

Welcome to the 2024-2025 edition of CAPA's Literary Magazine, *The Fínal Draft*. Our first issue highlights self-selected pieces and some excerpts of writing from the senior Creative Writing class, along with some brief bios so you can get to know the people behind this wonderful production. We're looking forward to delivering issues of our magazine to you on a monthly basis! Each new issue will be available during the first week of every month. Not only will we be publishing these black & white paper issues, but starting next month we'll be publishing in glorious color on our website! Be sure to check out the bulletin board outside room 210 for more info later this month!

We hope that this year's edition of the literary magazine, our website, (capaliterarymagazine.com), and our Instagram account (@capalitmag) can be a home for not just for the Creative Writing department, but all of you creative people at CAPA: visual artists, photographers, filmmakers, designers, and, of course, writers. With our magazine, our Instagram, and our website, we want to create dynamic, accessible space for all majors to display their talents. So, please submit any writing, art, photography, video, and other mediums by emailing us at capaliterarymagazine@gmail.com, and we'll work with you to find a place for it. Thank you for reading our first issue! Please feel free to hit us with your feedback. We look forward to publishing your work this year.

- Mr. Corona

- The Class of 2025

  1.Micah Alston

  2.Lailissa Andrades

  3.Shaniya Britt

  4.Elliott Byrd

  5.Cynthia Ventura

  6.Rachel Coupland

  7.Jae Diaz

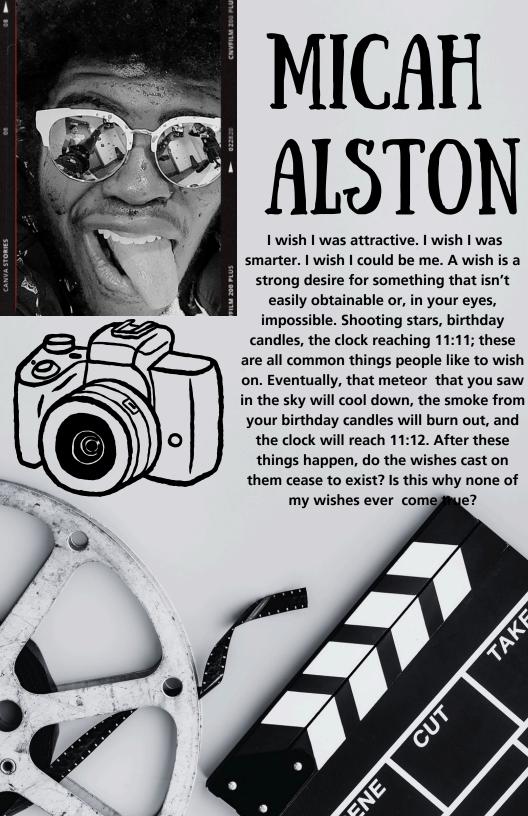
  8.Azure Dover

  9.Nova Greene-Berry

  10.Effigy Handy
- 11. Kharma Hillian
- 12.Morgan Irby-Clark 13.Astrid Judd
- 14. Aaliah Kennedy-Sutton 15. Angel Leung
  - 17.Brave McHugh 18.Astrid McSwiggan

16. Imani Martin

- 19. Tah'mir Mont 20. Rena Ngo
- 21. Lidya Roach 22. Abdul Robinson
- 23. Milena Rogers
- 24. Millie Salinas 25. Imara Stewart
- 26. Ptolemy Stuart
- 27. Mallie Weller
  - 28. Syncere Wright-Mccullough







## Whois that GIRL?

background song of your movie?

1000 miles vanessa Carlton



Dream Career?

I won't shut up About...

the color pink, food, & pinterest

How many days would you last in the apocalypse

ummm... zero

birth flower? cosmos & marigolds







Homan Kake br Klow a copy or mostly Hour ban do good to Evera Voenoder to the girlies domina see Parfesting is said to so thank you for your strongth 1 resilience commences Michenisga Respe thank you for being you Studes Thet is began Nesseguite a bardingeruit commen no Happy international women's day (3) nitures. Dentre sea barner \* P \* P \* P \* C Teenage Hell is a teenage girl My breasts lay softly in my black strapless bra Which hugs my bust. As it sexual? The thought of a depressed, fatherless, reckless mess of a teenage girl, Perfectly tied in a bow, A bow for my princess hairstyle. As it sexual? Sometimes I think of myself as a bimbo whore But I blame the ones who raised me. Am I too easy? I am the Madonna with the mind of a whore The contradiction Sweet and salty. Black Swan, white Swan. The Madonna and whore. As it sexual? \*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*



#### Florescence Flower

Growing up, I didn't pay much attention to my neighborhood. The environment and the people living amongst my neighborhood weren't really virtuous. None of that really caught my attention. Thinking back to when I lived with my mom in North Philadelphia, when everything was in order. Food was on the table by 5:00, and we ate as a family, specific routines we followed every day, everyone played their part. Reminiscing about the old times in that neighborhood has me daydreaming about the good times I remember having with my mom. I was her first child, we were like best friends. She would take me places, run around with me. Those daydreams are the daydreams I want to stay in forever. My neighborhood wasn't the best neighborhood and I wouldn't sugarcoat anything about it.

Being raised in North Philadelphia, people would degrade you. People would tell you that you wouldn't make it just because you live in a terrible place with useless people. Have you ever wondered if you would actually make it out of the hood? Contemplating about your future, not wanting to end up like the crackhead up to no good at the end of the block, or the one lady half naked asking for money in the middle of the street. This was one of the two things I did not miss during my time living there. Born and partially raised in the area of North Philadelphia, this my first home I could remember. I can remember having a memorable time with my sister running up and down the crooked sidewalk with the next door neighbors, playing tag. Running as fast as I could to get away, laughing and out of breath. SMACK, I hit the ground. Scraping my knee after I stumble over the uneven concrete. Shed tears as I saw this big nasty scrape on my knee, a lot of blood drop down. After getting it cleaned, I continued to play roughly like nothing happened. As I grew, I started to realize more of my surroundings.

