



# MARIN COUNTY FREE LIBRARY TEEN LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE

THE SPIRE / 2024

The Spire is a youth publication created by and for Marin County teens. It is run through the Marin County Free Library and it takes submissions from youth, including poems, photography, articles, recipes, interviews, how-tos, and more! It's designed and edited by a group of four teens and a supervisor, who make up the Teen Leadership Crew (TLC). The TLC meets monthly to create the issues and organize submissions to The Spire at their respective schools. If you want to be an ambassador and editor of The Spire as a TLC member, email:

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# When Stories Are Told

a short story by Anaïs Letard

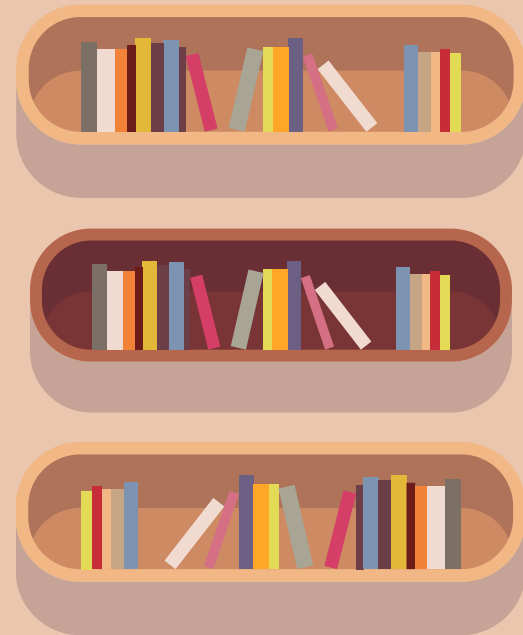
**Margaret Winston:** Silver curls, hazel pupils, and oh so many freckles. This was Ms. Winston, though her friends called her Margaret, Margy for those who returned books on time. Being the local Mill Valley librarian had its perks: time to read the daily newspaper, free coffee in the office, pay. But the best part for Margaret was learning about different people, their personality, their interests and their skills. It was as if one had taken a pair of glasses and were seeing the world through a whole different lens. As she sat on her seat at the front desk, she could glimpse the fourteen year old teenager in her corner by the windowsill. Or the man smoking out a window in a discreet section of the library. Or the young man in his senior year of college who never stopped checking his phone. All individuals. All different stories. All in one same space.

**Katherin Lee:** Aged 14 years old, bundled in her sister Jane's wool gray cardigan and holding a cup of coffee, sat Katie Lee, petite, strands of purple hair straying from her braid, milky blue eyes reading *The Catcher in the Rye*. She sat on the window sill. She knew Margy didn't mind. Then again, she was also a regular library volunteer, so maybe Margy didn't mind anything she did. It was the only spot in the library with enough lighting not to strain her eyes. She needed to finish this book by Monday as well as write an essay but gymnastics practice had kept her busy this week, as well as that paper for biology and algebra test. So here she was, reading in the library, trying hard to not think about her workload.

Thankfully, the library was pretty silent today; only the college senior called Nathaniel she'd seen in the neighborhood, the librarian and herself remained. The library was always quiet, which meant Katie could work peacefully.

For Katie, the Mill Valley library was her second home, a safe haven. Here, nobody judged her or asked her things like: "Why did you dye your hair" or "Why are you so quiet?" or "What happened between you and Jane?"

Katie thought of her sister now and of the ocean and conflict that separated them. Katie Lee is ten years old. Jane Lee is thirteen. They are sitting in a living room lit by an antique chandelier, snuggled in blankets, shedding tears as angry voices come from upstairs. Katie is ten and a half. Katie's parents loom in front of her. She catches the words "...things just aren't working out," and "...he'll visit, don't worry dear," and "...it's all going to be okay," except nothing would ever be ok again.



Katie is about to turn eleven. Jane is throwing a cardigan at Katie with rage. Jane is screaming. Katie's crying. Her cheeks were forever stained.

Katie is eleven years old. Jane enters the airport. Jane doesn't look back. Katie doesn't stop watching.



**Pablo Gonzales:** Walking into the Mill Valley library was like entering a fresh produce room in Costco. The air conditioning was always on high, probably because Ms. Winston couldn't work the heating system. Pablo was aged forty, large, tired most of the time with ruffled hair and gray pupils. He was craving a cigarette. He was always craving a cigarette.

"Good morning, Mr. Gonzales." Ms. Winston smiled as he entered, cutting into his thoughts. That was something he had noticed about her. She smiled too much.

"Good morning. How are you doing today?" He rasped.

"Better than you seem to be. You look like you could pass out any minute!"

As much as Pablo wished to deny it, it was true. He could sense the dark circles that hung below his barely open eyelids. Nightmares had plagued his sleep the previous night. As they had the nights before. He kept trying to practice those therapy techniques but nothing ever changed.

"Mr. Gonzales?"

"Here they are," He said, a little too quickly. He pulled two hard-covers out of his bag; one entitled *A Beginner's Guide to Healthy Sleep*, and another *How to Stop Smoking in Five Easy Steps*. The first was a book recommendation from his sleep specialist. The second, well, he didn't know what to think about that one. "Sorry if they're a little overdue."

"Oh, I don't mind. I was going to ask you if you could be so kind as to tell Nathaniel over there," she turned and indicated to a dark young man sitting on a couch in a far off corner of the library.

"That I'm closing early today?"

"Of course." Mr. Gonzales wanted to inquire why, but before he could she was already beaming and heading to the staff room with the two books in hand.

Peculiar. He thought. He headed towards the man with a newly-lit cigarette in his hand. To his right, he saw a violet-haired girl hovering over a book in the golden morning sunlight. He thought about the life the girl had ahead of her, of her healthy lungs, of her peaceful sleep.

Pablo Gonzales is twenty eight years old. He's in a deep sleep, thrashing, frowning. He suddenly opens his eyes, sweat pearling his forehead. It's the first of many nightmares.

Pablo is thirty one. He's standing in front of a door with a sign that reads "Dr. Smith: Sleep therapist" on the front. He takes a breath, and walks in.

Pablo is thirty two. He's in front of a cash register. He leaves the store with a pack of cigarettes in his hands.

Pablo is thirty-eight years old. His wife instructs him constantly to stop smoking. Her hands are red from the many times he has squeezed her hands in his sleep. He promises to try and try and try. Because trying is all he can do.

**Nathaniel Washington:** Nathaniel wondered how Margy could still stand him whenever he left the library without a single borrowed book. He sat on a couch in the library now, with his phone in his hand and swirling thoughts in his mind. He was twenty-one years old, with dark skin and bruises along his legs, a short haircut and Nike sneakers, reading a New York Times article about inflation. It was all over the news recently. Headings such as “Gas price rise 15% in only a month,” or “Interview with economist Jayden Gray on rising market prices...” and so on. Sitting now, Nathaniel couldn’t deny the financial impact the recent inflation was having on his family.

“Nathaniel?”

Automatically, Nathaniel stood up and flattened his hair, just as he always did when addressed, and found himself observing a large man with half closed eyes and a cigarette pressed between his fingers.

“Do I know you?”

“No. Ms. Winston told me to inform you that she was closing early today.”

