

The sun is setting, and the Nass is getting out of here. We still have a few tricks up our sleeve.

The Nassau Weekly

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I'll Be Your Baby Tonight

Masthead

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Oh my god, we've killed the *Nassau Weekly*. We've triumphed. We've vanquished the heraldic petrobeast, the tarantula hawkwasp, the vile soul of literary extraction on this campus, which always seemed to be wearing this black cowboy hat. What was that about?

We killed the *Nassau Weekly*, and all it took was another eight mostly weekly issues of student-sourced content. Some of it, even, was good. Now, the movie's over. The end-credits scroll upwards into transcendent oblivion, and here we are: unthwarted by narrative closure. Might as well pick up this black hat. The setting sun shoots out all this jagged, crystalline light, and it's getting in my eyes. Might as well ride off beyond the limit of this light. Might as well go there.

As editor-in-chief of the *Nassau Weekly*, much of the magazine's general production process feels filmic and outrageous, and often, the stakes feel arbitrarily inflated because I love the mag so much. The other day, a guy said, "I guessed you were probably in the *Nass* because you picked it up, and I don't know anyone else who would do that."

Maybe there is still work to be done. For now though, it's time to pass that wild urgency of *Nass* publication onto younger, stronger, greener successors. Sons and daughters. Thank you all for reading the mag if you read it. Thank you also for putting the whole thing together. You make my day. Anyways, we killed the *Nassau Weekly*. It was really great. I loved it.

Love,
Charlie Nuermberger, EIC

This Week:

Fri	4:30p Friend Center, 006 Towards AI Models that can Visually Understand the World's Cultures	7:30p Drapkin Studio LCA Cholla. New play written and directed by Daniel Viorica '25. Free tickets required	Tues	12:30p Guyot Hall, 10 Geo Lecture Seminar Series	7:00p Hagan Gallery, 185 Nassau St Fall 2024 Painting Class Show
Sat	8:00p Berlind Theatre at McCarter 2024 Princeton Dance Festival	7:30 p Drapkin Studio LCA Cholla. New play written and directed by Daniel Viorica '25. Free tickets required	Wed	5:00p Frist Campus Center, 212 Young Democratic Socialists of America - General Meeting	6:00p Grousbeck Hall, C039 Private Dining Room Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers Weekly Meeting
Sun	2:00p Drapkin Studio LCA Cholla. New play written and directed by Daniel Viorica '25. Free tickets required	3:00p Richardson Auditorium Richardson Chamber Players Fall Concert	Thurs	7:00p Friend Center, 113 Convocation Room Swing Dance Club - Weekly Meeting	10:00a-8:00p Hurley Gallery Exhibition — Poetic Record: Photography in a Transformed World
Mon	5:30p Frist Campus Center Euphoric Whispers: Improvisations for Tanbur and Percussion. Free tickets required	7:00p Chapel Interfaith Community Thanksgiving Service	Got Events?	Email Emmett Souder at js0735@princeton.edu with your event and why it should be featured.	For advertisements, contact Isabelle Clayton at ic4953@princeton.edu

Verbatim:

Overheard in frat house <i>BDE-BSE house-husband:</i> "Since we don't run the heat, I have to cook and clean to keep the house warm."	Overheard on a Tuesday <i>Medievalist, sniffing:</i> "My illnesses are vanquishing me."	Overheard in girl dorm <i>Hysterical:</i> "My PMS is getting to my ears."	Overheard during morning-after debrief <i>Gay-passing pedant:</i> "You called Chris's biceps 'glistening'?" <i>Woman:</i> "What word would you use?" <i>Gay-passing pedant:</i> "Bulging, gargantuan, varicose, veiny."
Overheard at Terrace <i>Curly-haired Ableist:</i> "My cousin is 16, and she's really picky. At that point it's like, grow up! She's not autistic, she doesn't have ARFID..."	Overheard in one of those study booths where you lock yourself in alone <i>Not-ready:</i> "A child is a time bomb!"	Overheard in WhigClio <i>Overthinker:</i> "We were the problem." <i>Underthinker:</i> "No, because we were the majority."	Overheard in sleeping structure <i>French AB:</i> "Can I disassociate with you?" <i>COS BSE:</i> "I have school."
Overheard in Engineering Library <i>Fault-finder:</i> "She's so riddled with religious guilt."	Overheard at Roma D-Hall <i>Homoerotic BSE major:</i> "Would you rather be gay or die alone? That's the question in front of me right now."	Overheard over text <i>Free spirit:</i> "I had ice cream twice today." <i>Zero-sugar, can deadlift 425 lbs:</i> "I might have to McCosh you if this behavior continues..."	
	Overheard in girl dorm <i>Has hyper-flexible elbows:</i> "Women are so understudied. We have no idea what kind of weird muscles we might have."		

Submit to Verbatim
Email thenassauweekly@gmail.com

About us:

The Nassau Weekly is Princeton University's weekly news magazine and features news, op-eds, reviews, fiction, poetry and art submitted by students. *There is no formal membership of the Nassau Weekly and all are encouraged to attend meetings and submit writing and art. To submit, email your work to thenassauweekly@gmail.com by 10 p.m. on Thursday. Include your name, netid, word count, and title. We hope to see you soon!*

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Partir C'est Mourir un Peu

"Her grandmother had taken her to a psychiatrist once. She was seven years old at the time, and it had been the first Monday of the school year."

By MEHR SAHNI

It was a beautiful Monday morning and Camille Haidara found herself contemplating just how awful everything was.

It is important to note that Camille was not a fan of Mondays. She had been born on a Monday, sixteen years ago in a cramped Paris apartment, and had never forgiven her mother for it. It was in the middle of a thunderstorm and her grandmother had declared that she would be a difficult child. Camille disagreed. She thought she was perfectly amicable, easygoing even. She was talented, if a little spacey. She was a rock n' roll drummer in five different bands – her favorite being *Senegal Boombox* – and did well enough in school to justify the quite large amount of time she spent daydreaming about being a teenage detective cruising the streets of Los Angeles. If she ever came across as demanding or rude, it was simply because she was a very particular person. Why did her grandmother care if she spent her money on an impractical and expensive coat? So what if she broke up with her boyfriend because he told her not to argue about how American crime movies from the seventies were better than French New Wave classics while out to dinner with his parents? Although in hindsight, the moment that led to the

relationship's demise was probably when she called his father – who she later learned was the recently appointed Minister of Culture – an ignorant and uncultured idiot unworthy of discussing art with someone of her caliber. If she were a plucky teen detective on an American TV program, they would've said she had gumption. But this is Paris. And in Paris, Camille is a bitch.

On this beautifully gray Monday morning, Camille Haidara sat on a Montmartre balcony, dreaming about how much better her life would be in California. She contemplated the quickest way to get there. Camille's father had moved to California several years ago after his dreams of Parisian afternoons – filled with philosophical debates and beautiful women – ceded their way to a middle management position at a consulting firm. That, plus an *enfant terrible* wife whose successes in the Paris jazz scene made him feel insecure, and a mother-in-law who never lost an opportunity to remind him of his ever present Americanness.