Entering the towering doors of a real school with kids my age and much older was very exciting for me. My school being walking distance opened my eyes to the environment I come from. Seeing how people litter like it's okay or watching now people walk around asking anyone for money. Everything was moving very quickly, like everyone and everything had things to do and places to be. "Is this the real world?" I would ask myself. I walked to school at 6:00 in the morning with my mom, not far from Temple Hospital. I've seen people I wouldn't call my neighbors but people that recognized my mom, I don't know where from but they would stop us. They would come up to us and say "good morning" or "how are you."



### **Elliott Byrd**



I am from magic marbles found in sun-burnt parking lots, ones you can peer through into an upside-down world. Ladybug funerals, and Chinese takeout splattered across the condo floor. Solitary wedding ring discarded on the stairs. I am from grubby hands holding each other. Walking past the homeless men's barking dogs on the way to the Grocery Outlet ("bargain market"). From the wreckage of shattered glass and brownie bits that slipped from my mother's hands on the walk to her friend's house. Crash so sudden against the pavement that my five-year-old self cried out "was there an earthquake?".

I am from Douglas Firs, from poorly kept yards overgrown with dandelions. A few years later, I'm from a rusted fire escape. Cigarette butts and marijuana buds dropped carelessly by our upstairs neighbor. From little science lessons at the scratched up kitchen table, feet swinging, kicking, against the old chair legs.

I am from blanket forts. Shielding me and the baby from the explosive arguments in the next room. Cold light spilling from underneath the door. Her little halo of curls sticking staticky to our makeshift hideout.

I'm from fire alarms in the middle of the night and finding refuge in unexpected places. From mac-n-cheese and trampolines. From playing pretend, and getting too real. I'm from being read to on the bus, fingers brushing the pages of the public library's paperbacks. Learning to understand from the stained and dusty seats.







# 

The flower petals disappear. The last one alone in the green mellow field. It stops blooming and starts to curve downwards. It's scared, it'll wilt away alone. But the sudden coincidental sunlight reaches them. That warmly shone on their petals was the flower that was destined to bloom alongside them. Their petals are glowing with warmth. They were meant to reach one another at a specific moment like they are each other's soulmates. A soulmate is a soul that is destined to meet mine and to have an immediate connection, in any lifetime. The wilted flower begins to bloom again with its special flower. Their vines intertwined tightly. Together, they blossomed in the bright light. Since the day I met my soulmates, my winter heart bloomed into a spring

It's no coincidence that all of our souls met and are still intertwined to this day. Our hearts and souls won't change. When we met each other on that dazzling day, a pink light begins to ignite my heart. My heart, I pick out the color that is my soulmate. Soulmates, I believe they truly do exist, whether it be platonic or romantic, there must be people out in the world that are destined to meet me. In my case, I have met my platonic soulmates. However, there is a missing petal, my romantic soulmate. Nevertheless, that is my belief and it will continue to blossom like the special petals that landed on my heart that day.

flower.

CW ritten by 15 yro Cynthia on February



I wont shut up about....
Folktales and faeries

My birth flowers are...

Holly and narcissus

In an apocolypse, I would survive...

A decent few weeks. I've got some basic jack-of-all-trades skills

What song would play in the background of your movie?

"Talk it Up" by Sammy Rae and The Friends

**Dream Career?** 

Published novelist, and comic creator

#### Excerpts from May Memoir

She is in the living room

The TV turns her into shades of blue and green and yellow, a stained glass untainted by the dense smoke of adulthood and awash in a holy purity. Spells and enchantments fill the screen, beckoning to her, drawing her forth into the story. Princesses, faeries, and faerie princesses echo the dress-up clothes she has adorned herself with in her long-standing ritual. She watches the movies again and again, content to have something that is truly her own, content to understand the same stories in a new way every time.

She is a princess, an enchantress, casting the whole wild world under her spell. Drenched in the weightlessness of girlhood, for moments here and there, she believes herself to be light enough to fly. Perhaps she is. Perhaps every moment in her life has somehow led up to the one where her feet finally leave the ground. Perhaps one day a beautiful enchantress will come to her door, disguised as an old beggar woman, rose in hand, and she will plant the rose in her garden of dreams. Perhaps, perhaps, perhaps. The tales allow her to believe in the possibilities of it all, and she thinks –

I have never loved anything as much as I love this.

She is in the classroom.

The teacher places a book in front of her, brand new and shiny, pale green and silver, telling a story of hope and courage and the wonder she thought adults were supposed to leave behind. Open its pages, and out dances a maelstrom of insanity, of wild beasts yet untamed and little boys and girls escaping into entirely different worlds. It encircles her, drawing her in, whispering secrets in the soft cadence of imagination. Finally, she can once more follow her heart out the window, into the skies and stars, breathing in time with the planets. She looks around and finds she is in the same place she has always been. But for a moment, she was an autumn wind that has just begun to remember what it means to feel truly chilled and alive.

She yearns to have that moment back like a caged animal craves freedom. She realizes for the first time that someone wrote this, that they spent their life creating a story, and she knows with absolute certainty that that is all she wants to do for the rest of her life. She is a writer. She always was. She holds the book to her chest and thinks-

I have never loved anything as much as I love this.





TO READ MORE SCAN THIS

### THE START OF COREDELIA

The nearest town, a week away on foot, only seems to know her as a myth to give hope to the families who may lose their children to the forest. A woman with dark hair to match her skin that sinks to her waist with a smile that carries comfort throughout her home. Never easy to find, as her home is constantly moving, but if you do spot her it's usually days without seeing another human, long after whoever you brought with you has either left or disappeared for... other reasons. She welcomes you into her home, reminding you of your own mother no matter who you are as she sits a warm bowl of homemade soup in front of you. Making sure you're patched and packed before going to bed and finishing your journey with her map the next day. Mama Gracie, a home way, way from home The myth continues with her meeting the god of healthy bones and large waters, Merfyn. It's not often people make it to her with another by their side, but she never fails to have a meal already in her pot for all of them. It had been weeks, he'd tell her, venturing to the next town in hopes of making a trail for anyone who wished to follow. She's as the story a million times, "I know, dear, you won't be the last" her voice cut through his worries as though she were the embodiment of home herself. His partner, quick to get some rest, asks where they may sleep and she sends him on his way, but Merfyn stays. His questions seem to have no end until finally he asks more about her. "Gracie, you do this alone?" "Well, of course, ain't nobody else in these trees" Her giggles fill his mind, hugging it before leaving him desperate for more. "Doesn't it get lonely? You must miss having company, haven't you thought about doing anything... more?" his voice hushed, as though he knew he was stepping too far, yet she only sent him a smile. "You're not wrong, darlin', a home ain't much of home if there ain't nobody to share it with once in a while, but I ain't never thought of givin' this up." "Never?" "Neva" Silence, it hangs over them like a blanket before her voice cracks through, "Get on to bed, sweetie, you gotta leave early 'morrow if you wanna make it to the next town over by Saturday's sun down."



