push him away. I tell him to stop, to go away, and he does. But when he leaves, I can feel the darkness begin to seep from the corners of my soul where it sought refuge. In an instant summer has vanished. My toes curl at the cold that slowly creeps up my warm body. I think I'm hallucinating, I'm imagining things. But when I look out the window, the trees are pushed down by the heaviness of ice. Only, it doesn't glisten in the sunlight, rather, it drowns in the grayness of the sky, blending with everything else. I'm aching inside and my body is shivering. A kiss. His kisses always frighten the winter away. They warm my soul and take the most pleasant parts, carrying them up to my mouth where they become a brilliant smile. They're the reason for the brilliance illuminating my face. All I need is one more hit.

One more embrace.

Just one.

I take one more kiss to feel warm again, and just like that, he's back.



Nature's Equilibrium
by Lee Ann Sévigny

Love!

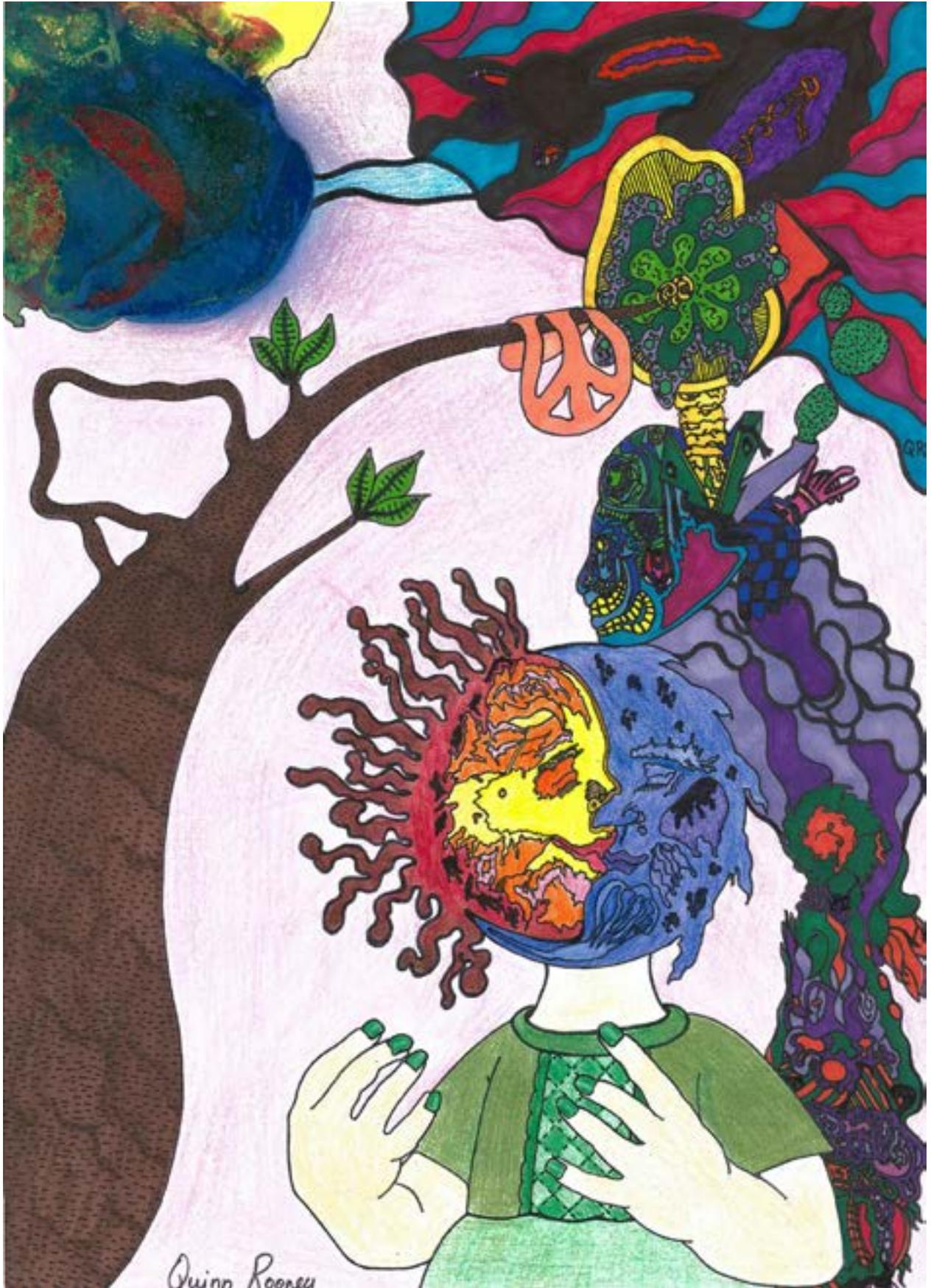
by Ahmad Nazari

We like the world as a friend,
Each day of the life is the storm of pleasure.
Each beginning doesn't have an end,
Living with close friends is our treasure.

Our heart expresses a love and charm!
The sense of humor is a weapon of seduction,
Without love, we have to seat 1000 years without
attention.

The friendship has no harm!

The society can't live without values,
We should keep strong like a statue.
Staying together as the group is the engine of the
progress,
More silence gives less chances to express.



Art by Quinn Rooney