Camille's father made his exit from her life remarkably smoothly, accepting a position writing about French Financial News in the *LA Times*, before his college pal Dave Grant hired him as the Financial Editor at the *Sacramento Bee*, the fifth largest paper in the state of California. He just *had* to take the job, he told his wife and daughter one Monday afternoon. Camille stared at a postcard her father had sent her: a geometric painting of a cowboy with a lasso ensnaring the "C" in California.

*Happy Birthday Camille, wishing you an incredible sixteenth from everybody in the Golden State! Would've loved to be there, but work has been crazy lately. See you soon,
Dad*

Accompanying the postcard was a bright yellow package. Enclosed within was a faded blue Dodgers cap, a pair of glossy black Ray-Bans in a crocodile leather case, and a first-class ticket to LAX. Camille pressed the hat low on her head and slid the shade high up her nose, sitting back against the cool glass of her bedroom window. She pressed the ticket to her chest, closing her eyes, imagining the gray skies and cobblestones melting away into the sunny Santa Monica boardwalk.

CRACK! Before she could react, Camille felt the window give out behind her and she tumbled backwards, slamming her head on apartment threshold and sending the Ray-Bans flying off.

"We've been looking for you for hours, Cami! What are you doing out here?" Camille's grandmother gave her a concerned look. "A baseball cap? Your hair will be a mess for the photos!"

"Who cares about my hair? It's just a birthday, it happens every year."

"And every year you will look presentable in the photos. Now get cleaned up. I bought a cake."

"Fine."

Camille tore off the blue hat, tousled her hair, and glared at her grandmother. They had never gotten along; her grandmother was a very pragmatic person and simply did not tolerate Camille's

particularisms. This was quite unfortunate, since with her dad running off to California, her mother always out, and her friends being largely non-existent, Camille spent a large portion of her life squirming under the thumb of her grandmother. Looking at the chicly-wrinkled spectacle-adorned face currently shooting her a look that ought to have stuck at least four inches out of her back, Camille found herself, as she often had before, wondering how exactly *she* had come from *that*. Over the last sixteen years, Camille had come up with plenty of theories. A common complaint of her grandmother's was how Camille spoke in commas, like a heavy novel. Perhaps her grandmother was resentful of the infinite complexities of Camille's lonely genius and the particularities it spawned. But her mother was a real genius, and her grandmother loved her mother. Too eccentric perhaps? But did her mother not also reject her grandmother's way of life? Is running around the world playing piano in clubs on each and every continent much different from Camille and her two post-post-punk bands performing in dingy spots in Lagny-sur-Marne? In scale perhaps, but certainly not in intention.

Pressing her new shades high up her nose clutching the postcard tightly, Camille whipped around and stormed past her grandmother down the hall, slamming the bathroom door. She turned on the faucet to wash her face and imagined the sounds of the water were waves of the Big Sur falling gently behind her as she drove down the coast. She fixed her hair, folded the sunglasses over her collar, slipped the plane ticket and postcard into her pocket, and tapped nervously on the grainy stone countertop. Camille always felt guilty on her birthday. Each one marking another year of her particular brand of alienation. Maybe her grandmother was

right. Why couldn't she just fit in? What right did she have to stand out? Why couldn't she just sink into the city like everyone else, melting into the rhythm of slow days and quiet, candle-lit cafes, finding contentment in the same conversations about art and politics that floated around her whole life? But that was the problem: Paris, for all its history, beauty, and smoky allure, felt stifling. It was a place of limits, where everyone seemed to know exactly what to say, how to look, who to know. Where her mother had carved out a reputation in the jazz scene and where her grandmother's pride lay in a lineage of perfect afternoons and respectable company. But what about Camille?

California, though. She knew her dad was there, of course, tucked away in some editorial office. It wasn't about him, though. Maybe it was foolish to base a dream on the neon-laced scenes of old movies or the lyrics of her favorite Lana Del Rey songs. But there was something freeing in the idea of the wholesome Americana, the sun-soaked highways stretching into deserts and mountains, like some great map that was waiting for her to fill it in. She liked to imagine L.A. as a place where people remade themselves. It was the kind of place where someone like her, a girl whose mind skipped and twisted and was rough around the edges, could finally breathe. Maybe she built it up in her mind, maybe she'd land and see through it in a second. But for now, it was something to tear after.

Her grandmother had taken her to a psychiatrist once. She was seven years old at the time and it had been the first Monday of the school year. Camille had taken up the habit of leaving school early and wandering around the neighborhood, and then gaslighting her parents into thinking that they had written her a note excusing her dismissal

and had simply forgotten about it. The Psychiatrist had asked Camille why she lied. She said that she lied now and then. See, sometimes she'd tell her parents the truth and they still wouldn't believe her, so she preferred to lie. (She never actually did that; Camille had copied it from a movie her grandmother had shown her). The truth was that Camille didn't know why she lied then other than to avoid going home. She felt out of place in Paris and no matter how much she searched she couldn't quite find a place that felt like home. She didn't know if she would feel normal in California, but she felt at home in her dreams of it, and if that were any indication she would be well remiss not to investigate the matter.

So Camille fixed her hair and her grandmother was happy. She lit the sixteen candles and smiled. Each flame was a Los Angeles sunset burning just for her. She thought about saying goodbye to her grandmother, wondering if her mother would be angry if she left without telling her. But those thoughts gave way to excited Californian fantasies. She slid her sunglasses high up her nose and pressed her hat down low.

"Is the hat really necessary, Cami? You look so *American*." And more than anything Camille wanted to tell her "Maybe I am?"

But Camille had, perhaps for the first time, ended a Monday with more things to be happy about than she began the day with. Tomorrow she would set out to find that home for herself, too far away for her grandmother to have any say in the matter. She tossed the hat on the counter but left the Ray-Bans on, reflecting the candles. The hat wasn't going anywhere. "Much better Cami, but can you fix your hair again?"

"Just take the picture."

Having a Childhood Dog May Improve Your Health

A Nass writer works out how early interspecies contact might improve immune system development

By PEYTON SMITH

A few years ago, my mom and I were watching old videos that she took of me as a baby. One featured infant-me crouched behind my dog’s water bowl and joyfully splashing my hands in the water, as if in a pool. My mom sat behind the camera giggling and cooing to me. Older me, who understood all the potential germs present in the dog’s stagnant water bowl, was horrified: “Why did you stand there and let me do that?!” My mom, not ready to have her parenting methods questioned, responded, “Look, you were having so much fun, and it’s probably made your immune system stronger.”

I’ve often wondered how much of an impact being around a dog at such an early age has affected my health and overall wellbeing. When I was one, my parents adopted a Bullmastiff puppy, Greta, who rapidly eclipsed me in size, growing to be 120 pounds. For the 12 years of her life, we were inseparable. She’d always tolerate me sitting directly on her, and she’d love to cuddle for hours in the morning. But she was frequently “gross.” Greta liked to lick faces and after drinking water, her slobber would always drip off her droopy mouth onto the floor. She could never go into the backyard unsupervised since she’d

eat her own poop.