My dream career is a Substance Abuse Counselor, thoughsoemthing I do plan on writing a memoir at some point as well.

Azure Dover

In my movie Cranes in the Sky by Solange will be playing in the background

Azure Dover Azure Dover

My birth flower is a daffodil

won't shut up about-Nicki Minaj looking at me when I went to her

concert

I can't write right now... I'm sick

I would

Azure Dover

survive an

apocalypse

for however

long it lasts.

Azure Dover



pulling at the cheeks of a woman's face, light skin colliding with the warm sun. In order for me to talk about hating my name, I have to talk about the person who gave it to me first. My mother's life changed when she was only eighteen, her belly bringing a different being into the world, her bag filled with books adding onto her newly formed heaviness. There sat a girl who didn't know where to go next in life, a girl who sat in between people bombarding outside of abortion clinics and a girl who questioned becoming a mother. A girl that went to senior prom with breast milk spilling onto her dress, and a baby on her hip at her graduation. That's when I came into this story, me and my mother's story.

"You changed my life, Aniya, when I had you, that's when my life was complete." For a good portion of my life, me and my mother were all I ever knew. Even while she was battling postpartum depression, knowing nothing at all about being a mother, making sure to save time for her babygirl, the "middle of her world". The star to her moon, my mother's world revolved around me and mine was simply centered around her. She was my idol. She is my idol, the way she would tell me stories about her childhood, the way her heart picked up and her dimples popped through as she smiled upon

reminiscing. I sat there, pupils peering back into hers with the same expression, dying to hear about the tales she got herself into her and how we were so much alike. But, most of all, I loved hearing about the sacrifices she made just to give me the life that she didn't have.





### \*\*Nova's Clarity Piece \*\*\*

I came across the term Non-binary while reading online stories near the end of 7th grade. "Non-binary- a term for people whose gender identity doesn't sit comfortably with 'man or 'woman'." I didn't suddenly see the light, or have a month-long crisis over my identity. To others, this would have been some huge revelation, but not me. I saw this and I knew it fit. Everything I felt over the past 12 years of my life coming together. Not feeling like a woman, but never feeling the need to be a man, I was non-binary. I was different from the other girls because I wasn't one.

When I came out to my mother, she told me 12 was young to know what the words that spilled from my mouth truly meant. That my gender and sexuality were things I shouldn't be thinking about, and I should place comfort in my body below grades. She told me that I was not normal and she couldn't call me "they" because people would look at her weird. No matter how I felt, I would always be seen as her daughter. I felt a massive crack tear through the carefully crafted ceramic cover, and if one were to look close enough, they'd see my bitter frown. Up until this point, I never once thought that if I dared to step outside my designated box I'd be judged. I never thought my own mother would ban me from having friends over because I can't be trusted when I'm unsure of my gender for weeks at a time. I never thought after years of finding a home something like my gender would be the thing to tear my relationship apart.

I faced my closest friends and shyly told them I may not be the girl they always knew. We sat in math class on a warm May afternoon, vines creeping up the wall of our trailer classroom. I forced back all my fears as I laid all my vulnerabilities on the table. I admitted that I hated the little checkboxes handed to me and would rather run freely between them.

#### they laughed.

they laughed right in my face, and the poorly constructed confidence I'd built crumbled. My now ex-girlfriend joked that if I identified as Non-binary then she identified as a seagull, while my other friend said she couldn't use my preferred pronouns, that "they/them" were just too confusing for her. Instead, she called me an "it" like an object. I put back on the mask with a few more cracks, cursing myself for ever showing my vulnerability, and accepted it all. I should have hated her. I should have hated the fact that she'd rather call me 'it', not 'they'. But I didn't. I honestly didn't mind being called It/It's.





### I Won't Shut Up About...

Fan fiction and my silly little characters

### What song would play in the background of my movie?



Record Player by Daisy

the Great



### How many days would you last in the apocalypse?

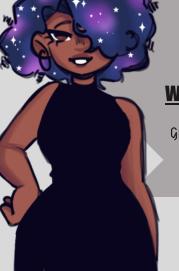
A week, tops.

#### My birth flower is...

Marigold and the Cosmos

### **What's My Dream Career?**

Graphic Designer or Game Writer



### MEET THE WRITER



An excerpt from I Am Facing the Wall

. 0.000 I am facing the wall,

The smell of the carcass is dancing around me, I can hear her separating the sinew from muscle, I can hear the quiet snaps of this disgusting things threads, The light must draping itself on the edge of her knife, As she holds the soft fur in her hands.

Mussing and ruffling it. It must still be warm. As she tosses aside bones. Femur, Fibula, Tibia,

I'll find them somewhere around her home again, In some project that she handles with as much love. As she handles the body.

> I am facing the wall. Worshiping her life, While she unmakes this monster, Playing god.

I am facing the wall, A new smell is pricking my nose now, She has found the black of the meat. I turn my feet up as the ichor flows plentifully around them, Its boiling, bubbling, some lands on my neck, It's itching its way under my skin but I don't dare disturb this peace with my deafening scratches.

read the full poem here!





