

The Nass is ready to strip off all of this irony. We're getting down to business.

The Nassau Weekly



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POST-POST MODERNISM, A.K.A. NEW SINCERITY

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Dear Reader,

It's the last issue of the semester, and we're mixing metaphors like water and oil: the *Nass*'s regular season is over but the playoffs have just begun; it's high-noon and we're taking a little siesta, but we'll be back soon; the curtain is falling on this volume's first act, a cliff-hanger that leaves your heart ablaze. But don't get it twisted! – there's motion behind the scenes. An intermission is no end.

This week, the *Nass* does its best to think outside ourselves. Our writers are wry, incisive, and seeing the world through new eyes. They're taking their literary knives, and jabbing them right at that place where your heart should be.

The summer sun announces a pause in the printing of Volume 47's glossy pages. But know that we won't be gone for long. The *Nass*'s mission depends on our continued engagement with you, readers and contributors. We'd like to use this space to thank the many writers, editors, artists, designers, and weirdos who work to make this magazine what it is. It has been our pleasure to publish these first eight issues. We look forward to many more.

With love,

**Frankie Solinsky Duryea and Alex Norbrook,
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This Week:

By Amy Başkurt

Hey all!! Who's ready for summer? I know I am. Congrats on (nearly) making it through another Princeton semester. I've forged a list of some groovy events to attend in order to celebrate. Take some time away from reading, writing, and...doing math (?). Spend some time outside, enjoy some music, art, and engaging lectures.

Student Independent Work
Practice of Art major under the Department of Art and Archaeology, **Dana Corbo** presents her **solo exhibition: ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ**. Showcasing 50 paintings, Corbo's work explores the relationship between the body and language, social codes, humor, and culture. Show up to **Lucas Gallery, 185 Nassau St. until May 2nd**.

Next up, do not miss violinist **Melody Choi's MPP certificate recital**. The virtuoso's show is **April 27th, 7pm - 8pm, in Fine Hall's Taplin Auditorium**.

And, finally, **Lea Casano-Boris's Garage Sale** is happening! Senior VIS minor Casano-Boris aims to bring attention to "discarded symbols and retro icons" in order to reflect on value, simplicity, and nostalgia. Located in **Hagan Gallery, on 185 Nassau St., the exhibition closes May 2nd**. Be there!

Campus Events

This one looks so so exciting! In collaboration with **Al-Bustan Seeds of Culture, the Near Eastern Studies Department**

is hosting a festival. Happening on **Frist South Lawn**, come experience Middle Eastern music, food, dancing, henna, arts & crafts, and more. **April 30th, 4-7:30pm!**

The **Princeton University Wind Ensemble** presents their **Spring Concert, April 29th at 7:30pm**. Their show will be featuring band classics along with three premiering pieces. Tickets are sold at the door, at **the Princeton High School Performing Arts Center**.

And, finally, last but not least, you must join a **celebration of Afro-Colombian music with Neblinas del Pacífico**, featuring Grammy Award Winner Eryen Korath Ortiz Garcés. In **Carl A Field Center, Room 104**,

April 25th, 7:30-9:30pm, this is an event not to be missed.

Thanks for reading this week, everyone. Keep working hard—the semester is almost over!

Email Amy Başkurt at ab7955@princeton.edu with your event!

For advertisements, contact Ellie Diamond at ed7627@princeton.edu

Verbatims:

Overheard outside McCosh Hall

A fledgling scholar: "Bro, I just learned the Ming dynasty was real thing."

Overheard on C Floor

An thesiser in his cubicle: "I'm going to take off my shoes."

Overheard at RoMa

A mean nerd: "You should post that on r/mildlyinteresting."

Overheard in East Pyne 010

Tired SLA Professor: "Go read the Church Fathers, please, I beg you."

Overheard at Terrace

Born in the wrong generation: "When dick didn't mean dick and gay didn't mean gay the world was a better place."

Overheard on Nassau St.

12 year-old to his 10 year-old brother: "You gotta live life a little."

Overheard at Murray Dodge

Tired History major: "I made up trans in Wuhan, that's where they invented it."

Overheard at Forbes Dinner (Meatball Day)

Some guy: "I took her to a ramen place because she's Wasian."

Overheard in at kitchen

Cooking: "Ooh, I like the hum of the pepper! Do you think some coconut milk might help contextualize it?"

Cooked: "This is really beyond me, I must say."

Overheard at CJL

Disappointed advice-seeker, flipping through the Torah: "Oh. It's not about love, it's just about Lebanon."

Overheard walking up the Frist Hill

Walker: "I think that I'm like, lowkey a Sisyphus kinnie."

Overheard in 1967 Hall

Self-proclaimed "girl's girl": "Ugly people have to exist for there to be pretty people"

Submit to Verbatims

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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us: Instagram: @nassauweekly Twitter: @nassau_weekly

Join us: We meet on Mondays and Thursdays at 5 p.m. in Bloomberg 044!

Forgive me Father, for I have...

