

# ***The Gryphon***

**MC**  
MONTGOMERY  
COLLEGE

***Spring 2026***

*Cover Artwork by  
Ashley Silva*

*Gryphon Logo by  
Derek Olmedo Fernandez*

The Gryphon is a mythical beast with the head, wings, and upper torso of an eagle and the body, hind legs, and tail of a lion.

# *The Gryphon* **2026**

*The Student Literary and  
Arts Magazine  
of  
Montgomery College  
Germantown Campus*



*Montgomery College  
Germantown Campus  
20200 Observation Drive  
Germantown, Maryland  
20876*

# Acknowledgments

Thanks to Dr. Elizabeth Benton and the English & Reading Department for supporting this publication. Thanks to Dr. Theron Coleman for assisting with editing. Thanks, also, to the students who submitted their writing and art!

Copyright 2026 by Montgomery College  
All rights reserved.

After publication, all rights revert to the artists/authors.

# Contents

Cover --	Untitled Artwork-	Ashley Silva
6 --	Sticky Hands, Open Sky-	Monique Williams
6 --	Rehoboth Beach-	Cate Wigglesworth
7 --	A Girl and Her Horizon-	Tran Le
7 --	Untitled Artwork-	Megha Arun
8 --	Horizon-	Harin Kellampalli
8 --	Untitled Artwork-	Fernando Castillo
9 --	The Same Horizon-	Verena Iskander
9 --	Untitled Artwork-	Ava Eghbali
10 --	Looking Ahead-	Alisson Samayoa
10 --	Reaching-	Monique Williams
10--	Between-	Monique Williams
11 --	Untitled Artwork-	Ava Eghbali
12 --	Beyond the Horizon-	Mahider Fida
12 --	Untitled Artwork-	Ava Eghbali
13 --	Straight to the Soul-	Daryl Williams
14 --	Kindness-	Adrienne Nantumbwe
15 --	Untitled Artwork-	Tran Le
16 --	Dusk and Dawn-	Suriel Biyo
17 --	Caring-	Errion Rogers
18-19 --	Horizon-	Jonathan Meneses
19--	Untitled Artwork-	Ava Eghbali
20 -21--	Untitled-	Theophilus Thomas
22 --	Toward the Unknown-	Tiffany Mejia Coreas
23-25 --	Monday Morning with My Two Favorite Unemployed Humans-	Victoria Namagembe
25--	Untitled Artwork-	Ian Plitnick
26 --	Never Give Up-	Kiara Twine
27 --	Untitled Artwork-	Ava Eghbali
28-30--	The Line Where the Sky Changes-	Monique Williams
31--	Untitled Artwork-	Ashley Silva
32--	Editorial Staff	

Rehoboth Beach, Cate Wigglesworth

Sticky Hands, Open Sky  
Monique Williams

At the curve where sky meets land,  
I stand, hands sticky from spilled tea.  
Light spills across the field  
I squint, blink, and almost believe.

Shadows stretch and stumble away,  
like old shoes I can't quite fit.  
The path smells of wet earth,  
boots sucking, mud tugging at every step.

Dreams drift like laundry on the line,  
tangled, bright, stubborn.  
Beyond this edge who knows?  
Maybe dust. Maybe sky. Maybe nothing at all.

The river bends. The mountains rise.  
I trip over a stone, mumble something, and laugh.  
Every ending blurs, begins again,  
and I carry yesterday with sticky fingers,  
smudges on my notebook,

Horizon shifts, stubborn and slow,  
pulling me toward something I can't name.  
The edge is messy, unclear,  
but I walk anyway half hope, half fear,

## A Girl and Her Horizon Tran Le

In her own world, she stays in her own bed  
Scrolling through words on her phone screen  
She lies there longer than she should  
And then goes to sleep with the blue screen.  
This habit repeats every single day

Pulling her social life away  
A girl who loves staying at home  
Feels it's normal, loves being alone.  
However, when problems come too near

She feels unready, full of fear  
She realizes how much she did not try  
Crying at night, asking why.

She does not want this life forever  
So she steps out on a normal day  
Outside her comfort zone, her heart beats high  
Then she thinks, maybe I can try.

After long days spent outside,  
She feels tired, wants to hide  
But now, she knows she can be both  
Resting inside, or going outside.

She is a girl who wants to discover her horizon  
Although it is so hard at first, she knows  
She keeps trying and reflecting  
And learns to love how the journey goes.



Untitled Artwork, Fernando Castillo

Horizon  
Harin Kellampalli

The horizon is a quiet line  
that never shows what it knows.  
It keeps the secret for tomorrow,  
and sorrow for those who follow.

