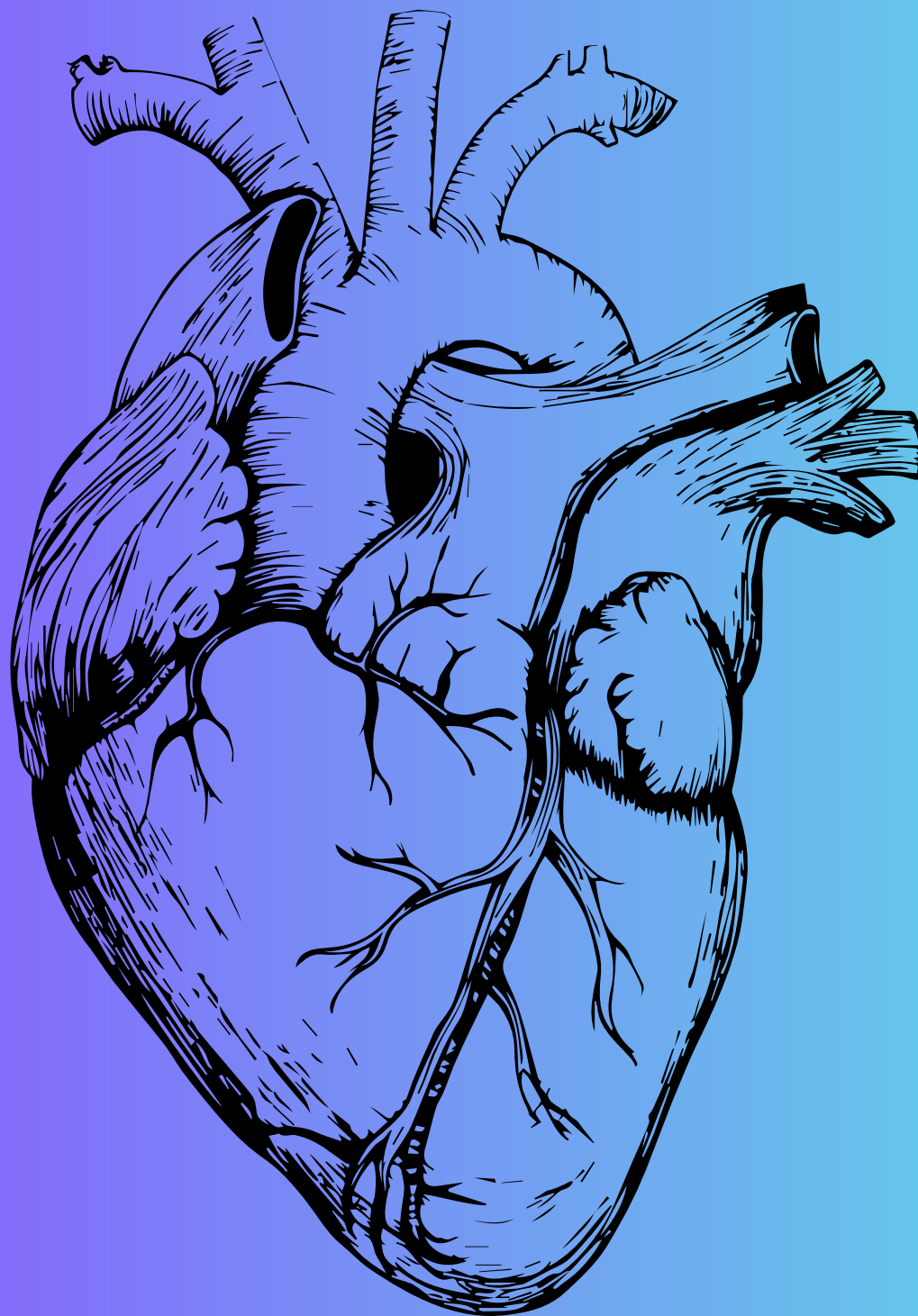


IN OUR FEELINGS: REMINISCING



SENIORS SPEAK: CLASS OF 2024



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Rock Climbing

Naiema (Tokyo) Camm

I don't feel the love anymore.
Confused why I feel like this,
I asked my mom.
As always she said,
"God does everything for a reason."