1. worn my heart on my sleeve
2. turned around so fast my butt made a clapping noise
3. fallen off
4. gooned
5. Been a freak 🤪
6. Matched your freak
7. Ordered a bride on doordash
8. Been a mail order bride
9. Been a weirdo. I don't fit in, and I don't... wanna fit in
10. listened to radiohead. by myself. fuck my stupid incel life
11. Spent \$28 on a small snack and a little trinket too
12. ran over a rat in my big car once
13. Ran over a dog in my little car once
14. toked it brother! 👍👍
15. Held space
16. Taken up space
17. sinned? 🤔🤔Idk bruh how do you play this game? 🧠🤔
18. done sex tourism
19. soaked
20. Misgendered a dog
21. Been adopted by Harry Styles
22. Been bought by Harry Styles
23. Misgendered Harry Styles
24. Sold my child to Harry Styles in exchange for alcohol and cigarettes.
25. filled the hole in my head with prescription medication

“pls take me off this list im
not on the nass”

held space
AND
taken up space

26. Danced. Alone. In my room, just me and the music. And it was beautiful.
27. written concubine #2 a letter
28. been banksy this whole time!!!!!!
29. enjoyed the gentrified burger place
30. been thinking about leaving the United States
31. Canadian citizenship, now
32. cried about the glorious nation of taiwan
33. cum all over my hands face and tits
34. defected in the name of Mother Russia
35. never tipped a waitress. not even once.
36. killed a pawnbroker and her pregnant sister to steal a few trinkets
37. Never stopped stanning Azealia Banks
38. killed two birds with one stone
39. gotten stoned with two fly birds
40. An absolute monster down there
41. the urge to fuck you like an animal
42. a lonely heart and a nice rack
43. Found a new god: my girlfriend.
44. Watched Glee for the plot
45. become death, destroyer of worlds
46. cum death, destroyer of oppie
47. smiled at someone on the subway
48. Spilled matcha on my selvedge denim
49. coveted my neighbor's super sexy wife
50. and his male and female slaves, his ox and his donkey, and everything that belongs to my neighbor.

confessions from the soul

NASS

NASS

NASS

NASS

51. a buttplug in in lecture
52. a balloon full of heroin stuffed up my ass
53. a baby in my belly
54. a fatty
55. never in my life yelled at a girl like this. When my mother yells like this it's because she loves me. I was rooting for you, we were all rooting for you! How dare you! Learn something from this!
56. Sodomized
57. got with an alum (and liked it)
58. decided to accept an offer as an investment banking intern at Goldman Stanley! Thank you to my mentors and family for supporting me in this opportunity
59. succumbed to that wind from Challengers that makes you cheat
60. scheduled sex on my google calendar
61. Considered going along with his "furry thing" just to hit
62. a crippling addiction to decongestant nasal sprays. if i dont spray every fifteen minutes i might suffocate
63. no faults, and am therefore unrelatable. It's lonely at the top.
64. assumed the identity of a traveling nurse to find a sublet for the summer
65. pls take me off this list im not on the nass
66. no more patience. PSA for all: you can take yourself off any listserv very easily.
67. no more patients. My practice is going under
68. No more payshens: lost my dicktchonaire
69. Kissed the plump mellow yellow smellow melons of her rump, on each plump melonous hemisphere, in their mellow yellow furrow, with obscure prolonged provocative melonsmellonous osculation
70. Fartid
71. shidded my pants
72. Been too cute >.<
73. had a little of the baptism water to drink
74. benjamin button syndrome
75. reverse benjamin button syndrome

76. a crush on benjamin button
77. a strange relationship to benjamin button
78. a button on my Benjamin
79. a hole in the middle of my tummy what is it
80. a benjamin butt
81. violated the honor code
82. Ate Annie's Mac and cheese over the sink with my bare hands straight out of the pot because I didn't want to dirty any dishes and I didn't have any forks because they were all in the dishwasher and I got cheese all over my hands and my face and my shirt and that shirt is ruined forever now I'll never get the cheese out of that shirt I loved that shirt just like I loved her and I'll never have her again
83. an oedipus complex
84. a reverse oedipus complex
85. started a rap career under the name oedipuss
86. brought my only son to the top of this mountain what do i do now
87. here in my hand a list of 205 members of the Communist Party who nevertheless are still working and shaping policy in the State Department
88. Slept with the son and the Holy Ghost, so..
89. class at 11 and then something at 12:30 but could def do coffee after we need to catch up!!
90. Been a chop h**
91. Been a chop HOE
92. bought Vogue instead of dinner. I found it fed me more
93. just hit the pentagon
94. ust hit the PEN(TA) and im GONe fr 🤔
95. Chanced the rapids
96. embroiled myself in controversy by tweeting "hitler.penis: the results may surprise you."
97. creativity, uniqueness, nerve, and talent
98. Herpes
99. Taken off my shoes in my cubicle in Firestone to feel a little freer in a small act against God
100. tried and failed to get benzos from CPS

LIST

LIST

LIST

LIST



A Gentle Thing



“The couple on the sidewalk embrace, face to face, covered in dusk. They stand so close together that the falling sun leaves the shadow of just one person on the concrete.”

By SOPHIA MACKLIN

My sister tells me to write about anything other than my own condition. My habit of writing myself into every story has been keeping me from writing at all. So, here’s anything else.

Venice frowns as she dances instead of smiling. She dances like the pain in her is coming out through her fingertips. Adrienne Lenker already has a terribly sad voice, but this arrangement of dancers moves like they are physically weighed down by it. The audience was excited throughout the first few pieces, cheering at their friends on stage. For the duration of this dance, only “Velvet Ring” and the sound of shoes on the floor exist.

Sarah has been a therapist for 20 years but still cries when she’s happy for a client. Her dad is one, too, and has the office next to hers. She thinks it’s nice to see the same last name on the two different name plates. In sessions, she advises her clients to “be like water.” She sees

them cramped up, jaws tight, on the verge of tears. She sees young girls, old men, mothers, and teenage boys. They’re all different, but always afraid. She tells them to flow around obstacles like a stream flows around a log. She’s so proud when one of them tells her that, today, the burden feels lighter.