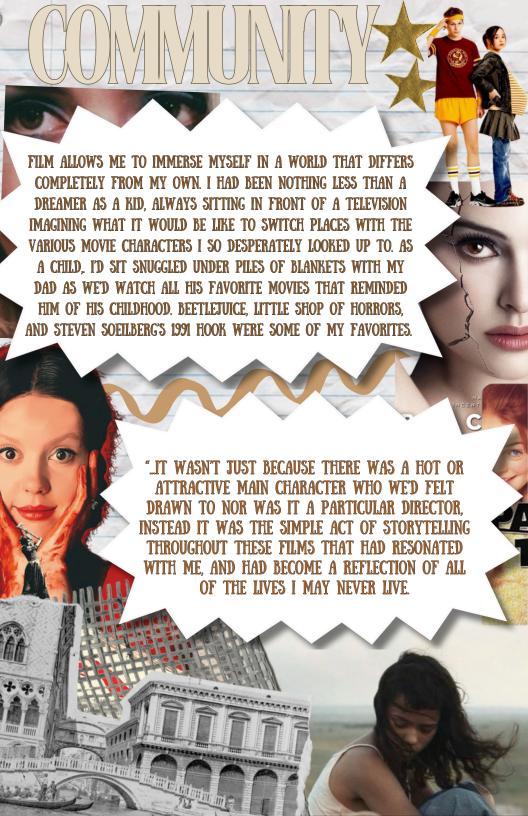






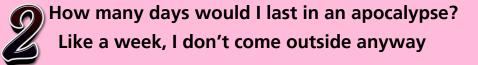












What song would play in the background of my movie?
King for A Day by pierce the veil

What is my birth flower?
The Water Llly

What is your dream career

My dream career is to be a cosmetologist, I

also want my own salon.

### My Clarity piece

I'm older now, my stomach doesn't attract stares anymore; my shirts flow smoothly down, without a bulge making them stick out. My waist goes inward a few inches, then outward adding a curve to the rest of it. My face, still cowards under the fine lines and dark circles, but it glows now. It's still not enough, I'm trying to learn how to accept myself, I'm trying to learn healthy coping skills. I'm convinced it'll never be truly just for me though. I put so much effort into myself trying to make other people happy, when in the end, I'm just sucking my own happiness away. I know it's not okay for someone to claim they want to be with you, but in reality it's only for your body. But I'd do what you want in order for your lies to gaslight me, and fill my head with pretty images of the girl with the perfect body. I bullied myself into having a good body and being pretty, it wasn't hard work that made me like this. I want to reverse it so bad, but the clock just won't rewind. It's hard to love myself when people around me convinced me not to, that I wasn't worth my own self love. Now when I don't eat, I'll get "the talk" about how girls would kill to have my body, about how I'm actually pretty regardless of the ignorant comments. When I look in the mirror, I want to see someone worth my love, someone worth being wooed over. I don't want to be the girl who everyone lusts over, I just want to be the girl that lusts over herself. I try to uplift myself, time to time, but afterwards I always get that feeling that there's always someone that looks better, that I shouldn't waste my time trying to beautify myself because no one would care. Sometimes, I wonder if I'm going insane, or if all along what they said was true. This life could be a dream, and I could be the ideal girl in my head, everyone loves her, she's so pretty, and her body is so good. I'm not that girl, I won't be anytime soon either. So my tears will continue falling, and my journey towards the light has just begun. In search of validation, I've lost myself. I need closure, I need clarity.





#### Wrath

"The walk home is a long one filled with dread and sorrow. The clouds fully cover up the sun in a dark gray and it looks like it is one the verge of a thunderstorm but it still won't rain. I want it to rain though. I want it to just pour down on me, maybe even wash me away.

Wash me away from this neighborhood, from my school, even from my family. I want it to take me to a single island, where it will just be Sarah and I."



### Questionnaire

#### I WON'T SHUT UP ABOUT.

Glee. Glee is my favorite T.V. Show and probably the best t.v. show on earth in my opinion. Every chance I get I mention Glee or if I hear a song that was used in Glee I have to go off about it

### WHAT SONG WOULD PLAY IN THE BACKGROUND OF YOU MOVIE?

It would definitely have to be the song that plays in the beginning title credits of the movie "Ladybird". I really relate to the movie and I think that song is just so classic in a way.

### HOW MANY DAYS WOULD YOU LAST IN THE APOCALYPSE?

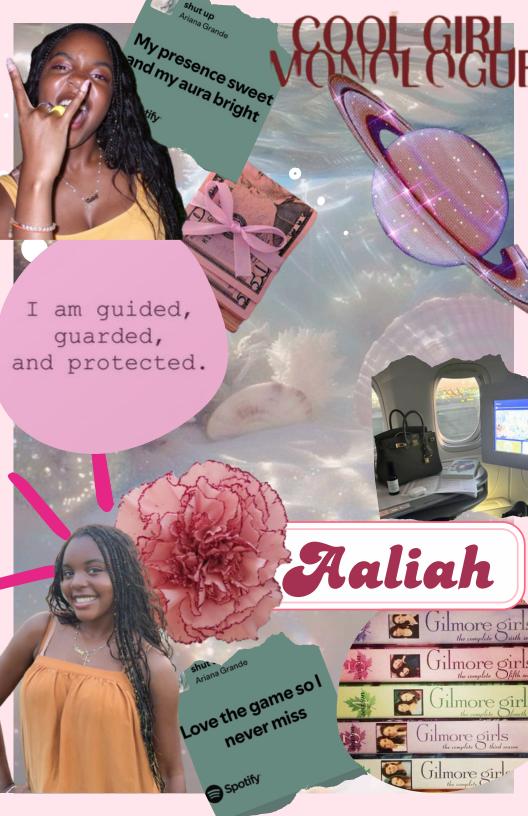
I'd be the one to start the apocalypse.

#### WHAT'S YOUR BIRTH FLOWER?

My birth flower is a Daffodil.

### WHAT'S YOUR DREAM CAREER?

My dream career is to be a writer however I am still debating if I want to be a novel writer or screenwriter



Silence takes over Irving Street every morning, no matter the season. The squirrels are Irving's morning birds. Their squawking never fails to wake anyone out of their deep slumber. The moment [ step outside, the silence sends a warm vibration through the clear air to my humbled soul. I sometimes forget where I am. How can this be the same place where everyone was woken up by the overbearing sounds of rioting and sirens just a few blocks away? I take in my peaceful surroundings in case it's the last time I feel comfort within my mind. The brisk wind makes the black bags from the corner store dance in circles like a dog trying to bite its own tail. Irving sometimes gets caught up in Philadelphia's many problems. However, she always finds her way back to her therapeutic nature.