I watch the line as it pulls away,  
a fading gold at the close of day,  
and still, it always waits, unchanged  
a routine, beautifully deranged.

A doorway in the distance,  
lit on the other side,  
But the future doesn't knock,  
It glows.

I want a map, something certain  
a line to guide me to a true future.  
But with every step I take,  
the unknown gets larger,  
and my courage lags behind.

So I decide to take one step forward  
into what I can't know yet.  
The horizon promises nothing,  
but it teaches me to keep moving.

The Same Horizon  
Verena Iskander

**Sometimes I wake up early  
Before my alarm  
And my room is still quiet.**

**The sky outside is that weird gray color,  
Not night, not morning yet.**

**I stand by the window  
And just look out for a minute.**

**There's a line far away  
Where the sky meets everything.  
I guess that's the horizon.  
I never really noticed it before.  
Now it makes me think of you.  
It's crazy how you're so far away,  
In another country,  
A different time zone,  
Living your day while I live mine.**

**We text and call a lot,  
But it's not the same as being together.  
Sometimes I just wish  
The distance wasn't real.**

**People say the future is "on the horizon,"  
And for me that just means  
The day I finally see you again.  
No screen or laggy calls.  
Just me running to hug you  
And not having to say goodbye.**



Untitled Artwork, Ava Eghbali

Reaching, Monique Williams



I used to have such short-sighted vision.  
when it came to my future.  
I could only see  
what was right in front of me.

But now  
It feels like a door.  
Ready to be opened,  
ready to step forward  
into something new—  
a path that leads me  
toward a beautiful horizon.

Sometimes I think too much,  
and worry about what's ahead.