Then why?
Why does God seem to hate me?
Why am I a fly on the wall?
Why don't I get the fairytale ending?
Why do I get the short straw?

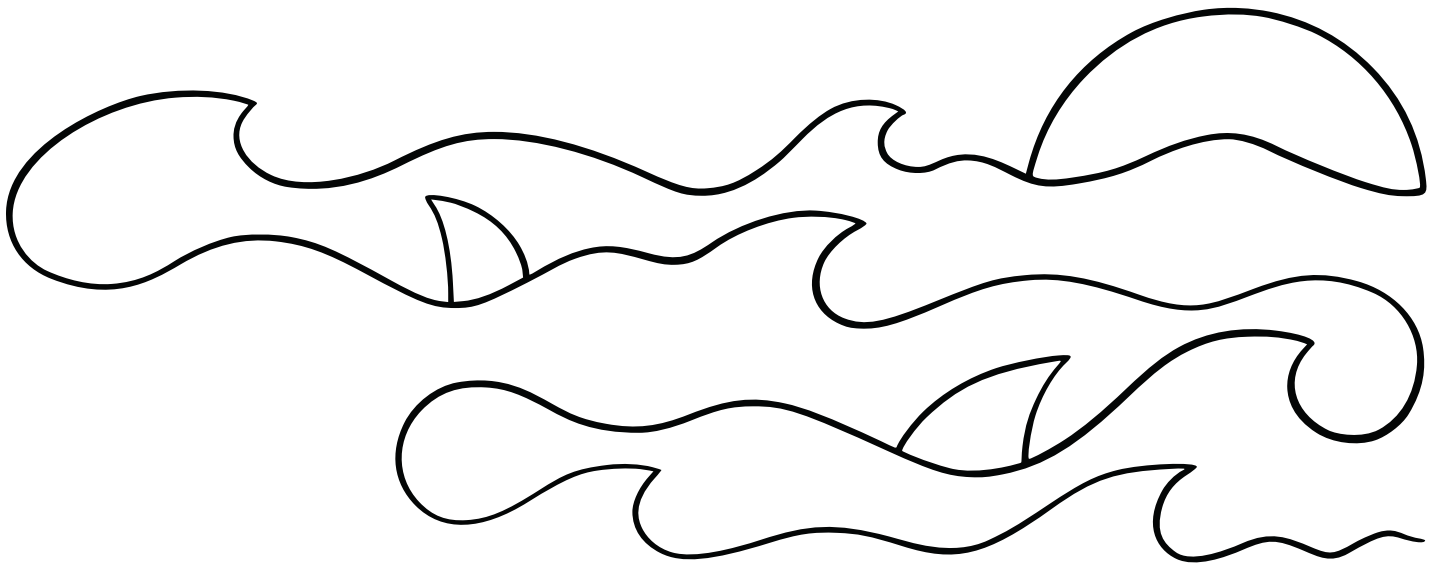
I think I'm doing good
Then I get pushed off a cliff
I climb back up as always
But the rocks get pointier and painful
Should I even try anymore?

I've never been fragile
But as I get hurt,
I get worn down
And become glass
Do I have a crack?

As sharp as a cactus
And as fickle as the weather
I feel happy then sad
I feel nothing.
Am I nothing?

I try to stay a calm, flowing wave
But instead, the wave crashes against a rocky cliff
It always ends the same,
The same heartbreak
The same pain.
Losing more and more pieces of myself.

There must be some reason, right?
Because God does everything for a reason.
But I don't see His reason
For making me a zero in all these ones.



Story of One

Jillian Coddington

We may not have had
The normal high school
Experience of
Disney channel.
Instead,
We had our own
Adventure.
One which
COVID destroyed.

The transition happened
Resulting in hesitance
And confusion.
Chaos reigned
In the school
And in our heads.
Slowly,
We became confident
With each other.
Forming those close friends,
Those memories
They say you can
Only form
In this place we call
High school.

At the same time
We're told these years
Won't matter.
We won't remember them
And we won't stay connected
With everyone.
Maybe one
Or two
But most will never be seen
Again.