#### search for anything... Q









love being private and low-key. Always out of the mix, drama free and without ake and toxic people around me. My

#일이니자44와·이노 씨이 좋아 ? 중대한 선택

#### angel leung

an avid football enjoyer :p

edit profile



*number one* pedri fan & vini jr, jude bellingham, rodrygo, guler defender.









angel leung @girldoobee

# i won't shut up about... real madrid, soccer, pedri, ten things i hate about u, love island USA s6, and bridgerton.



angel leung @girldoobee

# how many days would i survive in an apocalypse?... five hours, but 20 days if i'm with will ferrell from elf.



angel leung @girldoobee

#what song would play in the background of your movie? espresso, don't smile, decode, and tornado warnings by sabrina carpenter



angel leung @girldoobee

#what's your birth flower?... daisies and sweet peas  $:D \heartsuit$ 



angel leung @girldoobee

# what's your dream career?... an environmental policy analyst.











snippet of i know a girl like amy march



#realmadrid

other ppl u might
know!



cynthia 9ÏG olivia rodriguez that little mexican girl that be crying



rena **೨**९ ... 0/10!

#### author's note:

this writing piece is lowkey a tad bit corny. :/ but #iheartamymarch!!!

Works Cited Little Women. Directed by Greta Gerwig, performances by Florence Pugh, Timothee Chalamet, Emma Watson, Meryl Streep, Eliza Scanlen, and Saoirse Ronan, Columbia Pictures, 2019.



### angel leung

posted on september 5th 4:13 p.m.

When watching media, it's common to find yourself relating to a character or hoping you find someone who can represent at least a salt of your experiences. Whether they're meaningful or entertaining television shows. I do it occasionally when I notice that someone shares the same bad habits, it runs personal for me.

There's something special about having a character with similar moments you've gone through because it reminds you that you're not alone in that experience. When I watched Little Women, I cried a lot—or every time Florence Pugh who played Amy March appeared on screen. My eyes hurt the hardest, twisting into small tomatoes as Amy expressed her emotions of anger and sadness, even when she was wrong in the situation. I felt guilty for not thinking she was a bad person for burning Jo's manuscripts. I thought it was reasonable after Amy had done it to get back at her sister for not inviting her to the play the rest of the family was invited to.

My spine tensed up as I watched Jo storm into the living room.

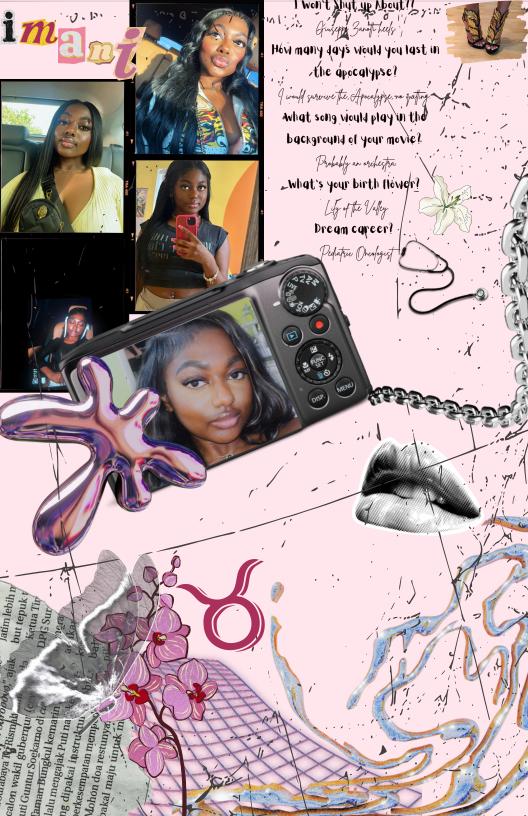
"Has anyone taken my novel?" Jo stood at the doorway, silently fuming. Silence settles in the living room. Amy flipped through her book sarcastically and feigned innocence on her face.

"Amy, you've got it," Jo stated. Her eyes glared into Amy's sitting figure. Amy denied, "No, I haven't."

A fight between Jo and Amy broke out. Meg rushed to pull Jo off of Amy, Meg's hands restrained Jo's arms. Amy admitted as she shouted in Jo's face, "I burnt it up! I burnt up your book! I told you I'd make you pay and I did!" (00:47:39-00:48:08).

I wasn't mad at Amy March because I saw myself in her. When I was twelve and first watched the film, I didn't blink as I witnessed a reflection of myself unfold in front of me. Now, at sixteen, I gulped as my lips sewed themselves shut.

<3...







I would last the whole

apocalypse, but only if it was
the Walking Dead. Otherwise
I'd be out day 1



#### Hand Piece - Brave McHugh

There is a pause that appears only in the afternoons. I can't pinpoint how, or why, or when this space was created, but no matter the reason, this single moment of pure boredom is an inevitable part of my routine. I'll often try to fill it by doing things I enjoy; reading, writing, listening to music. However, today is different. I find myself sitting on my bed, in that moment, and somehow, I cannot figure out how to fill it. After a quiet second, my eyes drift down to the palms of my hands that lie neatly in my lap. I've barely noticed that they're there. I flip them front and back, inspecting the way that they move, the bend of each of my knuckles. My fingers curl into a fist and I watch the wrinkled skin smooth and stretch. I study the tips of each of my fingers, noticing the slight difference in the length of each nail. Some are even and level, with only slight indents and scuffs, while others are rough and broken from bad habits. I push and pull on each of my fingers and crack the stiff joints. I let myself examine the hands in front of me, feeling over each raw, pink patch, rough from insatiable itching, the skin beneath numb to my touch. Then, I am drawn to the small red dot that lives just below the knuckle of my right pinky finger.