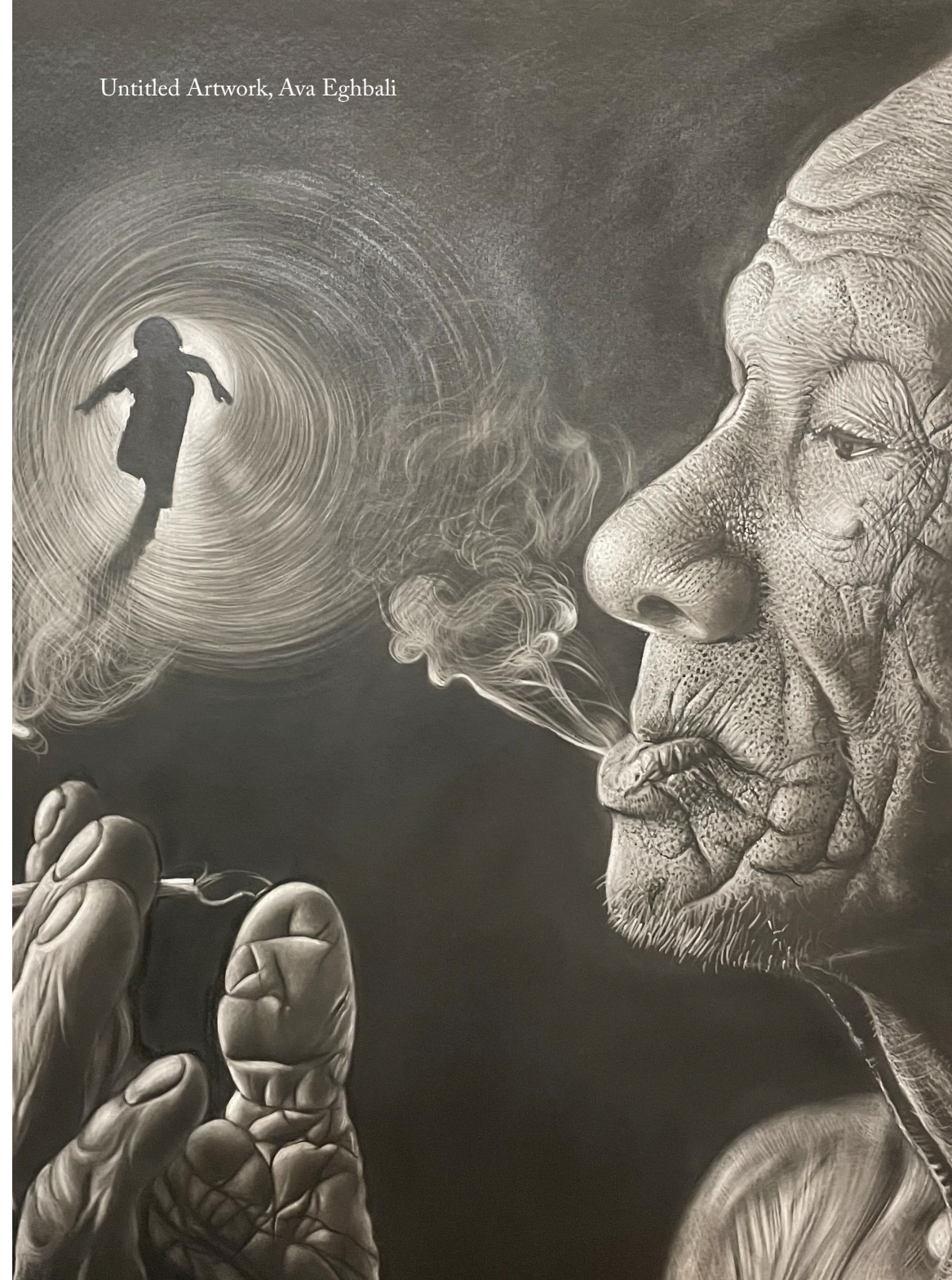
Between, Monique Williams

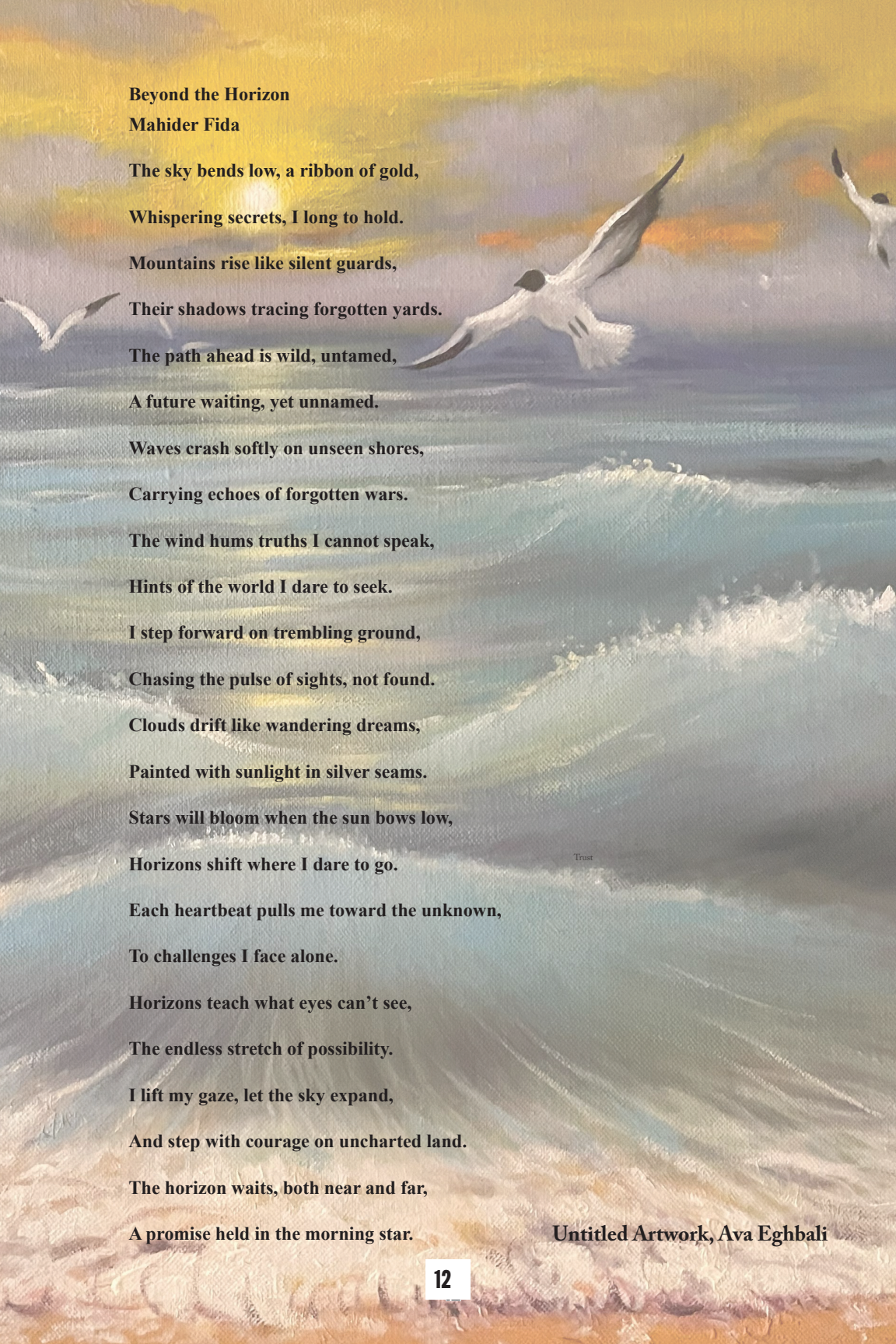
But deep down  
I know.  
Every experience  
can be used  
for growth.  
It's all about the way  
We move through life's situations.  
Choosing  
to see the positive side  
of things  
even when the horizon  
doesn't look so pretty.  
Because yes,  
The sun sets—  
but it also rises.



