

The Reckoner

of Marc Garneau C.I.

DECEMBER 2022



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NEWS BOARD

A board to keep the student body informed about their school and local community.

MGCI HOSA at FLC: A Week of Healthcare Fun

by ANNE LIU

After two months of studying slideshows, reading through textbook material, and diligently crafting posters and reports, MGCI students competed in the Fall Leadership Conference (FLC) as part of HOSA – Future Health Professionals.

HOSA is an internationally recognized organization dedicated to helping students learn all about the world of healthcare through workshops, university student panels, and content-based slideshows, offering students an in-depth view of various aspects of the healthcare system. The organization boasts thirty different events, from individual knowledge-test events like Medical Law and Ethics to team-based practical events like Emergency Medical Technician to submission-based events like Research Poster, where students have the opportunity to research any healthcare issue in their community.

Annually, HOSA holds three main competitions: the online Fall Leadership Conference in November, the Spring Leadership Conference (SLC) in May, and the International Leadership Conference (ILC) in June. Every student has the

chance to compete in FLC and SLC, while only the top three in each event at SLC qualify to compete in ILC, to be held this year in Dallas, Texas. The purpose of the Fall conference is to allow students to gauge where they are in their studying and among their peers, offering them the experience of competing in their event so they can decide if they wish to continue it for the remainder of the year. After the conference, students are free to change their event before the Spring conference, which is the official qualifier for ILC.

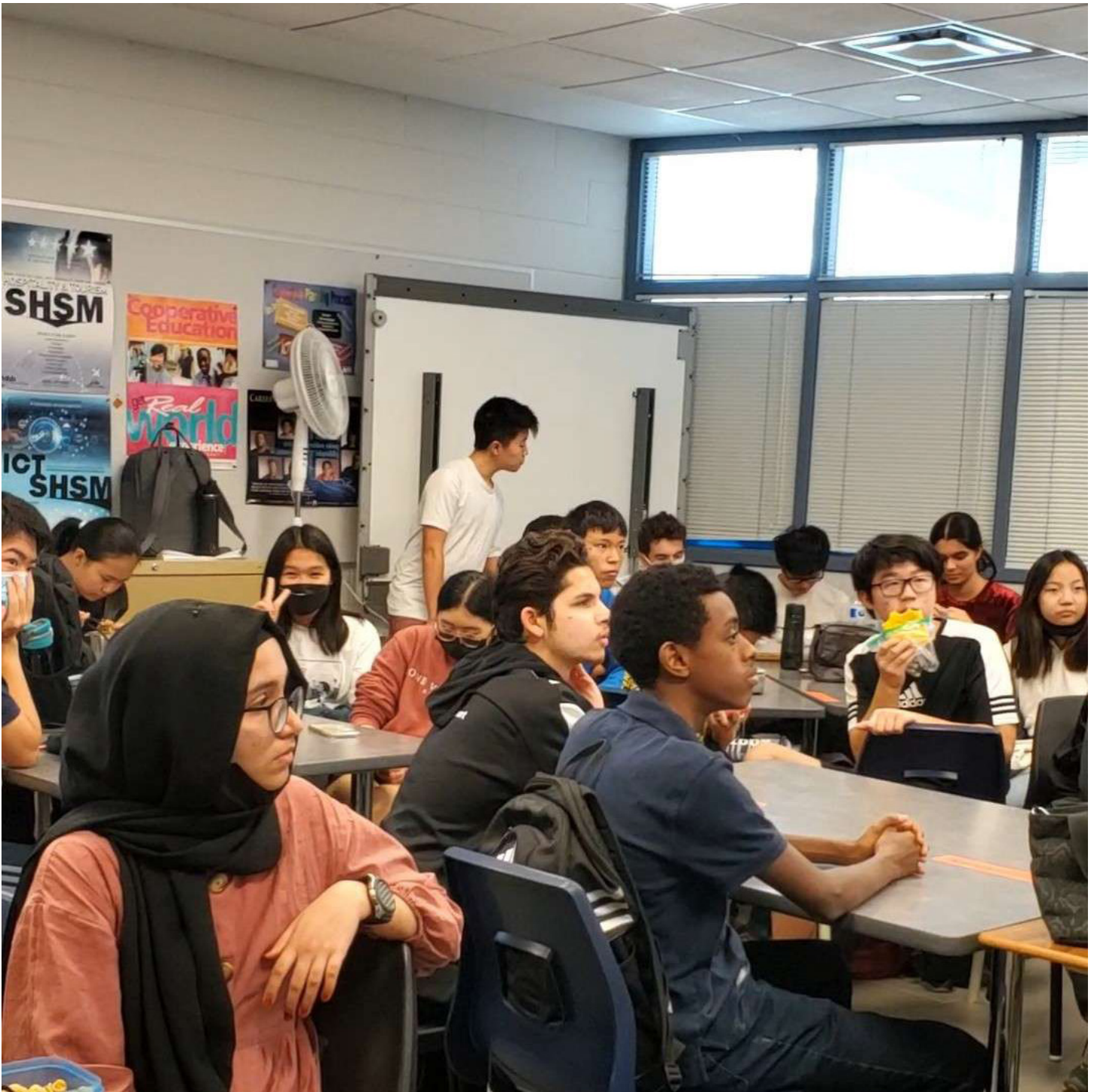
This year, FLC took place online from November 19th to 27th. To prepare, MGCI HOSA executives sent out study schedules and resources to members, allowing them to skim through the required information before the competition.

Normally, some events would only have an exam, some would have two rounds with an exam in the first and a skill demonstration in the second, and some would have live presentations to judges. During FLC, for the events that had an exam, only that portion—with fifty to one hundred multiple-choice questions—was

tested through an online platform during the nine days allotted. For events requiring the submission of a speech, poster, or research paper, students first submitted their necessary components by 19 November, then presented live to judges over specific days following their submission deadline.

MGCI HOSA members were nervous yet excited before starting their exams. Before commencing his online pathophysiology exam, Paul Shur, a Grade 11 member, said: “I currently feel very excited because it’s my first time doing HOSA. At the same time though, I’m nervous because [competing in HOSA this year] costs one hundred dollars... so I better do well! I’m excited to see how far I am when it comes to the material.” The FLC top ten rankings will be sent out in early January to show students where they rank among their peers and their overall score on the exam.

With SLC coming up in May 2023, MGCI HOSA has a lot planned. Members can expect cozy library study sessions, workshops for practical skills such as CPR, monthly quizzes, and field trips within the next couple of months, all in prep-



Photograph: Stephanie Chan

aration for SLC as well as their potential futures, through a solid foundation in health-care-related knowledge and experience in the club. Amy Li, the club president, said: “I was really happy to see that all the training coordinators were able to create super high quality study schedules to help their trainees prepare for FLC!”

In the week of FLC, all the event channels in our discord server were active with friendly banter among competitors and their trainers. I hope FLC was an enjoyable experience for all who participated... but I guess we’ll see whether or not that was the case as the post-FLC survey results come in!” As she reflected on the upcoming

future of MGCI HOSA, she said: “I’m really excited for the months to come because MGCI HOSA’s training is about to get real. If you’re a HOSA member reading this, get ready for workshops, in person study sessions, field trips, medical student Q&A’s and an in-person multi-school mock SLC! In the meantime, happy studying!” ■

Encouraging Environmentalism with EcoTeam

by ANDY SUN

The ever-growing pressure of climate change is a burden to be shared on all fronts. It's becoming an issue that governments and corporations are expected to confront. It's also a growing responsibility on average citizens—to drive less, cut consumption, reuse materials, respect green spaces, raise awareness, and more—whose collective actions lead to an impact greater than the sum of its parts. At Marc Garneau Collegiate Institute, this form of environmental activism has become a passion for many members of the EcoTeam.

MGCI EcoTeam seeks to promote eco-literacy and an environment-friendly culture within the school and community. Beginning from the start of the year, EcoTeam started hosting in-person meetings every Wednesday lunch in room 227.

During these meetings, students share their passion for the environment in many facets, from showing each other cool videos to engaging in discussions about eco-related events around the world. For example, a recent topic has been the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP27), an annual international summit hosted near the end of the year to address climate policies.

"I love learning about the environment and everything that nature has for us to learn about. [...] A lot of these issues we talk about are directly going to impact my generation," said Bailey Min, an executive of the club.

EcoTeam also organizes a variety of initiatives which spark interest in preserving the environment. In October, the club launched a poster design contest centered around electronic waste. Through the

month of November, the club has been planning a trip to the "Change Your World" conference, which will be taking place at York University on 7 December. These initiatives are aimed at inspiring students to learn more about the environment and to take action.

When asked about the importance of eco-literacy, President Saivenkat Jillia said, "With our society's current state, we can't expect the Earth to fix itself. I know that by influencing others to take care of the environment, I can play my part in slowing down climate change."

In addition to raising awareness, EcoTeam plays its part by encouraging environment-friendly practices within the school, such as reducing energy consumption, recycling, reducing waste, and more. Over the past few years, the club's efforts have maintained a Platinum rating (the highest rank) from EcoSchools, a certification organization that determines how eco-friendly a school is through the quality and quantity of its eco-actions.

For some members, this down-to-earth nature of the club is why they decided to join. "I hear a lot

about large global problems and things that need to be changed on the world scale, but learning about how to help your community and world as a student is really interesting," said Grade 9 student Veronica Davey-Young.

However, the club has no plans to stop there. "We hope to also focus on implementing changes in the school and beyond! For example, we could make E-waste bins more accessible or create a community-involved system for garbage cleanup," said Vice President Sophie Yee.

When asked about future visions for the club, Saivenkat said, "My long-term goals for the club would be more membership and more fun events, like more guest speakers, movie nights, and perhaps even bringing back The Trashion Show."

The Trashion Show was a competition hosted by EcoTeam prior to the pandemic to encourage sustainability by seeing who can make the best clothes using trash.