Nathaniel had a very hard time believing that Margy, the most dedicated (and only) librarian he ever knew, was closing early, especially from a man who was smoking in the library, which was against the rules.

“How come?”

“I don’t know,” his voice trailed off and he started fiddling with the cigarette. Nathaniel knew the man was lost in thought, so instead of pursuing the question, he briefly thanked him and picked up his bag. But just as he began to leave, books started spilling out onto the floor.

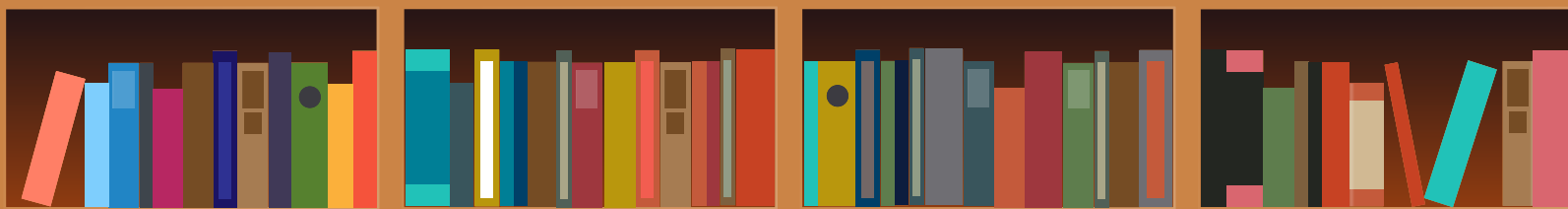
“Shoot.” he muttered under his breath.

Scattered in front of Nathaniel lay a textbook on international economics, an open notebook with scribbly handwriting inside and finally a Mill Valley library book about budgeting.

Nathaniel is sixteen years old. He eats lunch at a park near his public high school in hand-me-down clothes, watching with envy the private school kids drink Coke and shove each other.

Nathaniel is eighteen years old. He’s hugging his parents in a dark blue robe and graduation hat. His family’s joy fills him with sunshine, but the shadow of the tuition price looms within.

Nathaniel is nineteen. His parents have emailed him about moving out and having to rent further from Nathaniel’s college. Nathaniel's backpack carries the weight of his first college debt. He needs to get his degree, he needs a high paying job, or else his family won’t make it.



**Margaret Winston:** Margy pushed in the leather office chair, folded up her newspaper, and prepared to leave. The glass door she locked by key reflected her wrinkled face and messy bun. The clip-clop of her heels echoed in the emptiness of the library, the fans above still, the fireplace filled with only embers and ash. Hopefully no one had minded when she decided to close the library early today. She stood right outside the library door and locked the large, cedar door to the literary world she spent almost all her time in. She could feel the ancient ridges in the wood, see the bare branches of a nearby tree and even smell the foretaste of rain in the winter air.

# ALL WAVES CRASH

JACK MCINTIRE

As life begins and things start small,  
You feel enlightened and things look tall;  
Anger and happiness are abundant emotions  
A blank mind contains no commotion;  
An unavoidable eave begins to form,  
My first dispute, and my heart feels torn;

A never ending barrel rolls my way,  
A realization that changes never stay;  
Toys become boring, and imaginary friends grow old,  
As my ears become weary of the same stories told;  
Hope evolves, and my needs shine bold,  
As I developed an anticipation of my life to unfold;

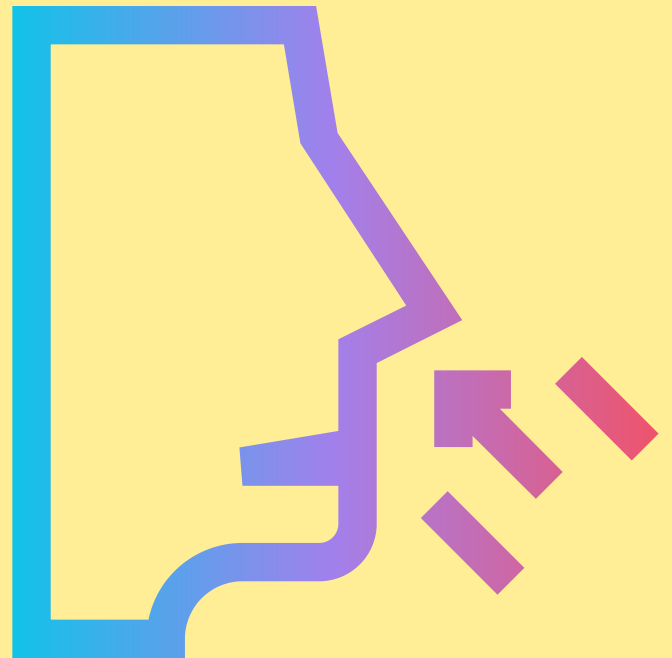
Timidity as my moms reprimands hit stronger,  
School gets tedious, and days get longer;  
Experiences and memories are all the matter,  
Unknowingly, that philosophy falls bottom of the ladder  
A need for money now stands in my mind,  
As an enjoyable weekend night becomes hard to find;  
Good times and bad go by in a flash,  
My last words speak, all waves crash



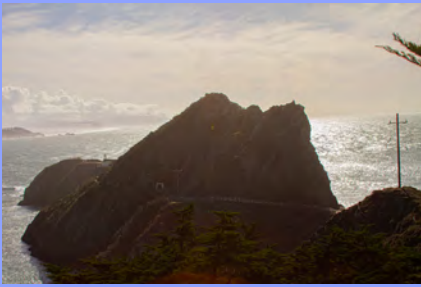
# Breathing

by Sadie Scholl

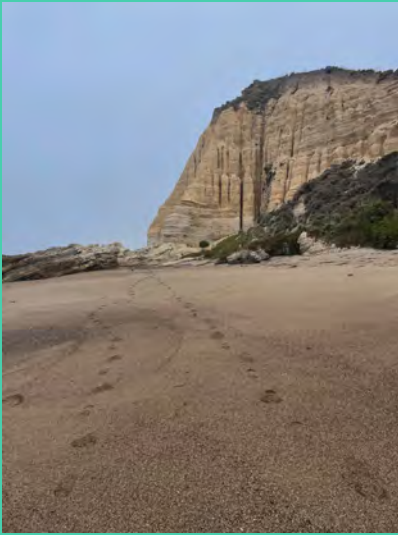
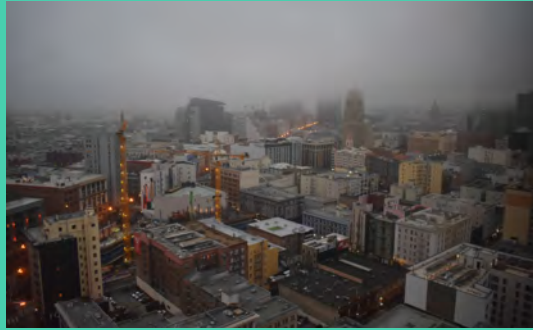
I never related my shortness of breath with danger  
But instead with joy  
For my bouts of coughing  
And teary eyes  
Were always prefaced by laughter  
I would sit in the car  
Driving home from a friends house  
Or dinner in the city  
With my lungs tight  
Aching  
It gave me a great satisfaction  
Sitting in that car  
I knew it had been a good day  
Full of joy  
Even if that joy  
Dipped me down  
Until the very tips of my hair brushed the pool of danger  
That waited below me  
But good fun always came before it



Photos by  
Hayden Wolftail



Photos by  
Madie  
Yates



Photos by  
Maxwell Fiek



Calistoga,  
California

# Why We Should Care About Indie Films

by Hanaleia Lavie

Scrolling through Netflix is like walking past tables covered in banquets when you are only mildly hungry. Sure, you could eat something. But will it be the crab? The salad? Mashed potatoes? The chocolate cake? You have a desire to put a bit of everything on your plate, and a strange feeling that no matter how much you eat, you will always be missing out on something.