Looking Ahead  
Alisson Samayoa

Untitled Artwork, Ava Eghbali



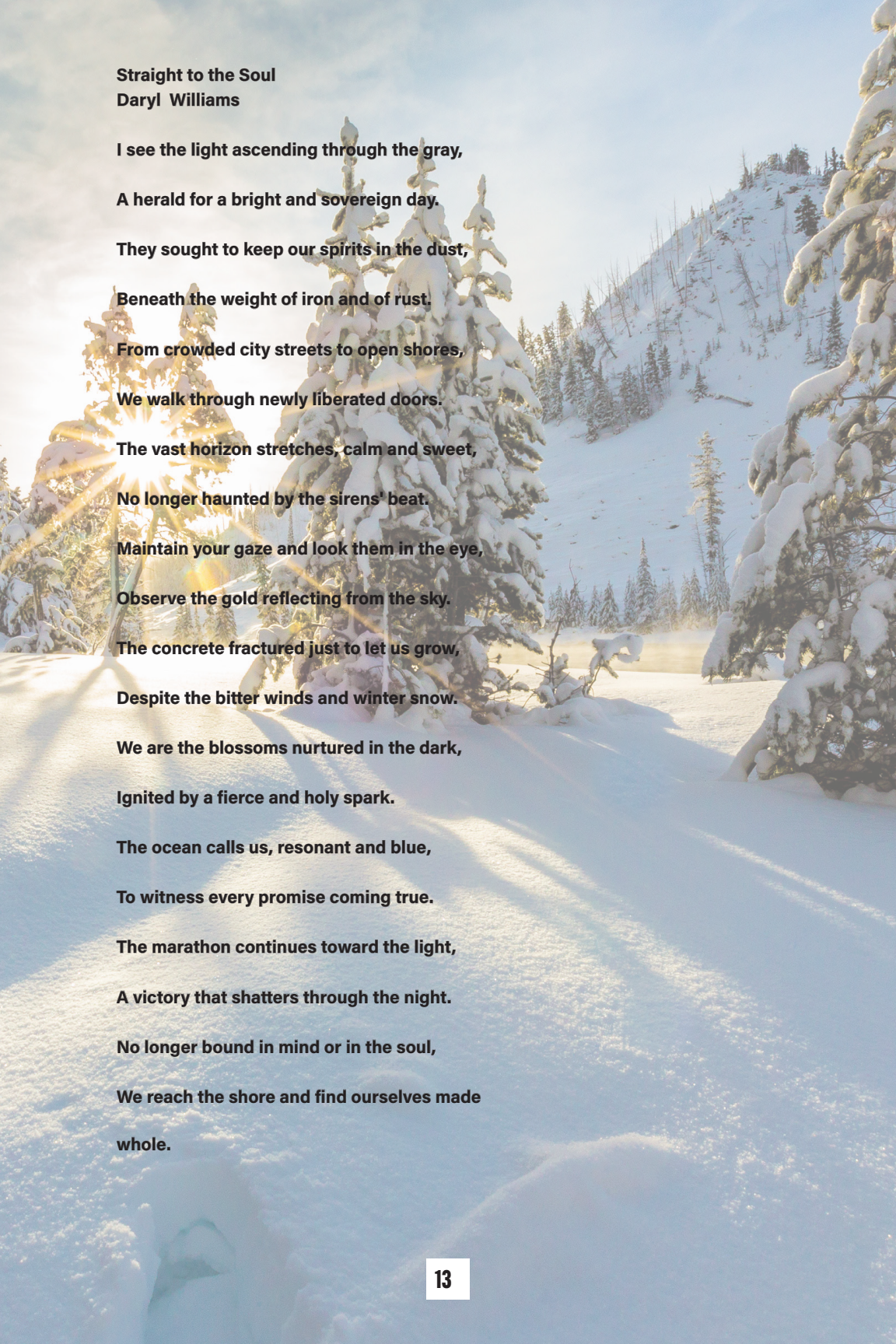
A painting of a vast, open landscape. The sky is a mix of golden yellow and soft purple, suggesting a sunrise or sunset. A large white bird with dark wings is in flight, soaring across the center. The ground is a mix of green and brown, with a path leading towards the horizon. The overall mood is one of hope and exploration.