Whether it be for one of these initiatives or wanting to make a difference for the environment, students are encouraged to attend EcoTeam's Wednesday lunch meetings. ■



Photograph: Justin Wei

Zooming In: NASA's James Webb Telescope Revolutionizes Astronomy

by MAXIM MOHAREB

Commonly known as one of NASA's most expensive projects to date, the James Webb Telescope (JWST) is changing the world's perspective on space by the day.

Named after the administrator of NASA during the Apollo program, it is currently at the forefront of space research. It took over 20 years and ten billion dollars to build and was launched in December 2021.

Despite the steep cost, it is now providing insight into the first possible concrete evidence of alien life and the first images of some of the earliest galaxies ever formed.

On 2 August, NASA released photos taken by JWST showing details behind galactic mergers that were previously unknown. This has taken the world of astrophysics by storm as the information from the series of photographs lays the foundation for a deeper understanding of black holes and gravitational physics.

On 25 August, NASA released an article stating that JWST had found an exoplanet that contained carbon dioxide in its atmosphere. This is the first exoplanet of its kind that we know of, and its importance cannot be overstated. For carbon dioxide to appear in the atmosphere suggests that the planet may have living organisms. Such a discovery is one of many that astronomers have been fascinated with in relation to the JWST.

On 19 October, NASA released an article stating that JWST had taken a star-filled picture of the so-called 'Pillars of Creation'. Such a discovery is monumental. 20 years prior, the Hubble Telescope had already taken a photo of the pillars of creation, but due to its limitations, the old photo was missing a large amount of the stars

that the new photo contains. This is one of many photo retakes that prove that the universe is much larger than previously imagined.

On 17 November, NASA released an article stating that JWST had taken a picture of two of the universe's earliest galaxies. One of the galaxies was formed 350 million years after the big bang and the other 450 million years after the big bang. To put this in perspective, before the release of these pictures, the oldest galaxy discovered was formed one billion years after the big bang.

The photographs and evidence provided by the James Webb Telescope show that humanity is still only in the preliminary stages of understanding the universe.

The James Webb Telescope is nothing short of spectacular, and with it approaching its first year

anniversary in service, there is no doubt that its contributions to astronomy will keep increasing. ■

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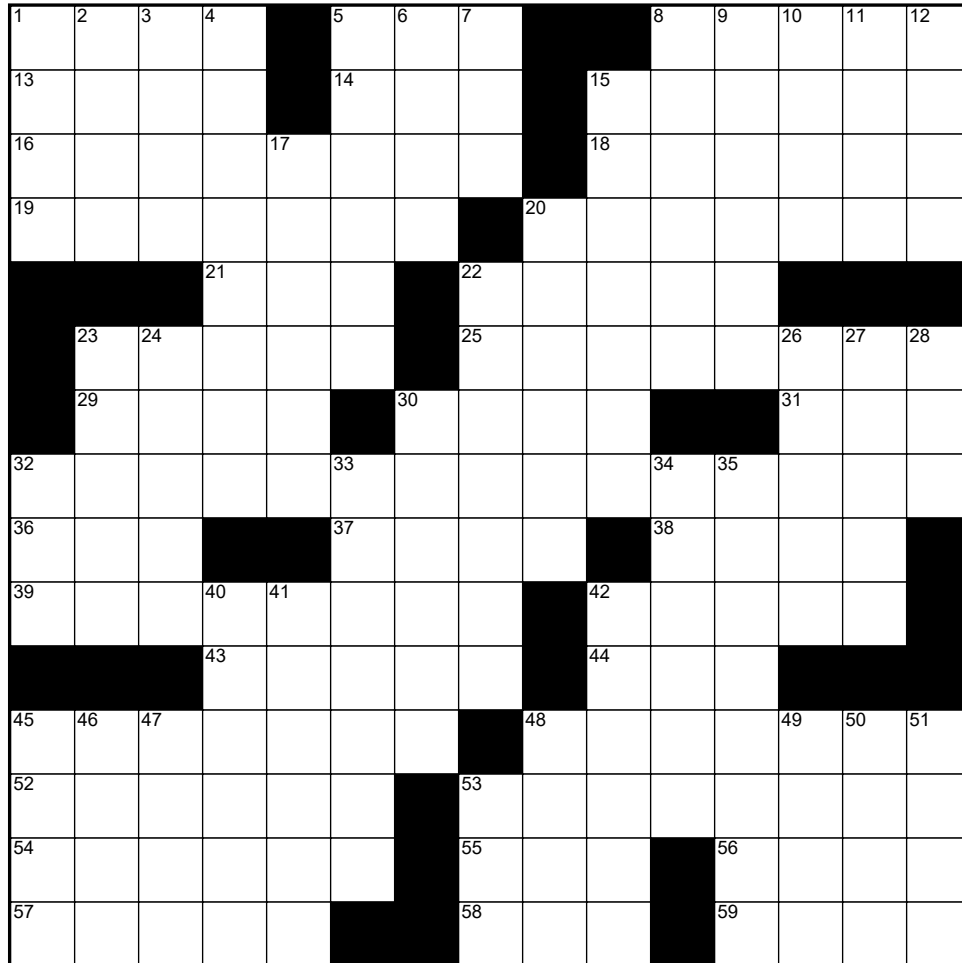
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Illustration: Samara Marjaan

LIFE BOARD

A board for imaginative self-expression through written and visual content.



DOWN

- 1 Shoots the breeze
- 2 City on Utah Lake
- 3 Roofing material
- 4 Company known for producing Christmas movies
- 5 Gibson, of "The Bedside Book of Birds"
- 6 Take care of
- 7 Sum
- 8 Carl Sagan series
- 9 Lacking pigment
- 10 Linker for activation of B cells
- 11 Dallas Stars captain Jamie
- 12 1980s speed skating gold medalist Karin
- 15 Half combat sport, half cocktail?
- 17 Record player
- 20 "Queen of Soul" Franklin
- 22 Notice of resignation
- 23 Archaic spy
- 24 Prefix for one hundred
- 26 Baywatch actress Gena Lee
- 27 "Not a creature was stirring, not _____ mouse."
- 28 Distress signal
- 30 "And _____ wilt, forget": C. Rossetti
- 32 Grammy-winning bluesman Mo'
- 33 Femmes _____
- 34 Latin star
- 35 Dance from Harlem popular in the swing era
- 40 "This video is sponsored by _____"
- 41 19 Across, presently
- 42 1949 Conventions' Namesake
- 45 "Let's chat privately", digitally
- 46 Australian singer of "Painkillers" and "Dazed & Confused" acclaim
- 47 "_____ petit placidam sub libertate quietem" (motto of Massachusetts)
- 48 Gen. Robert _____
- 49 "Brave" singer Bareilles
- 50 Old Russian ruler
- 51 Cut off
- 53 Weep

ACROSS

- 1 Style with black clothes and heavy eyeliner
- 5 Region containing MGCI, briefly
- 8 As _____ (as possible)
- 13 Opera solo
- 14 2012 and 2021 Taylor Swift Album
- 15 Like magma
- 16 *Unnecessary, yet attractive additional features
- 18 Geographically consciously named American financial institution
- 19 Refined, as metal
- 20 Author of Winnie-the-Pooh
- 21 Thirteenth Hebrew letter
- 22 Test for fit
- 23 Divide
- 25 *Has a drink
- 29 French father
- 30 Smidgen
- 31 Lifestyle brand founded by Drake
- 32 Sounds heard at the start of World Cup matches, and a nod to the starred answers
- 36 Consume
- 37 _____ lot (gorged oneself)
- 38 Slender
- 39 *Makes something wrong known publicly
- 42 Davis of "Thelma and Louise"
- 43 Reassuring response
- 44 Letter opener
- 45 Philly campus
- 48 Signs up
- 52 Biceps, e.g.
- 53 *Extremely tidy and clear; spotless
- 54 Forget _____ (flowers)
- 55 Gun, as an engine
- 56 Sketch
- 57 Ag, Au, etc.
- 58 Vote for
- 59 Kitten's plaything

Olé, Olé, Olé!
by FLORA CHEN

This isn't homeland

by ANNIE XIONG

i see it on their faces
im a fish out of water
my hands are fins & im alien
gills and degrees
don't transfer over shorelines

but oh!
if only they could see —
in water, i'm a queen
i can't climb trees
but i swim with ease

Illustration: Sonia Ravindran

Focus

by ALVIN YOUNG



Illustration: Colleen Chang

The punching bag slams into the ceiling, causing dust to snow down. “Not enough,” I pant, stepping away as the bag swings back down like a pendulum. Sweat drips down my face. I wipe it with the back of my hand. It stings slightly.

Again.
I close my eyes, letting the darkness envelope me, wiping out all light that only serve as distractions. Now, I can concentrate on that one scene.
She’s pressed to the ground, the gravel digging into her.

Bits of stone bite into her skin like vultures eager for a bit of dead meat. Her glasses are cracked wildly, lying pathetically by the other girl’s feet. Mizzie. Those that are bullied by her and her gang call her Meanzie. But never to her face.

Because then they'd end up like Katherine.

Katherine, who's upper body got painted a splatter of blue, green, and purple.

Who's knees became a thimble too weak to protect the flesh below.

Who's lips got dragged over the pavement to leave a bloody broken heart.

She ruined her. Ruined her. Ruin her.

The scene changes. There's just a faceless person standing before me, a silhouette. But I know it's Mizzie. I step towards her, pick up my pace. I leap, rewind my arm. It's a weightless feeling, like all the energy from my body has gravitated to my right fist. It's quaking fiercely, heating up like a meteor entering earth's atmosphere.

And then there's a scream. It's shrill, like a calling, and it's then when her face appears. Out of nowhere, Mizzie's face, destroyed, flesh torn apart like a bomb exploded within her, neck wrung out because her head spun too many times, and her mouth hangs wide open. The energy from my fist is decimated. I managed to fling

my weak arm forward just enough to break her mirage apart, along with my concentration.

My eyes fling open, and I stumble forward into the punching bag and fall onto the freezing ground. God damn it.

You weren't focused enough. You let your distractions seep in.