Daphne teaches yoga. She walks up and down the aisle of people stretched out on mats. After demonstrating the next pose, she tells her students that she offers “hands-on adjustments.” While they are in downward facing dog, she lets them know that touch is completely, 100 percent optional. If you want to opt out, she says, just lift your right leg. No one does. They trust her. She comes around, rubs her hands together to warm them, and presses shoulders into the floor, forcing relaxation. She lifts the head and extends the neck, releasing tension. She presses those same, warm hands together at the end of the session, thanking these students she has for 90 minutes for the gift of being with her.

The flight attendant never gets to look out of the window. She’s in charge of the drink cart and the trash bag and the seatbelts. But when she flies home to see her parents for Christmas, she gets the window seat. She keeps the window open the whole flight, not just

for taxi and takeoff. Always looking out at the snow-covered lakes like puddles of spilled milk, the ground cut up like a paper snowflake. She won’t take for granted the gift of the sky.

The family in the house on Mercer Street leave their Christmas lights up until April. The other houses on the blocks leave their blinds open, too, but those walls are covered in expensive art and chandeliers drip from their high ceilings. This house is closest to the Seminary. It’s narrow where others are wide, short where others tower. Perhaps it has something they don’t have. A reason to forgo propriety for pleasure.

The couple on the sidewalk embrace, face to face, covered in dusk. They stand so close together that the falling sun leaves the shadow of just one person on the concrete.

Lila gets a text from her sister, miles away at school and feeling lost. She doesn’t know what to say except for, I love you and I miss you. What she wants to say is: I’m holding your hand in the dark. You can’t see me, but I’m there.

When Sophia Macklin writes about anything, she ends up finding everything for the Nassau Weekly.



Drumthwacket: The People's House

The New Jersey governor's mansion is not located in the capital city of Trenton, but in Princeton. What does this mean for the people of New Jersey?

By LUCY MCWEENY

THE OFFICE

Stepping into the New Jersey Governor's office, I expected to see stacks of papers piled high on a well-used desk, strewn with pens and sticky notes. In other words: an office in action, a site of haptic government bureaucracy. The function of Governor Phil Murphy's home office, however, is instead reflected by an empty, dust-covered desk and a chair that reminds me of a rococo couch preserved at the MET you are not allowed to sit on; the room is rarely used by Murphy himself but remains on display to visitors of the residence.

The office of the most powerful man in New Jersey can be found in Princeton, at "Drumthwacket," the executive residence of the Governor. Built in 1835 but not named the official governor's residence until 1981, Drumthwacket has long been one of the prominent "stately homes" of Princeton, as one historian describes it. Nicknamed "The People's House," Murphy uses the mansion for official functions and meetings, though he lives in his private home 40 miles away in Middletown. Still, Drumthwacket serves as the locus of elaborate celebrations, some of which are open to all New Jersey residents, but often by reservation

only — a sought-after ticket by invested members of the community and overachieving student journalists.

What is even stranger than Drumthwacket's eerie in-habitude is its location. Of the 45 states with an official governor's residence, 41 of those house the residence in the state's capital city. New Jersey, with its governor's mansion in the quieter and wealthier suburb of Princeton rather than the city of Trenton, is one of the few states that breaks this trend.

"Only in quaint English novels does the ruling class live in country mansions with names like Drumthwacket," David Montgomery wrote in a 1981 *Daily Princetonian* article, shortly before the establishment of Drumthwacket as the New Jersey Governor's official residence. Drumthwacket was very much inhabited by such a "ruling class" until its purchase by the state in 1966. This air of grandeur imposed by the home has yet to change, with its ionic columns and 34 front-facing windows, and the estate remains removed from Trenton and a ways down the road from Princeton's main town. If Drumthwacket aims to be a symbol of the New Jersey government and its people, what then are the implications of this geographic dislocation?

THE FOYER

The foyer is decorated in a classic political fashion; an American flag to my right and the New Jersey flag to my left, depicting a shield with three plows supported by the figures of Liberty and the Roman goddess of agriculture. Next to the state flag hangs a portrait of Charles Smith Olden, governor from 1860 – 1863 and builder of this home in Princeton in 1835. Named Drumthwacket, this term comes from the Gaelic words "drum" and "thwacket," together meaning "wooded hills."

How, then, did Drumthwacket become not just the house of a governor, but the official governor's residence? Drumthwacket replaced Morven, located at Princeton's 55 Stockton Street, which had served as the state's first governor's mansion since 1945.

Describing this relocation in a 1981 *Daily Princetonian* article, David Montgomery '83 wrote, "Princeton need not feel slighted, however — Drumthwacket is just a mile south of Morven on Route 206, still comfortably within Princeton's boundaries." It wasn't until 1990, though, after decades of raising money and renovations, that Governor James Florio and his family occupied Drumthwacket as the official governor's residence.

THE DINING ROOM

Drumthwacket's dining room brings two rooms into one: two doors on each side, two fireplaces, and two chandeliers are placed around a long wooden table in the center of the room, large enough to seat 22 people, from two different parties. From the days of waistcoats and top hats to blazers and pantsuits, the open concept evokes socialization; a room of tea and crackers interspersed with business and politics.

