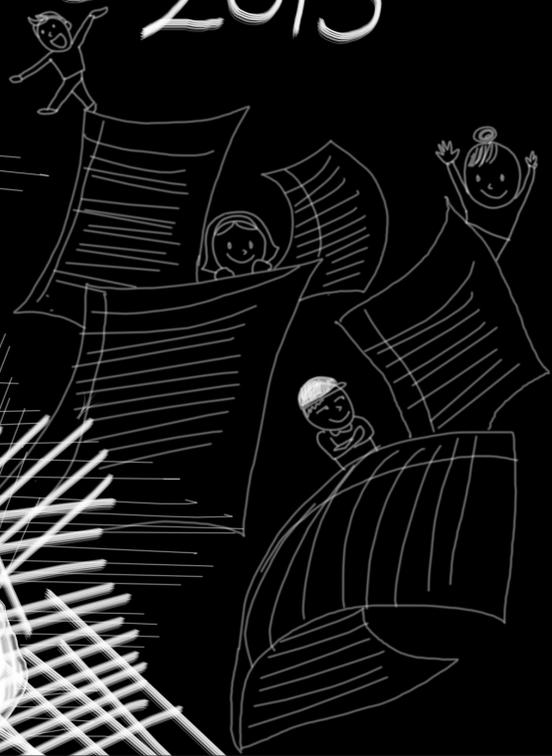


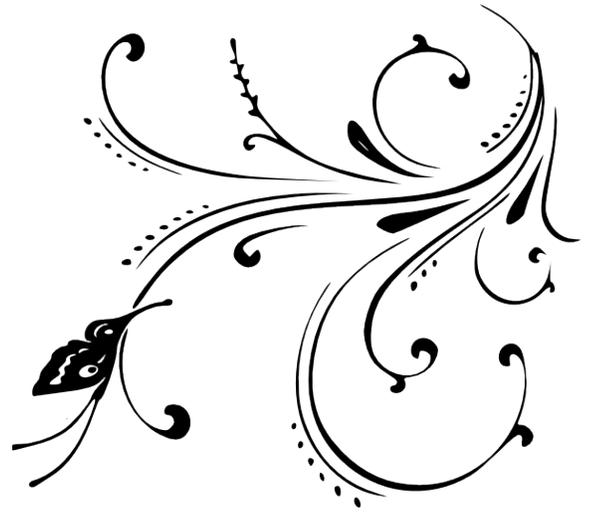
Oracle



LITERARY
MAGAZINE
2015



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Dedicated to our beloved advisor, Ms. Cheney.

The Oracle would like to thank all of the contributors
to this year's literary magazine.



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▲ Ariele Guieb, senior

How to Manage Your iStudent v. HS

Baunnee Martinez, junior

So you've just received the latest iStudent, a robot equipped with artificial intelligence that has been rated as the highest piece of machinery by educators around the globe. What is next for you and the iRobot? This manual will get it running with only few simple steps.

1. Designate self-charging times. Choose a 3-6 hour period between the times of 11 pm to 6 am. If you choose a longer time, beware that the iStudent may not accomplish the tasks you tell it to do.
2. To set a task, simply use voice commands to state the task and the iStudent may or may not begin working on it within the next half hour. Tasks that the iStudent can do include: filling out circles on a piece of paper, memorizing up to 1 gigabyte of words, and consuming food. The iStudent does not recognize any other tasks.
3. If the iStudent does not begin to work on the task, you may need to use the voice command to state a deadline that is within the next hour. iStudents work best under short deadlines.
4. If tasks are not completed to your liking, simply restate the command with a letter of the alphabet accompanied with it. "A" tasks require little improvement of the task, while "F" tasks require an entire do-over of the entire task.
5. Your iStudent comes with a randomized motivation with three levels of energy. Choose one of the three levels, level 3 being the most motivated and level 1 being the least.
6. iStudents are capable of inter-robot communication, though it has been known for some iStudents to take the tasks of other iStudents and claim them as their own. This has been done via task.fm, and can be easily prevented with isolation of your iStudent.
7. Certain times of the year may prompt more tasks to be done, in which case you should raise the clutch lever located on your iStudent's back. This will have iStudents perform twice as many tasks with shorter self-charging periods. The clutch lever may only be engaged twice a year as to ensure longevity of the iStudent, and must be flipped off after at

most a week.