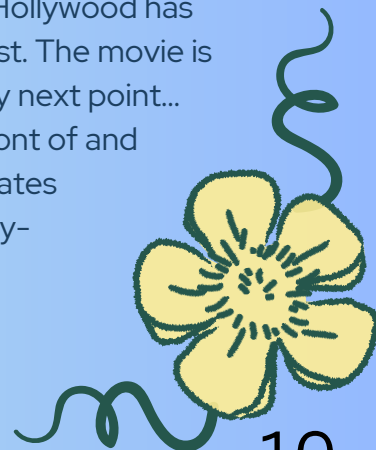
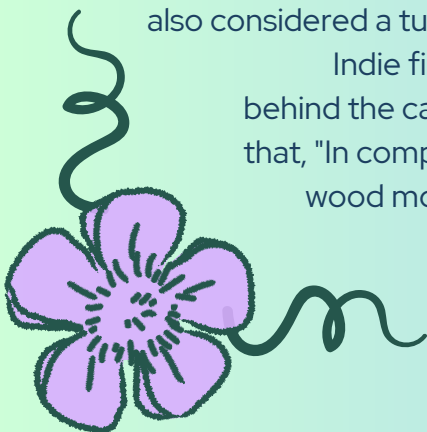
Such is the consumer's dilemma, and mine as I watch yet another show because my classmates are talking about it because I don't want to be left behind in the shadowy, shameful realm of "Oh, I haven't seen that yet."

Like it or not, most of the movies and shows that shape our culture are Hollywood films. By that I mean a film funded by a major film studio, especially the "Big Five": Universal, Warner Bros., Disney, Paramount, and Columbia. But perhaps our plate, which is already full of content waiting to be consumed, can expand just a little to welcome films by smaller, independent studios. This may trigger a fear of that shameful realm called Missing Out, a persistent voice in our heads that warns us against leaving a blockbuster in favor of a more obscure film.

It whispers, "What is the purpose of watching a movie that none of your friends have seen?"

However, the realm of indie films has so much to offer. In this article, I will discuss what differentiates an indie film from a Hollywood film, show how independent film productions have shaped culture, and explain how we can find and support indie films and filmmakers. Let's define an indie movie as a film not funded by a major film studio. Indie films are almost always lower budget than big mainstream movies. But let's get more specific. Sherry Ortner writes an article for the University of Chicago that explains an independent film as the "antithesis of a Hollywood studio film." While Hollywood movies follow mainstream trends and ideas in order to win the favor of the masses, many indie filmmakers endeavor to challenge the consumer. Indie films venture into difficult topics. Unlike Hollywood movies, they are often political, or a commentary on current events and social issues. For example, *Everything Everywhere All at Once*, an indie film by the studio A24, won the Academy Award for Best Picture this year. This film is loved for being zany, genre-bending, and a bit of a sensory overload, but also because it is about family ties and the importance of kindness. When we were walking to the theater, I was unexcited. But my mom reminded me that Hollywood has never portrayed a middle-aged woman, especially a mother, as the protagonist. The movie is also considered a turning point for Asian representation, which leads me to my next point...

Indie films are ahead of the curve in terms of diversity, both in front of and behind the camera. A study by the National Endowment for the Arts states that, "In comparison to independent films, top-grossing fare [like a Hollywood movie] is less likely to feature underrepresented individuals at the helm, particularly women. The films that do feature directors from diverse backgrounds are also more likely to showcase diversity on screen. Hollywood directors tend to





follow the current social norms, but indie films can break free of that box.

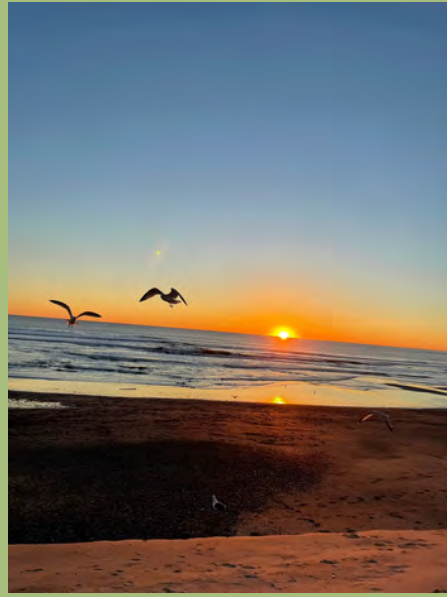
Actor Idris Elba credits much of his early success to smaller-budget indie films. He wrote for *The Times*, "We may need the money mainstream cinema from America brings in, but to create future stars and introduce new voices, independent film is where it's at. I wouldn't be here without it."

Idris Elba went from smaller indie movies to landing his reputation as a brilliant actor in mainstream films. However, many actors who make it in Hollywood transition to indie movies, even if the switch is just for a couple of films. Robert Pattinson, for example, went from starring in *Twilight* to working on Robert Egger's

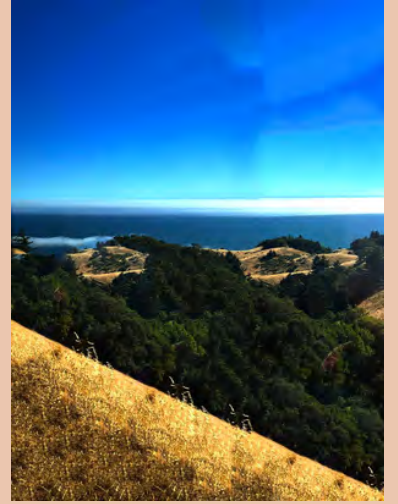
claustrophobic horror *The Lighthouse*, a low-budget hit. Robert Pattinson said of his decision to star in the film, "I just wanted to do something weird." Because once stars have hit it big, they start to see the appeal of scripts unpressured by the dominant narratives that Hollywood enforces.

Those who seek jobs in the cutthroat film industry often fail and quit for other careers. Filmmakers who work for smaller production companies or start their own might not have the benefit of a consistent and comfortable salary, but they have freedom from the demands of a major studio, and therefore the prerogative to create authentic art. I believe that today, in the midst of a writer's, and now also an actor's strike, we are realizing how much we value films. We cherish them as entertainment that brings people together, as social commentary that gives us new perspectives, and as art that serves as a form of escapism from the monotony of everyday life. When we don't have that familiar banquet of media to choose from, the feeling of a content famine coming on can force us to appreciate the creators that provide us the movies we love. To support these artists who continue to tell stories in an industry that does not favor them, I believe it is our obligation as consumers to be mindful of the content we binge. So let's search for a new indie movie or a short film that won a local festival to add to our watchlist, along with the new Hollywood blockbuster.