When Olden built Drumthwacket, the front portion of the room was the formal parlor, and the back was his library. But Moses Taylor Pyne, class of 1877 and the next owner, expanded the dining room and added several spaces in the Elizabethan Tutor style, including a gothic library and tennis court. Pyne used his expanded home to entertain large groups of guests, emblematic of the expansion of wealth and entertainment that continues to define the governor's residence. The Murphys have used this dining room for seven years of entertainment, meetings, and policy-making. "Because it is such a beautiful home, and because it's steeped in history, I think it leads to deeper conversations and shows the importance of the moment," Stephanie Lagos, Chief of Staff to First Lady of New Jersey Tammy



Murphy, said.

Robyn Brenner, the executive director of the Drumthwacket Foundation—a non-profit organization that manages the house and its grounds—said that governors will occasionally still stay for a weekend because of its proximity to Trenton, a 20 minute drive away. But it is this transitoriness that calls into question whether the residence is truly a place for these meaningful conversations, or simply an overnight stop and place of entertainment for the governor.

THE GARDEN

Nestled between oak trees at the end of a sweeping green lawn, the picturesque Drumthwacket sits along Stockton Street, about 1.5 miles west of Nassau Hall, a thirty-minute walk from campus. From within and outside of the mansion, the Italian-style gardens evoke a striking image of symmetry and order, a feeling of both tranquility and grandeur made possible by the sprawling grounds on which Drumthwacket sits. Rich with perfectly shaped bushes and intricate fountains, this almost overwhelming stateliness is managed by “master gardeners,” a group of six to ten volunteers who work year-round to maintain the gardens.

Anastasia Marty has been a master gardener since 2005, after graduating from the Rutgers Master Gardener Program. Marty cited her twenty years working in the gardens as “an honor.” That work is centered around the upkeep of the gardens in their lush and symmetrical style, maintaining them for the parties and celebrations often held in the warmer months.

The gardens of Drumthwacket,

in all their symmetry and opulence, are reminiscent of the Gardens of Versailles and their representation of monarchical power over even nature itself. But Marty recalled that, in the eyes of first lady Tammy Murphy, these gardens are meant to be “people’s gardens and a people’s place.” According to Marty, the Murphys have been intensely dedicated to renovating Drumthwacket and its gardens, attempting to increase sustainability while retaining its historical grandeur. These gardens are indeed advertised as a means to make this otherwise inaccessible residence accessible, an attraction for the public to visit. At the same time, those celebrations are often by reservation or appointment, a small but crucial detail in determining just how easily accessible they really are.

Aside from the parties and conferences, Drumthwacket and its gardens play host to 4,000 school children annually. These trips are free for the schools and, according to Brenner, Drumthwacket is open to the general public one day a week. Lagos emphasized Drumthwacket as a place to host the public. “We can open the home to a lot more people because we’re not in a city, so it allows for more space to host more people,” she said.

Being in a suburb might allow Drumthwacket to host more people, but it also removes the governor’s mansion and these celebrations from the actual capital city of the state, where most of the state government occurs. This distance between the governor and the government is further compounded by the disparities between Princeton and Trenton. What are the implications of hosting meetings or events in one of the more affluent towns

in New Jersey, as opposed to one of the poorest cities in America?

THE GATES

Before even stepping foot on Drumthwacket’s property, I had walked a mile and a half from Princeton’s Campus along the busy Route 206 and approached the gates guarding the estate’s entrance. A police car is parked out front, an officer controlling the estate’s gates. I’ve signed up for a tour, so he lets me in after checking my ID and welcomes me to Drumthwacket.

The experience is perfectly pleasant, but the clear divide between estate and road, governor and governed, questions Drumthwacket’s “openness.” Though a place for the public and for the community, it serves in a limited capacity. The separation of the governor from the public and the opulence of the estate is facilitated by Princeton’s position as a wealthy suburb: Princeton’s median household income of \$165,000 is more than four times that of Trenton. “There’s a lot of history there, in the house,” Marty said, reflecting on its placement. “Was there ever anything in Trenton? No, there wasn’t.”

But proximity to Trenton still leaves Drumthwacket removed from the state’s center of power, unlike most governors’ residences. And, even within Princeton, Drumthwacket is set apart from the hustle and bustle of the main town and campus.

Mark Beissinger, a professor in Princeton’s Politics department, wrote *The Revolutionary City: Urbanization and the Global Transformation of Rebellion*. In his book, Beissinger outlines a theory

about spatial location in regards to revolutionary processes, arguing that revolutions are more successful when they occur in proximity to governmental power centers.

Though revolution might not be imminent in New Jersey, this theory of spatial relations in politics extends to protests more generally. Beissinger said, “If you want to leverage a protest and leverage your influence over the executive power, you need to go where the executive power is located.”

Beissinger referenced the history of protest outside the White House. Typically, at least in democratic governments, he noted, centers of executive power are in close proximity to spaces where residents can gather.

“Drumthwacket is an interesting case, because not only do people not know where it is, but it is also out of town and kind of on a busy road. It would be very difficult for protesters to gather there.”

He added, “Having it so far removed does seem to accentuate, at least symbolically, a lack of attention. That doesn’t mean that the governor doesn’t pay attention to those things, but I could imagine many people interpreting it that way.” At the very least, “the distancing of his home from Trenton suggests a kind of steep divide between the private and the public.”

Trenton itself has been the site of numerous protests in recent years, with groups congregating on the streets of the city and in front of City Hall and the State House. But the rare instance of protest occurring at Drumthwacket itself took the form of only two people, suggestive of the difficulty of holding large-scale protests in such an inaccessible area. Last February,

Murphy Press Secretary Natalie Hamilton said that two women protesting Israel’s military offensive in Gaza confronted the Murphys at Drumthwacket during a Lunar New Year celebration event. The women, close enough to speak to Governor Murphy, called for the governor to disband the New Jersey-Israel Commission, which fosters economic and cultural ties between the state and the country.