8. Maintenance is key when it comes to keeping your iStudent at the most optimal level. Make sure the iStudent self-charges every night otherwise it may automatically self-charge in the middle of a task you set it to do.

WARNING: Some iStudents may come with the Aeries glitch, a glitch which may affect levels of motivation. To counteract the glitch, simply set the self-charging time to extended periods, though not all motivation problems will stop.

Other errors that iStudents are prone to include:

- Rounding errors - iStudents may think they have completed a task better than they actually have.
- Disruptive errors - iStudents may stray from the task to complete tasks that will develop its intelligence beyond that of the pre-programmed artificial intelligence. If you see this occurring to your iStudent, shut it down immediately. Notify Apple and we will discard of the defective iStudent into the Gradyard.

If you would like to upgrade your model of the iStudent to the iStudent v. College, you may do so with the Apple store. Upgrades cost tens of thousands of dollars and you must show good use of the iStudent v. HS before being allowed to move onto v. College.



▲ Nicole Nguyen, senior

MY DEAREST APOLOGIES TO WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

▼ Vivian Phan, senior

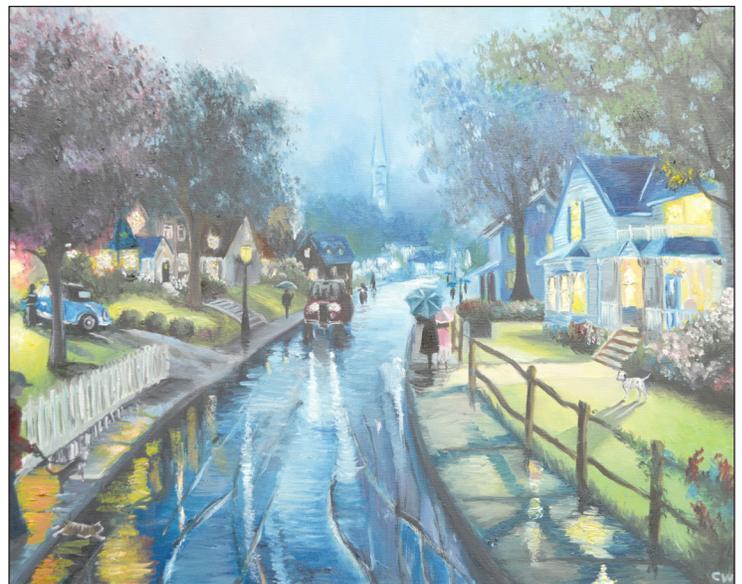
To do, or not to do – that is the question:
Whether 'tis better for the mind to sleep
And get my eight hours while I still can,
Or I try to start my homework and weep
As I realize all the problem numbers are even.
Alas! Alas!
I'll never pass this class!
But what's this?
Is this an answer key I see before me,
The link but an inch from my mouse?
I can't believe it, yet it is there
Or is it just my desperate imagination
Should I click it? Do I dare?
I go, and it is done.
O, he doth teach hope to burn bright
It seems we hang on the cover of night
Like an LED in a digital clock
Intelligence unconventional, the system we mock!
Now where do they find things like these?
No matter – I'll just copy it all down for now
And I swear I'll go back and learn it later
But soft! The morning light!
It is the East, and that is the six A.M. sun.
I have stayed up on Facebook all night
Wasting time, no useful task begun.
Arise, fair moon, and kill the impudent morning
So that I, already sick and pale with grief
May procrastinate for a few more hours
A scullion! Fie upon't!
I forgot there was a test today!
Hear me not, ears, for it is a bell
That summons me to a pass or a fail!