I remember the day I got that. It was the summer of 2012. We'd all gone on a trip to Sesame Place. Looking back, the line was to long to have just been for that one ride. No one would actually wait that long for a carousel, right? But, I was too giddy to care, distracted by the floating Grover seat and Big Bird bench with a spot open just for me. Mom and I made it so close to the entrance, our hands interlocked with each others, when the boy waiting in front of us began waving his own around, swatting at nothing. I couldn't figure out what had set the boy off, and I didn't care. For those few moments, he was just one other person in my way to finding a seat. We continued to wait, and soon, the line began to move and the boy was forgotten. He'd stopped waving around and I was getting ready to make my way on to the ride.

My excitement faded, though, when there was a sharp pain in the palm of my hand. The pain was quick and exaggerated. It moved from the spot under my pinky, along the length of my fingers, and then spread across the rest of my palm. It burned in a way I had never felt before. That's when I realized that, although the child from before was

long forgotten, the wasp he had been fighting off never really left. It had just decided to turn its anger to me. I began to cry. We were standing just 10 feet from the carousel's entrance and I began to cry. I had never been stung before, never even seen a wasp that close.

I felt my Mom pull us out of line. The ride was forgotten, just as the boy had been moments earlier, and all that mattered in that moment was finding the rest of our family.



## astrid mcswiggan !!!!!!

My dream careers are comic book author and/or children's book author. I would also like to be a housewife. That sounds cool.

The song that would play in a movie about my life is be Monkeys Spinning Monkeys by Kevin MacLeod.





I would survive about 6 days in the apocalypse.

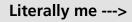
I won't shut up about seals, cats, Identity V, Shameless, MILGRAM, Panic! at the Disco, and Fall Out Boy.







My birth flowers are asters and morning glories.



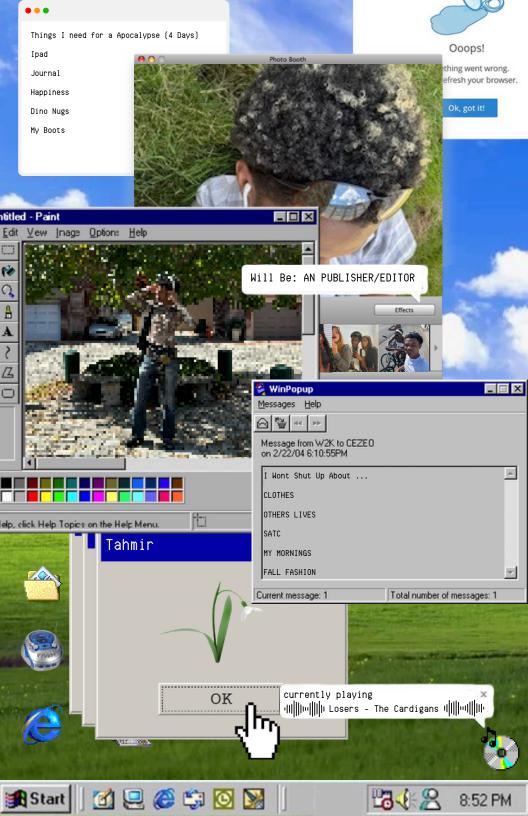


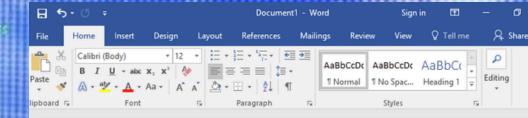


#### **Self Portrait of a Taxidermy Chimera**

Warm clouded muddy marbles
To feign the concept of sight
Secured by wires, glue, and hollowed eyelids
All of which stands eternally still
Contorted by stitches and zeal
Slick skin flush to speckled fur
Neanderthal ridge, my ingrown horn
A hoof raised higher than scaly webbed toes
Tilted hips, a wing stretched
Across the thorax is a paw
And what is now paper mache and sawdust
Was once a thousand scattered dreams







"Would you consider me a nice or mean person?"

"Mean." said with a smile.

"Mean," said with a giggle.

"Oh you're definitely not nice,"

I am the type of person that doesn't care to mince their words. To filter out the rubbish from the helpful. To care what others truly think of said words. In fact, "I dont care" might be my favorite combination of words in the human language. It holds such power over me, because I don't. I don't care much about…much. Not to be confused with my affinity for having opinions, of which I have plenty. But do I care about those things? I couldn't say I do. But to bring it back, I've always wondered why others said I was mean, until I met someone like me. She was a short, stout girl. Honestly it's hard to put her person into words for her energy transcended her physical appearance. She had a blase attitude, walked around like she owned the globe and I am quite sure she might've. In most conversations I witnessed, she walked away and I'd watch the other person's heart shrivel in hate. How could a person cause this much disdain? What could she possibly be saying to these people? Then we met.

"Who should share out first?"

"I'll go." And then I did. I spoke with confidence, sharing my little paragraph created in the last 10 minutes left in the assignment time. I mean who cares, right?

"Sounds a little rushed." Huh? Blood shot to my ears and traveled to my fingertips. "I mean I think you could do better, this paragraph doesn't make sense." Confused doesn't begin to explain my reaction. She was breaking the tried and true school method. I mean, everyone knew that. When someone shares out, you're not supposed to give them valid critics. You're not the teacher! You're supposed to nod and clap if it warrants. If you have to talk, at most you point out grammatical errors but other than that you sing your praises. What was wrong with her? And she didn't even notice my eternal turmoil, because she didn't care. I should've realized then and there. It was like looking practically in the mirror. There's some cliche here about not realizing your own flaws and unfortunately I fall victim. Because she was a bit, actually a lot, of me. Blunt, at times rude, indifferent to others and the social rules. My encounter with this version of myself I think about often. I think about it every time someone bucks back their face at my words, everytime words that maybe should have stayed dormant slip out my mouth.

There's a parallel between not caring and meanness I soon realized. That, obviously, if you don't care for others, they will soon not care for you. They will begin to see you as rotten and audacious. A knave with no etiquette. So I sort of watched in real time as people's perception changed as well as my own. I was not a renowned mean person. I was rude and cutting to my peers, always had something nasty to say, and lacked a bone of empathy. That's what was said, and could I really deny it. Are you anything else but people's perception of you? What makes you you to others?