"I know. But I can't let go of the consequences." *Mizzie didn't think about any "consequences" when she messed up Kathy's face, did she?*

"No, but I'm not her. I can't be like her. I can't."

*KATHY'S IN F*CKING INTENSIVE CARE RIGHT NOW. I'm sure you can conjure up that image in your head without concentration.*

"I-I know, I know." The image of Katherine's mangled face has haunted my subconscious for too many sleepless nights to count.

You don't even need to hit her. Just aim right beside her ear, above her left shoulder.

"But what if I miss? What if I blast open her shoulder? What if?"

You won't. As long as you

focus. As long as you pinpoint exactly where you're going to hit, why you're doing it, who you're doing it to, how you're going to do it. As long as you.

"Focus, alrig-"

Focus.

"Ok, I got it."

Focus. Focus. Focus. Focus.

Focus.

"I SAID I GOT IT!"

FocusFocusFocusFocusFocus-

FocusFocusFocusFocusFocus-

FocusFocusFocusFocusFocus-

FocusFocusFocusFocusFocus-

FocusFocusFocusFocusFocus-

"GET OUT OF MY HEAD!"

My hands fly up to my ears, wind tunneling into my ears. They stopped millimeters before smacking into the side of my head.

Drip.

It isn't until I look down at my thigh that I realize blood is dripping down the side of my face from my ear. I get up, face the punching bag, and close my eyes.

It's absolutely silent.

And now I focus on that silhouette and swing my arm back. Then forward. Right above the shoulder.

The punching bag drops onto the ground, rope snapped by an unprepared gust of wind. ■

unlovable

by ANJALI GUPTA

i mend my cracks with gold
but flaws are all you see
always inadequate
never enough
my fragmented constellation will never have a place in
your galaxy

my flower among the weeds
is never the one you see
unassuming
overshadowed

i shatter just to live up to your expectations
i break and bend
then try to be who
you
want
me
to
be

the fire of your words and deeds
burns
hotter
brighter
stronger
consuming me
changing me

no matter how hard i try
i cannot be forged in your flame
i cannot be who you want
i guess i
am
truly
unchangeable
unlovable

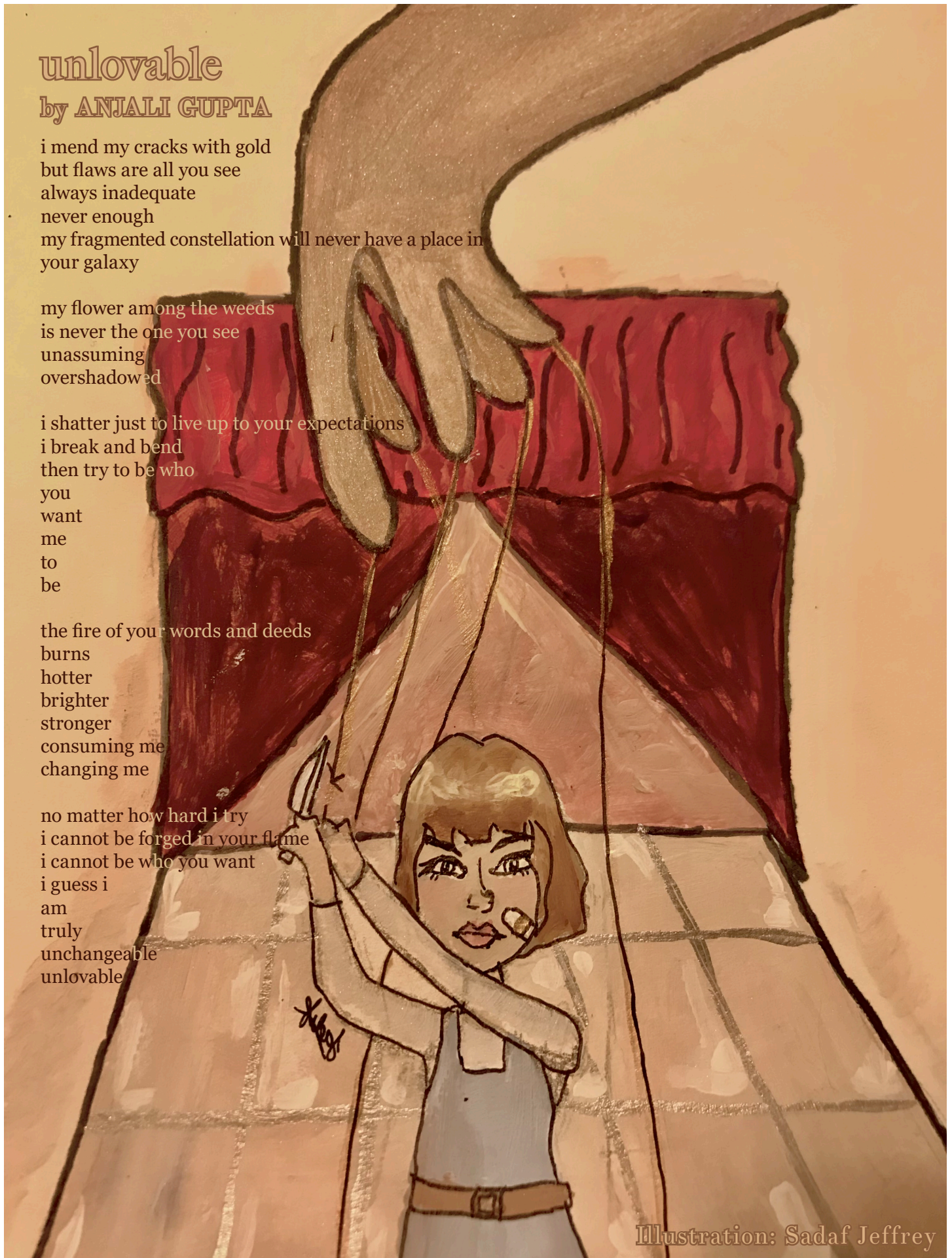


Illustration: Sadaf Jeffrey

The Seven Friendly Sins

by SOHA SAKHIANI



Illustration: Yuewen Gao

Mark Dyson is the paradigm of average, or for your better understanding, someone you would call mid. I mean, his name is Mark, and no offense to any Marks out there, but names really don't get more average than that. Mark is also socially awkward, romantically challenged, and a prepubescent looking klutz, even at the ripe age of twenty-six.

Recently though, Mark's luck has been looking up. His dad had passed away of old age or some old person's disease or the other (-after seventy it's hard to keep track of what's killing you). That's obviously not the lucky part though; the lucky part is that Mark had inherited his father's house. A very big house. Six bedrooms, five bathrooms, a courtyard with a fountain, and what excited Mark the most; a gumball machine. This estate was the late Mr. Dyson's life's work, the fruits of his 50 years of labor.

Anyway, Mark had loved this estate for as long as

he'd loved his father. After a month and a half of grieving, Mark decided to reinhabit the empty mansion his father had left him, convincing himself it was the only right thing to do.

Now that all of that's been covered, back to the present day where Mark is currently attempting - and failing miserably - to carry two cardboard boxes of something through the double doors of his new not so humble abode. He tripped over his own foot, and down went the two boxes of what now sounded to be holding something made of glass.

'And that's what you get for skimping out and not just hiring packers and movers, honestly moving into a million dollar place and he wouldn't spend a couple hundred bucks,'

Mark froze. None of his self-deprecating thoughts had ever sounded so...real? He looked around, Mark was a lot of things but crazy was not one of them. He knew he had heard someone, he paused

and looked around.

'Lay off the poor guy he just got here, saving his money was the right thing to do, more for us,'

Another voice!

'Yeah, maybe if we save enough we can retire earlier,'

And another?

'Retire way earlier than Dyson Sr did, we'll be richer than he ever was,'

'Don't talk about Mr Dyson that way! He housed us for half a century you ungrateful little-'

'Oh calm down, this one seems promising too, more of a looker than senior was, younger too,'

'Hm I'd say he's alright, seen better.'

Mark didn't even have it in him to be offended. Instead, he ran.

'No! Look what you did now dimwit you scared him off.'

'What-oh no I'm not chasing after him, you deal with it,'

'Hey come back, we don't bite. We're friendly,'

'Sinful, but friendly.' ■

we live but

on the contrary, we have never known
where we are meant to go.
we must all pay the penalty for
striving for a goal we are promised
we will never reach.

by AKSHAYA VARAKUNAN

can I hold it against you for
advancing beyond where I have fallen?
can I cry on your shoulder when
you are the one I have lost to?

in the distance, a radio plays
a lament in a minor key.
on the floor of a bus,
trampled and besmirched with filthy rain,
a newspaper lies,
my sanguine dreams listed in the obituary.
my luxurious bones sprout daffodils
from within the earth you have buried me in.

is this the way it was destined to be?
is it my solitary fate to carry
an empty arsenal and yet
still keep running into war?

hanging off the edges of the earth,
every lemma and postulation I have relied on
utters not a word of relief;
not a single reassurance that I will be what we wanted,
get to your feet and look down into my grave; watch
my liver pool with virus-infected mud and centipedes,
infested guts crawling with petals whose colours are
now smeared over in feculent brown.

was life supposed to assess our wins and losses
in merciless binary?
must I translate my life into 0s and 1s?
was I to end up this way no matter what I had done?

when the judge brings down the hammer
when I am sentenced to a fine and years of regret—
it cannot possibly be my fault for being spurred towards
the next inevitable plunge into loss,
that I will still inevitably hope to be a victory.
I hope you will lie to me as you stand above
my grave, assure me that the roots growing
into my decayed skin will jolt my nerves
into opening my eyes again.