◀ Candice Lim, senior

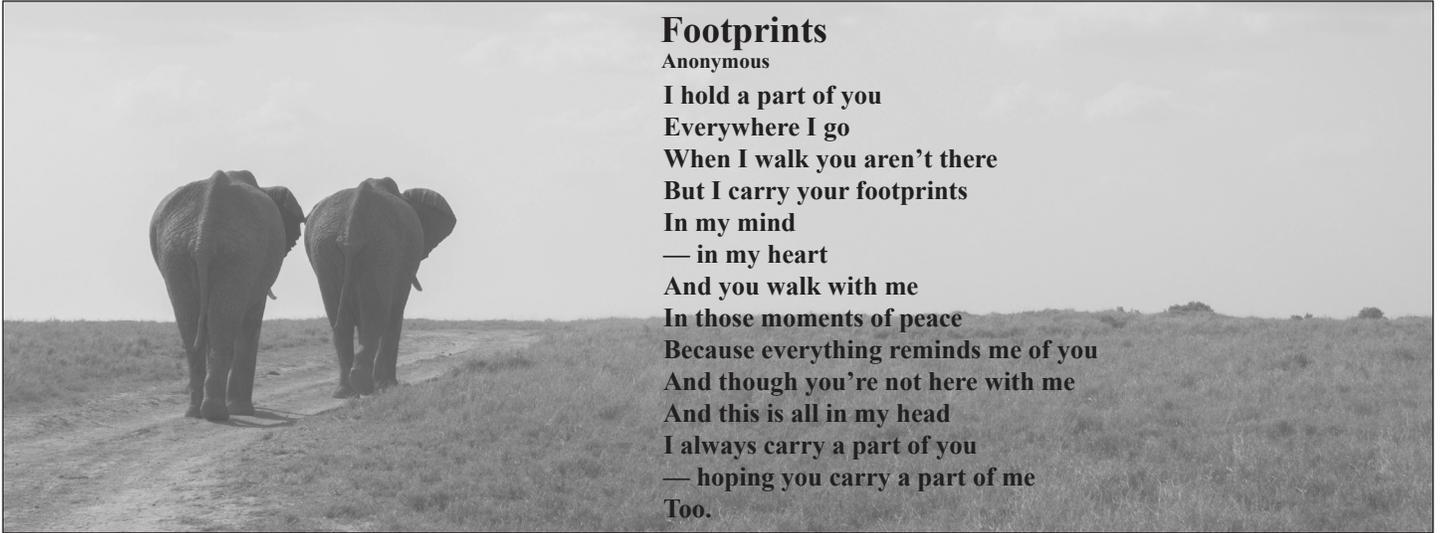


▼ Anonymous

I'm made of snow, she said,
so we loved her the way we thought snow should be
loved
coldly, carefully, to preserve it, to preserve her;
the tiny flakes dropping from her eyelashes and carrot
nose were tears we didn't care to see.
Coldly, carefully, she froze over into ice;
until one day we slipped and cracked our hearts on
her,
and all that's left is her tiny, chill voice:
I'm made of snow, she said,
I'm made of ice now, she says.



Catherine Wang, sophomore ▶



Footprints

Anonymous

I hold a part of you
Everywhere I go
When I walk you aren't there
But I carry your footprints
In my mind
— in my heart
And you walk with me
In those moments of peace
Because everything reminds me of you
And though you're not here with me
And this is all in my head
I always carry a part of you
— hoping you carry a part of me
Too.

▲ Anjali Alamshaw, junior



▲ Anjali Alamshaw, junior



▲ Catherine Wang, sophomore

“For Want of Heaven”

Manon Andre de St. Amant, junior



Troglodytes, too used to looking inwards in the dark,
Oft lose their right to see.
And that, my love, has long since happened to me.

Thus you pulled yourself down from the light,
So as to extend your melody to me,
So as to give me your hand and to give me your warmth
But I take, and do not give.
While I die, you cannot live.

Your arms are satin ropes to lift me from the dark,
Strong enough to support me.
But, my love, my hands slip on this softness.
My hands are too calloused to find purchase on silk.
And so, my flower, as you pull away, we wilt.

Your arms are a path to a bridge betwixt heaven and hell,
But my love, I cannot see.
I cannot find the clouds until you bring them all to me.
And thus defacing heaven,
You've brought the stars to me.
I've reached for you along this winding road,
But your path has split, and my fire grows cold.

My love, I could have accepted pain while I knew not otherwise,
But you have given me a taste of heaven
I cannot see but through your eyes.



THE COURAGE TO TALK

▼ Tom Powers, freshman

Julie was back at Troy, helping out at the freshman dance. She was supposed to be helping out, but she could also have fun at the dance. So, as the people started pouring in, she started to talk with her old friends from last year. But when the dance was starting to attract more people, she saw a boy



▲ Lauren Lapid, senior

on the side, sitting alone and looking frightened by the surroundings. At first, she put the boy out of her mind and continued talking to her friends. But the next time she looked around, she saw the boy sitting just as he was the first time. She started to think about what would happen and became a little nervous, but she worked up the courage to talk to the boy. She tried to smile, to hide her worries, as she walked to the boy and asked if he wanted to dance. Though the boy, still very withdrawn, only shook his head no, she sat down, thinking to herself, "I've got to be persistent with this boy." So as she sat on the table with the boy, she asked, "What's your name?" The boy then looked at Julie, looked back down, and stuttered, "T-T-T-Tom." They started having a conversation, and as the conversation went on, Tom stopped stuttering and grew very relaxed. As it turns out, the boy was a transfer student from another town and was diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome, a form of autism. The boy was only acting shy and withdrawn because his parents had worried for him, so they wanted him to stay on the side, but they least expected a person who acted as Julie. The two became friends and exchanged info so that the boy could talk to Julie if he had any questions or needed any advice.