Do they want us to
Make memories?
Or do they want us
To create a future
For ourselves
Without the weight
Of high school
Behind us?

But so much has happened
That it would be impossible
To forget

Consequences of Life

Jillian Coddington

My feet float on the clouds, but I don't know how the soft, fluffy, cotton is keeping me up when science class has told me they're nothing but water. There's an ethereal light before me and my vision is warm, my body just the same.

"Keep walking, it is your future and past waiting for you," the figure next to me is barely visible in the white clouds that shimmer through their body.

"What is it?"

"Your childhood," laughter and the pitter-patter of feet echo in my head.

"Your sadness," pain spreads in my heart at the thought of losing my friends and family.

"Your future," a welcome hug of ambition, success left in its wake, and proudness replaces the pain.

Without my noticing, my feet have been steadily trekking the pathway until they reach the gates. They must be the pearly gates that so many believe is what awaits us. But they don't appear to be so holy.

They're dingy and rusting, falling apart. Barely holding onto the hinges and a fence that is thrice my height with all their might. Shine has become dull and what was once gleaming gems, have become a mosaic of memories long forgotten.

"What am I supposed to be seeing?"

"Anything you may dream of."

"And if I don't see anything?"

"Then it is not your time."

"Then why am I here?"

“As a warning, to give knowledge of what awaits you if you continue on this path,” the voice is slowly drifting away, along with the mystery waiting for me.

I open my eyes and find myself in a park. The sun is setting and the rays are mystically coming through the trees, the colors so vibrant and the textures so clear I don’t even have to touch them to know the roughness of the bark and the smooth wax of the leaves. Orange and yellow are mixed with vibrant greens, foreshadowing the coming of autumn.

The world around me becomes so glorious that I can no longer remember the haunting beauty of what awaits me. All I feel is the warmth that comes with the setting sun on my skin, along with the chills that are settling within me as the moon rises high above.

And though the feelings are still there, I am not able to recall what must’ve been a dream that I came out of only seconds before. Powerful memories of what was and what will be are gone, and I’m left with a feeling of contentment and peace, knowing nothing can stop me.



Comfortability

Devin Copeland

When I think back
I get in my feelings.

Back when I was small
And happy.
Now I am almost
Grown.
Almost out of school.

In my feelings once
Again.

Lost all the time,
I miss it all.

I wish I didn't waste it.
Family, friend, or fun tim

My Last Year

Annaya Desanges

At first I didn't like Creative Writing, because I thought it wasn't for me.
Hearing and seeing how passionate my classmates were about their pieces
Made me want to find that same passion. I felt left out,
Like I couldn't find my spark.

PERFORMING IN FRONT OF THE CLASS WASN'T HARD FOR ME AT ALL!

It was the emotion and passion that I lacked,
It was the lack of creativity that I feel like I lost,
It was the lack of motivation that I couldn't seem to find.
At first I thought it was me, but THEN
I realized that every creative mind has to find their spark
And for me it might take a little while longer than most,
But this year 2024 I'm determined to rekindle my passion for
CREATIVE WRITING.

A Blast into the Past

Imani Lane

Add a criss-cross applesauce
On my grandmother's itchy rough rug
As my mother firmly brushed my hair up
Into two cute classic pigtails.
I miss the smell of the pink lotion on my mother's palms
As she would comb it through my hair to help it look more slick
And to add just a little bit of shine.
My favorite part was when my mother would tell me to get the bag,
That contained my various collection of barrettes
Any color you could think of, trust I had it all.
It was like picking ornaments to put on a Christmas tree,
The final touch.
At the time, I didn't realize how valuable those moments would be to my
future self.
Now I realize those moments are truly irreplaceable and most importantly,
Sacred.

To My Other Half

Mya Pridgen

“You’ll lose your friends one by one in high school,”

And one by one I did.

Tears would stream down my face,

As my flower petals fell.

Each drop tilting my stem lower,

And lower.

Until I am wilted and alone.

Still, my seeds float in the wind

Traveling and implanting themselves into the ground.

Before they bloom,

A beautiful bud sprouts next to me.

It blossoms with many petals

But,

The flower tilts towards me,

Holding my stem up,

And allowing the bees to pollinate.