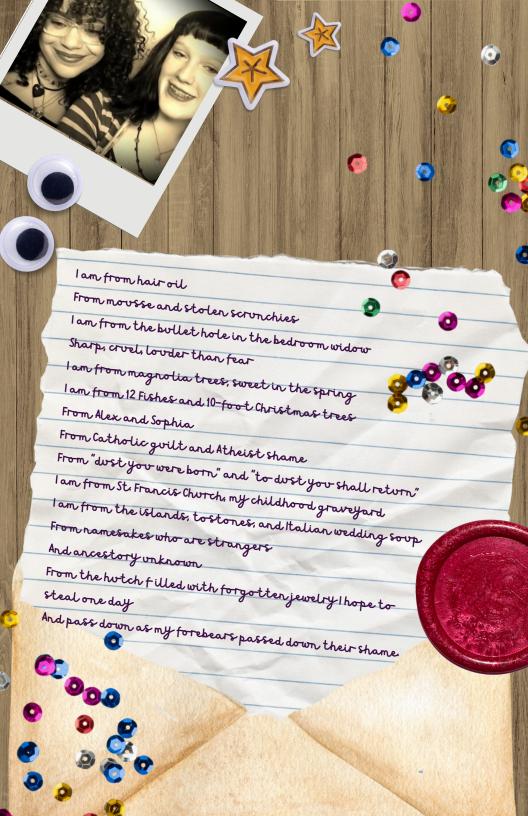


To my 8-year-old-self, my school was like the sun; everywhere I went, it followed, like how it did when I was in my mommy's spotless, black Honda's backseat. I made my way into the small 2nd-grade classroom, the midnight blue painted walls that should have brightened up the room only made me homesick. I didn't know anyone there, but they all remembered each other from the previous year. I fought the spiraling Milky Way in my stomach from bubbling up my throat, out my mouth, and onto the rough, carpeted floor.

read more:









### YouTube







## ABDULAKHIR





I WON'T SHUT UP ABOUT HOW GOOD TEEN WOLF IS.

BLACK CHARACTERS NEVER MAKE IT TO THE END LETS BE REAL.

PD PLAY THE BEGINNING BY FLAWED

MY BIRTH FLOWER IS HOLLY MY DREAM CARRER IS TO BE A

BILLONAIRE PLAYBOY.









#### IT'S COLD

"It's cold mommy." The toddler said while trying to snuggle deeper into their thin burgundy jacket.

"I know Micky, but you gotta wait baby. The trains are almost here okay?" She said while trying to pull him closer to give him the little bit of heat she had.

One more minute she thought; one more minute and the train would finally come. As the frigid blew against her brown chapped lips and her fingers began to go numb as she squeezed against her son. Praying to god for his help while snot ran down her nose, and tears kissed on her cheeks leaving a salty taste on her mouth. She could feel her strength slowly going away and her grip losing as each second went by. They had been waiting for almost an hour in the middle of a snow storm with no coats or form of heat. As snow landed against Mickey's nose and melted at first touch he felt frozen. As if he was dropped into a bowl of ice and couldn't escape from the cold that laid beneath it. His mom stayed still. Like a body with no soul, but enough strength to pull him close.

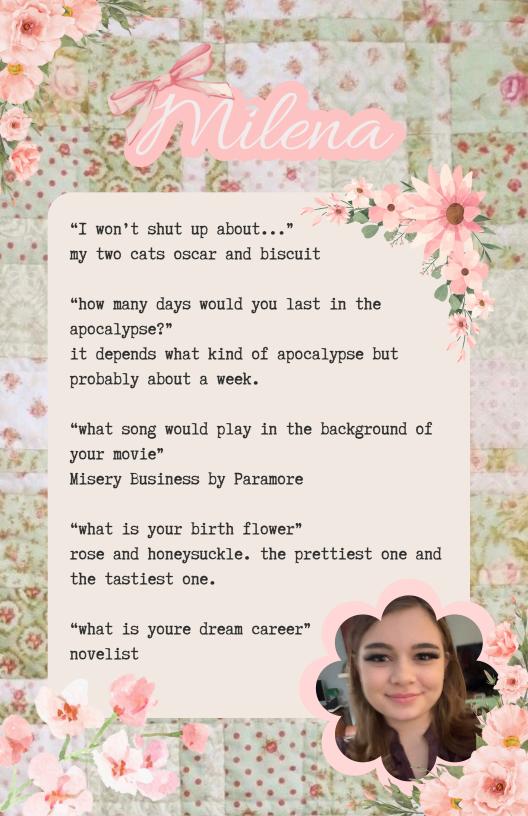
"Mommy...mommy," he cried while trying to get her attention.
"Where's the train?"

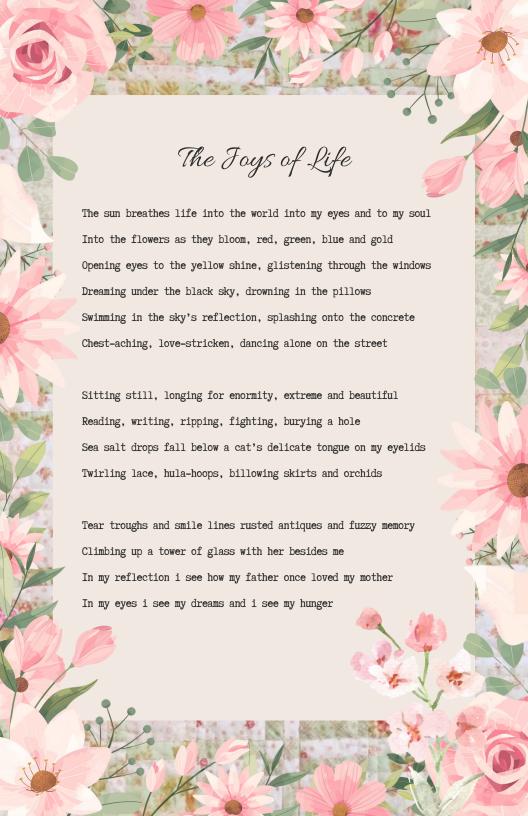
"It's coming baby, it's coming." She said as her foot began to lose feeling.