Ruby Kosek



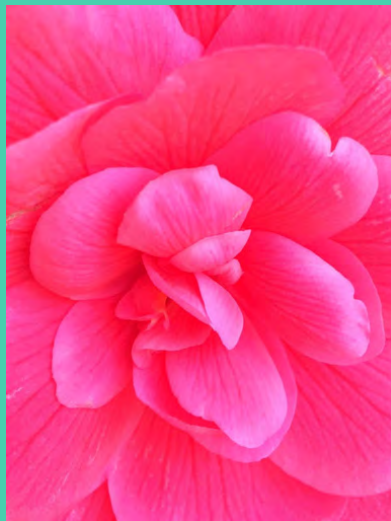
Harmony  
Lashayh



Claire  
Vu

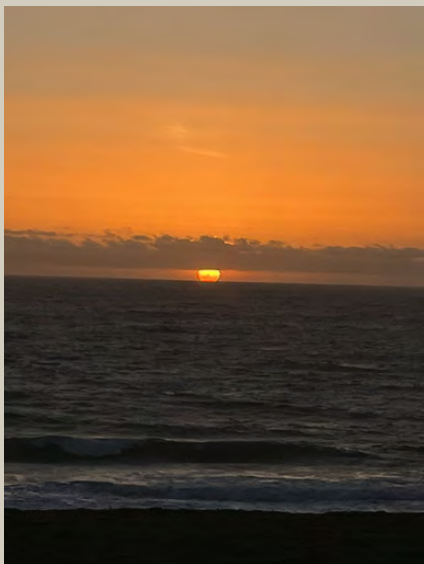
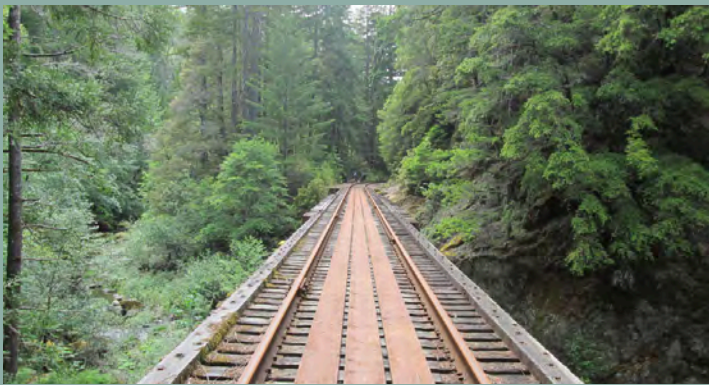


Tula Peltz





Lauren Felder, a junior at Tamalpais High School, submitted their collection of six photographs taken on a small Canon digital camera last June during a camping trip to Camp Noyo, California.



Jack Bartlett



# A Sestina for My 外婆

by Claire Yu

The gentle hum and shuffle of garden shoes outside  
awaken my quick steps from my bedroom door. Once sunbaked,  
–the dirt kicked up in dust– the garden floor now bursts with life, cultivated and loved  
by the streams worn on the soft palm of her hand.  
All summer I laid under my grandma’s sweet fig tree,  
its shade like cool water casts on me and the land.

My soul sinks and fills the land  
beneath my toes. The outside  
air charges my lungs, as I dance beneath the fig tree’s  
shadow, my feet covered with fallen fruit, sunbaked  
in the August heat as I clapped the palms of my hands  
to the beat of my grandma’s work. Oh, to be loved

by the whims of summer’s fleeting days! To be loved,  
like a child, whose greedy hands and dimpled cheeks land  
chuckles in the bellies of others, their hands  
still soft from days of rest, innocent of the world outside  
their grandma’s garden. I dance to the limits of the known, sun kissed  
and content, listening to the hum of hidden hummingbirds above. The fig tree

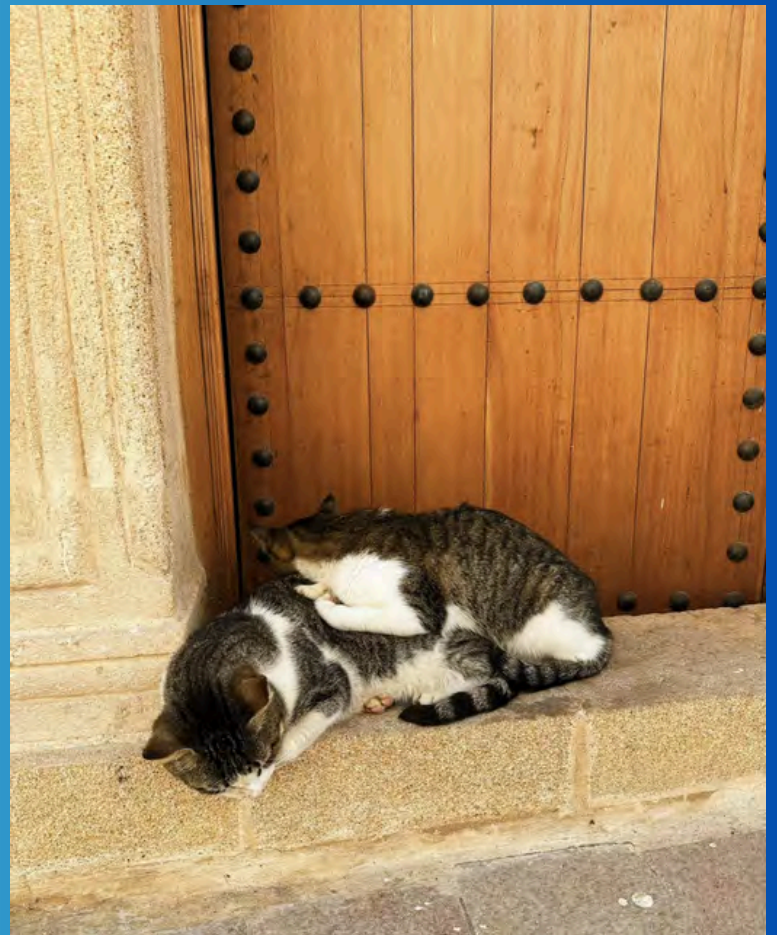
shrinks from my gaze as an insatiable wonder escapes me. The protection of the great fig tree  
occupied a distant space these days, of summers I hung like fruits on its limbs, loved  
and cared for by the bees and sunbaked  
afternoons, or abundant harvests when my eager reach lifted me from the land.  
Yet, the shuffle of garden shoes and the smell of summer air invited me outside  
to our garden now bursting with vibrant shapes. While her hands

forever streaked with dirt–the streams mud–clogged in the palms of her hands–  
her face, framed in a silver haze, still shimmered under the shade of the fig tree.  
In the silent company of the world, we stood together outside  
the home we’ve loved  
and decorated. the land  
we’ve known for years, sunbaked

through the indiscernible seasons whose touch left sunbaked  
and golden the hills of my town. Our hands  
intertwined with the love of a mother for its kin, of the land  
for the rain. In the careful embrace of the fig tree  
the silver haze seemed less frightening, to be loved  
by the whims of summer’s fleeting days, life seems worthwhile outside.