Our love of dogs often clashes with contemporary expectations of cleanliness and hygiene. Some dog owners are more sensitive to the innate “dirtiness” of dogs than others, and commit to more rigorous cleaning routines and frequent bathing of their furry companions. Increasingly, however, the long-term benefits of hygiene have been questioned by scientists, particularly in early childhood development. Throughout childhood, our bodies are continuously exposed to many microbes. Sometimes, these germs infect us, forcing a child who developed symptoms of the common cold home from kindergarten. Others, our immune system finds them harmless and learns to tolerate their existence. It’s key that this exposure happens early in life, when our immune system is more tolerant to foreign invaders. As we mature, our immune systems more often launch an inflammatory response to a benign microbe just because it does not recognize it.

Dogs, with all their slobber and dirt, host loads of microorganisms and viruses. Some of these do pose a threat to humans: zoonotic like rabies or bacterial disease such as salmonella. However, modern medical care and vaccinations have alleviated many of the risks of pathogens spreading from dog to owner. Now, dogs may help regulate our immune systems further, especially in early childhood, by reducing the cleanliness of our households.

Many studies on the effects of early-life dog (and cat) ownership have focused on “atopic” diseases such as eczema, asthma, and food allergies, all of which are hypothesized to result from our immune systems launching an inflammatory response against something that does not pose a threat. In most studies¹, my mom’s efforts to prime my immune system via a doggy water bowl holds up. A meta-analysis² from 2013 found a 25% decrease in atopic disease for children exposed to dogs (but failed to find the same for cats). However, in some studies the effects are more complicated. A study³ from 2022 of more than 77,000 children from the EU discovered no association between pet ownership and asthma, and instead observed that atopic health risks increased for those who have a pet allergy and owned a pet.

These mixed results may result from inconsistent ways of defining pet exposure. Studies differ in how long people have to be around animals for something to count as an “exposure.” Testing for atopic disease also varies between studies, with some only accounting for a certain type of disease or ignoring severity. But overall, with the exception of those who develop pet allergies, dogs mostly don’t seem to do harm to our immune system early in childhood, and very well may help.

Even so, early-childhood pet ownership is associated with a myriad of other health benefits, particularly psychological ones. Indeed, a 2020 study⁴ found

that recreation and play with a dog during pre-school was associated with a decrease in peer problems and increase in prosocial behavior, a pattern that has been backed up by many other pediatric studies.⁵

Anecdotally, I can say that having Greta as a pet in early childhood definitely taught me prosocial skills, in particular forgiveness. The day after my birthday, all 120-pounds of her leapt up on the counter to eat what remained of my cake. In a rage, I promised to not pet her for the rest of the day. Though when I came home from school that day and was greeted by her slow tail wag and black glossy eyes, I broke my promise and pet her sweet wrinkled forehead. Perhaps Greta just wanted to share the cake, all spread out across the floor, although I think that would’ve been a step too far for my immune system.

Peyton Smith wonders how much of an impact being around the *Nassau Weekly* has on her health and overall wellbeing.

The 2024 Election in Two Images

By ELENA EISS and
LILLIAN PATTERSON

The week before the United States general election, we solicited short-form narrative non-fiction submissions from the Nassau Weekly community. We hoped to gather and serialize scenes, images, and glimpses from Election Day and the following week. We asked writers to tag their reflections with a date and time in an attempt to track the progression of thinking on campus. Unfortunately, we only received the following responses. The collective aphasia of the situation speaks for itself. We rarely have so little to say.

Elena Eiss

Monday, November 4th, 2024 –
7:39 pm

On a phone call with my mom. She tells me—the evening before election day—that both presidential candidates are in town. Trump has booked the hockey arena, PPG Place. Kamala Harris was supposed to speak at Point State Park, but after safety concerns, she is giving an address at the Carrie Furnaces—a monument to steel—in Swissvale. It's true, then: Pittsburgh must really be the center of the universe.

My phone holds a hidden avalanche. Text after text after text urges me to vote, asking me if my parents have voted by name, reading me out my own address. My high school social studies teachers post pictures of themselves canvassing and at rallies on their Instagram stories. Any other time, Pittsburgh is an APUSH plot point: Andrew Carnegie's and Henry Clay Frick's and union suppression. Remember when we made headlines when that bridge collapsed or when that bus got stuck in a sinkhole? Probably not. But a reporter on CNN kept speaking outside my high school for their 2020 election coverage. This year's candidates and all their political acquaintances just can't help themselves but return again and again to this city of bridges.

When Jubilee released the "Pete Buttigieg vs 25 Undecided Voters" video yesterday, I was relieved all 25 participants were from Michigan.

Lillian Paterson

Wednesday, November 6th, 2024.
5:00 pm.

The first time I saw my dad cry was November 9th, 2016. He sat on the couch, hands covered over his face. I don't remember a lot from that week, but I do remember his expression when he finally looked up at me and my sister. It wasn't just sadness; it was with anger and determination as well. There was a lot on the line in 2016, and there's a lot on the line now.

"This isn't an anomaly," he told me this morning over FaceTime. "Most of the presidents I've had in my lifetime were Republican. And every single one of them were worse than, or just as bad, as their predecessor. You know what was an anomaly? Barack Obama. Hillary Clinton. Kamala Harris. Anomalies aren't normal, even if they should be. And we don't usually catch them happening more than once. But that doesn't mean we stop fighting for them, you know?"

In a New York Times piece from 1977, James Baldwin said that "people can cry much easier than they can change." My dad didn't cry this morning, but I did, because it was the easiest thing to do. Eight years ago, he cried the same tears and I wonder if there's something I'm missing that he has now.



The Lobby Prince

“No price is listed on the website. I’m reminded of one of my mother’s more pessimistic maxims: sometimes, if you have to ask, you can’t afford it.”

by GAVIN STROUD

There are endless ways, even for a visitor under the age of twenty-one, to spend a solitary evening in Manhattan. Unfortunately for me, on one after-Christmas-but-before-New-Year’s December evening of last year, none of them are in the neighborhood of affordable. It seemed to me that there was nothing free to do other than walk, perfectly enjoyable in the crisp afternoon, but decidedly less so as the sun set and alley-strangled icy gusts began to suck the breath out of my lungs. I ate alone at a cheap-passing diner only for my meal (at a price of 34 dollars) to more or less clear my wallet out. My father had given me 60 dollars in cash for the entire evening, which in his Chicago-in-the-90s mind was more than enough. I paid my tab with a smaller tip than usual and left. I heard the distant screeching of brakes, like someone sharpening the cold of the night.

I went down 5th Avenue, then 6th, then 7th, feeling aimless like a moth among the golden windows and silver things and the steam from everything warm. Eventually I ended up on 58th Street. That was when I stumbled upon a temple. Protruding out into the sidewalk, dressed up

in gold and pouring out light of the same shade, attended busily by uniformed bellmen, teeming with the passings of pearls and fur, was the entrance to the Essex House Hotel. I walked closer, passing a man asleep in blankets on a bus stop bench, and felt the warmth from inside reach through my jacket, into the center of my being. I stood in the vestibule for too long, unsure, enduring the sideways glances from the bellmen, until I passed inside through the massive rotating door.