Beyond the Horizon

Mahider Fida

The sky bends low, a ribbon of gold,  
Whispering secrets, I long to hold.  
Mountains rise like silent guards,  
Their shadows tracing forgotten yards.  
The path ahead is wild, untamed,  
A future waiting, yet unnamed.  
Waves crash softly on unseen shores,  
Carrying echoes of forgotten wars.  
The wind hums truths I cannot speak,  
Hints of the world I dare to seek.  
I step forward on trembling ground,  
Chasing the pulse of sights, not found.  
Clouds drift like wandering dreams,  
Painted with sunlight in silver seams.  
Stars will bloom when the sun bows low,  
Horizons shift where I dare to go.  
Each heartbeat pulls me toward the unknown,  
To challenges I face alone.  
Horizons teach what eyes can't see,  
The endless stretch of possibility.  
I lift my gaze, let the sky expand,  
And step with courage on uncharted land.  
The horizon waits, both near and far,  
A promise held in the morning star.

Untitled Artwork, Ava Eghbali

A photograph of a snowy winter landscape. The scene is dominated by snow-covered evergreen trees and a bright sun low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden glow. The sun's rays are visible, and long shadows are cast across the snow. The overall mood is peaceful and serene.

Straight to the Soul

Daryl Williams

I see the light ascending through the gray,  
A herald for a bright and sovereign day.  
They sought to keep our spirits in the dust,  
Beneath the weight of iron and of rust.  
From crowded city streets to open shores,  
We walk through newly liberated doors.  
The vast horizon stretches, calm and sweet,  
No longer haunted by the sirens' beat.  
Maintain your gaze and look them in the eye,  
Observe the gold reflecting from the sky.  
The concrete fractured just to let us grow,  
Despite the bitter winds and winter snow.  
We are the blossoms nurtured in the dark,  
Ignited by a fierce and holy spark.  
The ocean calls us, resonant and blue,  
To witness every promise coming true.  
The marathon continues toward the light,  
A victory that shatters through the night.  
No longer bound in mind or in the soul,  
We reach the shore and find ourselves made  
whole.

**Kindness**  
**Adrienne Nantumbwe**

**Kindness is a quiet strength, not loud but steady,  
A choice to treat all people and animals with respect,  
Regardless of personal bias or passing mood.  
It is the gentle decision to see worth everywhere.**

**To be kind is to offer friendliness freely,  
To give generosity without weighing the cost,  
To act from a heart that asks for nothing back,  
And finds reward in the doing itself.**

**Kind people move with others in mind,  
Placing someone else's need before their own,  
Not for applause, not for praise,  
But because goodness feels like home.**

**Being kind and being nice are not the same,  
Though many confuse their shapes.  
Nice can be a moment, polite and brief,  
A smile that flickers and fades.**

**Kindness is steady, a pattern of care,  
A habit stitched into daily life.  
You can tell someone is kind  
When their actions repeat like sunrise.**

**They help the elderly in their spare time,  
Not once, but again and again,  
Because they truly want to be there,  
Because compassion is simply who they are.**

**Nice is holding the door in passing,  
A courteous act, thoughtful but small.  
Kindness is staying to walk someone through,  
Long after the door has closed.**

**Kindness is one of humanity's finest qualities,  
A treasure sought in friends and partners alike.  
It is the warmth we hope to find in others,  
And the light we strive to become ourselves.**



Untitled Artwork, Tran Le



**Dusk and Dawn**  
**Suriel Biyo**



The path ahead is steep and wide,  
with shards of doubt on either side,  
and rocks that press against your feet,  
where fear and fragile courage meet.

Behind you fade the trail you've crossed,  
like footprints in the morning frost,  
the mist will take what you once knew  
and hide it from beyond your view.

Face the line where earth meets sky,  
where quiet dreams and futures lie,  
don't turn around, don't lose your pace,  
for memories will slow your race.

The sun will sink, the light will dim,  
and night may blur distant rim,  
but walk in faith through darkened air,  
for dawn is waiting for you there.

**Caring**  
**Errion Rogers**

My word is caring.  
It lives in the quiet hours of the night.  
When the house is dark  
And the world feels fragile.

I would lie awake,  
Listening to every sound,  
Every shift,  
Every breath.

My mom's epilepsy  
Turned the night into something uncertain.  
Silence was never just silence.  
It was a question.