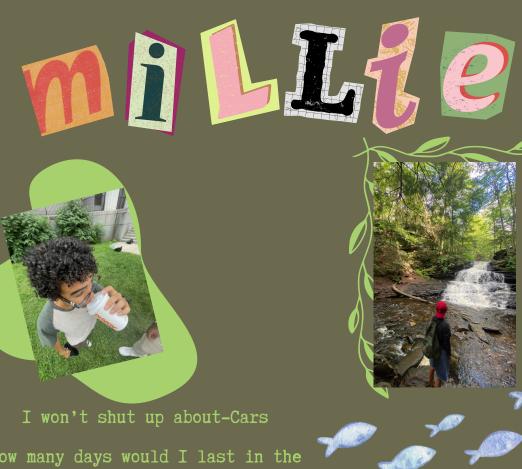
"Here say it with me baby, say Please god, please make the train come. Please let us feel the warmth of your love and your rejection of the cold. Please god." She whispered to him.

"P-Please god...please let us be warm. Please make the train come." He said while closing his eyes and facing the subtle darkness that hid behind his eyelids.

"There you go baby. Just keep praying...the train will come sooner or later, baby."







ow many days would I last in the apocalypse-6 months

ng would I play in the background of ir movie-Gypsy by Fleetwood Mac

What is my birth flower -My birth flower is water lily and delphinium



My dream job is - anything with sports marketing

# The cockroaches of South Philadelphia

The bumps in the sidewalks remind me of when I fell off my bike when I was a child. Burnt-out cigarettes are thrown on the side of the street by the same guy who smokes the same cigarettes every day. I've never seen him stop nor quit. The older men play their game of cards outside and yell every time they lose. A group of teens lurk around the corner to find anything they can break or light on fire. Kids my age dig for money to buy cigarettes or blueberry flavored puff bars like rats in the city that look for food. Older homeless men come around and ask for money. My block is a place where people have to scavenge just to find food. Were seen as cockroaches that just got their head chopped off or a caterpillar to find a green leaf in a desert.







Something you wont shut

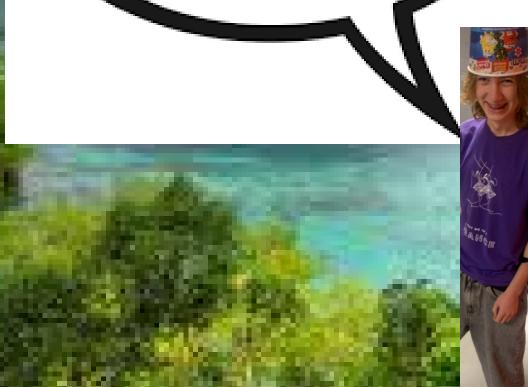
up about?

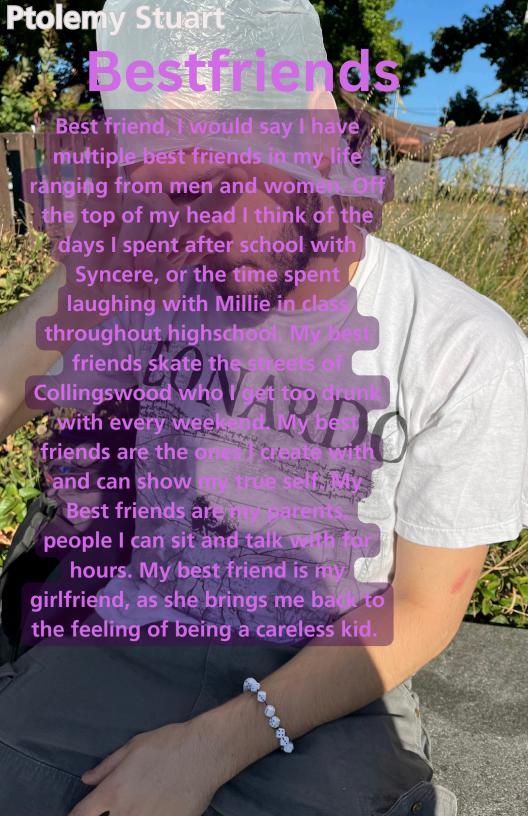
Any conversation that falls under modern hip hop would leave me endlessly talking. I love to chat about the sports of the modern day as well as decades ago.

How many days would you

If you put me in a group with the right people like people I already work well with, I could outlive the apocalypse.

last in the apocalypse?







## QUESTIONNAIRE

I won't shut up about finding new music and listening to it with my girlfriend.

If I were to find myself in the apocalypse I would either last 4 days or 4 years.

The song that could play in the background of my movie would be the song Bad Religion by Frank Ocean My Birth Flowers are Irises and Primrose.

my dream job is to work in publishing or something to do with the writing process.

## I AM FROM

I am from broken radios
from Legos and Newport cigarettes
I am from eggshell-colored paint chipping off walls
wobbly railings clutters home doused in vanilla
I am from my grandmother's daffodils
the ways they contort and never sever
I'm from caked-up faces on birthdays and freckled faces in
summertime

I'm from outstanding grudges and smart asses
from We don't do therapy to You're always welcome home
I'm from trust in god as he knows all sin
I'm from reading and my uncle's greenhouse
from homemade pizza dough and ramen in a cup
from the teeth my younger sister lost to the laundromat
the tumor that almost took my grandmother
storage unit 3507 dusty remnants of a person long gone
I am from the regrets of forgetting and the trepidations of
remembrance

I am from shoes too big and shirts too small
from hand me down and handing down
I am from constituents of my mother and father eternally
intertwined

I am a figment left behind





#### **Just Live**

Just thinkall of the possibility the inevitability of it all the amazement of living

Just wonderHow to swore through the sky
How to create life
How to fuel the fire

Just breathe
the smell of fresh dew in the morning
the cloudy gray skies
the breeze within the wind

Just feelthe rain dropping on your skin
the wind of a cold fall's night
Don't just think, wonder, breathe feel
Live