*Photos by  
Jamie Lemberg*





# Dark Mornings

## By Amelie Green

The dark mornings are always bright and sunny,  
The blankets are warm and the air is cold,  
And with heavy eyes I wake,  
Filled with hope of a new day  
But those eyes close, and sleep returns.

I'd wake again,  
30 minutes past the time I had to arrive,  
So with heavy limbs I rise,  
Filled with an agenda for afternoon,  
But those limbs fall, and sleep returns.

An hour past the days start,  
The alarm blares,  
So with a heavy heart I rise,  
And with heavy limbs I walk,  
And with heavy eyes I start the day.



Photo: Evangeline Littler

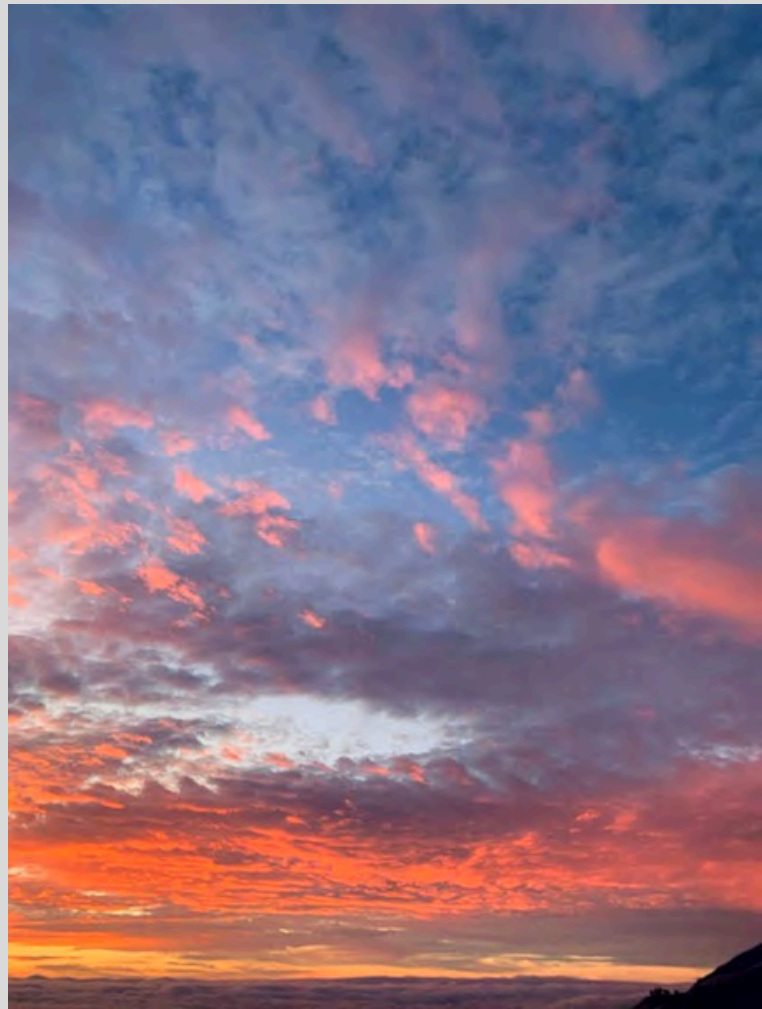


Photo: Evangeline Littler

# "Trust Fall"

## By Olivia Gasson

When you trust someone,  
You put your heart in their hands.

To be betrayed is to have them rip you apart,  
Your blood and flesh.

I was seven when I endured my first tear;  
You have put bandaids over every mark.

While I still have my scars,  
I am learning to trust again.

Hold my heart,  
Never let me fall.

# tied tubes

## Amber (Sunny) Dashiell

there is this constant ringing  
in my ears

Bright surgery lights  
flash,  
blinding me.

one i cannot escape  
no matter  
my many attempts

it's inescapable  
organs that defy my will  
an uneasy sickness  
with each thought  
Crying. Loud crying.

red and pink and white  
fear fills my bones –  
a chill,  
marrow freezing

i cannot allow this to happen  
i can't  
i will not  
Arms outreached,  
palms outstretched,  
prepared.

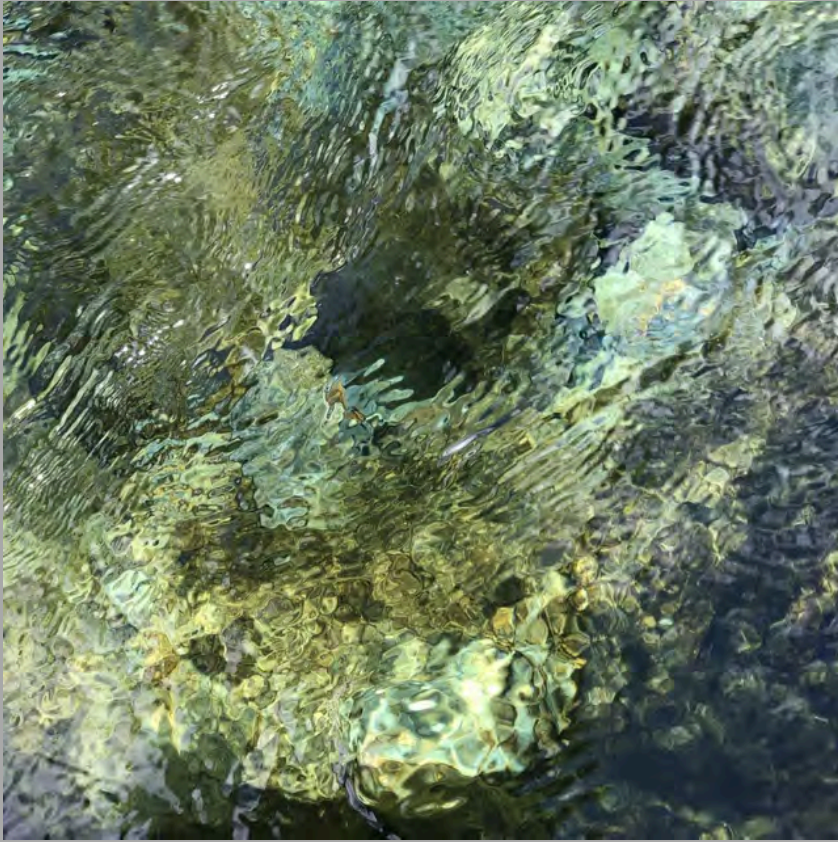
i can not allow  
myself this

prodding and poking,  
unrelinquishable shame  
and a gut  
that will never be normal  
vessels closed off,  
personal protection  
I am safe now, I  
will not be tainted.  
I have saved myself.

guilt. sickness.  
why is this  
so painful...?