The lobby is presented with an intricate patterned marble floor and huge onyx black pillars reaching up to a ceiling of dark, carved oak. It was as though every sound from the clack of heels on the floor to the distant *dings* of the gold-doored elevators was part of one intricate, reverberating symphony, of which I was now a seamless part. Now that I had passed into the domain, no one gave me hard glances, more than one employee offered to help carry my bag (the small backpack I was wearing), and they all eventually came to assume my parents had paid for a room here. I later tried to look up the price of a room at Essex House. No price is listed on the website. I’m reminded of one of my mother’s more pessimistic maxims: *sometimes, if you have to ask, you can’t afford it.*

I took a seat on a huge leather couch in the corner of the lobby, just adjacent to the bar, where neat

corporate travelers drank colorful cocktails in crystal glasses, and a woman in a navy dress played softly on a baby grand in the corner. I was tired from a day of walking, safe from the cold, and lulled by piano music, I fell asleep.

When I woke I found that nobody had touched my bag. I became more aware of my surroundings than I had been, almost to the point of discomfort. I saw a man at the counter with a long, long black briefcase leaning at his side. I found myself imagining there was a rifle inside it, and that shortly after checking into his junior suite he would climb to the roof and someone would say “like a watermelon” to the police in Central Park tomorrow morning. He was the assassin now, and he would be forever. As he walked off and into the elevator, I saw any other possibility for his identity go with him.

On the other side of the couch, there was a handsome boy a few years older than me, crushing his hair with the hand not holding his phone and thumb-scrolling while he looked away and off into the street through the big windows. Around his wrist, there was a sparkling silver bracelet, encrusted with precious gems. We made eye contact for a moment and we nodded to each other and then he was getting a call and stood up and was gone. He, too, left my life forever. Could that bracelet not be the heirloom of some exotic royal bloodline?

Could he not be a prince? I had never seen anything like it in the windows of Tiffany's or Van Cleef. Perhaps there truly was nothing in the world like it but that on his wrist. So I crowned him Prince of the Essex House Lobby.

I flirted with the imagined lives of a half-dozen other guests. I imagined the couple talking with cocktails at the bar did not arrive together and were meeting for the first time, that the woman on the piano had lost her place in the Boston Philharmonic to some long-running nemesis on whom she now swore revenge... But what drew me more than any of these was the thought that someone (even maybe the departed prince) might be conjuring such narratives about me. In every moment of eye contact, I imagined an idle but brilliant story blooming around me. Then someone dropped a glass and the shatter shrieked through the whole building. I stood up and left, catching a glimpse of a janitor sweeping up the pieces of crystal, suddenly dull and dark on the floor.

Outside, the cold stabbed right through my jacket. It had dropped some fifteen degrees and bit with another seven worth of windchill. I had to cup my palm over my mouth to warm the air enough to fit it into my lungs. I walked down a congested 59th, looking like I was holding in a secret. The wind rose over a dark Central Park. I looked out and down and saw the carousel headlights from Columbus Circle ahead.

I passed by two men standing above towels on the ground covered in handbags. Chanel and Louis Vuitton and Burberry for prices spoken but not written. I saw an old woman pick up a

Chanel. She fished out a 20 from the purse she was wearing, Prada. She did not thank the man who took her money, or even smile. Instead, she ducked away and vanished into the sidewalk congestion. I turned back to face the way I'd come. I saw *ESSEX HOUSE* in red neon letters looming in the foggy sky, little yellow freckles for windows inside which stirred more of the life I suddenly felt whirling all around me. I thought about that woman, the mythology of the bag she now owned. Nobody but me and a few perceptive others on the street would likely ever know that the Chanel was a fake. For 20 dollars she could think of herself the way that many would think of her on the street: as the kind of woman who can afford to throw away some 3000 dollars on a leather bag.

New York is many things, and it can be called *many* more: a beating heart, a carnivorous animal, a cesspit, heaven, hell. Call it anything. The place commands of all who enter that they abandon not all hope, but a great deal of themselves. Identity is not a solid, shapely thing on the streets of such a city. You, me, anyone walking on the streets of New York are not people, but flashes on film. This is a fate that no one, at least with the entirety of their being, can accept. So we buy fake bags, sit in the lobbies of good hotels, haunt the counters of loud, expensive SoHo bars, so that someone like me will be there to make up stories about us.

Perhaps there truly was nothing in the world like *Gavin Stroud* but that in the *Nassau Weekly*.

At the movies

By DANIEL VIORICA

Tissue paper face held
over a match. Night dangles
from rafters, perfume

chemicals burn. Daylight
burns like faces on the screen
skin-soft, bleached

and bloody. Picture
this: grey background, rose
buds flailing. Narrow angles

abstract and brief as lips
on neck. Later only rainy
weather.

Sacramento, 2013

By JUNA BROTHERS

The sidewalk outside is wet. So is
my swing hanging from the orange tree branches,
and my pink boots by the door that hurt.
I like to draw the same picture
over and over, a different bedroom
from mine scratched out

in blue pen. At night I turn into branches
and leaves and things don't hurt
anymore. I saw a picture
on TV once of a man
growing bark out
of his skin. Armor. I wake up

with my hands curled into claws.
There are marks on the insides
of my wrists, scratched out
and tucked away for a picture. It's not
that I didn't want this, I just
thought the air would feel different
after.

Sentence Starters

By WENDY WANG

We haven't learned
the cliché of red leaves
of hazelnut cold

brew, that dead squirrel
because despite
we couldn't have brought

she want to? Live
then die, like crunchy
we were, doing planks

still forgetful of lip
& band-aids. You
like a childhood

time amidst NYT
lines for ginger ale,
you must imagine me

I'm more used to
holding scents no
mornings were drip-

The compound past:
not speak to us because
a *Trap*. The near future:

to start more sentences for
not conclusions. Now,
its leaves, that squirrel, the

we need to let it leave, let
let it rust—you said it,

silent screens, no watches,
just 2 a.m. stars,
you had no end

the right tense:
falling, your choice
foam atop my cold

we mourned for
the newborn tents
her back. Why would

for a while
leaves, like us, whoever
for hours yet

balms, brochures, sprinklers,
talk about Cicero
friend who punctuates

Connections, long
cyclical walks on which
happy. The imperfect:

holding thoughts than
matter how many
ping into my iced chai.