I was alone,

Comforted only by the thought of wasting away in my room.

There was no light guiding me

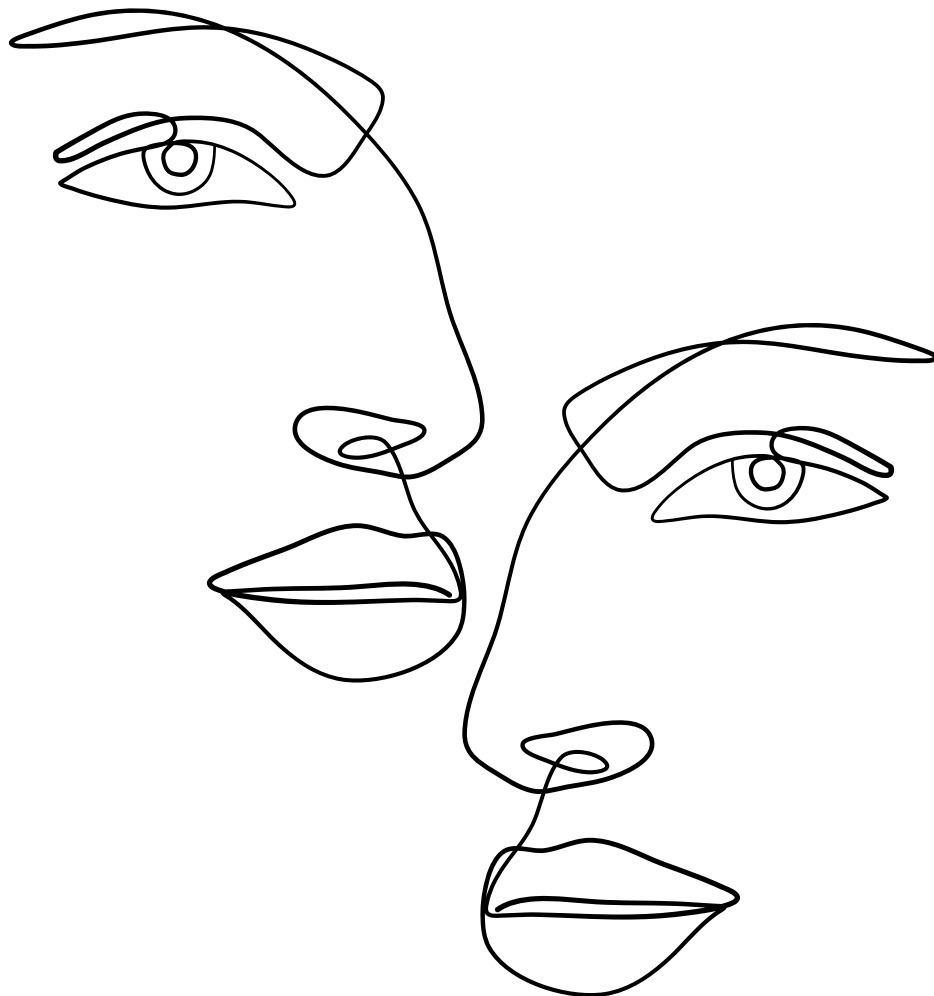
Through the forest that was my mind,

Until you and I bonded,

Like never before.

We were linked
In a bond I'd never let go of.
When I see you, my eyes light up.

Suddenly, you're the spotlight.
My Roman Empire,
Constantly on my mind.
We're Rick and Morty,
Finn and Jake,
You're the peanut butter to my jelly.
In all,
You're my other half.



Meaning

Sanai Roberts

Reminiscing is to miss. To miss the weightless feeling of positivity. To come home and brag to Mom about your name being on green all day or moving up to pink at the end of the day. To go to the book fair with \$20 and then come out with a new diary and an invisible ink pen. To actually enjoy reading. To stay after school for detention with your friends. Yes, you're in trouble, but the right people won't make it so bad. To be the student all of your teachers bragged about. To be a teacher's pet, but also the goody-two-shoes out of a bad group. The only one who finished their work on time.