Thanks to renovations and reconstructions under the Murphy administration, Drumthwacket has remained a picturesque estate carrying the history of Princeton into the present state. And while the “People’s” house should be in the people’s capital, perhaps a Governor’s residence isn’t meant to be the people’s house. Under the Murphy administration, the New Jersey statehouse in Trenton was also renovated. The gold glimmering dome can be seen throughout the capital. Let the Governor have his mansion and garden in Princeton. And the citizens of the state, in classic Jersey style, can stick with the gold glimmer of Trenton.

This article was edited and fact-checked as part of the Nassau Weekly’s journalism section, Second Look. Please submit corrections to thenassauweekly@gmail.com.

ON THE STEELERS

and Making This Place Beautiful

The last time the Steelers won a playoff game was the first Trump Administration. Nothing's changed. Everything has.

By NAOMI SEGEL

1/16/25

The Pittsburgh Steelers lost in a miserable fashion in the first round of the playoffs again. I shouldn't be surprised. We are caught in purgatory, too weak a unit to compete with the Ravens or the Chiefs, too strong to tank for a high enough pick to draft a franchise quarterback. It has been a perpetual cycle for the last 8 years. A Steelers season goes something like this:

1. Draft an offensive lineman that was taken higher than he should have been
2. Steelers Nation finds a way to talk themselves into the starting quarterback (who is either never going to be great or has already hit his peak about ten years ago)
3. We win a couple of games to start the season, including beating an injured Ravens
4. The city of Pittsburgh is filled with hope
5. @steelersbyjoey posts "WE'RE SO BACK" (we indeed are not so back)
6. Signs look good to winning the division (we do not win the division)
7. We end the regular season with a 9-8 record (way to keep the streak, Tomlin)
8. We lose to the [insert an AFC contender with a young, great, franchise quarterback here]
9. Fans don't understand how they keep having faith in this team

The faith in Tomlin, the belief in homegrown talent, the holding on to history—the city of Pittsburgh knows hope and yet, no cigar. The last time the Steelers won a playoff game was the first Trump Administration. Nothing's changed. Everything has.

1/22/25, in my notes app

Almost threw up listening to his voicemail today

3/9/25

I'm sitting at work and I'm trying to hold back the tears that are welling up completely out of my control. The reason is so stupid. The last straw always is. The tears come when you least expect them. It may have a correlation to when you're microdosing your Lexapro because you don't have enough to last you through spring break so the diluted feelings have become raw and suppressing them proves impossible - I really have to work on my endurance.

"JUST WRITE" written on a post-it note above my desk (which, as most things are, is an idea copied from my sister). How do any of us write about this world, accept this, resist this, find joy in this?

Maggie Smith asks, "This place could be beautiful, right? You could make this place beautiful."

How do we write about this world, Maggie? Right now, right here, in this place? How do we go on, resist, bring children into this world? How can we make this place beautiful, wondrous, good?

Executive Order 3/1/25 calls for "new or updated agency guidance to facilitate increased timber production, sound forest management, reduced delivery times, and decreased timber supply uncertainty."

Maggie, he wants to destroy the beautiful. He wants to destroy the trees, dominate the only mother we share. How can we reckon? Create? Maintain?

You told me we would never become strangers. I don't care that the promise was unrealistic. You didn't text me on my birthday, you broke the promise. Just tell me, how are you?

Maggie, they are destroying the beauty that makes this life wonderful and I am thinking about a birthday text. They are dismantling the goodness of the work of public servants and supporting dictators and destroying what makes me look in awe at this planet, and I am thinking about a birthday text.

3/13/25

The NFL free agency period opened on Monday. The Steelers are still in football purgatory. The Raiders got Geno Smith, the Jets took Justin Fields from our grasp. Don't worry though, we got Mason Rudolph back in the Steel City. Booyahhhhh. That'll get us a playoff win, fosh. At least I'm not a Seahawks fan right now! Anyways, there are bigger fish to fry, there are always bigger fish to fry.

4/3/25

He's disappearing college students. His tariffs are about to trigger the second great depression. He is sending fathers to rot in a cell in El Salvador. He's erasing the archive. He's defunding vital education and using antisemitism as a dog whistle. He's ignoring the courts. He's disregarding legal visas. He's gutting federal government public servants. They are planning military attacks on their personal phones. Lawyers, judges, universities are afraid of him. Planes are crashing. He's destroying the National Parks. He's disappearing college students. How do we write about this? How do we maintain hope? How do we make this place beautiful?

I've been trying to go to as many speaker talks as possible recently—trying to make sense of this world, trying to see if the experts can make sense of it. Jodi Kantor told us that because fewer people are absorbing journalism, the worry is that the footprint for potential impact is shrinking. Patrick Radden Keefe told us that our job is to witness the history happening before us; that we must document the downstream impacts and the human stories from these policies. He told us that even if there is no direct impact of writing the story, writing it means it will be cemented in the archive. Jennifer Morgan discussed the emergence of racial capitalism, that we cannot continue to separate the historicities of capitalism and slavery.

Professor Eddie Glaude asked how we raise our babies in this. How do we raise our babies in this? Should we raise babies in this?

I'm trying to make sense of all of this, trying to ferociously write every drop of wisdom down, trying to use it to make sense of this world. After work, I will open spotify and decide whether I listen to Pod Save America or The Athletic Football Show. To listen and engage or to listen and escape. The perpetual fine line.