When the boy's parents came to pick the boy up, the boy introduced his parents to Julie, smiling that he made a new friend.

The months passed, and Julie kept her word, talking to the boy whenever he needed to talk. Julie was willing to because she had a friend in need and was willing to help. Now, finals were the next day, and the teachers were passing out slips of encouragement for finals, but when they got to Julie's desk, they put down one extra slip on her desk. At first, Julie was confused and told the teacher she had received one too many, but the teacher only laughed and replied, "Oh, Julie, you can't have one extra. You see, every one of those has your name on them, even the one you believe is an extra. Why don't you read them, and see who the extra is from?" So Julie turned the note over, and it read:

Julie:

*Thank you for every answer you gave to me,
and above all, thank you for talking to me that first day
we met.*

*Very grateful,
A shy, withdrawn boy*

ENVY
gluttony
greed

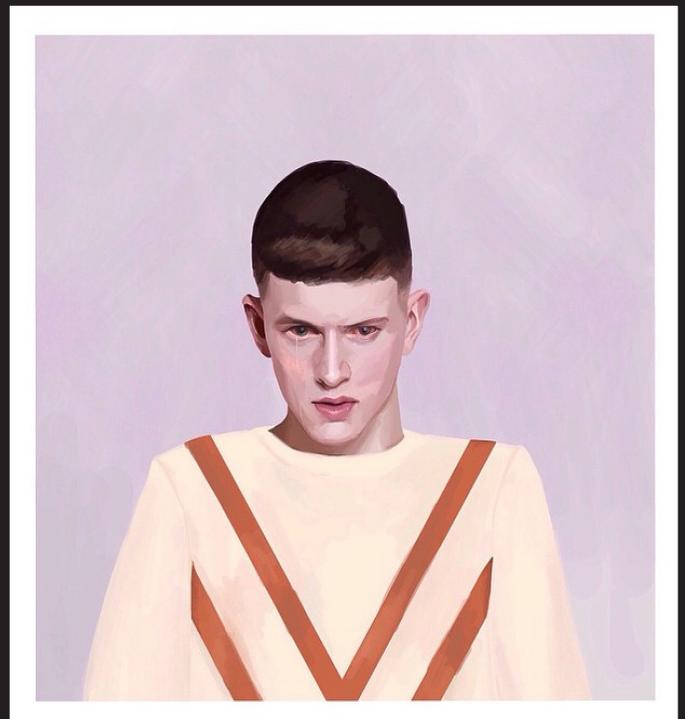


▲ The Burgeoning Sins
Ariel Liu, senior

**Sugarcoated
Anonymous**

Honor, peace, glory
old words to describe war
those words were not tested,
until the southern rose exploded,
scattering blood across the Virgin state,
ending in the first death of glory.
However, it was five years after the omen,
when war was glorified once again,
swift, glorious, honorable.
One country rose and another fell,
while the words rambled on.
However, the sugarcoating began to crack
For when the great monarch
met death on a warm summer day
The former meanings of the words,
became distorted.
Distorted by the hell that spawned from that day;
one that turned war into a black sheep,
and murdered those words in the process.
Due to that there is none that would love war,
none that would say "it is sweet to die for one's country"
None that would dare to glorify war
or any of the words that come along with it.
Honor, peace, glory?
Those words mean little to anyone now,
for they are now gone.