grief, undeniable,  
heavy, charring grief.  
a loss i never had  
the chance to love

no, no, no.  
Pleading, begging,  
wishing to hear  
the  
cries  
of  
my



## Evangeline Littler





Photos by  
Dahlia  
Tymoff



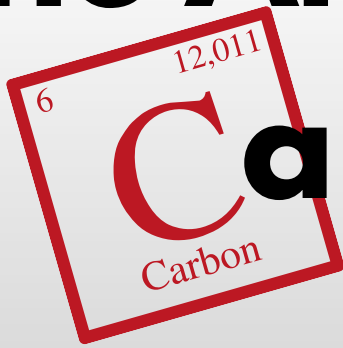


Photos by  
Spencer  
Nuss

STINSON  
SUNSET IN  
SEPTEMBER

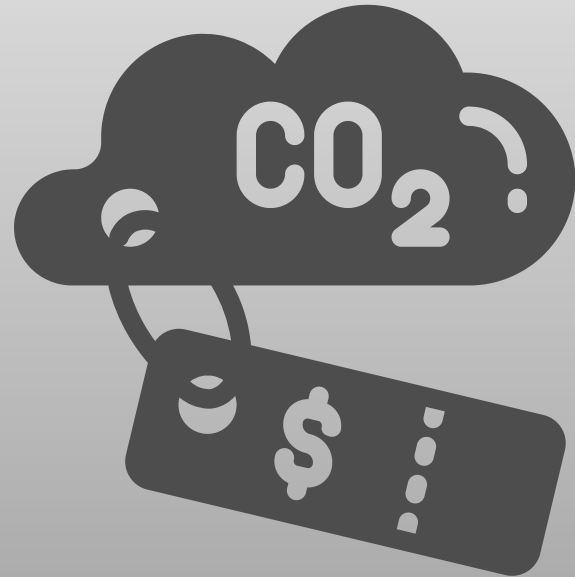


# The Argument for a Carbon Tax



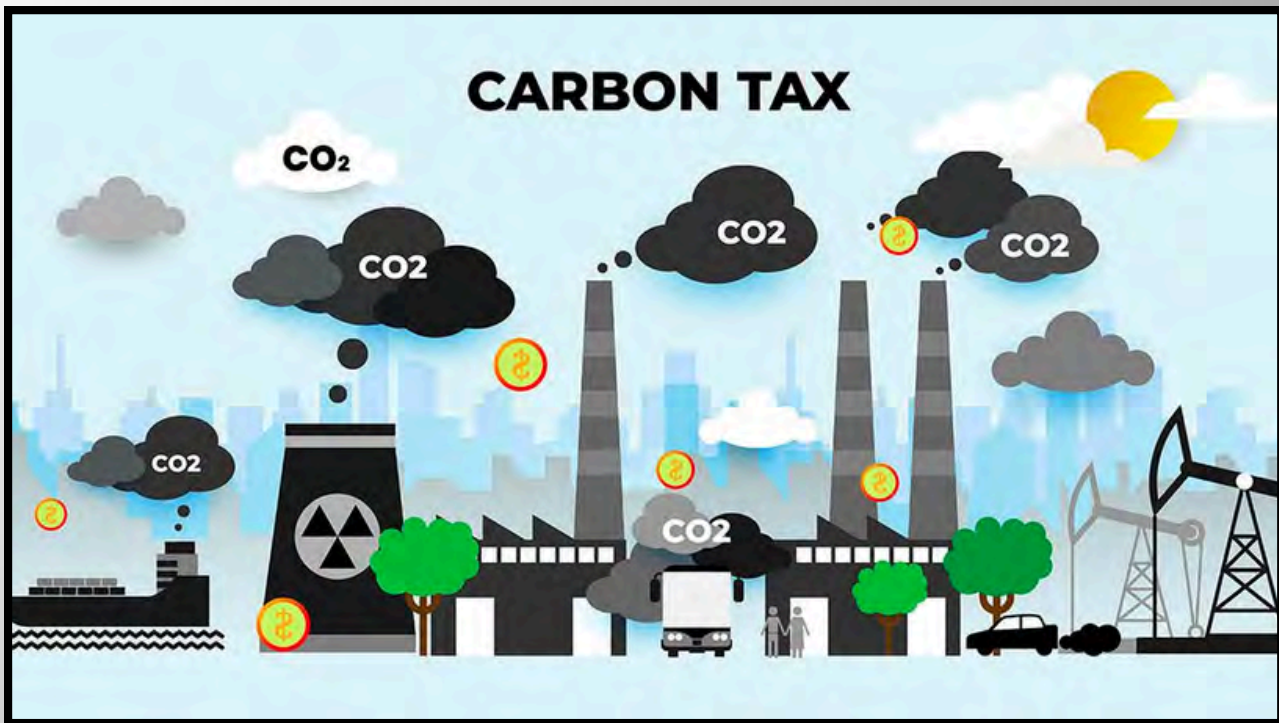
**Leo Susser**

One point four trillion dollars is the revenue in the first ten years if a \$25/ton carbon tax was introduced into the American economy, according to the Brookings Institute. By 2025 a 22 percent decline in emission and by 2030 a 26 percent decline. For years, politicians, economists, and climate activists have debated the implementation of a carbon tax. A carbon tax is when the government charges a fee for each ton of carbon emitters released into the atmosphere. A potential carbon tax would tax both corporations and consumers. By taxing consumers and businesses it would force the consumers to choose the cheaper green alternative, and at the same time drive innovation to produce greener goods that are now in more demand and cheaper. Although the benefits to a carbon tax re very high, there are also some costs and challenges.



An introduction of a carbon tax would be regressive and disproportionately impact the poor, as a larger percentage of their income is spent on carbon heavy goods. The introduction would also create deadweight loss as the supply curve is shifted left, meaning the amount of items produced would shrink. After researching and talking to economists, I believe that a carbon tax would be an effective way to decrease climate change while also maintaining a strong economy, as the benefits outweigh the cost.





Source: Engineering News

Over 100 years ago British Economist Arthur Cecil Pigou, founder of the University of Cambridge School of Economics and an influential figure in twentieth century economics, came up with the idea of a carbon tax. In the early 1900s, London experienced horrible pollution, referred to as pea soup, as the economy shifted to industrialization. The smog was not only hurting the people and their health, it was also affecting the economy. So in 1912 Pigou created his Pigouvian tax, a tax that would work to fix the pea soup of pollution impacting London. The problem with the prices of items that produce greenhouse gasses is the negative externality (cost of the pollution) is not included in the cost of producing the goods. For example, a plastic bag costs \$0.10 to produce, but economists have calculated the pollution from the production of that bag costs society \$0.02. However, this \$0.02 cent cost was not priced into the 10 cent bag. A carbon tax tries to fix this, by taxing the price of carbon to account for the negative externalities. This is how the carbon tax works at the most basic level.

Implementation of a carbon tax is more difficult. To do so the government would set a price for each ton of carbon corporations emit into the atmosphere and charge companies for their emissions. Causing the supply curve to shift left as carbon intensive goods rise in price. The shift would force the consumer to buy the cheaper option, which would be the greener option due to it not being taxed. The second change is to push companies to innovate, so they do not have to pay the tax. The objectives of the tax would cover the externalities and shift the amount of carbon down, as it becomes uneconomical to produce products with a disproportionate carbon footprint. Another benefit of using a tax is that it encourages consumers to make millions of small decisions to reduce their carbon footprint. The implementation of a carbon tax also becomes harder as the tax would be regressive on the poor and hurt the consumer more than the business, so it is an unpopular solution. Although this can be mitigated.