I stayed alert,  
Afraid to fall asleep,  
Afraid to miss something important,

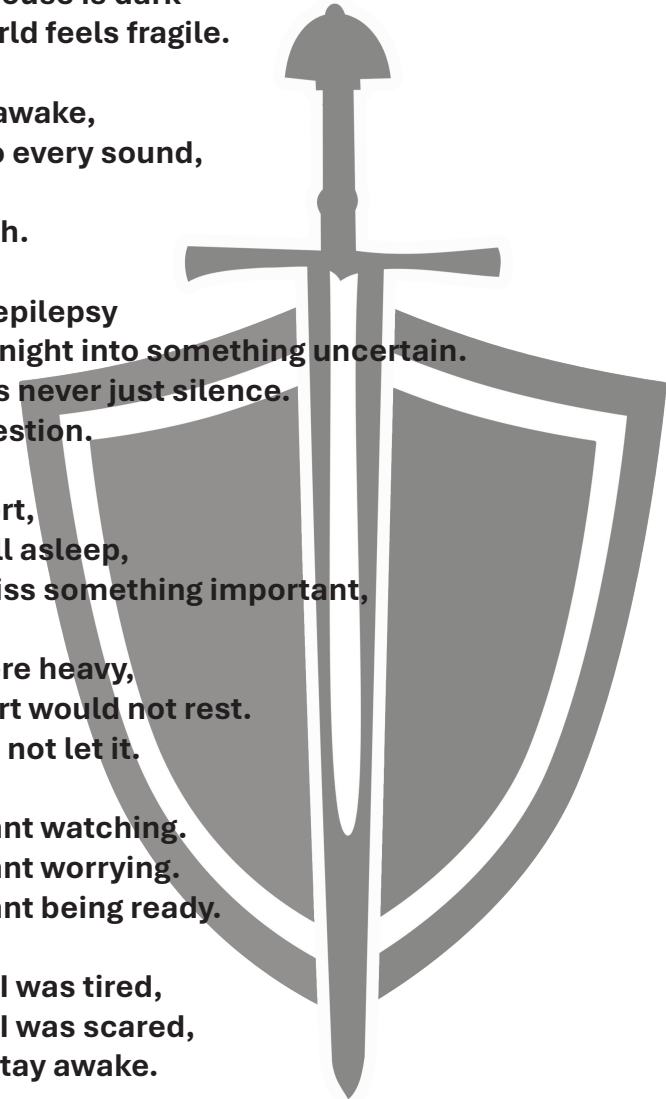
My eyes were heavy,  
But my heart would not rest.  
Love would not let it.

Caring meant watching.  
Caring meant worrying.  
Caring meant being ready.

Even when I was tired,  
Even when I was scared,  
I chose to stay awake.

Because caring is loving.  
It is protecting in the only way I could.  
It is putting someone else first.

Caring is a quiet kind of bravery.



Nomii learned the word horizon long before she understood what it asked of her. It was not something anyone explained. It was quite obvious. A simple line in the distance that split the land and sky. But to her, it appeared in her life the way longing does, quiet, persistent, and impossible to ignore. A feeling of being close to something unnamed. A certainty of whatever she was meant to become waited just ahead of that line, hovering right there, at the edge of her reach. She grew up believing she was always almost there.

Each time she achieved something, the feeling grew stronger. It felt like standing on her toes, fingertips brushing the air just before contact. She could sense the shape of her future without ever touching it. The horizon of her life stayed visible, steady, always promising more.

Nomii learned to move instinctively towards that feeling, chasing it through her choices, through late nights and early mornings, and through moments of doubt she refused to hang on to for long. Each step felt necessary. Each step felt right. The horizon rewarded her efforts by just staying in view.

“...Just a little farther,” it seemed to say.

Sometimes, she felt like she was getting closer. The goal pulsed with warmth and familiarity, as if it already knew her name. She thought the next moment would be the one where everything finally lined up. The moment where she would step fully into the person she had been reaching for so long. Instead, the moment would pass, and the horizon would reset itself, unchanged.

Almost there.

The words grew heavier over time. They stopped feeling encouraging and started to feel like a dare.

Nomii briefly wondered what it would mean to stop reaching. The thought frightened her. Without that horizon, without HER horizon, who would she be? Movement had become a proof of purpose, and the exhaustion of believing she was just a step away from being enough.

The horizon did not vanish.

It waited.

Nomii then realized that the horizon was not asking her to arrive. It existed to keep her moving, to shape her wanting. It was not a finish line but a companion. One that measured her not by how far she got, but by how deeply she cared to continue. She exhaled, letting the pressure ease from her chest.

She was still almost there. But for the first time, it didn't feel like failure.

It felt like possibility.



Untitled Artwork, Ava Eghbali

Untitled  
Theophilus Thomas

The horizon has always seemed truthful to me. It never promises anything except distance. As a young person, the horizon represented a destination; it was a place that could be reached if enough distance had been put between myself and where I started by simply walking. It took me a long time to see the horizon for what it was meant to represent—to be followed.