Reminiscing is to cherish. To joke on your brother while he jokes on you as your parents laugh. To salivate over the cherry chocolate coating of that ice cream cone Mom took you to get after school every day. To laugh at, listen to, and agree with everything Ma says. To admire yourself as Grandma does. To appreciate the fact that your uncle bought everything you picked up at the store. To appreciate when your aunt took you to get your nails done.

Reminiscing is to learn. To ask questions about your heritage. To take that shot of "juice" and salt that Ma gives you when your throat hurts and your voice is gone, and then listen as she explains how her father did the same to her. To spend the weekend at your uncle's house as he talks about what activities took place in Jamaica. To listen to Ma talk about netball. To watch Ma cook and ask her what browning is. To listen and watch as Ma shows you old pictures of the family. To listen to stories Grandma tells you about Mom.

To sit with Grammy and talk about all your older cousins that you call auntie and uncle because they grew up with your mom. To partially understand your cousin as she speaks Patois and tries to teach you. To fight with her as a child, only to be so close as we got older. To comprehend your family and understand where they come from. To finally get back in touch with your dad, and talk to him almost every day about any and everything. To accept him and forgive him.

Reminiscing is to love. To have your first kiss on your birthday by your third grade boyfriend. To shake your head in shame as your mom introduced you to the new boy in the office while she registered you for the seventh grade. To hear “you guys would be so cute together”. To build a relationship with the boy and be on and off with him for almost two years because you can’t seem to really let him go. *The cupcake stage is a wonderful thing; the calm before the storm. The kisses and hugs before the arguments and long periods of silence.* To branch into your step family and fit right in. To love them just as much. To feel how much they love and care about you. To think about how your aunt used to babysit you and then years later you turn around and babysit her children. To meet your cousins on this side as one of them tells you that she remembers when you were younger.

Reminiscing is to familiarize. To make connections in your Psych class about your childhood. To talk about how selective your memory is. How you remember that you’re not comfortable with someone, but you don’t remember why. Reminiscing is to repress. Reminiscing is to remember all the factors that make you happy, that make you.

FIRST DAY

Mads Santrock

Memories of the rain drops dripping from the sky,
Soaking my face,
Parting my bangs.

The blue doors ahead,
Heavy against my hand,
What seems so light now.

A crowd of children all around,
Smiling, as they meet their classmates,
Crying, at the thought of leaving their homes behind,
Embraces from their parents.

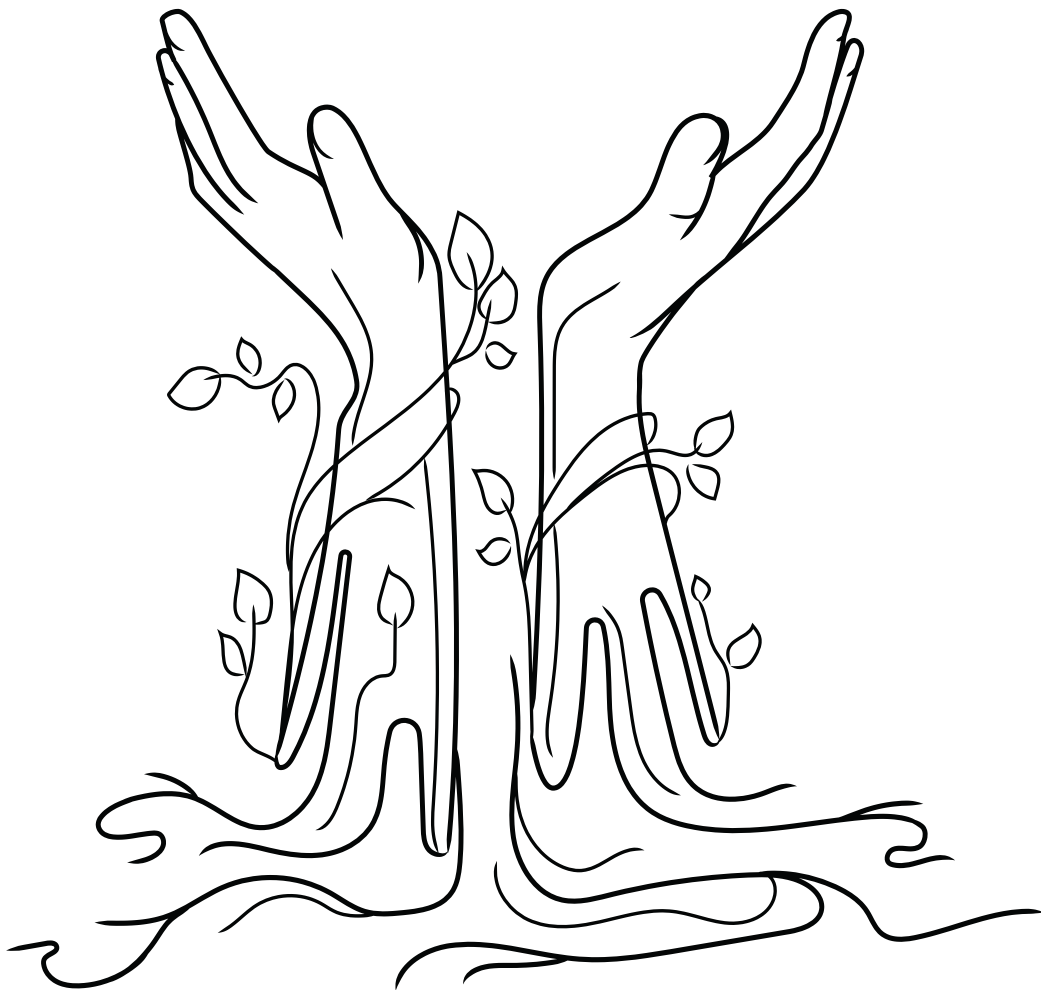
I stand in the middle of the room,
Surrounded by strangers,
Who I would later know for the rest of my school years.