One of the biggest problems with a carbon tax that many economists point out is how a tax would be regressive on the poor. Poor people spend more as a percent of their income on heavy carbon products compared to the wealthy. Low income families pay 8.1% of their income on utilities compared to non-low income families that pay only 2.3% on utilities. Stanford researchers imposed a hypothetical \$15 metric ton tax and found that “Under [this] hypothetical carbon tax, households in the lowest income group would pay as a percent of income more than twice what households in the highest 10 percent of income distribution pay.” Meaning poorer people will be paying more (as a percentage of their income) in taxes. This is one of the reasons why a carbon tax has not been implemented as a large voting base for politicians who are middle and lower income Americans. One solution that has been popular to fix this issue is a Carbon Dividend or cutting other taxes.

A carbon tax has been implemented in a couple of countries so far. Finland, Poland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands, and Germany all introduced in the 1990’s. The data has been positive as countries' carbon footprint have fallen. Finland, Poland, and Sweden have seen large declines in carbon emissions. According to the Swedish government, their carbon tax “provides incentives to reduce energy consumption, improve energy efficiency and increase the use of renewable energy alternatives.”<sup>7</sup> Sweden has the highest carbon price of \$126 a carbon ton and covers 40% of emitters nationally, and over the past thirty years this tax has worked miracles. Their carbon footprint has dropped 27 percent from 1990 to 2018. While their carbon emissions have been cut, their economy has kept growing. If the United States implemented even a policy one third as effective as Sweden's it would lead to an enormous 10 percent decline in emissions. Stopping 457,700,000 million tons of carbon from entering into the atmosphere.

***The United States should act on a carbon tax now. Climate change is an urgent issue and is becoming irreversible. Not only is putting a carbon tax a moral idea, it is also an economical decision. If we continue to destroy the environment the negative effects will hurt our economy leading to rising waters, more droughts and more hurricanes. It is our responsibility to tend to this earth so future generations can reap the same benefits from it as we do. In the words of Mahatma Gandhi, “the future depends on what we do in the present” and what we need in the present is a carbon tax.***





Photos by  
Sophie Akāpo





**PHOTOS  
BY  
ELLERY  
BARNES**





*Photos by  
Johannah Nesbit*



# DESTRUCTION SCARRED

BY ALESHKA MCPRETL

I never understood our end until I saw the ocean.

I don't mean seeing the waves in passing, coated in the rose-colored haze of a day at the beach. I mean the real ocean. The one away from the watchful eyes of the world. The one you only see in the early morning after you've climbed through miles of rocks to visit. The journey, with all its hill-filled glory, is arduous. Your feet are sore and aching, yet you cling to the dream that the view will be worth it.

That's more like us, isn't it? Angered, blistered feet, yet we still keep going.

You stand atop the cliff, staring at the raging waves that hit the rocky coast. Your eyes soak in the sparkles of the water dancing around you.

You can't see its destruction. The fog blocks out the irate rays of the sun. You're lulled into a sense of false security. You can't get burned. You don't need the safety net of sunscreen. Exhausted from your trek, you welcome the cooling mist. The water seems to stretch on for eternity. Surrounded by all encompassing beauty, peace flickers through your heart.

Forever. What a beautiful lie.

The waves gain the courage to reach higher as you stare into an abysmal sea. The water learns to crash against the cliff with more force than you could ever fathom. The rocks beneath you are wet and slippery, and your socks are soaked through. The mist you once welcomed now turns your skin to ice.

Now you understand the depth of the ocean. You understand us. Beauty is only there to conceal the destruction.

Photos  
by



Sophie  
Shern



**PHOTO BY  
MARSHALL  
MAYNARD**



**PHOTO BY  
AMELIA LEE**

# Photography by



**Will  
Howard**



# The Milo Foundation

by Kelsey Cook

The Milo Foundation is a no-kill organization providing an alternative for homeless pets throughout California. "In addition to community education, volunteer opportunities, and adoption services, Milo provides sanctuary for animals needing more time and space to have quality of life until the special homes they need can be found," as stated on The Milo Foundations page. Milo is located in Point Richmond.

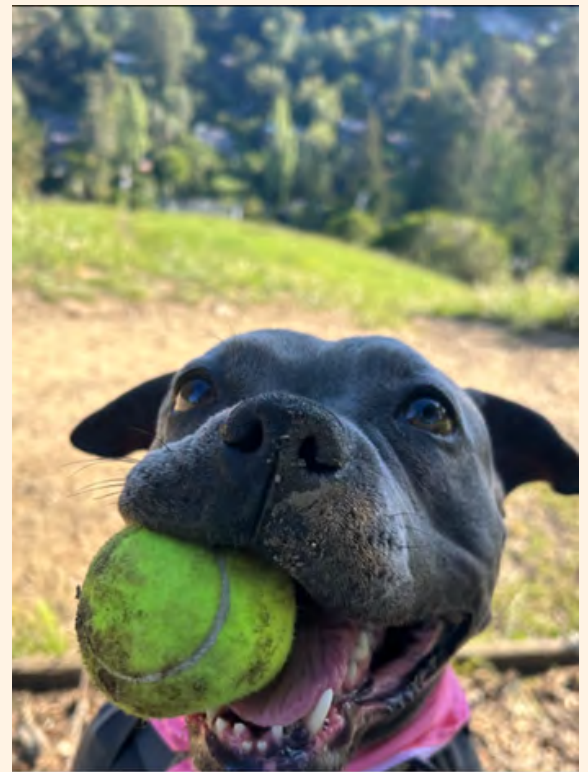
According to key volunteer Marianne Parsons, every year almost 70,000 dogs are euthanized in the U.S., mostly due to the lack of space in municipal shelters. The vast majority of these dogs were young and healthy.

"The last thing we need is someone breeding more dogs when there are already so many being murdered in shelters. Every time someone buys from a breeder she/he is encouraging that breeder to breed more," Parsons said.

Parsons expressed their belief that there truly is no excuse to buy from a breeder. "I've been volunteering at Milo Foundation for a bit now and I've really enjoyed being able to walk and play with the dogs. It can be sad leaving them in their playpen, but it really does warm your heart," local volunteer Phoebe Pierce said.

People underestimate how important it is to get a dog from a shelter or rescue versus having a bred dog, Parsons said, adding that there are so many dogs out there needing a home and it is not fair to the unhoused dogs.

"We adopted Bella from Milo about eight years ago, we'd heard about Milo for a while, so Milo was always our first stop when considering adding a dog to our family," Christini Holbrook said. Holbrook adopted a Staffordshire pitbull and expressed how it's a huge responsibility due to the stigma associated with the breed because of how powerful and intelligent they are. The dog they wanted, Bella, came from a homeless man who, she said, took great care of her, but was no longer healthy enough to give her what she needed.



Picture by Kelsey Cook





Picture by Kelsey Cook

“We confirmed our intent to add her to our family, and we have been happy ever since,” she continued. Holbrook has noticed that when her friends and family get bred dogs, they can at times come with health issues.

“Our families personal choice always is and will always be to adopt a pet in need vs selecting from a breeder,” she said. Holbrook continued to explain how if you get the same fulfillment from a shelter pet then you would a breeder selected pet, so why not just go with a shelter pet? “We also have the world's best cat, Walter, who came to us via Marine Humane,” she continued.