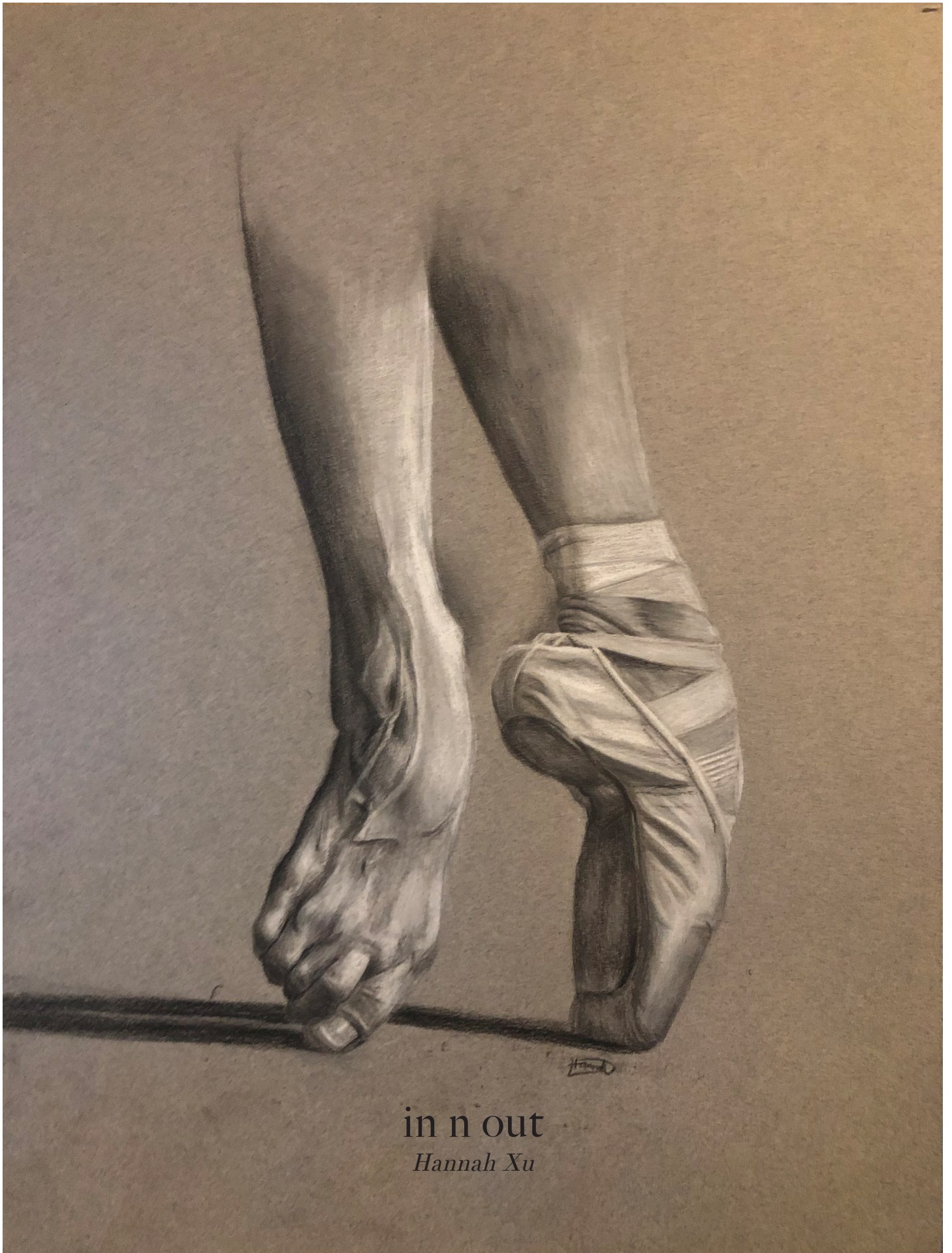
just as you have crushed me,
I trust you to crush the world in front of you,
and as a souvenir,
bring me back the earthquakes you create
when you return.

Illustration: Amy Long



Roadkill

Elizabeth Wei



EDITORIAL BOARD

A board that amplifies student voices through supported opinions.

A Casual's Guide to Bandwagoning at This Year's Qatar World Cup

by SAM LI, DARIAN YAN

4 years ago, Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo were still at the height of their El Clasico prime, locked in a timeless deathmatch for eternal greatness; 4 years ago, Canada was ranked lower than Uganda and

Cape Verde Islands, two african nations that suffer from severe poverty and political instability; 4 years ago, David De Gea was the unequivocal best keeper in the world, a legend of Spain, and this year he won't be going to the

World Cup at all. Safe to say soccer has changed quite a bit since this tournament was last held in Russia.

However, with the kickoff so imminent, I think we all better ask: how bad should we feel about



Illustration: Ivy Liu

watching this year? If you haven't been tracking the storylines, here is the gist: Qatar is notorious for committing various human right abuses, such as its discriminatory policies against the LG-BTQ2S+ community. They were also recently accused of bribing its opponents in their opening match, Ecuador, to deliberately lose. FIFA, the International Federation of Association Football, is also not without its own faults, with decades of corruption on its resume. For instance, when Qatar was selected to host this year's competition in 2010, their national team was ranked 99th in the world, and it had 1 stadium capable of hosting an international game. But let's take politics out of this, because we are all here to watch a sport that transcends misuses, something that brings connections deeper than the manipulation of the game by profiteers and autocrats.

• • •

If you don't follow soccer, the tournament works with a group, single-elimination format. The 32 teams are divided into 8 groups and play against each other once, and the top 2 best teams in each group qualify into the elimination bracket starting from the round of 16. Half the teams are eliminated each round until 2 remain.

Each game lasts 90 minutes (two 45 minute periods). Ties are decided by an overtime of 30 minutes. If the game is still tied after 30 minutes, there is a penalty shoot out in which both teams shoot five shots. The team with the most successful attempts is named the winner. In the case that both teams score and miss the same amount of shots, the shootout continues tit-for-tat until one team finally

misses while the other scores.

• • •

With a new scenery, and Canada finally making the tournament in nearly 40 years, let's sit back and analyze our chances. Oh, did you say you don't care about soccer? You're here only to impress your friends and fit in? Fine. Then let's look at how and who you should bandwagon this time around, and sadly, the Canadian squad led by Alphonso Davies and Jonathan David probably won't be your best bet. 😞

However, the best part is, it's still anyone's bet as to who will take home the long coveted Jules Rimet Trophy. We have our bets on Messi's Argentina, but any other team quite frankly could have a run as well.

So, let's look at the "favorites" and help you decide who you should root for:

France

Who are they? The defending champions from 2018. A squad bristling with razor-sharp world-class attackers like wonderkid Kylian Mbappé and recent Ballon D'or winner, Karim Benzema.

What's wrong with them? Star striker Mbappé was just handed a massive contract by PSG, a team completely owned by the Qatar government. After having such a long history of controversies and bribery, I would not put such a horrendous act of chicanery past the Qatari autocrats. We'll definitely look forward to Mbappé's performance. 😊

Oh, and by the way, France could be affected by the "Champion's curse", a term used by many fans to explain the phenomenon of the previous winners failing to make it out of their

group, something that has surprisingly happened every World Cup since 2006.

Outlook: Anything other than winning will be a disappointment as the defending champions, and I love their chances! (I'm not just trying to jinx them..)

Brazil

Who are they? The top-ranked team in the world. Another side that's spoiled for attacking talent, with Neymar, Raphinha, and Richarlison. They're incredibly well rounded as well, with world class players all around the board.

What's wrong with them? Honestly, not a lot. Brazil's biggest adversary will probably be GIFs of Neymar acting like he's been hit with Avada Kedavra any time a defender breathes on him heavily. I'd definitely look one up if you haven't seen them.

Outlook: Another early favorite. A legend in the game looking to recapture its glory. Not a bad bandwagon choice considering its squad depth and star power. But the biggest reason to root for them is definitely Neymar's ego; after PSG handed Kylian Mbappé that contract and basically ownership of the club, that man definitely needs an ego boost. He will not be taking another L.

Argentina

Who are they? The South American champions. Home of Lionel Messi, one of the world's biggest stars across all sports and a leading GOAT candidate in soccer. They are *desperate* to win what will likely be Messi's last World Cup after falling short in the 2014 final.

What's wrong with them? The

pressure on Messi to lead his country to international glory is most definitely soul crushing and winning COPA America probably didn't help much. Even though they haven't lost in 36 games, spanning all the way back to the end of 2018, they are still rather dependent on Messi to perform.

Outlook: Win a very achievable World Cup, handing Messi the unrivaled title of GOAT, or leave the biggest void on the resume of the potential best player of all time. But no pressure, we definitely won't be heartbroken :D (another good bandwagon choice, rooting for Messi at his last World Cup will not wrong you)

Portugal

Who are they? A team that's probably not going to win the World Cup (no offense, trust me, we really would rather have them win than Brazil). But also a team with the other GOAT of our generation, Cristiano Ronaldo. His pride definitely won't take a loss without a fight.

What's wrong with them? On paper, this team is one best in the world, but getting the individual stars to function together will be a challenge. Players like Ruben Dias, João Cancelo, and Bruno Fernandes have shown their ability at club level, but haven't shown the same ability for Portugal yet. But of course, the elephant in this locker room is Ronaldo. He's the other potential GOAT of this generation; however, after getting sued by his own club, Manchester United, it's unclear what form he will be in for this world cup.

Outlook: Maybe a semi-final appearance, and a chance at the final for a Ronaldo Cinderella

story. A risky option, but if Ronaldo puts up the best performance of his life, you could end up a legend.

England

Who are they? A team that will have all the talent to perform well, but definitely won't win the World Cup (remind us to delete this article if they somehow do win the World Cup). England is currently in the midst of one of their many "golden generations". With top goal scorer Harry Kane still performing at an elite level and youngsters like Mason Mount, Phil Foden and Jude Bellingham showing promising signs of greatness, they definitely have one of the deepest squads in the tournament. So I guess we'll find out whether they live up to the pressure, or crumble beneath it.

What's wrong with them? It feels like every few World Cups, England recreates another team of generational talent, but it never ends up actually working out. Maybe it's the high expectations, the crazy fans, or the English press constantly sabotaging the team with headlines, but they haven't won a World Cup, or any major international trophy, since 1956, despite always having world class talent.

Outlook: England are the favourites to win their group, and have a fairly easy path to the semi-finals, but that could very well be as far as they'll go. They are not our personal choices, but who knows, maybe this article won't be published for long. 🙄

If you have any bit of loyalty and self-decency however, let's look at the Canadian squad head-

ing to Qatar.