I grew up spending countless hours gazing over open land: fields withered down to nothing but heat, roads melting into a faint horizon, rivers that angled enough to conceal their destinations. The boundaries between land and the sky seemed like whispered promises. It was as if they offered the possibility that life was present somewhere out of my sight, out of my awareness. Even then, I felt like I knew that the horizon was more metaphor than mapping.

So, when I was older, it was not a horizon anymore. Instead, it was academic expectations, social roles, and then queries on identity—queries that had no clear answers to them. Teachers advised me to look to the future, others asked what I wanted to be, while friends seemed to be sure of things that, as yet, I had no vision of. The future was nearer then, almost oppressive, as though it were pushing against me rather than expanding outwards. I realized that the unknown can be just as infinite as possible.

Yet, in a curious way, horizons always mean distance when you reach out to them. Every time I believed I knew myself—my values, my destination—

something shifted. Something came up, an interest, a belief, a challenge to which I had to readjust all I believed before. At first, this flux irritated me. I wanted definition, clarity, a destination. But I gradually realized that this flux of the horizon was not a sign of poor direction but of growth.

There is strength in moving forward with uncertainty. The horizon teaches the lesson of patience and humility. It shows us that perspective is relative to position. What seemed like the end would become the beginning when we finally reach it after so long. What seemed impossible will seem normal and tiny by comparison. What scared us will remind us of how far we've come. Today, when I think about the horizon, I do not wonder what lies ahead but rather what I will become on my journey to it. The horizon is not a place where I need to find any answers, but where the action lies. It only asks that, no matter the difficulties, no matter the uncertainty, I simply keep moving towards it.

Thus, in our definition, "horizon" does not mark an end. It is a reminder that "life is defined not by arrival but by... pursuit."

Toward the Unknown, Tiffany Mejia Coreas

## Monday Morning with My Two Favorite Unemployed Humans Victoria Namagembe

I am a Black African mama of two teenage daughters. That title alone carries generations inside it.

Before my alarm goes off at 6:00 a.m., I hear someone calling me softly.

“Mummy... mummy...”

A gentle hand touches my shoulder, trying to wake me up.

“Sharon, are you okay?”

She says no. She isn’t feeling well and is wondering if she can stay home. I asked what time she went to sleep last night.

“10 p.m.,” she replies.

“Did you sleep well?” I asked her.

“Not really. I feel tired,” she said.

My 16-year-old wakes up at 5:30 a.m. every morning to do her makeup — and that was after I issued a rule. If I receive another late notification from school, I will stop buying her makeup. Since then, she has mastered the art of waking up 30 minutes before the rest of us.

I suspect she might be coming down with something. I’ve been sneezing around them for days. But before granting her request, I think about my other human. If one stays home, the other will certainly try her luck.

Two teenagers at home means phones in hand, snacks disappearing from the pantry, and productivity at an all-time low. I don’t fancy that idea.

Still, despite my hesitation, I tell her she can stay home.

I head to the kitchen to fix breakfast before getting ready for work.



Shanice strolls by, murmuring, “Hi, Mummy.” She looks surprised that her sister isn’t already occupying the bathroom.

“Mummy, have you seen Sharon?” I inform her that Sharon won’t be going to school today.

She lets out a dramatic sound — half gasp, half opportunity — and asks, with a suspicious smirk, “Can I stay home too?”

“No, Bookie,” I say. I have several nicknames for both my daughters. “You’re going to get ready for school.”

She begins to argue. It’s not safe to walk alone. What if something happens?

Now I feel the familiar pull of motherhood. Being their mother means teaching them about safety, self-esteem, kindness, speaking up, and looking out for each other. It also means worrying about things I wish I didn’t have to — the dangers young girls face in this world.

The weight of that sits heavily on me. So, I agree. She can stay home too. But then, as I’m getting dressed in my room, both of my girls walk in with matching cheeky smiles.

“Oh, Sharon,” I say slowly, “I see you’re feeling better already?”

“Yes,” she answers quickly. And just like that, clarity. I immediately change my mind.

“Actually, both of you are going to get ready for school. Right now.”

“Bruhh!” They shout in unison.

“Don’t ‘bruh’ me. Please go get ready.”

With slumped shoulders and synchronized confusion, they exchange looks and walk out. I refuse to be manipulated this early in the morning. Some days are lessons — especially when they try me.

I am not a perfect mother. Sometimes I lose my patience.

Sometimes I worry too much. But I pray for them constantly. And often, we laugh loudly — the kind of laughter that fills a house with warmth.

I will always choose them.

I choose to show up.

I choose to guide them.