Past Lives did
our present has been
we are going

page-long body paragraphs,
to talk about fall,
bench on which we paint time,

them fall, let her die,
yesterday, with two

in mind.

it is late october and i thought i was falling in love three weeks ago

By CALLISTO LIM

(There's something off about this moment, a beauty mark on the day. I'm feeling small and alone, far away from home and homesick for my car.)

it is late october and a discarded napkin
swirls in the wind, imitating a fallen leaf.
it is late october and the girl
who i wanted to fall in love with
will never grin at me as she drinks
from my lukewarm latte or hold my gaze
before she kisses me goodnight again.
but a flash of her passes by and
i think of a late october spent
in the arms of a lover, in old cloth armchairs
in old stone buildings watching old
chipped windowsills collect freshly-falling leaves.

it is late october and fall slips into winter,
fall harvest abundance fading
into unfamiliar brushstroke branches.
i sit in a patch of shade beneath an ivy branch,
watching buggies roam the golf course before me.
a grove of trees sprouts out of the fairway,
a faraway grotto to explore some day, not today.
i told my roommate, yesterday, that i wished
my life were boring. that i could spend my days
drifting through bookstores and watching pigeons flock.
not folding into myself, not clutching at my chest every time
i see a mess of curled brown hair, wondering
if it is her and at once hoping it is not.

it is late october and
my ear piercing is irritated from when she bit it, not
knowing that it was fresh. it is late october and
my piercer told me to get them checked out by
september, but i do not have a car—not here, at least—
and every twinge of discomfort, every accidental
brush of the metal is a reminder.

it is late october and i miss home.
nighttime drives under yellowed street lights and
walmart trips to buy microwave popcorn and
july. a birthday party that ends too soon, my kitchen
full of hometown friends learning to make dumplings and
my mother at the stove, boiling and steaming and frying.



it is late october and i am reminiscing about easy
love and tight hugs. crowding around tables for
board game night at a friend's house, the last one before
he leaves for college in northern england. i dread this
northern winter and its brutish cold and too-early sunsets,
but i am warm, still, in borrowed jackets and shared mugs of tea,
skating down poorly-paved streets and sharing
movie nights with friends i only met two months ago but i think
i will probably have for a lifetime.

it is late october and the leaves lining the streets are gorgeous
and the trees incandescent, radiant but deferring to the season,
accepting defeat for just three short months. and i
will be glad when they return, verdant sprigs from
frost-gray branches, not rebirth but re-becoming.

and i know that there will be something freeing about that day,
but i will just have to wait.

Babushka's Angel

"The angel flew first on her golden wings to the *yelka*."

By SOFIIA SHAPOVALOVA

The Woman had one ornament she treasured. An angel, golden wings and skin of cream (porcelain perhaps, but it was difficult to say as no one remembered the angel's precise origin). Fair, fair hair she had and an even fairer face – dusted champagne cheeks. Robed in a lovely, carmine dress that flowed from the cut of her collar bones down to her toes.

The angel held a star in her hands. And she was a star herself too: the star that adorned the *yelka*, the pine tree assigned once a year to the corner of the Woman's living room, an evergreen beacon placed to attract the spirits of joy. Though, the angel was no star in the traditional sense of decorations, physical crowning jewels, and the glittering like. Rather, it was a metaphorical sense, a matter of ungarnished reverence. To the Woman, this one angel was *the* most precious figure, and it was this young maiden that was summoned first by the Woman each year when the *yelka* arose from her slumber. When the inevitable cold of December announced its annual, frosted appearance, the Woman's daughter would observe how the Woman carefully parsed through the glass globes and *Saint Nikolai's* that filled the large box dedicated to hosting the spirit of *Novyi god* each year until it was time to celebrate the winter

festivities, when she would pull out the angel before all else. It was with a mother's delicate hands that she would scoop the angel out, gently unraveling her from the swabs of white tissue paper that enveloped the angel during the darker days spent inside the box, in the warmer times of the year.

For it had been her own mother that had bestowed the angel with golden wings and robed in a lovely, carmine dress to the Woman some many, many months ago. Months which had slipped into decades as the new years kept coming. The Woman would admit that she could not quite say when or where her mother had found the angel in the first place, but the Woman figured she could surely inquire at a later date. Besides, details such as these don't matter nearly as much as the feelings which surround the fact. What *did* matter to the Woman was that the angel had come from her mother. And now that she was far from her (separated by practical barriers such as continents and oceans) and could not quite say when or where she might see her again (prevented by practical matters such as passports and credit cards), the angel possessed an incredible amount of gravity – funny, perhaps, considering angels are not meant to be tied down to this *zemlya*. The angel was further a kind of tangible proof – of the country the Woman and the Daughter had come from, and of the country she wondered whether she would ever return to.

So the Woman would scoop the angel

out, unravel the swabs of paper slowly, and faithfully search the angel's face for indications as to how she had been faring since the two had last seen each other. Blow softly on the fair face to shoo away the specks of dust which had accumulated despite the box's best attempts to shield her from time during the off-season.

The Daughter always noted how the Woman would smile at her angel, still anchored in unchange. *What a beauty you are!* the Woman would think to herself. A beauty fit to be hung at the top of the *yelka*. Front and center. Certainly above all the baubles that dangled from the branches of the *yelka*, and even above the *Nikolai's*. The rest of the ornaments hung from paper clips, untwisted and retwisted to make for make-shift hooks, but the angel hung elegantly from one gleaming thread that fed into the flaxen hair that fell to her shoulders.

Each year, the Woman reassigned the angel to her designated spot on the *yelka*. Upon guiding the angel to her place, she would take a step back and smile at her handiwork. Or, rather, handiwork may not be the proper word to describe what it was that the Woman so admired. The Woman had not *made* the angel after all – her fingers had taken no part in the crafting. No, she had simply taken care of it all these years. Treating it with the dearness one affords a child until she might perhaps return it to her mother someday. Ask her where it had come from.

The Woman's daughter had watched

the Woman repeat this sacred ritual year upon year until she came closer to comprehending the significance of the custom herself. Tried to. When she had been very young, the Woman's daughter could not at all understand why this angel was deemed worthier than the other, much bigger and more colorful ornaments. The vibrant balls that glimmered under the twinkle of lights and the *snegovik* with his cheerful face that smiled back at the Daughter. Or her favorite *Saint Nikolai* – the one with the fur-lined coat and black boots and rosy cheeks that hinted at ebullience in a way in which the angel never could. Yes, if the Daughter had her way, he would be at the very top of the *yelka*, above all the other toys which the angel somehow triumphed in the eyes of the Woman. But the Woman had insisted.

The angel flew first on her golden wings to the *yelka*.

Once, the Daughter had even attempted to place *Saint Nikolai* where she thought he'd look best, stretching up on her tiptoes to try and reach this higher perch. The Woman had not said anything then, but the look she cast had been answer enough. The Daughter sighed deeply, took *Nikolai* into her hands again and moved him a little lower, and a little bit to the left. In that moment, the Daughter had asked *why*, but the Woman offered no explanation besides a passing *because* in exchange. Such was the standard response.

Where did you get it? the Daughter asked again.

Nothing. So she made an educated

guess. Furrowed her brows in thought.

Did Babushka give it to you?

The Woman nodded simply.

As the Daughter aged forth with the Woman, she took it upon herself to care for this yuletide order too, wanting to demonstrate to the Woman she cared as well. She would slap lightly at her younger brother's eager hands when he tried to place the *snegovik* in place of the angel, not that he could reach the top of the *yelka* anyway. *That's not his spot!* she would explain, a bit presumptuously. *Angel goes first!* Together, they moved the *snegovik* a little lower, and a little bit to the right.

Across the years, there came a point when it became the Daughter who continued the act. When the Woman

stopped caring to extract the angel from the box that sheltered it year round, it fell instead to the Daughter to do so.

This change struck suddenly. Why the Woman stopped caring was, at first, difficult to determine, and she certainly was not about to *speak* the answer out loud to her Daughter. For the woman had never been one for explanations. Rather, to find the reason behind this change, if reason can ever be a satisfactory tool to explain a human act, the Daughter had to think back to what she knew of the angel. Where had the Woman gotten it from? Why did the Woman love it so? What caused such love to seemingly vanish?