Canada

Who are they? A team that hasn't been in the World Cup since 1986, but we are finally back, and back with a vengeance. Canada's squad has stars in Europe, like Alphonso Davies, Jonathan David, and Cyle Larin; they performed exceptionally well during the qualifiers. The individuals shined and the system showed great promise.

What's wrong with them? Canada has dominated the rest of North America, but that's about all they have to their name. This young group has essentially no international experience, so it's rather unclear how they'll face up against Belgium and Croatia in their group, and how far they can go beyond that point if they make it into the elimination bracket.

Outlook: This team is polarized with potential and reality: They could easily win no matches and crash out of the group, but I would not put it past them to make the greatest underdog run this year. Let Canada surprise you with the underdog story of the ages. 🙌

• • •

Things are definitely looking spicy this year, and this piece could not ever do justice to the competition in Qatar. If you're not already a fan of the game, this is the best time in a long time to pick a side. Good luck choosing!

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Dadaism and the Disruption of Societal Norms

by CHANG CHANG LI

In the middle of the 20th century, Europe and the greater Western world found itself in an entropical state filled with political turmoil, war, and economic inequality—a direction that would bulldoze ahead all the way to the modern day where these themes reign supreme in our societal landscape. Yet in the face of major societal change and a cloth of political suppression forced onto the mouths of radicals and revolutionaries opposed to the new world came Dadaism, a unique form of art focused on absurdity, irrationality, and making a mockery of the injustices of the modern world.

In response to the sinful reality of World War I, the genre of art known as Dada was erected from the graves of the, at the time, shattered Western world. To contrast the public sentiment at the time, Dada rejected the reality of war and poked fun at it, all while continuing the centuries' work of exposing the growing power imbalance within the fast-growing capitalist nations of the west. War, capitalism, bigotry, and much more the victims of Dada's endless campaign against societal evils, all through an obscene and unorthodox method. Combining cubism, surrealism, and many other experimental works of art, Dada was

created to be nothing less than confusing—abstractions of art that were considered lewd and obscene by the art community at the time, anything considered non anatomical or unreal shrugged off as a lower form of art.

See *Nine Malic Moulds* by Marcel Duchamp, a piece that at first looks like a bunch of inoffensive figures of nothingness, yet upon further inspection shows to be both a well thought out and offensive commentary on authority figures within society. With each of the nine figures meaning to represent a caricature of some authority figure, such as a police officer or fireman, the painting means



Illustration: Shiloh Zheng

to not only insult and sneer at oppressors but state the malleability of these oppressors as a cog in an oppressive system, a much deeper meaning than one may discover off first glance. Newspaper clippings pasted together into an incomprehensible mess, mustaches drawn on the Mona Lisa, dissected urinals, random assortments of shapes balanced on top of each other; Dada seemed to be meaningless to the wide majority of people, but hidden within these perverse pieces was something special—the ability to disrupt.

Disruption had always been one of the primary goals of the Dada art movement, peevish political leaders and sneaking in quick quips about society into this chaotic canvas, and disruption is what arose. Throughout the 20th century, hundreds of Dada artists around the world were arrested for creating art considered “disruptive of general society,” their censorship justified under the guise of disruptive behavior when in reality their arrests were the results of political censorship. In a time where art was required to be of a fine class, Dada shifted the world’s perspective to where art could be both common and influential—influential enough to draw the attention of police enforcement and influential enough to shape the minds of young European youth to the reality of the dictators that ran rampant throughout the early 20th century all the way until now. Every newspaper clipping or loose screw or stroke of a brush was another humorous disruption in some oppressive society, a guerilla war campaign against fascism and injustice, the general practices of Dada extending all the way today—the movement of Dada having liberated modern art from the exclusive shackles of the upper class.

Although the majority of Dada artists were white men, the “inferior” societal outlooks on Dada allowed the unique opportunity for women and people of color to contribute greatly to the Dada movement, allowing them to participate in art due to its perceived inferiority. Hannah Hoch, Beatrice Wood, and Mina Loy were only a few of the many great women in Dada who created some of the best

pieces of the entire movement. Dada served as one of the first opportunities for women to create widely consumed pieces of art, all in a community that embraced the work of women as equal to a man’s.

Even today, you can see the effects of Dada in both art and political discourse—Dada having the long lasting effect of the normalization of addressing oppressors with an open and clear animosity, being unafraid of expressing yourself and insulting those who prove to be unjust. It isn’t for no reason that it has become so socially acceptable to go online on Twitter or any other platform and post a scathing comment or image about some dirtbag politician, and it certainly isn’t a bad thing. Dada asserted to the public that when who you’re targeting and ridiculing has done much worse than a simple mean joke or ad hominem, then you should have the right to ridicule and disrupt as much as you want—because you should always have the right to fight oppression on any battlefield, whether that is a lobbying at your local city hall or even just posting some meme you found funny on your Facebook page.

There is no reason why civility should ever come before the truth, the contrary a sad belief that seems to still be commonplace in society a century after Dada’s peak. There’s a common trend among conservative politicians and many older generations to diminish the ideas of progressives due to what they may consider unprofessional or uncivil behavior, a logical fallacy that attempts to force the idea that politics is some sort of royal affair that only the most well-endowed can participate in—a mentality that has only forever contributed to the power imbalance between the people and the elites.

In reality, politics is ultimately supposed to be a device to support the people who prop a nation up in the first place, and if the people of a nation are frustrated and upset and unsatisfied, it makes sense for politics to reflect that. Forms of communication such as art should never be gate kept behind the fantasies of higher class and civility but instead utilized by all to spread emotion and thoughts in

whichever way they wish. Dada and adjacent artforms came into existence during a time of ultimate tyranny, the European continent infested with fascism and injustice, and revolutionized the way art is utilized by the masses—creating pieces that can be consumed and enjoyed by even the most common folk and at balancing itself on the fine line between utter nonsense and deeply meaningful pieces of expression. It has been essential in modern discourse, having deconstructed and disrupted social norms to make politics a game to be played by all, not simply the upper class. It has created memorable pieces of art that can be enjoyed both at face value as quick quips yet also surprisingly clever and profound declarations of values. It has created a culture of open dialogue and a culture where the common man can face his oppressors with unrelenting animosity in the face of adversity, a culture that has ultimately sparked societal advancement in the face of the evils of fascism and inequality.

Dada persists in the attitudes of perspectives, and for politics to become much more demonstrative of general sentiment, Dada deserves to grow—not just deserves to grow, but has to grow. Whether it is to pave change for the underprivileged, for the most passionate and unsatisfied, or for anyone in general, Dada must persist in the forever fight against time. In the modern day where incivility is increasingly being weaponized against progressive movements in the media, it is essential for progressive politicians to learn from the Dada movement and embrace the chaos behind political change. After all, when your goal is to deroot a systemic evil, can you really strike it at its deepest without burning it down to ashes? Can you truly fight an evil if you treat that evil with the utmost kindness and respect? Can you adequately express the views of the people you’re fighting for if you represent them with a muzzle tied to your face? Dada, outside of its nuanced history and complex subgenres, is an artform of complete freedom—lacking self censorship, lacking civility, and lacking the small leeches of evil that tie us back from creating change. ■

Reform, Revolution and the Islamic Republic

Or, The Futility of Revolution in Iran

by SUMIT PAUL

Revolution and instability have characterized Iran for well over a century. Between protests against foreign control of tobacco in the late nineteenth century and the recent Iranian democracy movement, the country has seen its fair share of violence and radical change. The modern Iranian state, the product of a lengthy struggle against the old imperial regime, continues to see itself as thoroughly revolutionary. In its forty-three-year reign, it has worked tirelessly to transform Iranian society in the likeness of its interpretation of Shia Islam. But in recent years, it has been increasingly beset by a new revolution - a liberal one. Protestors, increasingly supportive of the expansion of democratic power and secularism, have taken to the streets in droves since 2009, co-opting economic grievances against the government into an ideological struggle about the virtues of the revolution itself. Their struggles have arguably reached their zenith recently, with the multi-month-long demonstrations against the government killing of Jina Masha Amini. You're likely familiar with the basic details - the twenty-two-year-old was beaten to death by the Iranian Guidance Patrol for refusing to wear a hijab. In the days that followed, the nation erupted into protests - sparking speculation that another revolution is on the horizon. I will not discuss the virtues of such a revolution itself. I instead wish to bluntly state why it would end in failure and give the people of Iran a far

bleaker future.

The history of the Iranian Revolution of 1979 is complicated and would warrant an article of its own. To keep it terse, Shah (roughly equivalent to Emperor) Mohammad Reza Pahlavi came to power after deposing his father with the help of the Allies during World War II. Said allies wished to secure Iran's lucrative oil resources for the war and beyond. The country remained a constitutional monarchy, and in 1952, Mohammad Mosaddegh was elected to the office of Prime Minister. His attempt to nationalize Iran's oil led to another coup in 1953, wherein the Shah and his western allies became even more powerful. The Shah's power grew to the point of dictatorship, and he embarked on a lengthy campaign of modernizing Iran. In awe of his allies, he rapidly "westernized" the country - industrializing, extending personal and political freedoms to women, et cetera. He hoped to establish Iran as a great power, a junction between east and west. The intense, hubristic pace of development proved to be his downfall. Inflation, housing prices and unemployment skyrocketed. Hordes of rural peasants flooded the cities, deprived of their millennia-long way of life by the Shah's insistence on development. The clergy - who Pahlavi had become increasingly reliant upon (to resist communism), began to resent him for his social reforms. In 1977, the economy collapsed, leading to demonstrations across the country. The Shah cracked down with in-

creasing brutality - his military and secret police (SAVAK) would kill thousands but ultimately could not quell the protests. With domestic dissent censored, an external voice spoke loudest of all. Grand Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, exiled years before to Iraq, galvanized Iranian resistance. In his writings and speeches (distributed by cassette to mosques across the country), he denounced the Shah's reforms, declared him a western puppet and called for the fundamental reconstruction of Iran into an Islamic republic. Protests intensified, and the Shah's goons began to lose the will to keep killing their fellow Iranians. Seeing the writing on the wall, the Shah transferred powers to a provisional government and fled the country in early 1979. The Ayatollah, now revered across the country (despite many factions of protestors opposing Islamism), assumed power in Tehran. The army declared neutrality, and the provisional government gave in. What immediately followed was a purge of members of the old regime and an intense Islamization of the country. By understanding the revolution of 1979, we can begin to understand the nature of change in the country and its current government.