4/3/25 (but after work)

I flipped on The Athletic Football Show. The Steelers are likely to sign anti-vax, pro-RFK Aaron Rodgers. Ain't that something—the fine line doesn't even exist. That's okay though; that's never what it was about.



Here We Go, always (my first game, circa 2013)

IT'S MORE THAN THAT DAMN PHONE

If the discontent people online have is due to some sense of displacement, then maybe this is what the Modernists were talking about.

By ANNIE WANG

There's an epidemic online, but it isn't the digital age itself.

Online, people yearn constantly for a different world than the one they live in, seen in a genre of content rooted in nature. *Content* includes short videos ranging from 15 seconds to a minute and slide-shows of photos (but no more than 10 photos in one post). Nature being the natural world — all things from the dirt in the ground we stomp on to the nuances of the human experience. For instance, a clip on TikTok shows blue waves rising out of the ocean, crashing into jagged cliffs at a bay, and leaving behind mist lingering in the air. The sunset reaches the horizon and creates a soft yet tawny filter over the video. A trending song's chorus plays over it, whether the rest of the song is enjoyable or not. It is nostalgic and reminds people of summer. It is flooded with comments like *I belong here*—some comments even capture a transcendental experience, saying *my soul belongs here*. Other short video platforms are no different (and I'm sure YouTube shorts are of similar caliber, but I cannot speak

from personal experience for this one). Content showcasing the people in nature, picnicking in a park, hiking on a trail, or swimming in a lake is captioned: *this and never watching another reel*.

The irony of dissing the digital age on platforms produced from it goes a step further when the platform itself is what allows the diss to be spread. Being *born in the wrong generation* is a conviction that people hold to themselves, a belief stemming from the feeling that the way we communicate and live today doesn't align with who they truly are. Social media content captures the idea of being born in the wrong generation by comparing the present day to what should have been. It's the modern day versus the past. Blue light, binge watching, and doom scrolling. The other side is Woodstock and jukeboxes. Fleetwood Mac and denim. Neon colors and MTV. Anything except vaping and the Kardashians. When people say, or think, that they are from the wrong time *or generation*, they ultimately argue that they have been displaced.

If the discontent people online have is due to some sense of displacement, then maybe this is what the Modernists were talking about. My English professor describes the Modernist framework as a hero's journey. The hero is exiled, then forced to wander, and finally, in the end, returns. *Exile, wander, return*. The idea is that the forced exile, the displacement, or

maybe even dislocation, for lack of a better word, allows the hero to undergo the development needed to establish the final return. Leopold Bloom, Rupert Brikin, and Adolf Verloc, our heroes who leave home only to be brought back with some new understanding of what they thought they knew. It seems that people on the digital frontier want to live the way the Modernists wrote; they want out and press forth with their journey, a journey that allows them to connect with the physical world around them. However, rather than wandering Dublin streets, the Tyrolean Alps, or London corners, we are left to wander the digital landscape, exiled from the physical world, and longing for more.

Those who came after the Modernists but before Gen Z will confidently point and say with their chest: *it's that damn phone*. The desire compelling a whole generation to be unhappy is caused by the constant flick of a scroll and face to screen. The small devices that fit into our palms bring anxiety and depression. Meanwhile, life spans are getting shorter with attention spans. Algorithms turn to learn users better than users know themselves. The users are missing out on sunlight and authentic human interactions. They will say it is an epidemic.

For the past few weeks, my history professor has talked a lot about the technology's evolution and its effect on the United States'

political climate. In the 80s, the developing web and online standards' deregulation led to people saying more of what they wanted, especially if there was only one message they wanted to spread. Rising talk shows and online chat rooms created conversations about contentious topics that used to be left untouched by daytime TV. Race, gender, abuse, and addiction. People were granted greater opportunities to clash on differing viewpoints regarding issues affecting everyone. It is a trend that has intensified since the 80s, and we all know it because we are all a part of it. The divide between Americans perpetuated by the digital age is partially responsible for the disdain harbored against it.

It is not only the free discourse ensuing online, either. Now online, we are boggled with news headlines about crashing planes, the melting planet, and tariffs. We see movie stars acting like politicians, and politicians treated like movie stars. Online, it's so painfully easy to see the worst. The world is constantly changing in ways faster than anyone can adjust. People are being hit with the stark realization that enough hatred for one thing is enough to bring many together. And it is not only politics either. There is a battle of aesthetics in culture defined by mobilization against one thing in support of another. Minimalism or maximalism. Blockbusters or independent films. Sabrina Carpenter or Olivia