Faces pass,
My feet heavy,
Struggling to continue to the correct room,
Room 15.

A smaller group of children,
Awaiting my arrival,
A beautiful older lady,
Holding out her hand.

The hand is soft,
Not quite firm,
I take it in mine,
And I accept that this is my life.

New faces every year,
There will always be a new older person reaching for my hand,
Waiting to show me the world.



The Embrace of Memories

Mads Santrock

Take my hand,
Inhale my memories,
Let it sink in,
And hold it.

The embrace of my parents,
The hand-holding of lost friends,
The tears shed from fights between kids,
And the bruises from the school park.

The tree I stood underneath,
Leaves falling in my hair,
Smile upon my face,
Friends holding onto my wrist.

Around the tree we go,
Feeling the mud splash onto my bare legs,
Giggling,
As if it will never end.

Remember,
The friends that I made,
The short field trips I went on,
The hours spent at the park for recess,
The dirt upon my sneakers.
Inhale,
And feel.

I Am Only Seventeen

Aysiah Matthews

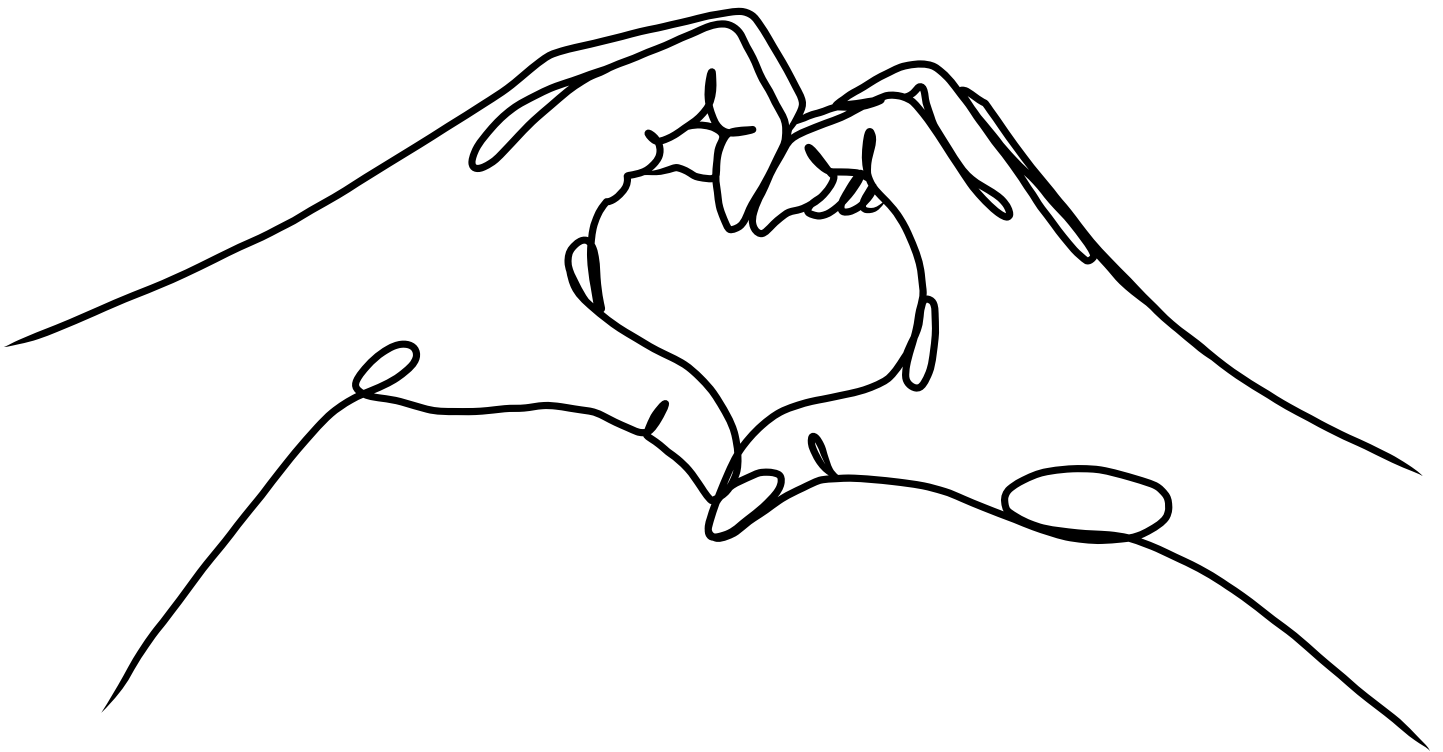
every night, i find myself
in a perpetual reminiscent state of mind,
reliving all that i have experienced
the past four years of my life.

i can recall the countless mornings
i woke up to join virtual classes
after spending late nights with people
who were much older than me.
those nights were fun,
but i was only fourteen.

i will never forget the man i loved unconditionally
who made my life feel like hell on earth.
i will never forget the people or the time that i lost
because i let him convince me that
he was the only thing good i'd ever have.
i was only fifteen.