Force upholds any state - this is common sense. Any genuine revolution involves a profound shift in the capabilities of the factions involved to wage war. The Shah fell because his army did. Demoralized, with confidence neither in their leadership

nor the cause they were fighting for, soldiers began to abandon their duties, leaving towns in the hands of protestors. Iran's revolutionary government has made sure not to fall for the same trap. Iran's armed forces consist of three main components - the main army, regular law enforcement and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. The latter of which is an enigma - its stated

purpose is to defend the revolution. Thus, it is fiercely loyal to central leadership (the Supreme Leader) and is unlikely to declare neutrality in internal strife. The 150 000-man [1] strong force has only seen its power in Iranian society grow in the past few decades, expanding from a military organization to a business conglomerate with a stake in construction, energy, land and

transportation [2]. Some even floated the idea of a "military president" coming to power (in Iran, the president is an elected role beneath the Supreme Leader). All in all, they have everything to lose from instability. The rest of Iran's security forces, at the time of this writing, show little indication of desertion [3]. Thus, any uprising that would go revolts in the streets to a total

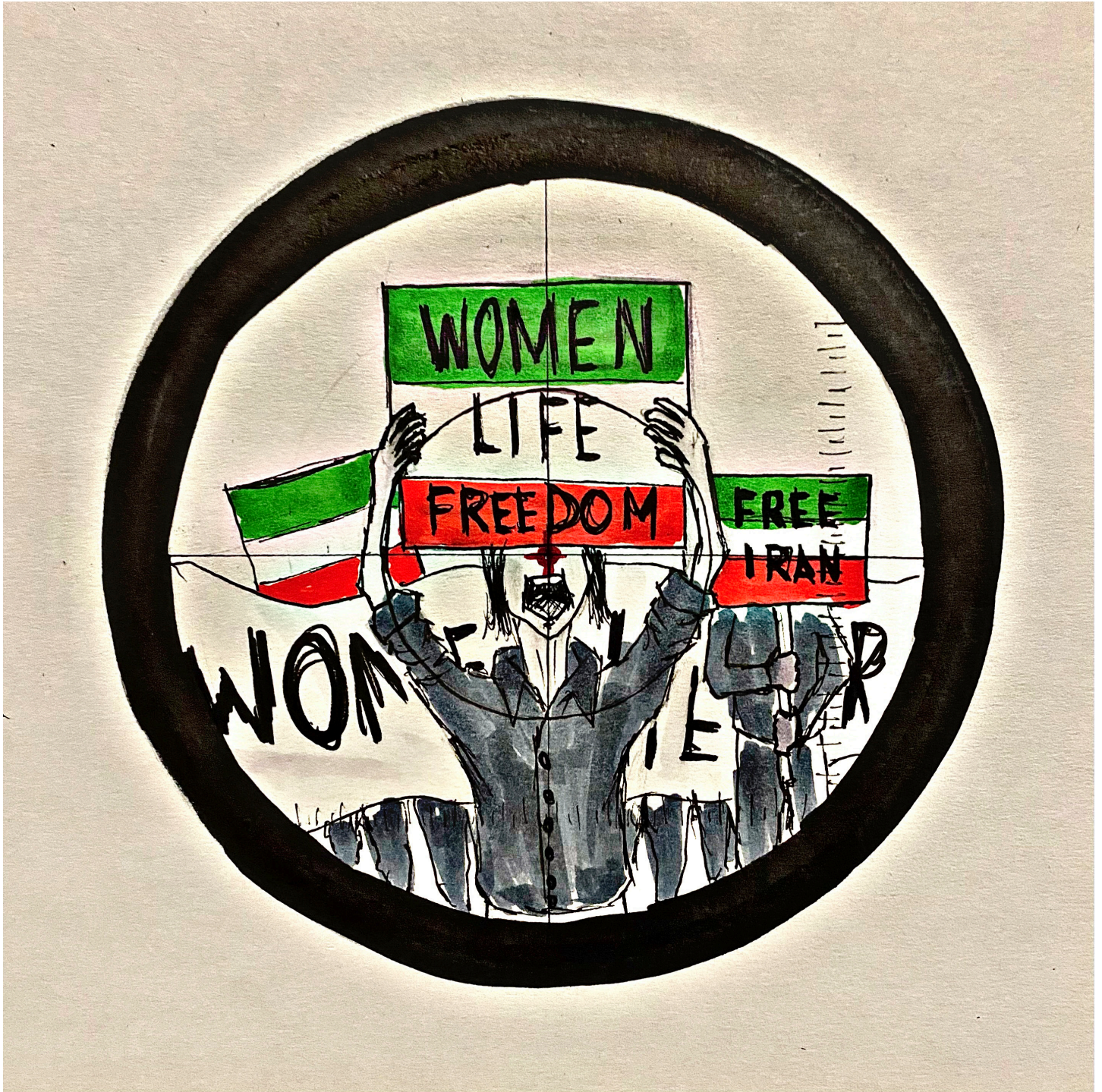


Illustration: Zaid Azhar

civil war.

A civil war would plunge Iran into a humanitarian crisis easily exceeding those of Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq. The country is one of the largest in the Middle East in terms of population, with well over 80 million [4] people. The habitable parts of the country are like a fortress, enclosed by mountain ranges. The rest of the country, meanwhile, is inhospitable desert. The country is very ethnically diverse, with dominant ethnic Persians only comprising only 61% [5] of the population. The remainder of the population is mostly Azeri, Kurdish and Luri and Baloch. With two of those ethnicities already involved in the struggle for self-determination and one with its own state hostile to Iran, a civil war would see an explosion in ethnic violence. The Iranian resistance, like other rebellions in the Middle East, would quickly descend into infighting. The revolution of 1979 saw the unity of Iranian society against one man, after which infighting was given little time to establish itself. In a civil war, infighting would appear front and center. Ethnic separatists, ideologues divided on post-revolutionary Iran, other factions of Islamists, et cetera would create a nightmare of a quagmire in the country. There may be a day when revolutionaries dance freely in the streets of Tehran - but this would be followed by years of desperately trying to stabilize the country. We've seen it across the Middle East - from Tunisia to Iraq to Libya - the toppling of autocratic regimes leaves a vacuum of power that quickly becomes impossible to deal with. More often than not, this situation is worse than that which preceded it (take the rise of ISIS in the 2010s as an obvious ex-

ample). This is, of course, to assume the government is defeated in the first place. Iran's current protests, while mobilizing vast swathes of society, lacks centralized leadership or any real lethal capabilities. A full-blown revolution today would end in a complete massacre. The protests of the past decade have led to the deaths of thousands at the hands of the government, who's to say they would flinch at killing thousands more? Foreign intervention on behalf of revolutionaries would be even worse. With its aforementioned rugged terrain, Iran would be absurdly difficult for a country like the United States to invade and occupy. The U.S. would likely emerge victorious but would be faced with yet another impossible nation-building project. In short, imagine an Afghanistan-like disaster in a country with twice as many people.

Iran's current situation is dire. Beyond grievances with the social-political system, Iranians face widespread poverty [6], unemployment [7] and inflation [8]. Some today may say that they'll gladly give up their last vestiges of comfort for genuine change. While seeming noble, this rhetoric is ultimately imprudent. The best Iranians can hope for, at least as of me writing this, is reform within the Islamic Republic. And while reform is a gargantuan task on its own, it's just a wee bit more tenable than total revolution [9]. ■

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Why the TDSB's New Specialized Programs Admissions Policy Is Problematic — And What We Can Do to Fix It.

by MIRANDA ZHAO

In May of 2022, the TDSB trustees voted to change the specialized programs admissions policy. In a motion that passed 17-3, they decreed that all TDSB specialized programs would begin using a lottery-based system of selection. This affects “programs such as High Performing Athletes, Arts, Africentric, Math, Science & Technology, Integrated Technology, Leadership Pathway and Cyber Arts.” [1] The change was shattering, but not shocking; discussions surrounding the phasing out of specialized programs have been occurring for years. [2]

In accordance with the TDSB's board-wide changes, schools have already changed their policies for this year's round of admissions, which will affect the graduating class of 2027. For example, the TOPS and MACS websites state that “all placements will be determined by random draw.” Other programs affected include the athletics program at Birchmount CI, the arts program at Earl Haig SS, and the IB program at Victoria Park CI.

In this article I will be arguing that the way the TDSB is attempting to fix the status quo with randomized admissions is the laziest, least effective option possible, and discussing what we can do to fix it. As a student in the TOPS program, I'll be focusing on the effect it will have on TOPS. Please keep in mind that I'm not arguing against diversity, or some degree of affirmative action. And I hope not to disparage the incoming students of TOPS (or any other program). I am sure that they are brilliant, passionate individuals — as all students are.

Part 1: Existence Why specialized programs are necessary in public schools.

To debate about the admissions process, it is important to first establish that specialized programs deserve to exist in the first place. Doing a cursory Google search reveals a host of articles arguing for the abolishment of gifted or specialized programs.