All the Daughter truly knew was that the Woman had once received the angel from her own mother. From *Babushka* as they had called her – an elusive and almost peripheral character whom the Daughter had only met twice herself. One meeting blended seamlessly into



the first four years of the Daughter's life, when she had been too young to parse through time and translate being into memory. When both the Daughter and the Woman had not known borders such as continents and oceans that keep people apart, when living had been easier. That first meeting had been stretched into every day, habitual visits paid by **Babushka** to their fourth floor apartment block, until passports and credit cards became necessary to meet again.

The second meeting had come about four years later, one the Daughter ingrained into the folds of her subconscious so that she would never forget. The Daughter had latched onto every detail then, the fourteen hours flight to the Charles de Gaulle airport and how they had to run to not miss the next leg of their journey farther east. The AirFrance airplane cheese had stunk and her brother cried when his ears popped as the plan began its descent. **Babushka** had been waiting for them when they landed.

This second encounter was when the Daughter formed her primary impressions of the Woman's mother. She was a bit of a bristly character, like prickly pear or pineapple. She spoke in commands and didn't waste her words on praise and compliments. Strong-willed, one might say, and far shorter than the Daughter had imagined her to be. Why at eight years old she had even been taller than **Babushka**! Still, there was something appealing about this distant figure who had somehow managed to

direct the decorating that took place in a home miles away, wielding an iron influence (at least, when it came to the aesthetics of **yelkas** and angels) over the Woman and the Woman's daughter for years.

Truthfully, the Daughter was a bit scared of **Babushka**. But she did have a beautiful singing voice that any **khors** would no doubt be sad to lose, and one that somehow rendered her into less of a frightening personality. When **Babushka** kissed them all goodbye at the airport, so they could return in time to adorn their own **yelka** and celebrate across the ocean where they now lived, the Daughter had not realized then she would never again hear the melodies sung by that stunning voice. They would never sing them together.

Five years past that second meeting, sad was not an apt enough word to articulate what the Woman felt now that she could no longer bring herself to touch the angel. She spoke even less than she had before.

The new years kept coming as they had prior, without pity for the grieving Woman. The Daughter puzzled over this change in tradition and significance long before she could come to understand it (perhaps, she never fully would), and the Woman, these days, had little desire to continue the caretaking that she had upheld for the past eight years spent across the ocean. After all, there was no longer anyone to return the angel to. No more visits to **Babushka**. Her golden wings and skin

of cream... no one could say now where the angel had come from originally. The fair hair and even fairer face, the lovely, carmine dress. No, the Woman could not continue looking upon the angel on the **yelka** when she spent her days praying for a different angel now. One much more real, and much more lost.

One she hoped the heavens had received, and one to whom she might never return the angel she had guarded in indefinite waiting.

Meanwhile, come wintertime, the Daughter would open that same big box which still housed the Woman's angel. Place the shunned beloved upon the **yelka**. The Daughter hung the angel carefully in its spot, whispering, *I remember.*

And wondered, was **Babushka** remembering too?

Rather, to find the reason behind this change, if reason can ever be a satisfactory tool to explain a human act, the *Sofiia Shapovalova* had to think back to what she knew of the *Nassau Weekly*.



Teeth

Meditations on Didion, Rooney, Shakespeare, and tooth extraction

By ROYA REESE

Over fall break, I went home to get my wisdom teeth removed. On my bedside table was a stack of books, and on top was *The Year of Magical Thinking*.

I read *Magical Thinking* the summer after my senior year of high school when I read almost all of Joan Didion. I remember thinking vaguely that I should read it, because my aunt had just lost her husband, and she read it. It sat on the coffee table in her living room during the week after the

motorcycle crash.

I had taken on (or been given, I'm not interested in dwelling on this detail) the job of caring for my aunt in the aftermath, so I figured it was only logical that I read the book. Like research. *Read, learn, work it up, go to the literature. Information is control* (Didion, *The Year of Magical Thinking*). Included in *working it up* was sleeping in her bed every night.

I remember that I knew how the book ended. I knew Joan's husband died and her daughter died, so I spent all of *The Year of Magical Thinking* waiting for her daughter to die. In the end, she did not die, not in *Magical Thinking*. In the end only her husband died, and I missed it entirely.

While I'm home, I see a high school mentor, seeking advice. Or some words of wisdom. We talk about my freshman year and my general maladaptation to life at Princeton. "It was like you fell," she says, "and then you just kept falling."

Rifling through my closet at home, I find my brother has taken most of my clothes, including the socks. I ask my friend Emanuelle where her crew socks are from, and she says they're from her

grandmother's closet. Her coolest pieces of clothing, the ones she likes best to tell me about, are from her grandmother's closet. Her grandmother who made her bring a winter coat for a summer in San Francisco. *The coldest winter I ever spent was a summer in San Francisco* (Mark Twain).

My brother asks me to pick him up breakfast from Wawa. "I don't care what it is," he says on the phone. "Just something I can hold."

The day I get home from Princeton, I immediately sleep for three hours. Then, on Wednesday, I am laid out for the entire day after my wisdom teeth removal. I hear of several friends who get sick over break: two colds, one scratched cornea, and various other afflictions. Perhaps the first six weeks was too much for us to hold.

On the third day after the surgery I feel well enough, physically, to get my hair dyed; I am still emotionally shaken. I say to my mom, "I feel kind of raw, like...if I skinned my knee and then someone rubbed on it a bunch." She says, "ew."

The man who dyes my hair is

senile-seeming, and remains quiet as I describe to him the color I would like. When he applies the dye, it makes streaks on my forehead like I'm bleeding from my skull. I think of my cousin telling me about when her mom dyed her hair fire-engine red in high school. I think it's possible mine will turn out like hers.

Once a friend dyed my hair at school; as I demonstrated the steps, she said "oh, actually I get it, it's similar to how I oil my hair before I go to sleep." Repeating a ritual each night. Intimacy. The dye seeped into my skull and left it brown.

Post-surgery: I read *Intermezzo* by Sally Rooney. The characters are in crisis, but I like them, particularly three involved in some sort of unnameable polyamorous relationship. A friend says, "Of course you would like that. You're a Slytherin."

On my bedside table, underneath *The Year of Magical Thinking*, is my journal from junior year of high school. That year, I was laid out with another violent affliction: a terrible crush. Especially in high school, I placed a lot of stock in keeping my cool, not going crazy



over boys or girls or anyone, really. Which is why it was such a great hit to my ego when I fell fatally in love. I flip through the journal and think about the exact combination of features that makes you fall for a person.

Intermezzo: You have come to care too passionately, too fully and completely, for an unsuitable person (Sally Rooney).

What makes a person suitable? Unfortunately, for me, the qualities I consider have changed little since high school; I love a narcissist, for example, and even better if they won't give me the time of day. These qualities meant I spent a lot of my adolescence yearning and pining. Holding onto people for too long. *When it costs too much to love* (Fiona Apple).