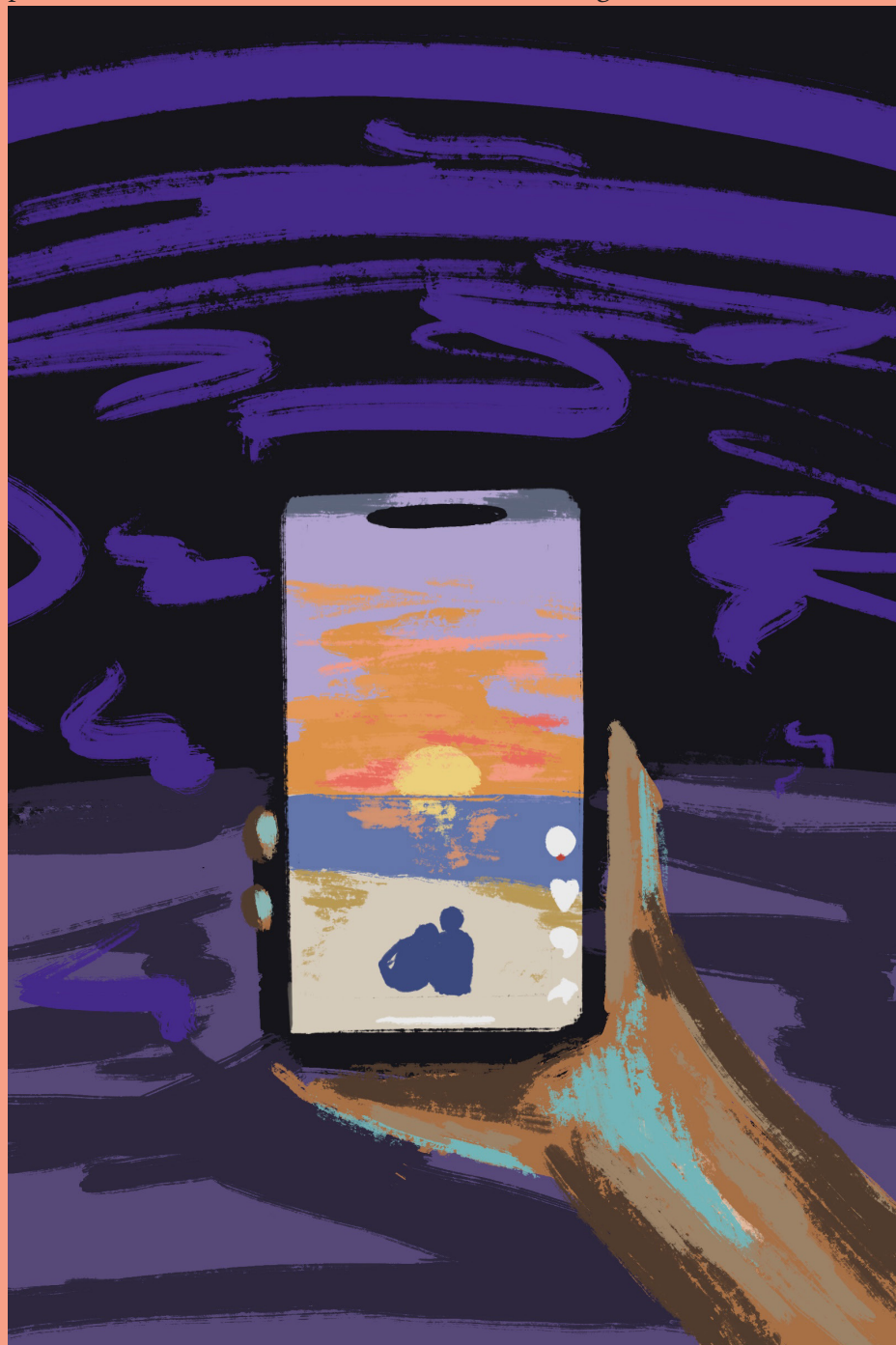
Rodrigo. At the end of the day, it is clearly more than that damn phone.

I think the anxiety about the world people feel can be attributed to screen time, to an extent, but it's not all doomsday. I love seeing edits of characters from the TV shows I watch (Parker Posey's fabulous, Southern, UNC-Chapel Hill alumna housewife character in *The White Lotus*, who has lines like *I don't even have my lorazepam. I'm going to have to drink myself to sleep*). I have fun stalking the Instagram of people I have just met, and am excited for new posts from the ones that I have known. Lorde recently teased new music on social media, and it is about being seventeen, which I haven't been for a while, but still know how it feels to be.

A few weeks ago, I was sick for what felt like a lifetime, but it was just the weekend. I could not stomach anything for two days, and the next time I did, it was applesauce and saltines. I texted my parents and friends, falling asleep between messages, waking up later and responding, and repeating the pattern until the weekend ended, when I was able to leave my room again. The digital world fosters an interconnectedness between humans physically separated, and it isn't something that we have taken full advantage of yet. The last time we got close was five years ago, when long-distance relationships, professional and personal, and facemasks were the norm. People wished to stand closer than six feet apart and regretted not taking advantage of the world to which they once had full access. When the walls of the P-word came crashing down, people flooded back together, but that didn't resolve feelings of displacement. Almost as quickly as people came out of their homes, they retreated to screens, like the same habits that came before, and once again found themselves

disconnected from each other. If I think about it too much, comparing life before, during, and after the pandemic blurs the difference be-

discomfort is unavoidable, pervading every corner where one might seek refuge. The unease we feel from being attached to our screens



tween loneliness and being alone.

Wishing for a better world than what we have is beyond valid; if anything, it's probably one of the few things everyone has in common. The age we live in outside of the digital one is uncomfortable, and the

is a daunting reflection of reality. Wandering grows to become aimless until the hero is entirely lost. The end of the long journey down a narrow way is obscure. Our phones feel heavier, we can not stop refreshing our emails, or avoid seeing

breaking news—news that is not only breaking in the media but also breaking us inside. Perhaps this is what the Modernists had planned for the heroes they wrote to experience, and what it feels like to be dislocated.

I do not think abandoning screen time is the solution because it does not make the world or my own life feel any less fractured. Yet to take the time to slow down is a privilege that I cling to the same way I clung to my mom when I was seven years old in the grocery store. It is not a process I can strictly define for myself or anyone else, other than as physically slowing down: halting the mindless movement, resisting the urge to click refresh when something doesn't load in three seconds, or speed-walking to class when I am barely five minutes early. When I do intentionally and willfully slow down, I notice things I would not have otherwise. My friend wears a gold, chunky bracelet, and the store she bought it from has student discounts. The weather app says it is going to be cold, but it's also sunny, so I will not need my heavy coat. I have not called my parents in weeks, and I used to call them all the time. I hear the things my professors say, and I listen to them.