The purpose of a specialized program is to challenge high achieving students, and to provide a more focused approach to education for people who know what they want to do in the fu-

ture. It makes sense for society to group kids who are accomplished musicians and want to be a musician together, where the after school orchestra won't waste time teaching the basics. Same with mathematicians and athletes and scientists. The question is not about whether they “deserve” “special treatment,” but rather that they need a more challenging environment for the education system to be effective for them. A metaanalysis of studies done over the past century showed that grouping students by ability or interest has a statistically significant positive effect on how they learn [3] In

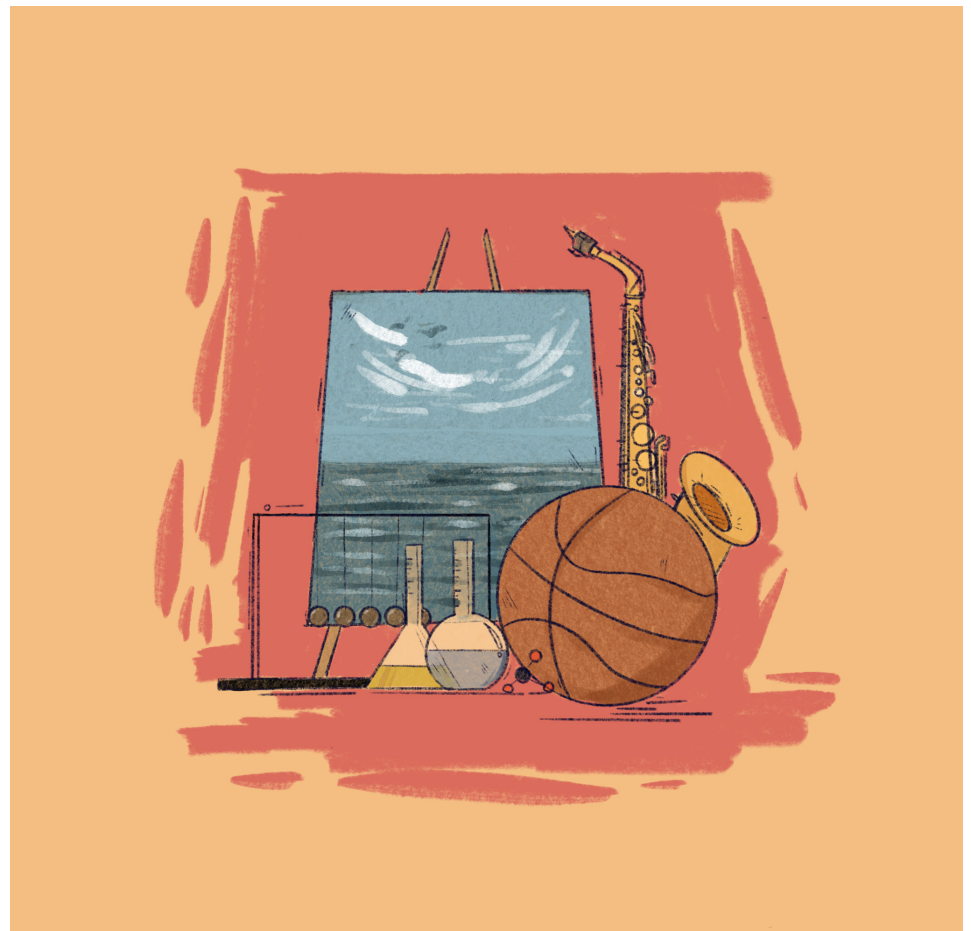


Illustration: Grace Zhu

this sense, specialized programs follow the very definition of an equitable system, by providing kids with the resources they need to succeed.

An argument against specialized programs is that it creates a segregated system, but this is an uncharitable representation of what specialized programs are. People go to different universities and major in different areas to receive what they need. There is an inherent separation (key word: separation, not segregation) required for this, but that doesn't mean it's necessarily a bad thing.

Of course, many students are struggling in the mainstream programs. What about their needs? Are these programs taking resources away from the rest of the population? It is valid to construe specialized programs as unfair. However, since studies show that grouping students by ability is helpful, perhaps we should be focusing on expanding access to programs, rather than taking it away from the kids it's already helping.

Part 2: Selection

Why a good selection policy is imperative in a specialized program

Recall that the purpose of a specialized program is to challenge students and individualize education. In TOPS, we get an accelerated Math, Science, and English curriculum. But this acceleration is only possible if everyone can keep up with it, and we know everyone is able to keep up because they were selected to be here. To get into TOPS, we had to submit personal statements and past marks, sit through exams, and an interview. Some programs like Claude Watson School for the Arts require an

audition.

In San Francisco, the change to lottery-based admissions in 2021 more than tripled the percentage of students with failing grades at Lowell High School [4]. Random draws take away the guarantee that everyone here truly fits the program, which lowers the quality and pacing of the program itself. I tried out for Claude Watson in 3rd grade and I did not get in. In retrospect, I am so glad I didn't. If I had sat amongst their orchestra, I would have thrown everyone off rhythm and slowed the class down (which happened in my middle school band, despite hours of practice). Merit-based admissions limit this probability in a way that random draw just can't.

A program is nothing without the people in it. To change the standards by which we hold a program's students is to knock it down from its foundations.

When discussing the new admissions policy, Colleen Russell-Rawlins, the director of the TDSB, said that it's the TDSB's "responsibility to remove barriers that prevent students from access to education and provide them the pathways to pursue their dreams and realize their full potential." [5] The barrier in education is not the existence of merit-based admissions to specialized programs, as Russell-Rawlins claims. It's the lack of funding that creates a low quality of education, starting from elementary school—large classes, few tutoring resources, and a lack of standardization. In grade 5, my teacher only taught math for one day in the entire school year; he gave us a multiplication table to complete on the day he was sick. For people who can't afford to attend math classes, gaps like this have disastrous consequences. Specialized pro-

grams have become a scapegoat for the inequities in our system.

In this way, random draw is also disingenuous, as it doesn't help the people it claims to help. The TDSB is luring lottery students in with false promises that a program will be the remedy to the education it failed to properly provide earlier. Instead, these students will either find themselves in a program with diluted standards, or without the required knowledge to succeed in a more challenging environment.

Our current system does have a problem. To paraphrase a friend—it is difficult to distinguish between innate and expressed talent. Merit-based admissions can only test for expressed talent, leaving all those who don't have the resources to bring out their innate talent behind. Our meritocracy needs to be changed, but we do know one thing, and that is: randomized admissions ruins programs for everybody.

Part 3: Repair

How can we fix this mess?

Everyone deserves to have a quality education that teaches them all they want to know for their future. There are definitely barriers that prevent students with a lack of resources from getting into programs, and there are definitely students that should be in gifted and talented programs, but aren't able to be, because of the low capacity. The solution to these issues can be narrowed down to one thing—more funding (*ahem* Ford government [6]). Increasing the number of teachers or people available to tutor students, or increasing the number of specialized programs would help solve both issues. In the bigger picture, social inequities need to be addressed.

The TDSB got one thing sort-of right—implementing affirmative action to increase diversity and combat racism. The TDSB’s website says that 20% of spots will be “given to students self-identifying as one of the currently and historically underserved and under-represented communities” [1]. We could debate about this, but that isn’t the point of this article. Either way, the quota system could and should be combined with merit-based admissions, instead of scrapping the latter entirely.

For now, let’s look at the short term goal of lifting the new policy. Other school boards, such as the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) [7] and the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) have replaced merit admissions with lotteries in the past [8]. In San Francisco, Lowell, a well-known magnet high school, reacted. The board members had voted to permanently hold lottery-based admissions in February 2021 [9]. There was widespread support for a recall election, and by June 2022, three of the school board’s seven original commissioners had been replaced. When the new commissioners voted, the changes were withdrawn. On top of that, three associations had also sued the school board, resulting in a ruling that the SFUSD had violated the law by failing to properly inform the public about changes [10][11]. Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology implemented a looser admissions system in 2020, resulting in a lawsuit against Fairfax County School Board. The judge ruled in favour of the plaintiffs, reinstating merit-based admissions [12].

As students, we need to let our voices be heard. It’s clear that public discontent holds a lot of power, but without news

coverage, the public is gradually forgetting that this issue exists. Fix this by emailing your TDSB trustees, reaching out to news sources, occasionally debating the issue with your friends, and convincing others to take action. The trustees held another vote to repeal the policy in October, which failed to pass 7-13. Compare this to the original division of 3-17; some of the trustees have changed their minds. With further public and student action, more may follow.

Part 4: Summary/Closing remarks

Changes need to be made to make our society more equitable, starting from pouring more funding into our schools, and ensuring that all children of all ages get a high quality education. But taking away from specialized programs makes the issue worse.

If this specialized program admissions policy persists, the golden age, the halcyon of the TOPS is over. The core of specialized programs is its students, and random draw cannot guarantee that the students fit the program.

TOPS has existed since 1987 [13]. It has been a defining aspect of high school life for a total of roughly 2000 students over a period of 36 years. Specialized programs have existed in some form in the TDSB for even longer than that. What school we go to has a huge impact on what friend groups we form, what we learn, and who we become. Don’t let other people forget what this policy change means to students. And don’t let the legacy of what our programs represent die with us.

A big thank you to the people who edited and discussed this article with me. ■

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From the several designs, you were able to pick your favourite one and send fun messages to friends via postcards!