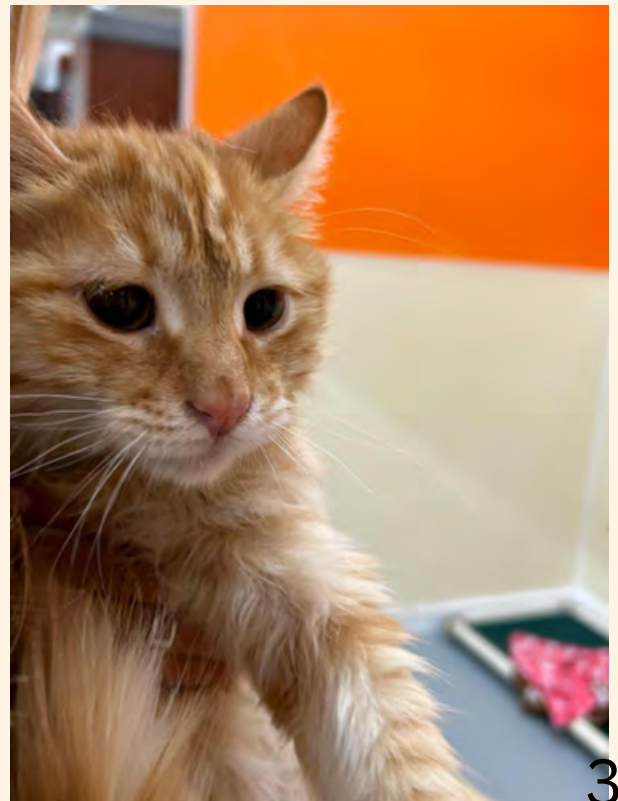
“Volunteering is very important to The Milo Foundation, since Milo is non profit, every volunteer helps.”Not only do volunteers have a direct bearing on animals finding a forever home, it's also a wonderful opportunity for people to be part of something big,” Parsons said.

If you need a new hobby or volunteer hours, consider visiting Milo Foundation. They also have an Amazon wishlist on their page to help these special dogs. Milo Foundation has now given 28 years providing homeless animals a home and a second chance.

You can find more information about Milo on [milofoundation.org](http://milofoundation.org), as well as their Instagram titled [milodogsandcats](https://www.instagram.com/milodogsandcats).



Pictures by Kelsey Cook



# DIVINITY

## *Poetry Collection*

### By Amara Collins

#### **i. the father**

genesis foretold such abomination  
fallen from grace  
into lap

we are one of the same  
cut from ample flesh  
but your whips and chains  
cut deep,  
into mine

forced lashings  
stimulate the sin of my sodomy  
you have made parenthood my purgatory  
fagging away  
such affliction

#### **ii. the son**

battered heart beats solemnly  
under tattered skin  
Raptured.

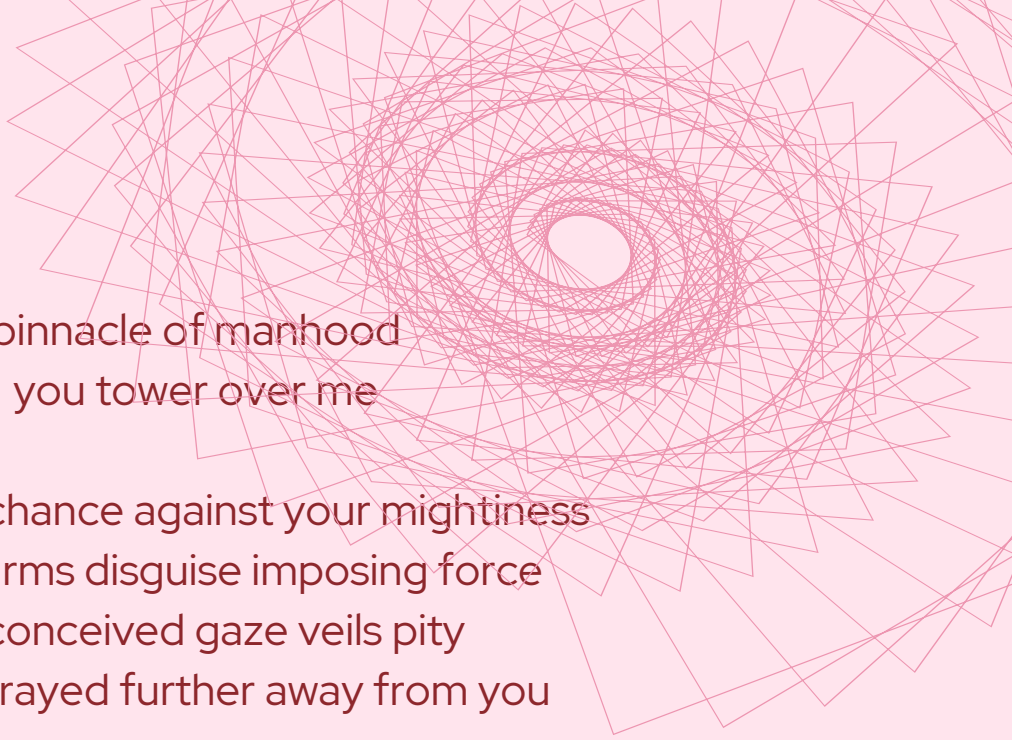
betrothed to enemy,  
ostracization enthralls  
unnatural disposition curdles purity  
begotten son cannot bare an heir

upon pearled gates  
onlookers hear the cries  
of one  
plagued boy,  
Bastard Son.

#### **iii. the holy spirit**

bruised knees hit floor  
instinct takes over as hands clasp  
eyes clamped  
underneath portraiture,  
begins desperate plea for  
forgiveness

chosen to preach  
pillar of nobility,




pinnacle of manhood  
you tower over me

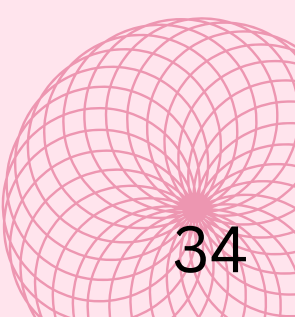
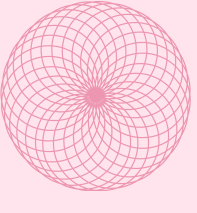
i have no chance against your mightiness  
limber arms disguise imposing force  
preconceived gaze veils pity  
i have strayed further away from you

in the eyes of God I am nothing  
you repeat that  
until your mouth ceases to move,  
but the message loops—  
it is my fault  
after all

your gospel blurs in my ears  
a cacophony of lies  
louder than my screams  
i plead and you preach  
daring to question authority



God's wrath strikes through you  
blood flow floats down to Hell  
i must scrub myself clean,  
to be with you  
unshackle placid matters enslaving me  
bells of repentance toll  
Death is our Salvation



# A Message from the Teen Leadership Committee (TLC)

Dear Readers,

If you are interested in taking part in the Marin County Teen Leadership Committee or in being a future contributor for *The Spire*, you can email [teenlibrarian@marincounty.org](mailto:teenlibrarian@marincounty.org)

*Thank You!*