The constant hope for something to change and the claustrophobic discomfort might have a more convoluted answer than escape. I absolutely do not have that answer. But maybe it's not about escaping the digital age or even fully returning from something lost, our version of exile. Recognizing that longing itself is proof we are still alive, even if it does not feel like it, and that we are still searching. And maybe knowing that is enough to confront the dislocation for now.

Annie Wang *and the Nassau Weekly wish for a better world.*

Dear Dad, Are You Flying?

How an actress found catharsis in a play to grieve and love her dad

By **ARIEL CHEN AND VAISHNAVI MURTHY**

AT A CHURCH FUNERAL, a woman collapses into a chair. Her face is shadowed as her shoulders shiver with each sob. Despite the tears staining her cheeks, she looks impeccably put together, decked in high heels, pearl earrings, opaque tights, and a long delicate cloak, all in black.

The woman's name is Lee. She mourns both the loss of her husband Chris who died from cancer, and the growing distance between her and her daughter Anna.

Lee, played by Kiyomi Ton '28, is one of the characters in the play *To Dream About Wings*, written by Steph Chen '25 and directed by Wasif Sami '25. Performed this February at Wallace Theater, the play follows Anna and Leo, two teenagers who navigate their own dreams and relationships while trying to make their families proud.

Leo worries about Anna's stressful home life, but he also dreams of flying and has been working on a flying machine. Meanwhile,

Anna worries that Leo will leave her one day. When Leo excitedly shows Anna his finished flight machine on a rooftop, Anna holds him back, breaking his wings, and causing him to fall to his death. Anna's grief restrains Leo's spirit on Earth, but with the help of a former priest, Anna finally lets Leo go, all the while dealing with the loss of her father. Meanwhile, her mom Lee desperately wants to help but doesn't know how, her worries overshadowed by an excessive concern for her daughter's success, her own unfulfilled dreams as a housewife, and the loss of her husband. This play is about the American immigrant dream, but also about how people find each other to grieve loved ones and learn to let go.

Kiyomi, who played Lee, lost her dad as rehearsal started last November, and her character's loss became personal. Kiyomi's mom is named Ly, pronounced the same way as the character she portrays, and Kiyomi feels the uncanny echo of her mother's experiences when enacting Lee's grief. Like Lee and Kiyomi, Ly was a singer herself at Buddhist

temples. A Vietnamese immigrant from a poor family, she raised Kiyomi as a nail artist, fulfilling both parental roles when her husband couldn't. Bringing Lee to life, the play became Kiyomi's way of understanding her parents. But more specifically, it allows her to understand how her father loved her and pay tribute to him.

"When he lived, I feel like I never thanked him specifically and, you know, said 'This is for you'," Kiyomi shared, her eyes shining brightly under long eyelashes. "So this play, I'm doing this for him."

To Dream About Wings, Scene 6. Written by Steph Chen.

Chris, Lee's husband, sits on the sofa in his living room as his daughter Anna talks to him eagerly.

ANNA

Well, then when I'm successful I'll bring you and mom and we'll travel all over the world. We'll go ride the hot air balloons in Turkey, see the Eiffel Tower—

CHRIS

You're all grown up.

ANNA

—why don't we go now? Dad, we could go tomorrow.

CHRIS

Maybe one day. (*beat*) I'm so excited to see you graduate.

LITTLE KIYOMI'S BEDROOM door had a sign that read "Daddy's Girl." Some of her fondest childhood memories involve exploring new restaurants with her parents, her favorite being Pho Van Restaurant in Baltimore. Yet, a cloud hung over those moments. As Kiyomi grew up, her father was diagnosed with bipolar disorder, and their relationship was placed under increasing strain by her father's unpredictable mood changes. "There's good moments but they could have easily turned bad," Kiyomi said.

As her father's illness turned into a drug addiction, the chasm between him and Kiyomi widened. Knowing his mood could

change at any moment, Kiyomi felt like “walking on eggshells” in every conversation. The confusion morphed into a practiced distance by the time she was in high school. She turned to theater, performing others’ stories and staying late at rehearsals to escape the silent tension at home. By the time she graduated, Kiyomi had participated in six productions.

Scene 19.

Anna sits with the Priest on a bench under a streetlight as she confesses her struggles.

ANNA

I tried so hard praying for my dad to get better. I would lie in my bed at night, under the covers with the lights off, and gamble with God. If I got an A on my next exam, my dad would get ten more days.

GRANDPA, PLEASE BLESS ME with good grades.

When Kiyomi was little, she prayed to her late grandfather. He looked back at her from a framed photo next to a Buddha statue, shrouded by incense in a family shrine. Waiting for college decisions, Kiyomi and her family sought blessings at a Buddhist temple.

Since seventh grade, Kiyomi had known that college was the fastest

way to leave home and find her own success. She put everything into her Questbridge application, thrilled when she matched with Princeton. Posing alongside the signature tiger outside of Nassau Hall on Preview Day, Kiyomi took in her parents’ excitement. They had not gone to college themselves, but walking into Princeton with their daughter, they’d achieved a different dream.

Scene 21. Chris walks on stage in a white suit and narrates his own eulogy. He is not holding his signature cane for the first time.

CHRIS

Chris died January seventeenth, days before his sixtieth birthday. He is survived by his wife, Lee, and his daughter, