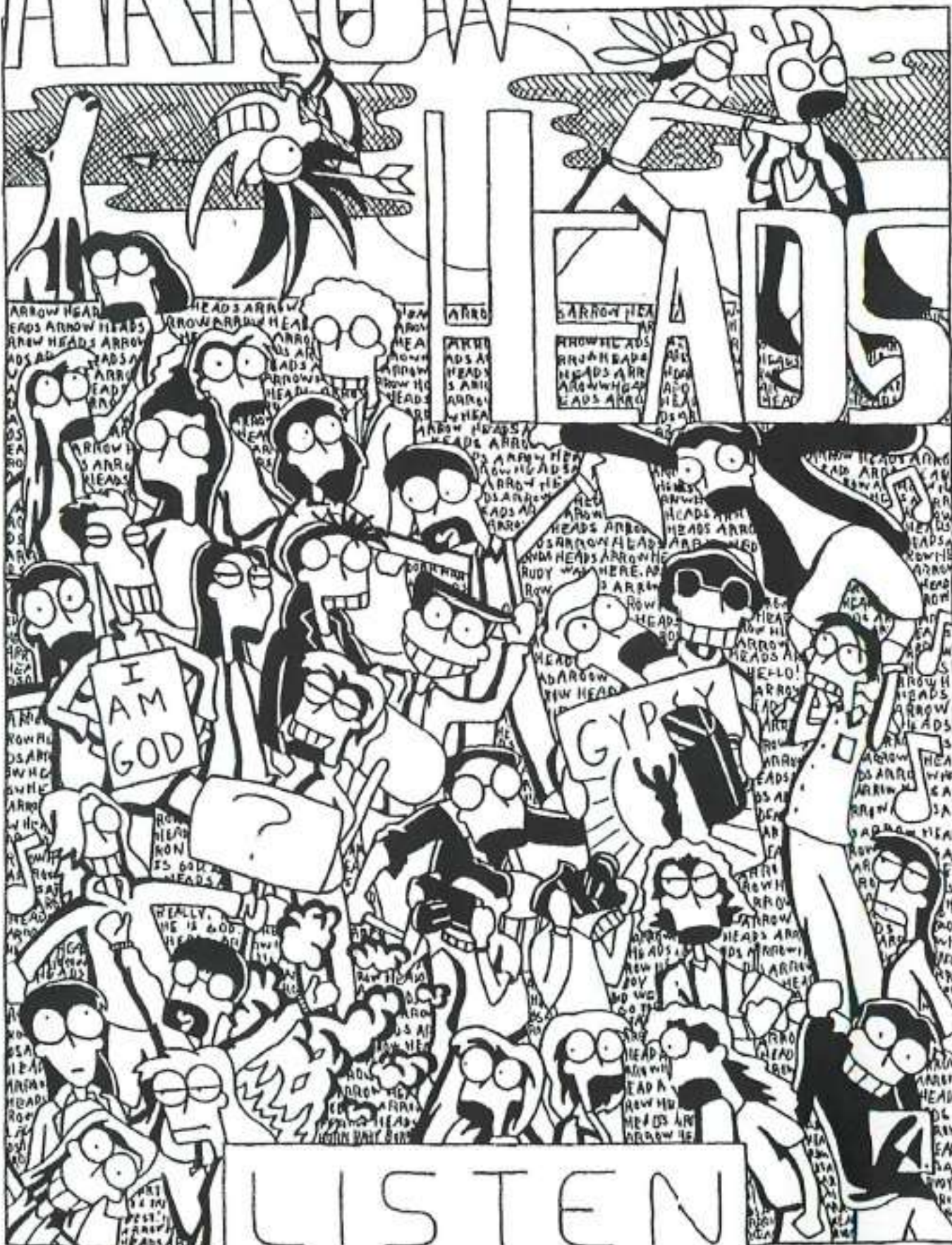


VOL. XXX

1994

ARROW

LEADS



LISTEN

Listen

The vibrant laugh of a young child at play,
The sorrowful cry of a lone wolf astray,
The silent whisper of the wind through the
trees,

The faithful prayer of a man on his knees,
The inspiring cheer of a devoted fan,
The clamoring bang of a garbage can;
We take for granted the sounds that we
hear,

That strengthen our emotions and
broaden our fears,

But without such, what would life be?
We could only suggest by what we see...

-Vicki Chomicz
Class of '94

LISTEN

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Editor's Forward

Our lives are filled with sounds and voices rich in expression of emotion. Writing is one way in which we can choose to articulate our passions, points of view, and acquired knowledge to our peers. Life gains more meaning when we take the time to truly understand what we hear. Even the most basic words are overflowing with substance if we just take the time to look deeper, below the surface. When we look beyond the ink and paper, the words and structure, there is a meaning of greater and more intense significance. Behind the words is a glimpse into the heart and soul of the author, there for the taking if we just listen.

Debbie Gibson

Principal's Message

The literary works of our West High School student writers presented to you in the following pages reflect a true creative effort. These offerings represent a variety of original contributions. We at West High School are proud of this publication, realizing that it is no simple task to express one's thoughts and ideas accurately and with imagination. We also recognize the contribution of Arrowheads sponsor, Mr. Richard Scott, and the entire West High faculty for their talented efforts to inspire our student contributors to present their very best.

Dr. John Schmitt

Editor's Note

This magazine is published annually by the West High student body under the direction of Mr. Richard Scott. Submissions were graded by students and reviewed further by the editorial staff. The names of the authors were removed from those submissions and privately recorded to protect against any possibility of biased grading. Arrowheads is co-sponsored by the English Department and the Associated Student Body of West High School, 20401 Victor Street, Torrance, CA 90503.

Table Of Contents

<i>Listen</i>	
Vicki Chomicz '94.....	1
<i>Credits</i>	2
Editor's Forward/Principal's Message.....	3
<i>And I knew then that she held my heart</i>	
Jeff McLean '94.....	6
<i>Monster</i>	
Minji Kim '95.....	8
<i>Getting a Grip</i>	
Fawzia Qazi '95.....	9
<i>Lies</i>	
Minji Kim '95.....	11
<i>Imagination Proclamation</i>	
Matt Kahn '95.....	12
<i>Happiness' Course</i>	
Julie Ahn '96.....	13
<i>Where Did the Purple Cows Go?</i>	
Michael F. Kim '96.....	14
<i>Destination Unknown</i>	
Debbie Gibson '94.....	16
<i>Friends?</i>	
Mark Kamimura '95.....	17
<i>Quiet</i>	
Andrew Ho '95.....	18
<i>Three-Fourths of a Candy Bar</i>	
Amanda De Simone '96.....	19
<i>Their Dreamy Retreat</i>	
Anna Alberts '94.....	26
<i>Change</i>	
Andrew Ho '95.....	27
<i>Bologna Stew</i>	
Matt Kahn '95.....	28
<i>Subtle</i>	
Kristina Kaur '94.....	29
<i>Never Say Goodbye</i>	
Miranda Griego '94	
Michelle Monreal '94.....	30
<i>An Old Friend</i>	
Dorothy Park '96.....	31

<i>My Love is Lost</i>	
Jenna Roy '95.....	32
<i>Knife in the Back</i>	
Steven Wasserman '95.....	33
<i>Souls of the Pier</i>	
Jeff McLean '94.....	34
<i>Sky</i>	
Vicki Chomicz '94.....	35
<i>Recital</i>	
Debbie Gibson '94.....	36
<i>Warming Up</i>	
Andy Schrader '95.....	38
<i>Childhood Dreams</i>	
Hyunji Kim '96.....	40
<i>The Problem of the Messiah</i>	
Steven Wasserman '95.....	42
<i>The Quietude</i>	
Rosalie Fink '95.....	43
<i>Ocean</i>	
Andrew Ho '95.....	45
<i>Glorious Spheres of Fiery Intensity</i>	
Jeff McLean '94.....	46
<i>An Original Lymric</i>	
Jack Van Leer '95.....	48

Illustrations

Rudy Adolfo.....	Cover
Angel Chang.....	13,41
Ryan Crandall.....	47
Debbie Gibson.....	30
Sharool Krunehr.....	45
Jeff Hall.....	14, Center
Eric Holman.....	7,16,26
Charles Hu.....	10
Ron Huett.....	20
Eric Iseri.....	8
Shannon Mason.....	18,44
Charles Ruggiero.....	31,39
Daniel Tang.....	36
Sasha Tchir.....	22

And I knew then that she held my heart

We skipped along a walk of broken ceramic
dishes.

They were painted, and shaped like birds and
puppies and

flowers and frogs.

A brief detour through the park,

As I walked her home.

An overcast sky; indecisively blue-gray

Signs urging us to vote for Whitehead or

Applegate or

Messerlian.

I am almost old enough to vote

And to register for the army; Die for my country.

But this girl made me feel young and innocent.