remember gathering the strength and courage
to finally free myself from this man.
i remember rediscovering what it felt like to live,
to live for myself and to have fun.
i remember the pain i felt when i learned
that i lost one of my best friends to gun violence.
it felt like all the progress i had made was lost.
life was hectic at this time,
but i was only sixteen.

i am only seventeen,
reliving all the wins and losses,
wishing i could go back and change
the decisions i made, the people i met,
and honestly, my whole life.
i am only seventeen.



Class '24 Class Haiku

Leave It All Behind by Tokyo Camm

I carried the weight
Of my family and friends
Now it's on paper

Class Haiku By Jillian Coddington

Never expected
This would be my favorite class
With lovely weirdos

Comfortability By Devin Copeland

In our mind's embrace
We find comfort in the past
Reminiscing time.

The Count Down By Annaya Desanges

The last days approach
Capturing joy and laughter
I will miss you all!

Untitled By Imani Lane

Creative writing
Transformed a measly rodent
Into a lion.

Blossomed By Aysiah Matthews

this class, these writings
have helped me blossom into
the woman i am.

My Ten Person World By Roman Mirabal

In my darkest days
I knew who to rely on,
The family I chose.

The Light That Shines When I Walk In By Mya Pridgen

My face reflects the
Feelings I hide inside me
Walking in, I smile

Definition By Sanai Roberts

To reminisce is
Missing your adolescence
To miss who you were.

Welcome By Mads Santrock

The flag on the wall
Warming me with an embrace
Inviting me home.

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