I pity me, seventeen, even in my pathetic post-surgical state: honestly, it was a crush painful enough to warrant comparison to having teeth ripped out of my skull. I tell Eliza this on the phone and she says, "I remember that girl sounded like a nightmare," and then comes over with three cartons of ice cream, sits on my bed, tells me stories. Noticing a stain on my pillow, I say: "What is that?" And she says, "That would be bloody drool, I believe." "Disgusting," I say. "No, not disgusting," she says, "I mean you did get

four teeth out. Actually, it's quite tasteful — only a little bit."

I poke around in my empty wisdom teeth sockets, tasting blood, strangely gutted by their loss. Drugged up on pain medicine, I tell Eliza tearfully: "I want them back. I miss my teeth." She says kindly, "your teeth don't miss you."

We are imperfect mortal beings, aware of that mortality even as we push it away, failed by our very complication, so wired that when we mourn our losses we



also mourn, for better or for worse, ourselves. As we were. As we are no longer. As we will one day not be at all (Didion, *The Year of Magical Thinking*).

—
Post-break: my Shakespeare professor lectures on the idea of joint commitment. Coined by philosopher Margaret Gilbert, the term describes the small

compromises we make to do things together — walk side by side, engage in conversation. He suggests Romeo and Juliet as an extreme example: two teenagers so deeply in love, so *jointly committed*, that they marry and kill themselves in a matter of five days.

Over dinner with a friend, I laugh about this, how Romeo and Juliet lock eyes at a party and just know. "For me, I think it's less love at first sight and more love at repeated exposure." That one time when someone piques your in-

terest in a new way. Well.

But Romeo and Juliet didn't meet for the first time at that party. No, their families had obviously known each other for years. So what was it about that meeting that made the difference?

There is the question of choice, of course; or what happens if one person *sees the vision* and the other does not (read:

this girl did not like me back).

I think of the scene between Amy and Laurie, when Amy says: *Well, I believe we have some power over who we love, it isn't something that just happens to a person*. And he replies, *I think the poets might disagree* ("Little Women," Gerwig).

—
I lie in bed after surgery, watching *Much Ado About Nothing* for class, watching Benedick and Beatrice dance around each other and fall in love. My mouth is swollen, but only a little. I have a package of frozen peas pressed to my jaw. My room is clean, sheets washed, only the books on my nightstand are out of order.

Leonato, to Beatrice, says: *you shall never run mad, niece*. Oh, but I have.

We flip through the *Nassau Weekly* and think about the exact combination of features that makes us fall for *Roya Reese*.



The Ripple Effect: Yue Yin's Eras of Creation

A Nass writer reconsiders the classical recounts her experience working with a celebrated choreographer at the Princeton Dance Festival

by LIVIA SCHNEDER

Yue Yin enthuses the dancer to try. She implores us to use each limb simultaneously, at its full capacity; for this challenge we thank her.

From 4:30 to 6:20 p.m., every Tuesday and Thursday in the Hearst Theatre, a cast of thirteen gathers in a circle around her assistant, Sarah Allen, to follow a series of repetitive movements in a deep plie. Bending and stretching and bending our legs while methodically adding in our arms. It sounds like Zumba, but it looks much better; this is called FoCo. I have never been stronger in my life.

After warm-up, Yin takes the stage, teaching us choreography from her work, *Ripple*, which premiered in 2020. The pre-made choreography does not ask but requires the dancer to employ dynamics to be executed correctly. Yin turns around herself, jumps, stretches, all while maintaining a grounded position; her knees bent, she rarely succeeds 5 feet.

Occasionally she shocks us, instantaneously producing choreography in front of us of the same caliber to what has already been performed. And that's it. The movement often goes unedited. Her equivalent of word vomit is ready for publication. She told me that's just how she works. If she prepared

choreography she would simply forget it before teaching it.

One of the first times Yin choreographed in rehearsal, she was trying to find the correct wording to explain the movement so that the cast and our bodies might understand. Attempting to grasp our language of dance, Yin raised the question of what traditional dance meant to us. What is the relative baseline of dance across culture? For us dancers in the room, predominantly born and raised in the United States, the answer was clear: ballet. She did not give her tradition, but instead, utilized balletic terminology so that we might better understand the qualities she wanted from us.

But her question implied she might have a different answer. I asked what classical dance meant to her. Yin answered: Chinese classical and folk dance, going on to describe what Chinese classical dance looks like: "[there are] a lot of ballet techniques in Chinese dance, but then it has a little bit more upper body... So, [the] footwork [is] very much like ballet," but has its own unique character. She mentioned the forms traditional Chinese dance draws from, including martial arts. The Shen Yun Dance Company supports this sentiment, remarking the movement transformed from militant technique into a performance medium seen at banquets and festivities dating back 4,000 years, eventually shaping what is classical Chinese dance today. In Mandarin, the characters for dance (舞) and martial arts (武) are even pronounced the same. The overlap can be seen in shared postures and stances.

Yin's dance "base" and "tradition" that one can build upon is inherently different from what many of us in the United States study.

But how does a dance form become the tradition? Much like ballet in Europe and the United States, Chinese Folk and Traditional dance is institutionalized, both taking their origins from entertainment in imperial courts and then being solidified as genres through the legacy of education. Yin learned Folk and Traditional Chinese dance at the Shanghai Dance Academy. Her school was a boarding school, so she was only able to go home once a semester, a hard ask for a child no more than 14. Yin described her youth in the school as insane.

I assumed that while spending all that time at school, she must have been performing constantly. I was wrong. Yin corrected me: in their first years, a dancer would never see the stage. "You need to get your stretching, to get your stamina... Then in your 3rd or 4th year you can perform."

Choreography was also not an option in Shanghai. The government had a stake in "everything: schools, companies," including dance. Art was not a medium to employ artistic liberties. "People are not welcome to share [their] ideas or what you have to say. The whole climate of China is very much like government control. It's really not about you." It became clear to Yin that China was not the place to pursue a career in art. So where was?

Yin exclaimed New York as the obvious choice. "The movies, the media, the dancing were New York City, so where

do you want to go then? Uhhhhh.... New York City." She described New York and China as two poles: if you wanted to choreograph, China was not an option, and New York City was the best option. NYC garnered more intensity and competition than she found even in other American metropolises, which she described with excitement. "When you go to a place that is slower, that's when you feel the difference."

Yin completed her MFA at NYU Tisch in 2008. Here she was introduced to the more malleable form of contemporary dance which she combined with her foundational skills of Chinese classical and folk dance to create FoCo ((Fo)lk-(Co)ntemporary) technique. With FoCo, Yin intended to create a contemporary technique that would "provide the foundation, the resistance, the strength, the balance, the physicality... needed to perform." Each rehearsal, we begin in a deep plie in second; we follow an instructor while they take us through a series of repetitive movements that tackle strength while maintaining agility needed for dance. The movement clearly inspires her choreography, which is consistently grounded in the floor and draws on 'stepping' that occurs in Folk Dance.

Yin recalled the first time she ever choreographed, "the solo I did at NYU. That solo still [is] performed by other companies, I am very proud of that." It was a piece she choreographed and performed herself while still getting her degree. It was the beginning of her choreographic career. I imagine something created by her body, for her body garnering so much success was the foundation

for the confidence in her artistry and production we see today. A single-bodied beginning to the more daunting larger works she currently produces.

Currently, Yin is working on a trilogy she started in 2023 with the piece *SOMEWHERE*. They finished the first and the second (*NOWHERE*), and Yin teased that she had begun working on the final third (untitled as of now). When I ask what her trilogy is about, Yin says, "it's existential, it's not really about anything. It's about that feeling, are we here?... for what purpose? But it is not in any shape or form a narrative story. We are implying a feeling; we are forming, destroying, reforming."

She links the trilogy together by their endings and beginnings. In *SOMEWHERE*, "the dancers exit the stage through a portal, so they are leaving but then also entering," referencing her set design with a vacuous unlit doorway enshrouded in what seems to be large bed-sheets which drape and cover the entire back of the stage. At the end of the piece, a star-like light shines from inside the portal, the dancers enter. She explains, "there is always something from the end that indicates a beginning. So if something begins, it inevitably ends." In *NOWHERE*, the portal takes a new shape; the stage is surrounded on all sides by audience members, entrapping the dancers, however, a large circular light hangs from the ceiling – reminiscent of a UFO preparing to steal a cow. Her long-form choreography project tackles cyclical-being through never defining a clear beginning or end, simple new eras. This is present in the choreography itself; new pairings of people, qualities of movement are seamlessly tied together. Even if she is creating in segments, you will not find the seams. Yin stresses this in rehearsal. She implores us to never stop moving, to never consider two steps separated; rather, to always find the thread. Her dancers partake in eras of the piece, never uncontextualized. The eras of her life might have influenced this thematic choice. First dancing in Shanghai, to New York, to choreographing, to having a world renowned company. Each era influences another, but does the era ever end?

Yin perhaps speaks of the era from a personal perspective. Her era in China,

to her era in New York, to her era now; her past and present are fused, as displayed in the evolution of her choreography and technique. How does the immigrant experience influence choreography? Yin acknowledges the clear stylistic influences in her choreography and FoCo, but maintains that it cannot be defined as Chinese, "It's not a Chinese dance or Chinese dance study historically. So FoCo technique or movement style is contemporary dance." FoCo and her choreography are the evolution of her foundation; it is the new era without a clear beginning or end. Yin intentionally clarified she is "not demonstrating what Chinese dance is or could be." Rather, "I am here doing a form of dance, but naturally, it has Chinese culture because I'm Chinese." She is melding her Chinese tradition to the modern traditions she found in New York City.

In this new era of teaching, Yin chose to restage her piece *Ripple* with students for the Princeton Dance Festival. Yin created *Ripple* in 2020 during the pandemic. To adapt to the pandemic's conditions, Yin worked with small groups of dancers to create small groups and segments, piecing them together to make a whole. When asked why she chose this piece for us, she responded, "The movement language is leaning towards balletic," returning to her previous statements about 'traditional' dance. Yin took into consideration our background and tried to find what would flow the best with us. She is constantly modifying the piece: "I am reshaping and adding things that were not in the original piece, so the piece will probably not look the same." The Princeton Dance community is now a part of a new era; we will perform this work which is rooted in how Yin understands herself and her movement, and adapted to how she understands us in the context of her work. You can see the new era of *Ripple* on November 22-23 at 8 PM and November 23-24 at 2 PM in the Berlind Theatre — see you there ;)

The Nassau Weekly garnered more intensity and competition than *Livia Shneider* found even in other American metropolises.



“She hadn’t stopped smiling since she got here. He wanted her to stop. He’d known her for months and hadn’t seen her cry yet. The closest could’ve been when her grandfather passed and she left for a weekend.”

by SARAH PARK

He heard her coming down the hall before she knocked. He knew it was her from the quick steps and soft humming. When he opened the door, she took off her glasses and left them on his desk. Her glasses and her nails were red. So were her shoes and wallet and tattoo. He knew what her favorite color was without her telling him. He knew several things he wished he didn’t.

She used to pass by his window on her way home from class. He used to imagine walking beside her, the top of her head in his periphery. He used to think they’d have a lot to talk about, but it didn’t bother him when they didn’t. He’d stopped making his bed after the fourth time she came over. She didn’t mention it then, and she didn’t say anything now. She pulled the covers back to show she liked it. They took their clothes off. He put on a shirt after, and she held onto his sleeve. He leaned his head into her shoulder, and she smelled like outside air and bubblegum. He was old enough to know she wasn’t what he

wanted.

But if she had asked him something then, he would’ve answered any way she liked. He thought he could fall asleep in her arms, but then she whispered she was leaving. Don’t go, he said, but she said she had to. Then why’re you holding onto me?

She laughed and patted his chest. Then she pulled away from him all at once, and the scent of her left him. She started to put on her clothes. He stared at her through the hair falling over her face. She was smiling. She hadn’t stopped smiling since she got here. He wanted her to stop. He’d known her for months and hadn’t seen her cry yet. The closest could’ve been when her grandfather passed and she left for a weekend. Then she was back on a Monday and smiling when she saw him in a stairwell. He wondered what she looked like when her cheeks were splotchy and her eyes got red. Maybe when she cried, she’d want him to hold her. Maybe then, when she didn’t want to let go, he would make her.

She took her hair out of her sweater and put her glasses back on. He knew she was a good person without ever having taken her on a date. Because he knew it, he almost asked her to stop smiling like that. He wanted to tell her

that it made her look easy, like she’d bend whichever way the world wanted her to. When she turned to open the door, he saw the back of her hair was tangled. He knew he could make her happy, but he wasn’t sure if he wanted to. He watched her leaving. The air fraught with silence made her pause. She looked back at him, and her eyes searched his face. He wanted to pull her to him and tell her that whatever was wrong would be right. He wanted her to come to him without him having to ask. He wanted all of this and none of it.

He thought of when the weather was warm and he would see her lying on the green. She read there often. Sometimes she slept. She was all he could see in the throngs of people throwing things and moving. He remembered so badly wanting to be alone with her, but now he couldn’t recall why. He felt like he was nearing the end of a book he couldn’t put down. The kind that took the life out of the world around him when he read it, so he couldn’t see anything but the words in front of him. He took a long look at her. When he was getting to the end of those books, he’d somehow find himself in a rush. It was like he knew the ending would be good, so he

wanted it all the more.

She bit the inside of her cheek. He could tell she was holding in a thought, but he didn’t want her to say it. One of those books was on the shelf behind her. At the end of it, he’d flicked through the last pages so quickly that the words blurred together. She opened her mouth and shut it again. He realized he’d forgotten how it ended.

She asked him if he was okay. Yeah, of course. After she’d gone, he’d fall asleep and wake up hungry. You’ll text me? she asked. He’d eat breakfast and think of her on the way to class. I’ll text you, he said, but he wouldn’t. She’d text him after dinner, and he wouldn’t respond. He wouldn’t pick up her calls until she stopped the next week. Sometimes he’d regret it. But for the most part he’d forget her.

She nodded and closed the door behind her. She was still smiling when she left.

Sarah Park felt like she was nearing the end of a newspaper she couldn’t put down. The Nassau Weekly took the life out of the world around her so when she read it, she couldn’t see anything but the words in front of her.

by CHAS BROWN



MOPS