She made me feel like I should never have to go
to college,

Or get a job or pay taxes,

Or learn that a whole lot of people are corrupt.

She made me feel like petting strange dogs,

And blowing on dandelions.

There is a part of me that is ready to grow up;

A part of me that longs to have adult love,

But this girl appeals to the part of me that wishes

To stay young forever,

The part of me that longs for love in its purest,

most

innocent, curious, and ideal form.
Indiscriminately innocent affection.
This is what I think she could give to me,
If I could make her want me too.

We walked through the park.
Along a walk of broken ceramic dishes.
As we walked by my grandparents' old pale-green two story
house
In South Pasadena.
We walked by Kansas City in the snow during Easter,
And by Rocketship park and Wilderness park in the bright
sunshine.
We walked through Arrowhead and Santa's Village
And we stayed all the while
Along the walk of broken ceramic dishes.
We guessed what all the painted shapes were;
Happy;
And I knew then that this sweet girl held my heart.

-Jeff McLean
Class of '94





Monster



You created it.

Now you have to deal with it.



It all started very small.

Then it grew.

It grew until it got too big.



It is now overwhelmingly colossal.

And it will continue to grow,

until it has complete control over you.



It may die someday,

but you never know for sure.

It will probably consume your life.

Some call it hatred.

I call it Monster.



-Minji Kim
Class of '95

Getting A Grip by: Fawzia Qazi

I clutched the smokey gray remote control to operate the soap opera of my life. Bored with the same old twists in the plot, I furiously switched from channel to channel. I thrived on the excitement that each new station offered until reality slapped me in the face.

As soon as I received my driver's license, I threw all the Driver's Training precautions out the window. I had aced the driving test on my sixteenth birthday with a perfect score, so I was an expert driver. The road was mine. I tested my car's endurance by speeding 70 to 80 mph in 35 mph zones. At the few red lights that I chose to stop at, I slammed on the brakes and screeched to terrifying halts. I used the "right turn only" lane for passing up and cutting off cars that were stuck in traffic. Just as I had never won the lottery, I thought my chances of being pulled over were slim. Discipline served as the framework for my school career and conduct at home. Thus, driving functioned as an outlet for me to show the world who was holding the coveted remote control.

One day at lunch, my friend and I loaded up our cars to take everybody to Pizza Hut. I couldn't handle being in the submissive position of following her since her Hyundai was so slow that my Civic could surpass her car's maximum speed with the parking brake up. While she sensibly stopped behind three cars at a stop sign, I decided to take a shortcut through the residential streets. I zoomed past her at 30 mph and sped up to make a right turn against the stop sign.

A feeble, elderly woman who had legal right-of-way, was barely able to stop before making a left turn into my car. I laughed hysterically while she fought off a heart attack. Suddenly, one of my friends' face turned the color of egg yolk. "Fawzia, there's a cop behind us with his lights flashing!" she wailed, followed by four other frightened shrieks.

As soon as I caught a glimpse of the flashing lights, my stomach did somersaults, beads of sweat danced on my forehead and the trembling of my hands measured 8.1 on the Richter scale. Not only did I pull over to the side of the road, but up the red painted curb, barely missing the fire hydrant. The remote control crashed to the ground. The batteries fell out and rolled away.

My friends buckled up their seatbelts and turned to stone. The police officer waddled out of his squad car and muttered with disgust, "Ma'am, are you aware that you ran a stop sign at 35 mph during lunchtime traffic?"



I dropped the idea of playing dumb and admitted my mistake. My mind was racing as I showed him my license and registration. Why couldn't I have won the lotto instead? My cooperation paid off since he only cited me for "failure to yield to a stop sign."

My parents took the news very well. After laughing in my face, my mom exclaimed, "One ticket in six weeks of driving, that's pretty good. I haven't been able to get one in 17 years!" My father displayed more understanding, he advised me to attend traffic school to prevent my insurance rates from skyrocketing.

Frustrated, I asked my parents why they weren't throwing a fit. "Fawzia," they answered, "We can't spoon feed you for the rest of your life; you know how to drive."

No punishment was the worst punishment of all, and it left me to deal with the problem by myself. I almost killed four friends and nearly orphaned a couple of grandchildren. Neither my parents, nor the police could transform me into a safe driver. I had the option to learn how to drive safely or eventually die, so I accepted the challenge of complying to each rule in the California Vehicle Code book.

I never bothered to retrieve the remote control. The soap opera continues its monotony, but now I pay close attention, especially to the news breaks. Ever since the ticket, I carefully plan out my driving route and make the least possible lane changes. I remain within 5 mph of the posted speed limit and interpret each traffic sign literally. I flipped out during the first few months of driving because my car was a new toy and curiosity compelled me to push all the buttons, and desire for control of the road made me break each rule. Now I know that the only control worth having is self control.

Lies

They will haunt you,
just like
the truth.

-Minji Kim
Class of '95

Imagination Proclamation

When it rains, and the winds are wild,
It's a helpless tear from a child.

Where is he who cries?
We can't ignore it, though we try.

Maybe it's a creative emancipation,
Someones hiding their imagination.

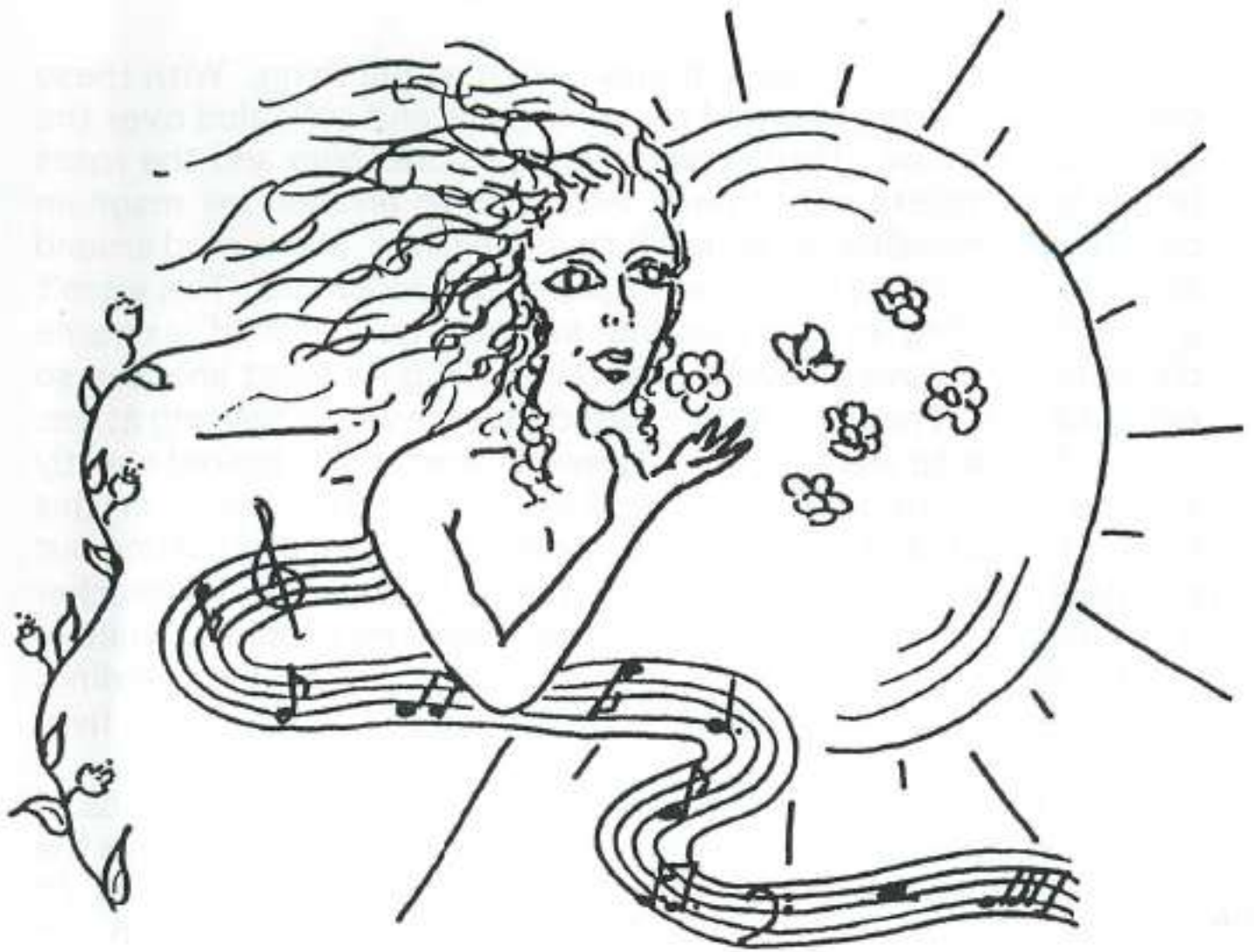
Would it be bright and sunny,
If we cared more for creativity than power and money?