I choose to teach them the things that will shape them into women I am deeply proud of.

And I will be there — a Black African mother of two teenage girls — praying for resilience, patience, and strength on this journey, walking them toward their future with love in both hands.



Untitled Artwork, Ian Plitnick



Never Give Up  
Kiara Twine

Never give up when the night feels too long.  
When the silence is loud and hope feels small.  
When your dreams seem far away,  
And your strength feels almost gone.

Take a breath and stand again.  
Wipe your tears and lift your head.  
The storm will not last forever.  
The sun still waits behind the clouds.

Every scar tells a story of survival.  
Every bruise proves you tried.  
You are not weak for struggling.  
You are brave for continuing.

Perseverance lives inside your heart.  
It whispers, try one more time.  
Even when your steps are small,  
They still move you forward.

Mountains are climbed one step at a time.  
Success is built day by day.  
Fall down seven times,  
Stand up eight.

Let your faith be louder than fear.  
Let your courage outshine doubt.  
You were not made to quit.  
You were made to grow.

Hard days shape strong souls.  
Pressure creates diamonds.  
Believe in the power within you.  
Believe in the dream ahead of you.

Keep going, no matter what.  
Never give up.

Untitled Artwork, Ava Eghbali



## The Line Where the Sky Changes

Monique Williams

Every morning at 6:12 a.m., I stood at the bus stop and watched the sky change. It always did the same thing dark to gray, gray to something lighter. I never knew what to call the color. It felt more like a pause than a shade, like the world hadn't decided yet whether to move forward or stay quiet a little longer.

I liked that moment because nothing was required of me yet. No conversations. No expectations. Just the sound of cars in the distance and the open space in front of me.

The bus stop sat at the edge of my neighborhood, where sidewalks cracked and slowly disappeared into land that was always "about to be developed." For now, it was just dirt, weeds, and sky. When I looked straight ahead, it felt like the rest of my life hadn't caught up to me yet.

My mother never understood why I liked mornings so much. She said horizons were for people who didn't have real responsibilities.

"Dreams don't pay bills," she'd say while sorting through mail at the kitchen table. In our house, practicality was love. "You need something secure."

I always agreed, even though the word secure made my chest feel tight. Secure sounded like staying exactly where I was safe, predictable, small.

At twenty-one, I felt stuck between who I used to be and who everyone expected me to become. I worked, went to school, helped at home, and did everything in the right order. From the outside, it probably looked like I had it together. Inside, I felt like I was waiting for something, even if I couldn't explain what it was.

Every morning, before the bus came, I let myself look ahead anyway.

The horizon didn't ask questions. It didn't care about my major, my résumé, or the timeline everyone else seemed to follow. It didn't remind me how behind I felt compared to everyone else. It just existed quiet and open like it was holding space for possibilities I wasn't ready to say out loud.

One morning, an older man started standing at the bus stop too. He wore the same jacket every day and carried a small notebook under his arm. At first, we didn't talk. We just stood there, watching the sky like it mattered.

After a few days, he said, "You look at the sky like you're waiting for it to tell you something."

I smiled. "It's better than staring at my phone."

He laughed, and for a moment, the silence felt easier.

Later that week, he asked what I saw when I looked out there. I surprised myself by answering honestly.

"Possibility," I said.

He nodded. "That can be dangerous."

"Why?" I asked.

"Because once you notice it, you start wanting more," he affirmed.

The bus pulled up before I could respond, but his words stayed with me all day.

That night, I opened an old folder on my laptop. It was full of half-finished stories I never let end, thoughts I never shared. I noticed how many of them were about standing on edges, waiting for something to change.

The next morning, I arrived early. The air was cool, and the sky was starting to shift again. When the man showed up, I asked his name.

"Elias," he said. "I used to teach art."

I didn't ask what happened after that. Some stories don't need to be explained.



“What about you?” He asked.

“I study things I’m good at,” I said.

“And the things you love?” He persisted.

I didn’t answer right away. No one had ever asked me that before.

“I’m still figuring out if I’m allowed to,” I said quietly.

He looked toward the horizon as the light grew stronger. “People think the horizon is something you reach,” he said. “I think it’s more like a direction.”

When the bus came, I stepped on with that thought sitting heavy but hopeful in my chest. I realized I didn’t need everything figured out. I just needed to move.

As the city passed by the window, I understood something for the first time: the horizon doesn’t come closer unless you do.



# Editorial Staff



Jyrah Houston and Monique Williams, Poetry Editors

---

Yusuf Benya, Art Editor

---

Cosima Galli, Layout Editor

---

Elizabeth Ejemai, Fiction Editor

---

Dr. Yeve Montgomery, Faculty Advisor