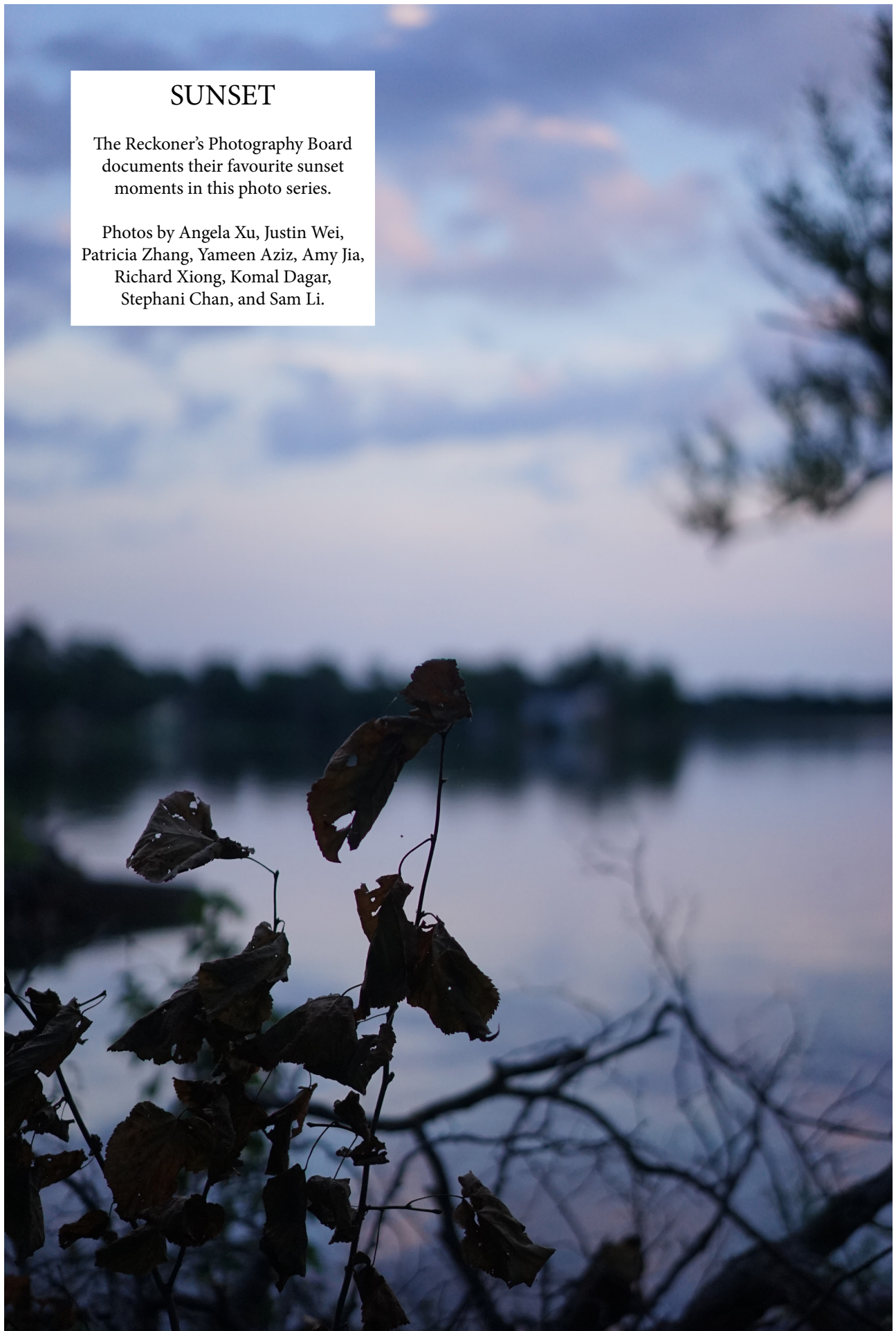


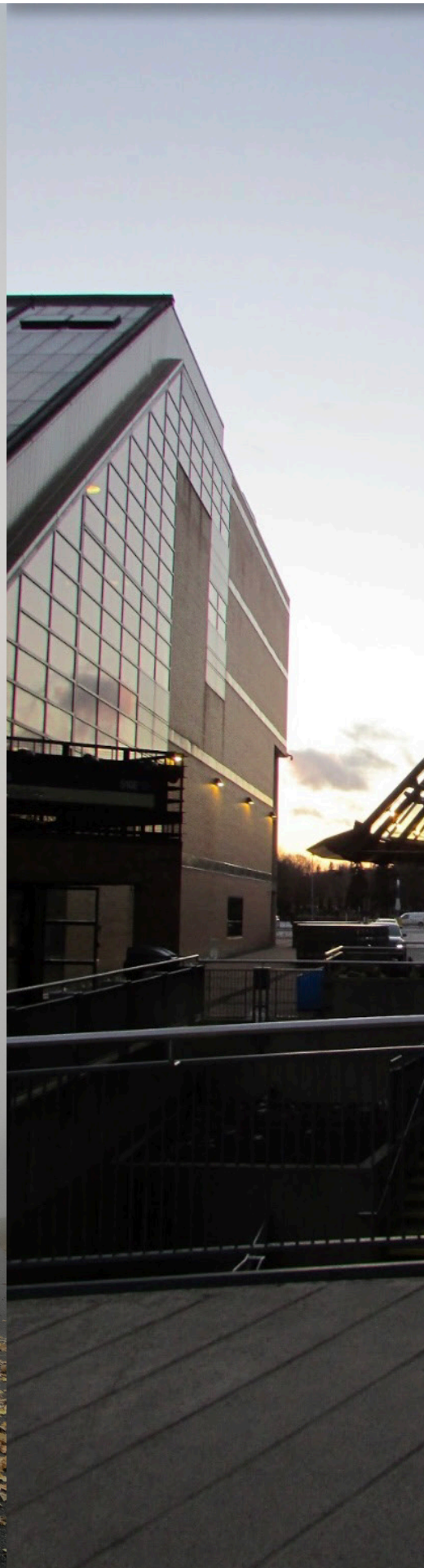


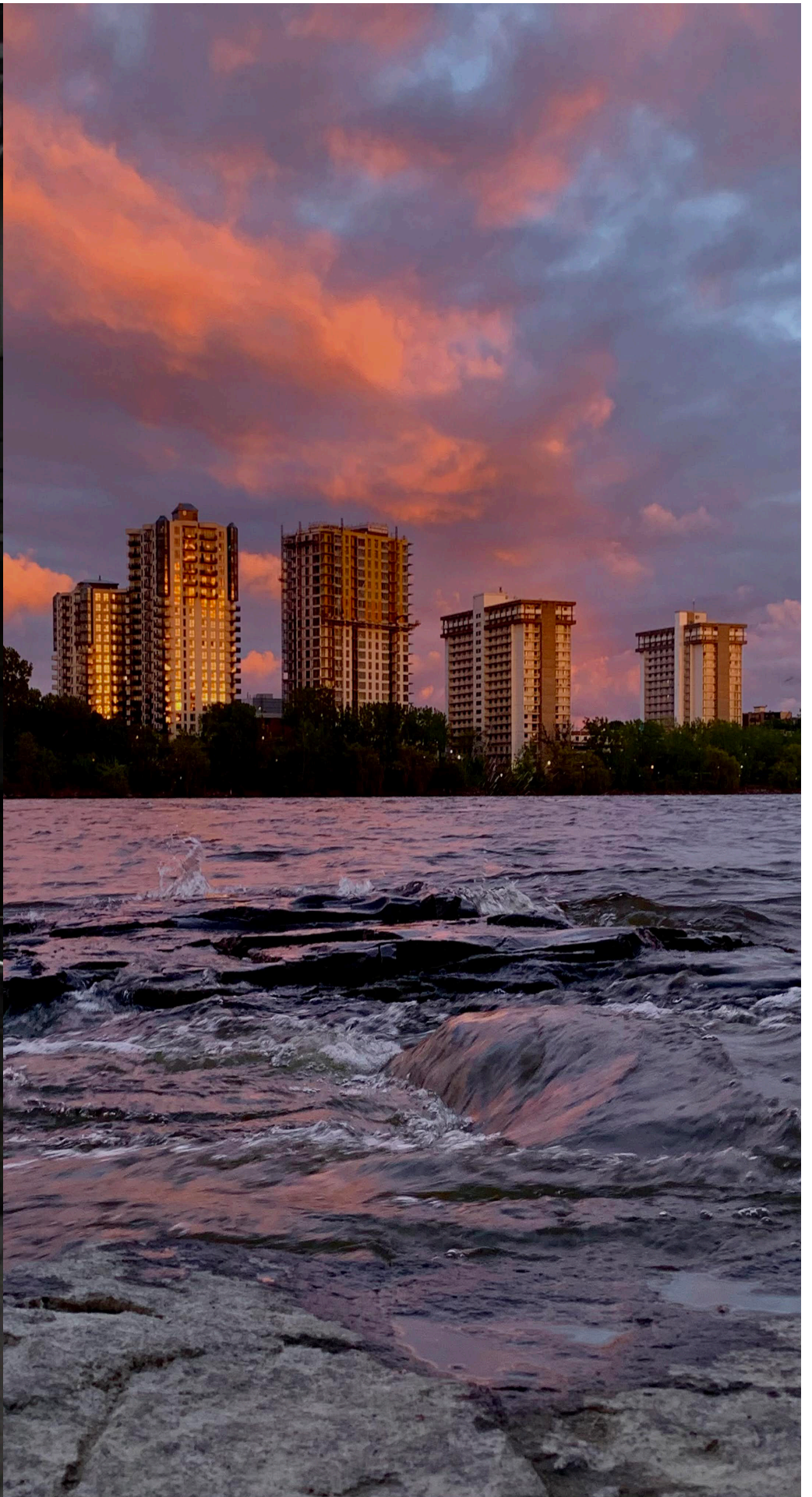
SUNSET

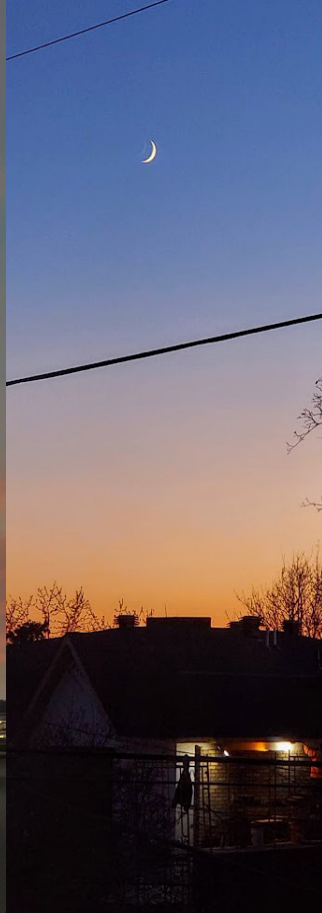
The Reckoner's Photography Board documents their favourite sunset moments in this photo series.

Photos by Angela Xu, Justin Wei, Patricia Zhang, Yameen Aziz, Amy Jia, Richard Xiong, Komal Dagar, Stephani Chan, and Sam Li.











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