There's no reason to hide,
The creativity of the child inside.

No umbrella can shield the wet and darkness,
Like a jolt of creativeness.

It's a part inside where the roads are bendless,
The time is always right, the opportunities endless!

-Matt Kahn
Class of '95



Happiness' Course

Happiness is a two way travel, not a destination,
Happiness is carried around wherever you go,
You can spread this joy to someone,
whether they accept this gift or not,
Happiness knows no boundaries, no limits, no patience,
Happiness is an incurable disease, highly contagious,
As a victim of happiness you may be of any race,
age or species,
Happiness journies endlessly.

-Julie Ahn
Class of '96

Where did the Purple Cows Go?
By Michael F. Kim

A four-legged thing. It looks like a purple thing. With these convictions in mind, I hurried to my crayons and scribbled over the outline of the cow. Then I colored the pastures blue and the roses brown to complete my picture. After having finished my magnum opus, I felt compelled to present it to my teacher. She turned around slowly, and as soon as she saw my paper, she screamed. This wasn't a blood-curdling or ear-piercing scream, but one of extreme disapproval. I turned around in circles looking for what she was so excited about. Then I suddenly realized that she was screaming at me.

The taste and the texture were different but it looked exactly like the rice I ate at home, placed in small plastic tubs. For this reason, I would sit in my art class and eat paste instead of cutting out pointless little shapes and attaching them to my paper. My teacher was quick to single me out as a major discipline problem, while in reality the entire matter was just a large misunderstanding. Unfortunately, I couldn't communicate this because I was only a five-year old kindergartner.

After many more purple cows, horses, cats, dogs and tubs of paste, I finally learned that my only objective should be to please the lady wearing the ugly dress who was constantly screaming at me. At this point, I entered the twilight-zone of conformism and in the process I was forced to forfeit some, if not all, of the immeasurable creative power within me.

Many rather uneventful years passed by with me sitting



behind wooden desks being force-fed information until it came out my ears. I was being taught in a system that was antiquated and inadequate. The method of teaching was to do countless dittos, workbooks and practice problems. The testing process was just as old as the method of teaching, and did not challenge the student to think.

Then the focus in schools and society abruptly changed from book learning to critical thinking and people skills. The thinking skills that had tangible, real world applications suddenly came into demand and only those who kept a kernel of their youthful imagination were initially successful.

At the time, these events held no real significance to me and because of human nature's tendency to shy away from the straight-and-narrow road, I decided to fit the mold. The screams of my teacher served only to confuse me even more. With a leash fitted tightly around my neck, I was led to the land of brown cows, green pastures and red roses.

After I gained more insight and knowledge, I reflected on past events, and heard an empowering call to prevent this from happening to anyone else. This oppression of thought is a blatant assault on our constitutional rights. If I were an extremist I would probably start a crusade against this quackery that hides behind a supposed knowledge of how we should think, act, and live.

My teacher, in her own single-mindedness, instantly dismissed my pictures, thoughts and actions as a deliberate attempt to disrupt her class. This rejection was seen as failure, which society itself has condemned. Thus, in an idiosyncratic attempt to "rectify" my work, my teacher, whether willingly or unconsciously, condemned creativity and set the path towards absolute conformism.

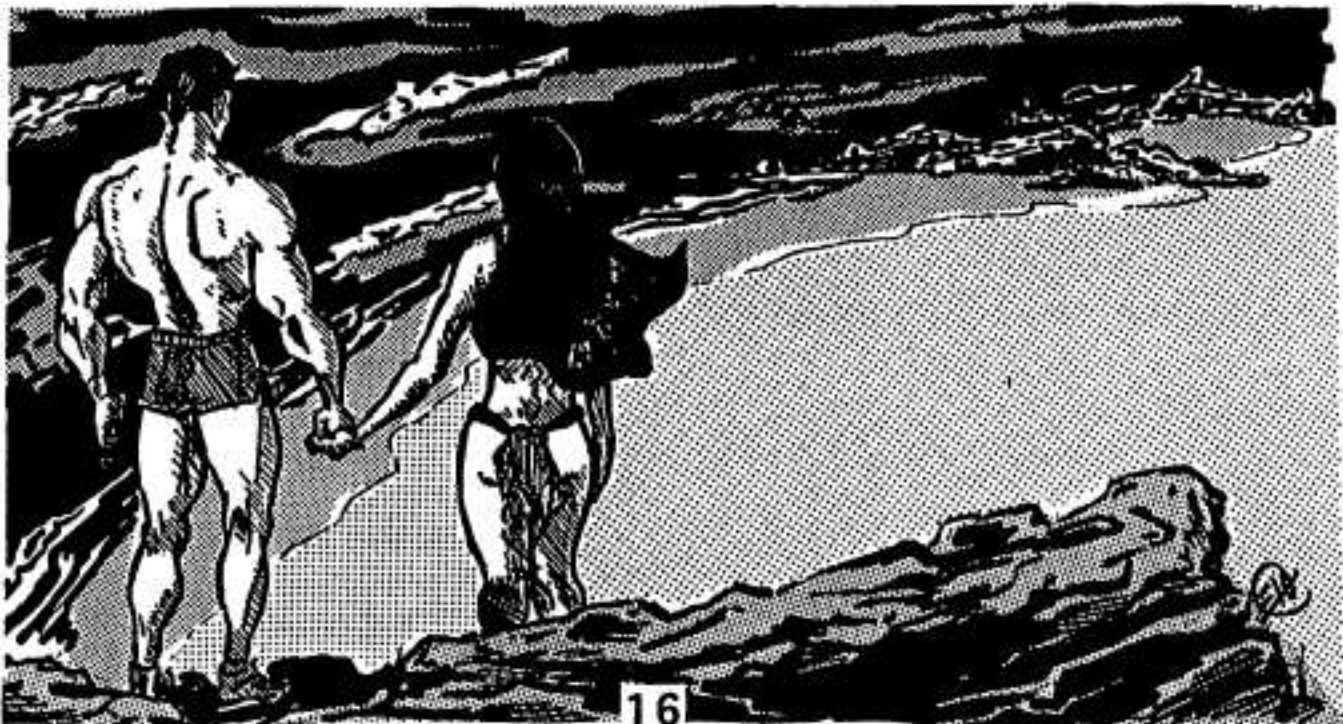
We've been robbed, all of us. The innovative thinking that today's industry so desperately seeks and needs is being slaughtered even before it has a chance to develop. We have all had that dogmatic teacher who insists that their answer is the only one and passes this mandatory sentence, as judge, jury, and executioner on us.

Another generation of complete zombies has been created. We have become machines without the ability to express ideas and thoughts of our own creation. The fear that somebody might disagree or see us as a failure keeps us from developing these skills. The initial fear of failure of displeasing an authority figure taught us to color within the lines, not to eat the paste and not to question anything.

Thus as we wander in the doldrums of conformism, I propose the question, "Where did the purple cows go?"

Destination Unknown

They walk down the beach together, hand in hand.
They look ahead into a magnificent sunset,
colors intertwining making new, more vibrant hues.
They've come to find perfection in the gorgeous sunset,
the delightful shiver of chilling waves nipping at their
toes,
and the relaxing silence of the rushing waves
and the gentle breeze.
They have found so much more.
They find sea shells crushed by the steady pounding
of relentless waves in their eternal graveyards.
They explore their varied colors,
watching them glisten
in the dwindling golden rays of sunlight.
Together they throw them back in the water
with a feeling of contentment.
Seeing a dying starfish lying stranded in the sand,
they bend over with concern, coaxing the ocean waters