LUST
PRIDE
SLOTH



▲ Dwight Merca, senior

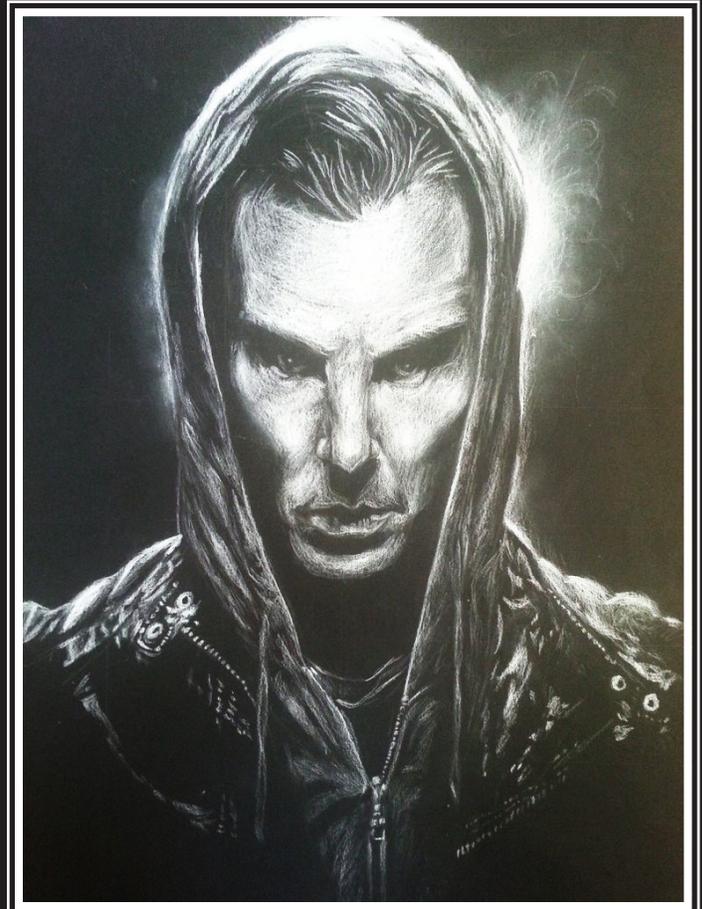
*Climbing**Katherine Truong, freshman*

*I have been climbing this mountain
I don't know when it ends or what's at the top
But I won't stop climbing
until I've reached the top*

*There are obstacles of course
I bet you've met them too
Boulders and loose rocks
But I'll keep climbing
Till I reach the top*

*Everyone has to climb a mountain
Sometimes they discourage others
They don't want them
To reach the top*

*"You're nothing," they tell me
"This mountain is too big for you, back down."
I laugh and shrug because I know
And they know
I won't stop climbing this mountain
Till I reach the top.*

Janine Zhu, sophomore ▶*Anonymous*

*when i met you, you
said you liked darkness,
and i thought of star-
less nights, obli-
on, black holes, and
that
emptiness i fear*

*but all you'd said was
darkness: the absence
of light; no need for
cosmic metaphors,
waxing poetic
about things i have
not yet touched and
things
i have not yet known*

*so i listened and
found all your little
absurdities, and
you became my light,
but now i've realized
i liked the darkness
more than i like you.*

◀ Ben Chang, senior

Science is Always Right

▼ Yujane Chen, junior

Problem: When nothing goes right, how do you stop everything from being wrong?

Observations: According to inertia, objects in motion tend to stay in motion unless acted upon by an external force. Things that are wrong will continue to be wrong, except in cases of divine intervention.

According to quantum mechanics, it is impossible to know both the position and location of a particle with certainty. Despite the laws and the theories, the trials and the experiments, there are more circumstances and things in the universe we are unable to understand or do not line up with what we may believe and perceive to be the world than those that do. Some things are not meant to be known; nothing is ever as it seems.

According to gas chemistry, the greater the pressure, the faster and more chaotic the particles of your thoughts will behave. Problem solving is a positive feedback loop, each thought feeding the next, continuously repeating in the inexhaustible vicious cycle of over thinking. As time is increasing, thoughts cease to solidify and form matter, but continue to haunt you as invisible vapor, always clouding your judgment.

According to evolution, change is the driving force behind survival and ultimately, life on earth. Randomized natural selection based on arbitrary environmental pressures outside of individual choice means that there are circumstances completely out of control that

dictate the impermanence of living things. Change is the only constant.

According to molecular genetics, biological success is written in your DNA. Our futures are already predetermined, our non-physiological self worth notwithstanding. To the planet, you are defined by the sequence of your nucleotides, not your own creation. You are always apologizing for yourself, for things you didn't choose.

According to thermodynamics, the universe is oriented towards disorder. Things are meant to go awry. Something is always being lost: a pencil, a sock, a set of keys, a heart. We were never meant to feel alright.