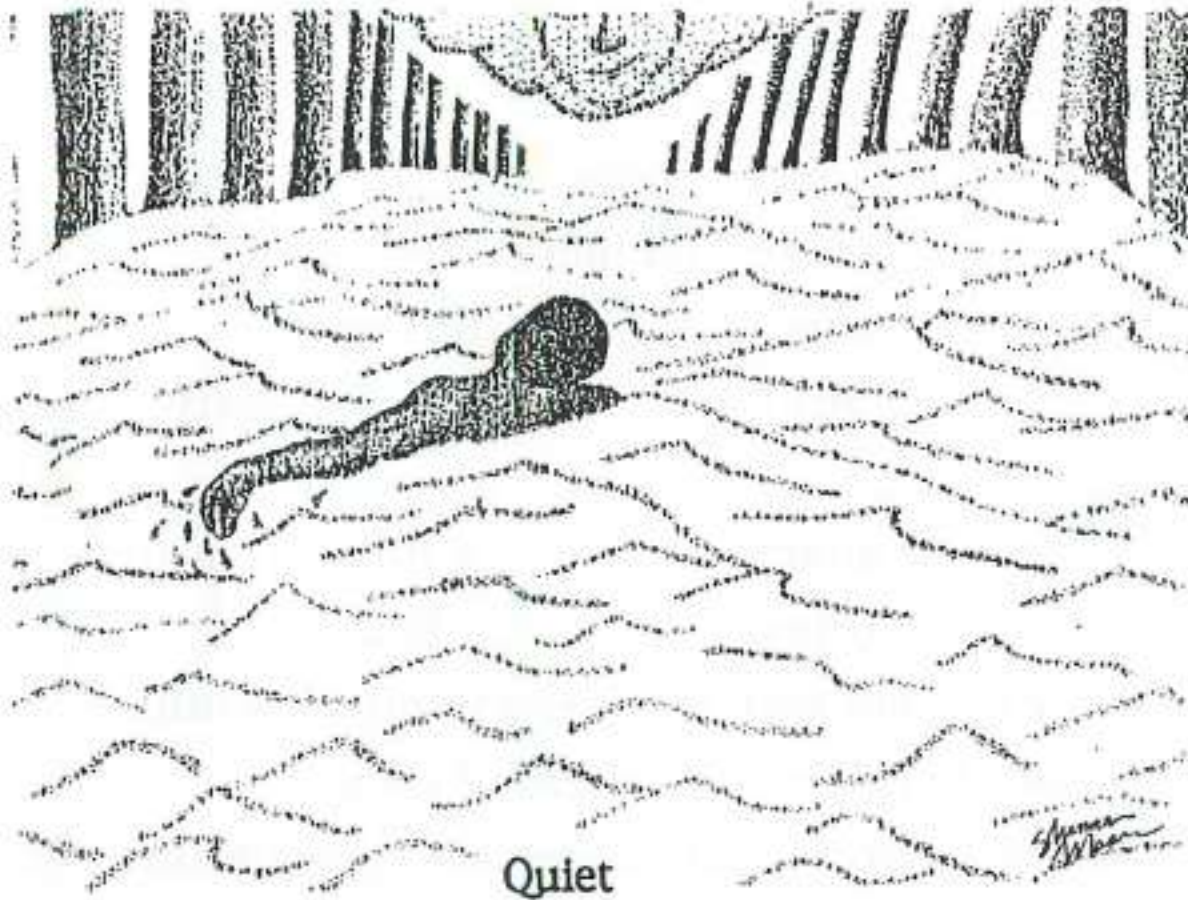
to take back what it once, and always would, reject.
They sorted through pools
nestled between moss coated rocks,
digging past the surface to find hidden treasures.
They find bits of transparent glass within,
pieces worn smooth with the wave's fierce intensity
and endless patience.
Together they walk, guarding their new found treasures,
clutching fresh memories close to their hearts
They are fully content with themselves and each other
as they stop to admire the view ahead of them.
They set off once more towards some unknown destination.

-Debbie Gibson
Class of '94

Friends?

What boundaries did you see?
As children we were colorblind,
I was your friend as you were mine.
The childhood innocence is now gone,
Whatever went wrong?
Will we ever again see beyond one's skin?
Will this madness ever end?

-Mark Kamimura
Class of '95



Quiet, not to be seen.

In the middle of the lake. Nobody's around.

The sky seems like a pretty face with grace,
looking at you with a smile.

The trees stand tall, like the way you wanted to be.

The water surrounds you like a warm blanket.

Slash, splash,

No one around.

No need to hurry, no need to talk.

They understand you.

They don't want money or advantage.

You are there. The place, just you and your
imagination.

Melting around. Just to see, see the world.

-Andrew Ho
Class of '95

Three-Fourths of a Candy Bar

By: Amanda De Simone

"Stay away from the road," Mom hollered after us as Assie and I ran up the steep driveway.

"All right!"

We raced to the "waiting rock", which was more like a boulder that rested alongside the driveway in view of the dusty, dirt road. Moments later a familiar rumble echoed pleasantly in our ears, causing shouts of excitement and impatience.

Dad pulled the dirt-encrusted station wagon off the road onto the gravel driveway and stopped, allowing us to bombard the driver's side.

"What did you get us, where are our treats, Daddy?!"

"Work was fine, how thoughtful of you to ask, ladies. Now, here's one for you...and one for you."

"Thank you," we said in unison.

"Now remember to brush your teeth afterwards!"

He left us at the "waiting rock" and continued on downhill towards the house.

We sat down on the rock to eat our Snickers right away as always, because mom would only allow us to eat candy after dinner, which was usually barfaroni.

I scarfed down my candy bar while Assie waited for me to finish. Then she broke off a quarter of hers for herself and gave the rest to me. She'd done this for as long as I could remember, I was seven and she was three years my junior. I never saw this as an act of affection; I just figured that she was incapable of eating an entire candy bar by herself.

Ashley, the name on the birth certificate and the name everybody else I used, was said to have a quick smile that melted even a stranger's heart. The people in our town called her the "golden child", and they never failed to remark on how beautiful and special she was. I suppose these people thought of me as the "wicked child", for they never acknowledged my presence, although Assie tried to get them to do so. She would point a chubby finger in my direction and chirp, "That's my sister. She's so smart that she can read and count to a million!"

Considering that I was almost eight-years-old, I knew this wasn't very impressive, and I resented Assie for embarrassing me.

There were many other reasons why I hated Assie. Everybody knew that she didn't have a mean bone in her little body, and I thought



it would be just great if one day they found me violently slain with Assie holding the bloody knife. The "golden brat" had an undying desire to imitate my every move and therefore never left my side, robbing me of my freedom. But the principle warrant for my hatred was due to the fact that she never called me by my real name. Instead she called me Me-Me because I was her sister and belonged to her.

This silly baby name made my life a living nightmare. When my so-called friends found out my absurd nickname, they told all the kids at school and "Me-Me" became the subject of many cruel rhyming games. I complained to Mom and Dad, but of course they found the name cute and also began using it.

"It's not fair, I'm not her property," I whined.

"It's not fair you call her Assie," Mom replied.

"I can't help it, I got a wisp."

"If you keep it up, Kiddo, I'll give you a lisp." But her eyes were smiling.

"Hey Me-Me," Assie yelled at me. "Look what I learned at pre-school." She held out a piece of paper that has "Me-Me is my sister" crudely scrawled on it.

"Assie, can you keep a secret?" I asked her seriously. Her eyes grew solemn and she nodded her head vigorously.

"Do you know what a secret is?"

Another nod.

"Good. I'm going to tell you a secret, but you have to promise not to tell Mommy or Daddy. Pinky swear?"

"Pinky swear." We sealed the promise by locking pinky fingers.

I told her that we weren't real sisters because the truth was, she was adopted.

"The only reason my parents adopted you is because your real parents are paying them lots of money." I flashed papers in front of her face claiming they were adoption papers.

"But Me-Me, we have the same hands!" she whimpered, placing hers besides mine for comparison.

"We both have ten fingers. The similarities are endless," I said sarcastically, a sneer on my face.

She looked dejected as if she believed me, and I held up my pinky finger to remind her. She held up hers in response.

Unfortunately, all the hard work I put into convincing her was wasted, for her child-mind allowed her to forget overnight, and the next morning I was once again Me-Me, Assie's sister.

One day, Assie performed a small miracle; she tied her shoes all by herself. As a result, Mom and I had to watch her tie and untie her shoes at least forty times. Next, she tied each of our shoes a dozen times.

Later, when the excitement had bubbled over, Assie and I went to the den to play video games. Suddenly I thought of a brilliant plan that could end my misery forever and turned the Nintendo off.

"So, Assie, you're a big girl now, huh?" I started.

"Yup! You wannah see me tie my shoes again?"

"No, thank you," I said politely. "Do you know what would make you an even bigger big girl?"

"What, Me-Me?" She was interested.

"If you would call me by my real name, Elizabeth."

"No, I don't wannah." She flat out refused.

"Come on, please?"



"No."

"It's not hard, say E-liz-a-beth." I pronounced each syllable clearly.

Her mouth was set in a straight line and she was looking at the floor. I was beginning to get annoyed. "Assie, if you don't say it, I'm gonna tell the Boogie Man to come and get you!"

"No!" she shrieked in terror.

"Say it," I warned. "I hear his footsteps...he's coming!"

"No! Make him go away! Make him go away, Me-Me!" she cried uncontrollably. Just then Mom burst into the room.

"What happened?" she demanded. Assie stopped her sobbing, but was still shaking. Mom saw her tear stained face.

"What happened Ashley, honey?"

"Nothing, Mommy."

Mom turned her gaze on me. "What did you do to her?" Her voice chilled my spine and paralyzed me. I didn't answer. She grabbed my shoulders and tried to make eye contact, but I looked away. She was in the middle of shaking an answer out of me when she was interrupted by a small quivering voice.

"Leave her alone," it said.

Mom stopped shaking me and we both turned to look for its source. Assie's eyes were fierce. Tears slid slowly down my cheeks. Assie saw this and charged forward.

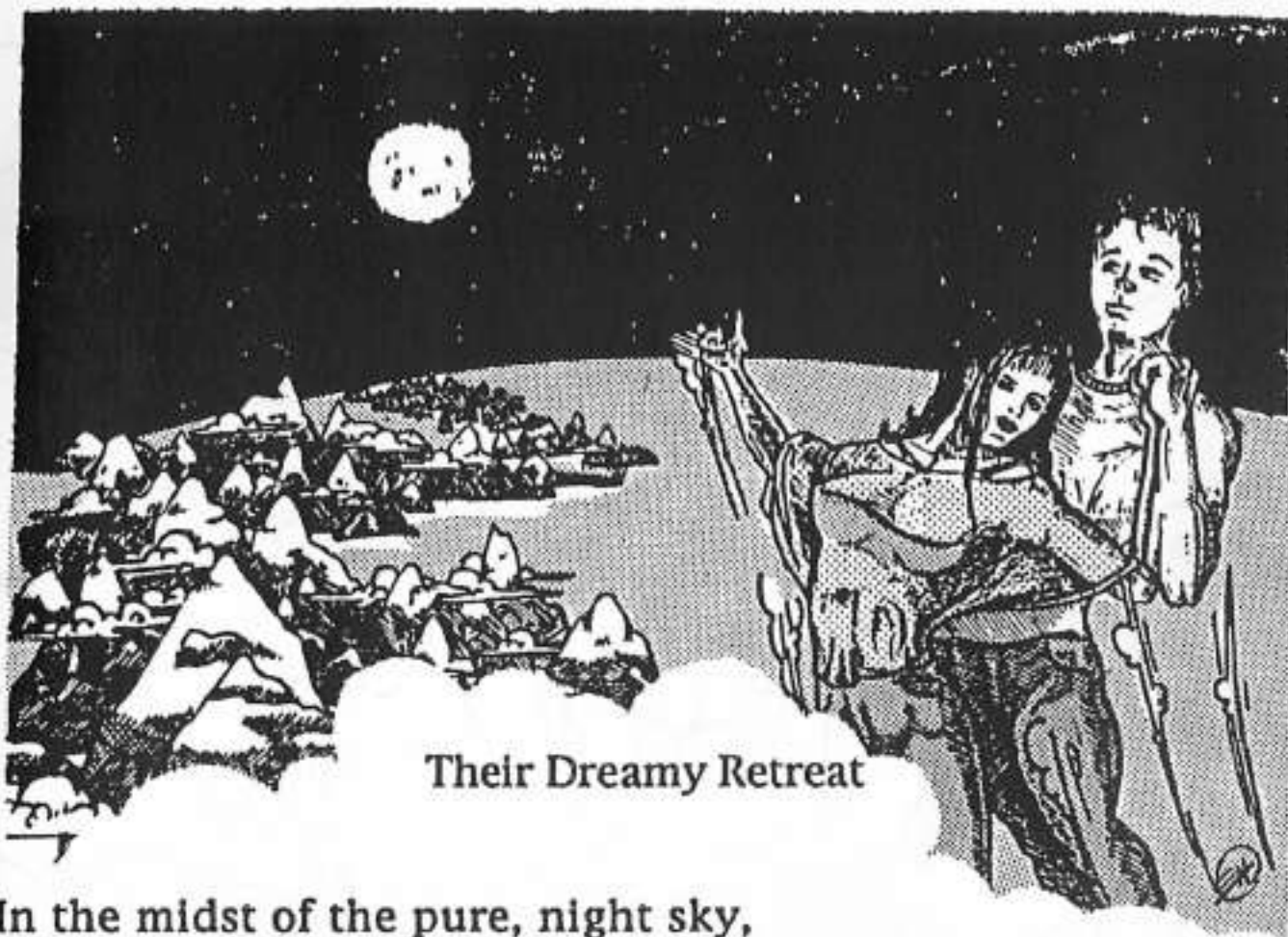
"Let go of my sister," and she opened her mouth and clamped it down on Mom's arm. I was released immediately from the shocked victim's grasp and stumbled out of the room, then out of the house. Outside, I curled up in a ball on the front lawn and cried.

The sky grew subtly darker, signaling the homecoming of Dad from work. I stood up, and although I felt light-headed, I trudged up the driveway towards the "waiting rock". The front door slammed and Assie slowly scuffed behind me without her usual enthusiastic skip.

We sat on the "waiting rock" together, for this was tradition, but we didn't exchange words. Her puffy eyes looked down at her untied shoes. Dad came and we got out our treats as usual, but there was no excitement in receiving them. I unwrapped my candy bar and ate it with Assie waiting for me. When mine was finished there was an awkward moment in which we just sat and looked around. But the moment, like all moments, passed and Assie reached for my hand.

"Here you go...Elizabeth," and she placed a crumb, hardly a speck, in the palm of my hand. That same instant she crammed the whole candy bar in her mouth, stood up, and walked away from me towards home.





Their Dreamy Retreat

In the midst of the pure, night sky,
Among the countless, twinkling stars above,
They settle back in each other's warm, secure embrace,
And let the solid, genuine love between them
Keep them safe, and free from falling;
They peacefully float, content with one another's company.
Unbound by the perilous, biting, chaotic troubles below,
They laugh and joke a little, rejoicing in their freedom;
They share their deepest feelings with complete trust,
and delight in it,
And on occasion, they shed a few tears;
Far from tears of sorrow, however;
They are tears of joy and fulfillment,
For they are together at last,
Giving and growing unconditionally,
Now and for evermore.

-Anna Alberts
Class of '94

Change

So much has changed,
different directions, different destinies.
We used to be so close,
dreaming about the same things, thinking of the same world.
What we have accomplished, what we have achieved together,
it's too little to show for what we have in our memories.
Seems like he was my brother,
now it feels like he's just another face in the crowd.
He changed and so did I.
Not just in how we think, how we act.,
it's more, feels like the person I knew inside of him has died.
I want to bring him back, but he told me he has passed away.
Nothing, nothing I could do, nothing anyone could do.
I wish, using every wish I have.
Bring him back. If I ever could.

-Andrew Ho
Class of '95

Bologna Stew

Have you heard of the boy who ate bologna stew?
A short kid, who just grew and grew.
When he walked down the street, his feet were stomping
loud,
Because he is ten feet tall, with his head in the clouds.

All of the kids just ran away.
He had nothing to say, else he'd blow them away.
Walking over buildings and skipping over rivers,
He became the World's best piggy-back ride giver.

No matter what he tries or does,
He would be happier the way he was.
If he hadn't eaten the bologna stew,
He wouldn't have grown, and now he knew.

He was special, even when he was small.
Nothing has changed, now that he's tall.
The difference is that he caused such fright,
Because being special comes from within, not from your
height.

-Matt Kahn
Class of '95

Subtle

It's not easy to be SUBTLE!!!!
Because you must whisper
Things instead of shout or scream or yell or
Demand, and you must hush when noise
And sound and voices are present. You
Must tiptoe instead of prance
Or jump or thump. You must be well
Oiled and not squeak or breakdown,
Squeal, or bang. You must be clear,
But not obvious, shaded, but not shadowed,
Faint but not invisible, asleep but not quiet
And listening as loudly, obscenely, sharply
And fully as possible.

-Kristina Kaur
Class of '94

Never Say Good-Bye. . .

**As we walked into the room,
With satisfaction in our eyes,
With laughter on our faces,
Yet a tear held deep inside.**

**As we looked at each other,
We wondered what each would be,
We wondered what each would do,
But tomorrow we cannot see.**

**We look back through our memories,
We look back through the years,
We see a lot of laughter,
And recall a silent tear.**

**It's so very hard to say good-bye,
It's hard for us to let go,
For each has a seperate dream,
As we each turn down a seperate road.**

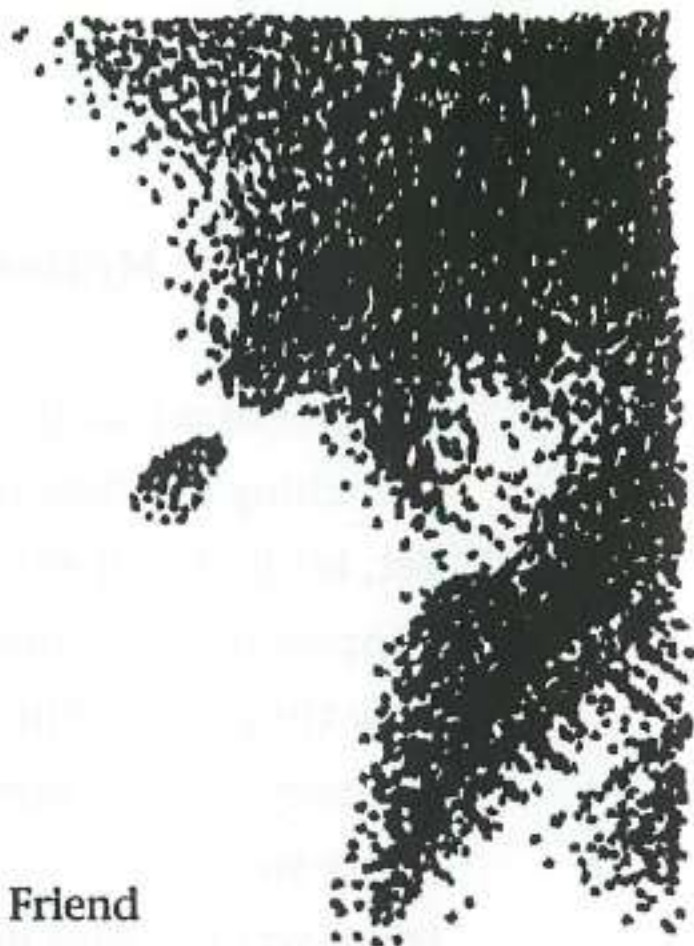
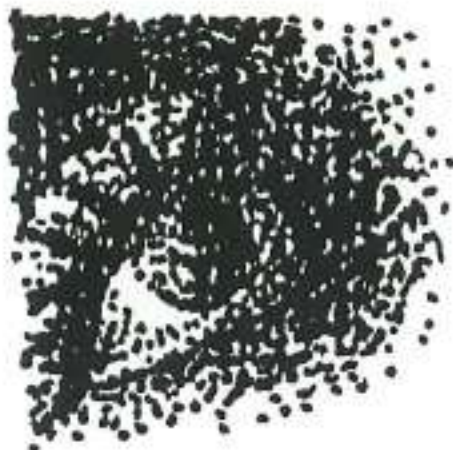
**We are not only friends,
But one great big family,
Trying so hard together,
To be the best that we can be.**

**As we leave and go on,
We watch the time go by,
But through it all,
We never say good-bye!!!**

Dedicated to the class of 1994!!!

**-Amanda Griego and
Michelle Monreal
Class of '94**





*Charles
Ruggier*

An Old Friend

In the shadows of a place I hadn't seen in a while
I saw a cold statue of an old friend.

It was of an alabaster white
that turned slowly to a dingy gray.

My old friend's hard stone eyes
seemed to gaze straight through me.

Seeing all, knowing all,
but understanding little.

My old friend's firmly set lips
seemed to question me

Why did I leave her behind?

Why did I have to stash her away

Hide her away in a shadowy corner
in a place I'll no longer visit?

-Dorothy Park
Class of '96

My Love Is Lost

I held it as a handful of sand
Clenching my fists to hold it there
Yet, bit by bit, it seems to have
Slipped through my straining fingers.
Now they're nothing but memories,
Of every smile, every kiss, and above all
Every word.

For it was not into my ears alone
You whispered, but
Into my heart.

It was not my lips alone you touched,
But my soul.

And when I opened my tired hand
And found my love was gone
I trembled and died

I struggle to hide my deadness
To conceal the emptiness in my eyes
As the tears glistened down my cheeks
My mind quivers and screams, " fight! "

-Jenna Roy
Class of '95

Knife in the Back

I had done this before, many a time,
yet I had never contemplated the meaning of my crime,
I was to steal up from behind,
with my knife I'd carve him like a rind,
but then I had a flickering thought,
that had little to do with being caught,
I thought of the joy of living life,
and how harshly it could be ended with a knife,
And so I turned away leaving him to be,
and he put a knife in the back of me.

-Steven Wasserman
Class of '95

Souls of the Pier

Saran-wrap ocean; Paper-mache waves.
He gave his youth, a soul to save.
We met him here-
On the roof by the pier-
We thought we could help him up from his grave...

...Craig Steven Williams,
Do you sleep tonight?
In a place that has warm blankets,
All proper and all right?

I learned a language, G.
And I learned we all stand tall.
Raceless - Bakersfield or Torrance
But why'd you never call?

I'm here for you, my brother
Money or a place to stay
God showed us peace, my man,
If only for one day...

Blood-red ocean, Armageddon
We talked bands and talked religion,
When he brought me here-
The roof by the pier
Jake breathed in nicotine and exhaled his visions.

Saran-wrap ocean to the paper-cut horizon
We spit off the pier at the target Beej spit on.
We leaned with her here
On the rail of the pier
She colored the fog with a crayon.

Souls that are dear;
Souls that you fear-
I meet them all here
The roof by the pier.

-Jeff McLean
Class of '94

?
What
would it
be like to
soar above the
mountain tops and
glide over the crystal
blue oceans, to pass through
the clouds and fly higher and higher
and higher
until you
are nothing
more than
a speck of
dust in the
sky?

-Vicki Chomicz
Class of '94



Recital By Debbie Gibson

I sat politely in the horrid metal chair with my legs crossed and hand folded nicely in my lap. From my calm exterior, no one could read the mess of emotion running through my head. I furiously thought about how my teacher coerced me into a dress and make up for this terrible piano recital, and I vowed never to let anyone push me into such an uncomfortable position again. As I listened to the last choppy notes of the student ahead of me, I could feel the tension begin. Soon, my teacher called my name and rolled through the three songs that I would attempt to play. I hopped up and unsteadily walked over to the piano, quickly perching on the bench. I glanced up and my teacher nodded for me to begin.

My hands seemed as though they were moving through water rather than air, pinned down by some surge of gravity centralized at that piano bench. I began to wonder what I would do if I were never able to begin playing, and whether it would be wise to just quit now, or begin, and suddenly forget which of my three songs I was playing. "Maybe no one will notice," I thought as I struggled to place my fingers on the keys in front of me. I began to lean forward and a bright glare flashed into my eyes off the stark white keys inches below my fingers.

I hurried to put my fingers down to block the blinding light, and a sharp, loud sound issued forth from the piano. It was then that I began to panic. Was that the right chord? Which song did I just begin? I could feel a burning sensation begin under my fingers and continue to creep up my arms. I wondered if anyone would notice the heat that was coming from the flames that were continually turning my face a darker shade of red, and causing a slight layer of perspiration to break out on my forehead. I snatched my hands back, glancing at them to check for third-degree burns, but could only see the shaking of a nervous child wondering why she could not control her own life. I thought about the slumber party I had been to the night before, wondering if perhaps a little more sleep would have saved me from the horrible fate of being the only person to die at a piano bench in front of her entire family. I glanced over at my teacher, but there was no sympathy there. She was the one who always said that "practice makes perfect," and that if I didn't try harder, I would not succeed. Well, maybe this time she was right. Perhaps I hadn't tried hard enough to memorize these notes and maybe one hour a day was not enough preparation against the stage fright that had been lurking just behind me waiting for the perfect moment to grasp complete control of my body. The heat from the shiny, sparkling keys felt as though it had slightly subsided, and I reached my hands out once more to touch them. They were now cool and comfortable beneath my fingers, and the familiar sensation of control gradually came back. I remembered the hours of practice, reciting the notes over and over to myself every afternoon in a monotonous string of letters, sharps and flats. I could visualize myself sitting at the familiar little keyboard in my bedroom, pressing down on the dingy, broken in keys experimenting with different sounds, styles and tempos. I could hear the simple yet beautiful melody as it had sounded echoing off the walls in the enclosed space of my room, in one last attempt at perfection the day before. My fingers slowed their quivering and began the familiar motions from hours of practice creating beautiful sounds and rhythms.

After my final musical piece, the applause took care of my one question, "Had anyone noticed?" The noise answered me with a resounding "No!" When the recital ended, congratulations flew at me from all over. Despite that, the true test came from my extremely strict teacher. When I approached her with my customary thank you gift, her normally emotionless face broke into a slight smile and she stretched her arm out across my shoulders and simply said, "Terrific!"

Warming Up

The night began to bloom when I entered the
Night club with a boyish anxiety,
Secluding myself in a shell of shyness.
Restless.

Sitting down at the table I had
Second thoughts about my motives
For coming to this sleazy dump.
Anticipating.

I found my way down the red
Corridors that led to my reserved
Room...Our reserved room.
Curious.

And then I saw her. My heart
Paused when I feasted my eyes on the
Curves of her body, and her shiny, voluptuous finish.
Nervous.

I slowly crept forward, looking everywhere but at
Her, but she invited me to approach.
Breathing became my immediate goal.
Scared.

Boldly taking her in my arms,
I placed my lip on hers and let my
Tongue do the rest.
Interested.



My fingers played her body
Delicately and tenderly as my
Emotions poured out through her.
Aroused.

Gasping for breath, I increased the pace
Feverishly swinging and swaying with my
Inner voices shouting at the new tempo.
Excited.

We were one and made just for
Each other. We made music for what felt like
E t e r n i t y .
Assured.

When I left that room that night,
I felt like I could conquer
Anything. And I intended to do so urgently.
Confident.

As I made my entrance on the
Stage, I examined my audience and I knew that
They and I would be in for another grand performance.
I placed my lips to her and made music all night long.
Invincible.

-Andy Schrader
Class of '95

Childhood Dreams

There was a time
When I dreamt of all the wonderful things I could do.
When fantasies of fairies, and angels filled my head.
When I believed that I could fly all over the sky,
If I just wish upon a star.

Everynight, I went to sleep in peace,
and enjoyed the adventure of my imaginary world.
I played on top of fluffy clouds and never got tired,
but it wasn't long before my dream became dreadful.
And I felt my life in danger, even in my dreams.

That's when I realized that the world isn't like my dream.
I was exposed to crime, violence, and injustice.
I was welcomed with hatred, hardship, and unfairness.
My head was only filled with horror, fright, and cautions.
Reality began to sink in and my childish dreams were
vanishing.

Somewhere along the line,
I was forced to grow out of my innocence.
I was forced to harden my heart and accept the cold truth.
My faith and trust in others was replaced with suspicion.
My precious dreams were long gone and lost beyond my
reach.

Then I decided to open up my arms.
Because childhood dreams are just a phase we go through.
I told myself that I could be what my heart desires.
So I began to taste the triumph of existence.
I can climb the highest mountain, and reach it's summit.
Because the biggest challenge in life is I, myself.

-Hyunji Kim
Class of '96



The Problem of the Messiah

The problem of the Messiah is simple, yet sad;
When he arrives with the future to be had;
He gives us the miracles we desire;
And lets himself be burned upon a fire;
His followers utter his words over his pyre;
Soon they make him their god;
Making all he believed a simple fraud;
They proclaim wars in his name;
To receive the riches they will claim;
Yet, they do not realize he was not their god;
But the messenger of the coming, from abroad;
When He arrives they will not understand;
That the Messiah was but a man;
And soon they will quarrel and fight;
Of which of their beliefs is in the right;
Little to be said, for what they say;
The problem of the Messiah. . . is the human way.

-Steven Wasserman
Class of '95

The Quietude
By: Rosalie Fink

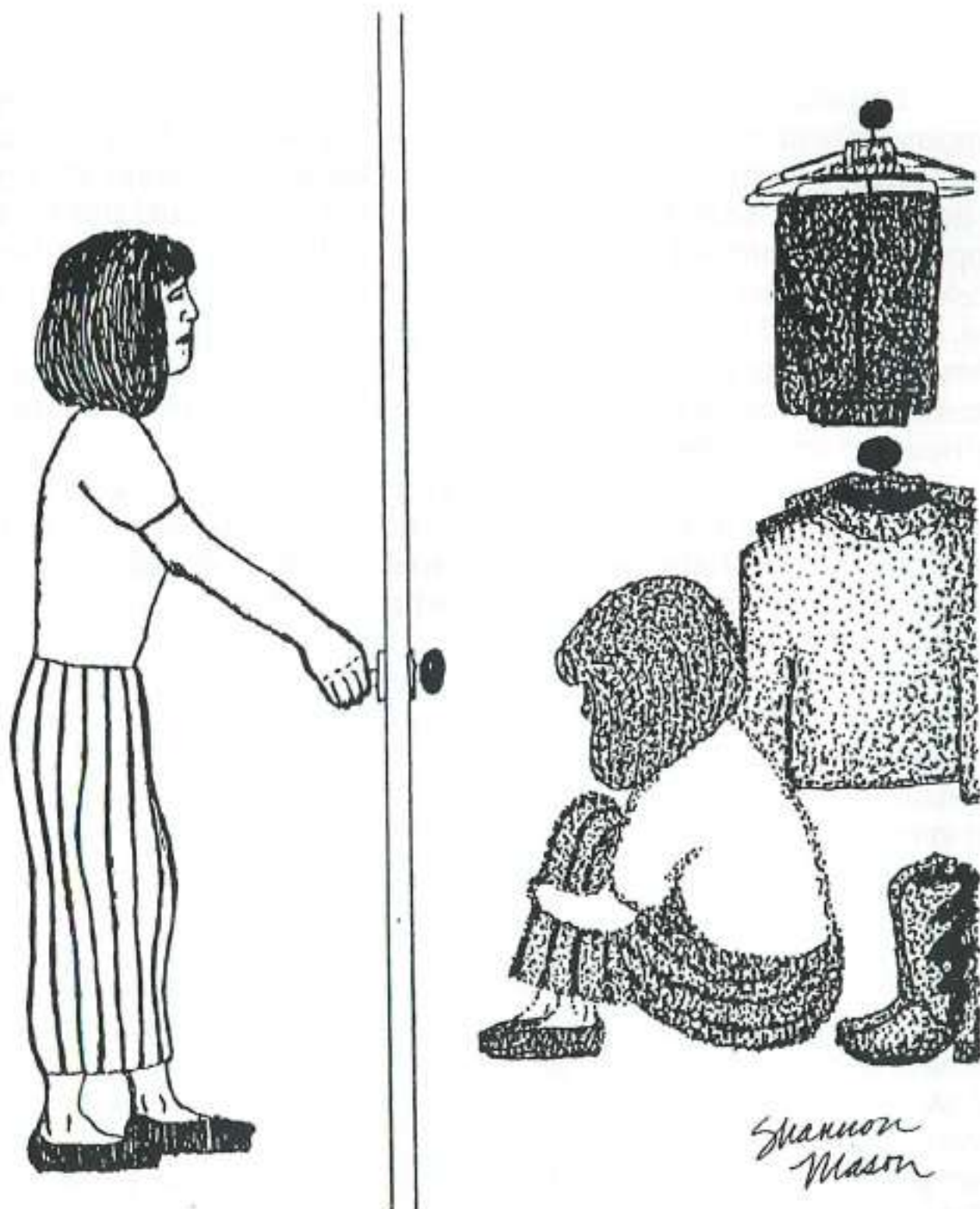
Engulfed in a listless quietude, I greedily tried to retrieve my composure and tranquility. I frantically dug deeper like a crazed miner struck with gold fever, through layer upon layer of my hardened heart, searching for my former self. How could this have happened? I promised myself I would never become like *them*, but carelessly, I had let go, sometime in the past, selfishly neglecting my soul. I nourished my darker side, the part of me that was most like *them*. It was not until today that the truth struck me across my callous cheeks like a stinging slap. Little by little I had evolved into a bitter, flinthearted and unfeeling human.

If my loved ones had not turned their adoration of me to a frigid hatred, I would not be here, sitting crossed legged like an Indian chief, in my childhood refuge, probing my soul for my true self. Fifteen years ago, when I last left this cramped and confined closet, I never dreamt that I would return.

But I have returned, and now ominous shadows of the past darken my thoughts. The panicked throbbing of my chest, the sudden gush of blood overwhelming my veins and the streams of sweat penetrating my pores all returned as I heard the echoes of yesteryear ring in my bursting ears. I smashed my knuckles into the sides of my head, hoping to prevent the sounds from entering, but it was too late. The banshee like wails and screams embedded themselves into my soul.

The memories overtook me, and all of a sudden I was fourteen again. I whimpered like an abused puppy in the closet corner, flinching at the piercing tone of their vile words and bursts of angry bellows. Niki, I said to myself, you must never become like *them*, never! In desperation, I bit my trembling fists to stifle a shriek. The inner pain surfaced and collided with the physical one I had just inflicted on my hands. At that brief instant I felt a comforting numbness that shielded me from reality, but it faded away almost as quick as it had appeared. Would I ever escape from this tempestuous life? How could I ever hope to grow up normal in a household as turbulent as this? My weak fourteen year old body heaved in exhausted fright. It was then that I furiously found the courage and composure to escape from the trenches of this violent, warlike life. It was a decision made in the listless quietude of my heart.

I shuddered and with no warning the yelling and screaming vanished in a millisecond. Once again I was the twenty-nine year old Niki Brenton, but I was altered. The stone that had encrusted my heart was splintered into millions of silvery specks. A tiny ray of sunshine



sinuously wove its way into my dark side and conquered it like a deadly virus would. My spirit unleashed itself and floated away from me in a lively and energetic state. "You'll be okay, again, don't worry," it winked knowingly. Then, in a flash, it dissolved like dust particles into the stale, murky atmosphere.

I was alone, preparing to abandon the closet's obscurity. The air was silent now, my flight from the past had ceased its journey. How long had it lasted? Had it been a minute or fourteen hours? The point was that it didn't matter, I needed to get out. Wearily I rose, feeling the shakiness and instability of my knees. I could breathe normally again, but my pulse was still electrified from the nerve-racking ordeal. Pausing for a moment, I nudged open the ancient, creaky door and collapsed into a pool of listless quietude.

Ocean

She stood. Watching the ocean wash away her sin and
her pain.

Her tears drip down the smooth skin of her face,
and crash into the dirt.

The wind flirts with her long dark hair and the sea gulls
catch fish like cops catching robbers.

The waves hit the rocks like a car hitting a wall.

She's alone.

All alone. Just like the way she wanted it.

Far away from evil and the complex.

Her future is far into the ocean, where no one could see.

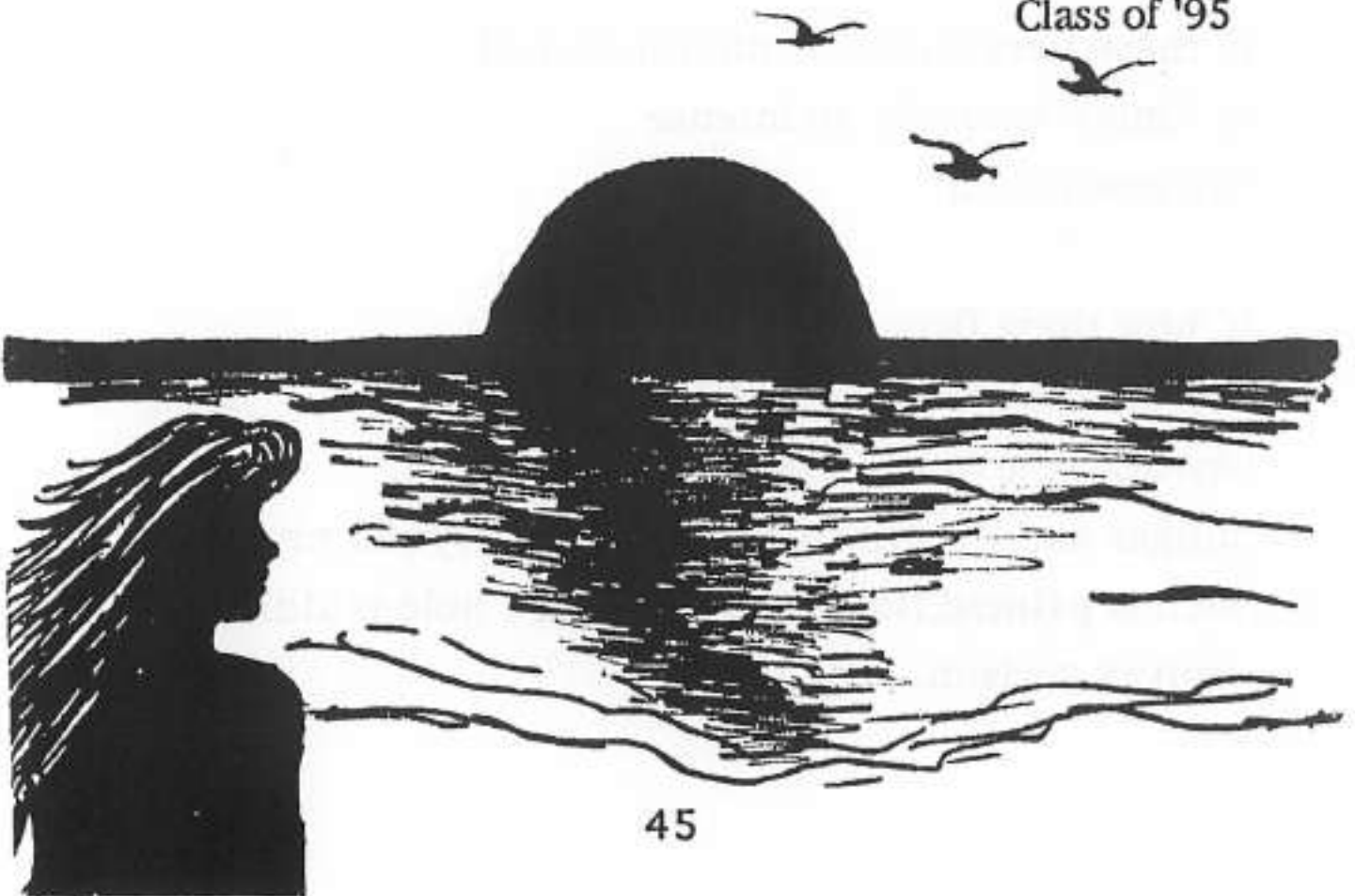
She could jump, she could run.

She could go home or fight,

But she stays, over the ocean.

Ocean of peace.

-Andrew Ho
Class of '95



Glorious Spheres of Fiery Intensity

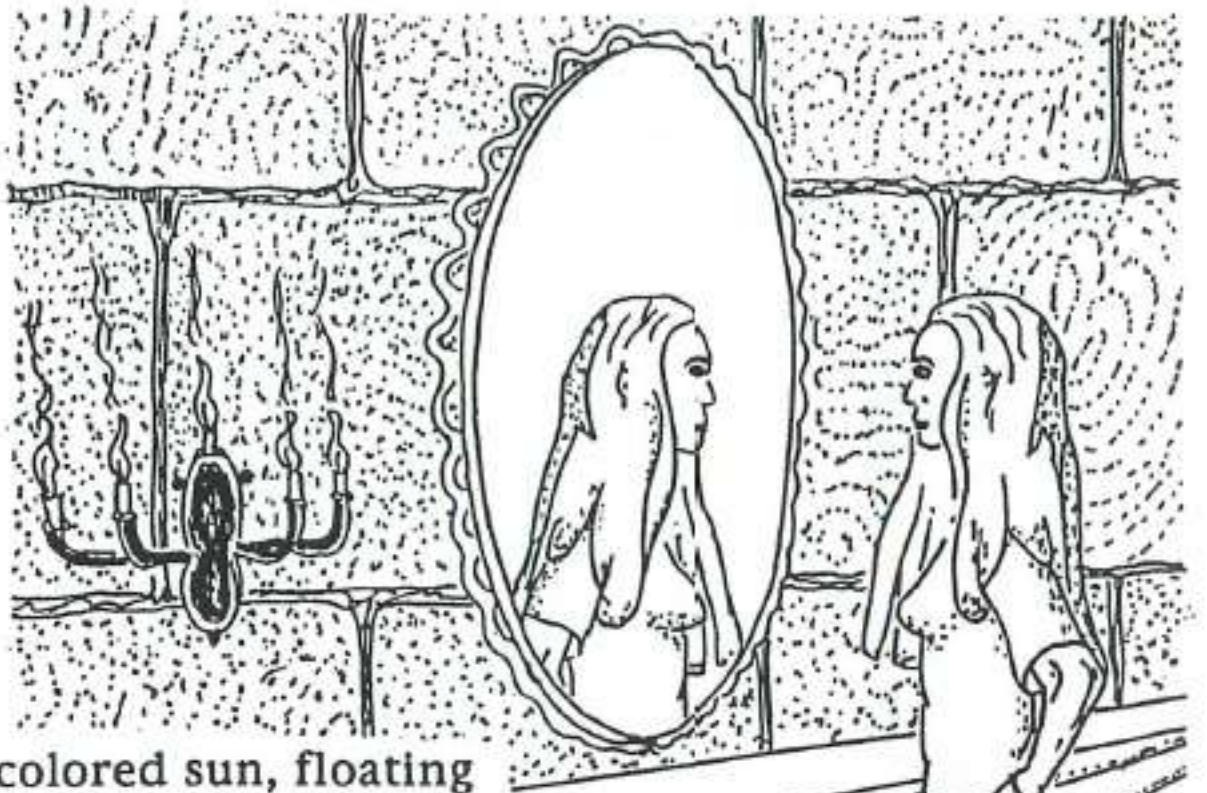
Spheres of fire, glorious spheres of utmost intensity;
I am transfixed.
Radiating spontaneity or schizophrenia (but which?).
Amused by some private recollection.
Smirking at an inside joke with yourself.
I am hypnotized.
I am most transfixed and drawn into these twin spheres.

Such feverish intensity - almost madness;
At times they have nearly a wicked tone,
But I know that this is a false ambiance.
I would prefer to think that nothing evil could grip
So tightly.

I'd like to think...

No, these fiery spheres contain no evil.
No, simply a wonder so intense
As to resemble it.

Oh, how these fiery spheres draw me in.
They draw me in and I starve.
They draw me in and I yearn to go to them.
I hunger and I yearn to see what lies beyond my reflection,
Which is painted floating in the black hole middle of
A convex verizon.



A hazel-colored sun, floating
in the middle of a white sky.

Whenever I think of you
I imagine these spheres a faded, dark gold.
But then I see you and I see that they are not.
When I leave you, my mind forgets.
Like with so many other things,

My mind forgets.

Your spheres of beauty - I dream in them;
I swim in them.
I am most transfixed; they draw me in.

They hold me.
I quite long for them to love me.
I am quite sure that they could kill me.

-Jeff McLean
Class of '94

An Original Lymric

There once was a man from France
Who didn't like to dance,
So what I did,
I killed a squid
And stuffed it down his pants.

-Jack Van Leer
Class of '95