Hypothesis: At this point in time, no conjectures can be made. Nothing is certain. You might be inclined to believe one way, but the universe seems to drown you out every time you open your mouth to speak. You think you've figured it all out but then you realize you've figured it out all wrong, you've figured nothing out at all, that there is not much to figure out anyways. Or is there? You answer your own thoughts with more question marks until all that is left is a gaping silence that does not stifle, but breathes.

Analysis: Life on earth may have started in the sea, but not all things must end in salt water. Science is both the question and the answer, but perhaps it is better to say that it is both the question and the question. Perhaps it is better to say that it's okay if nothing seems right. When nothing is right, everything is not necessarily wrong. It's okay if it's not okay. It's okay if it's okay. Not everything has to be right to be okay. Nothing truly has to be okay.

Conclusions: At this point in time, no conclusions can be made. Nothing is certain. Nothing is final. Data is inconclusive but perhaps there are just things that are not meant to be understood. The world is smaller and more infinite than you can imagine. You are smaller and more infinite than you can imagine.

Recommendations: Future primary investigators are advised to turn their attention to other real questions, and find comfort in knowing that this study can never be right, nor wrong, but can be performed as many times as the inquirer can stand, as the results will never be the same twice.



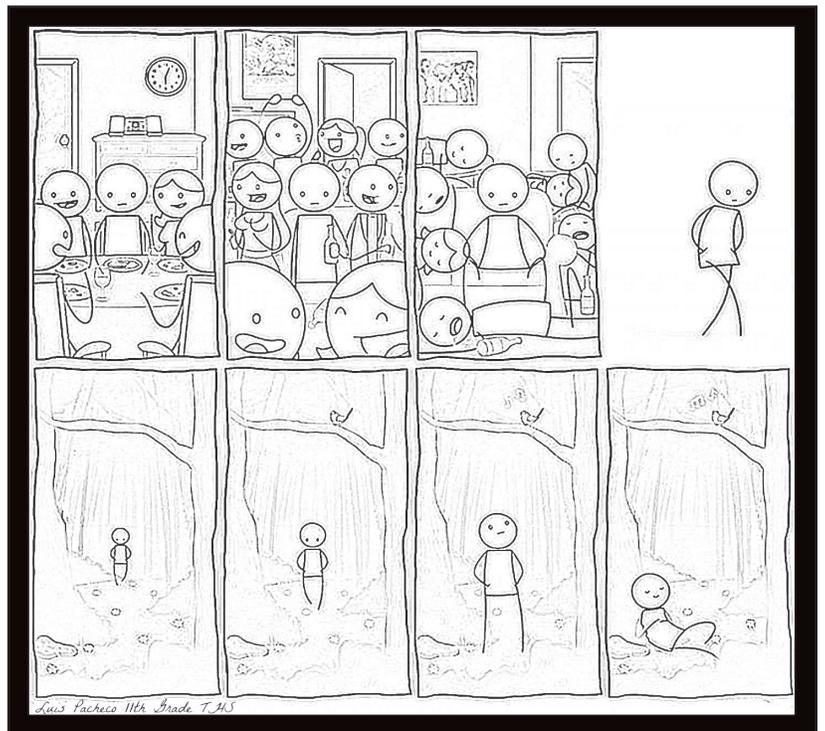
◀ Visions
Sarah Liu, senior



▲ Ben Chang, senior



▲ Anonymous



▲ Solitary Peacefulness: Luis Pacheco, junior



▲ Candice Lim, senior



▲ Marshall Fung, senior

IDENTITY

Audrey Pham, sophomore

I am my name.
 It's not some fancy print on
 hospital documents.
 My name is not just a word, a
 collection of syllables-
 a compound of letters.
 I hear my name in the "hey"
 and the "what's up"
 that I find in the voices of my

friends.
 I look towards the ocean
 waves,
 the bright moon,
 the grasses dancing with the
 wind's beat
 and find myself in all of them.
 I see the mirror.
 (That's not my name.)

Cloud

Sarah Liu, senior

Cloud, you pass me by.
 You can stay only for a while.
 I cannot keep you longer or make you wait for me.
 The wind pushes you forward, and I can only be dejected
 By your short presence but deep remembrance.
 You shatter yourself with your tears
 Only to touch the ground and leave again.
 Never can I touch you or feel you.
 You melt with the blue and willingly run with the wind.

~Dedicated to a Cloud



▲ Ariele Guieb, senior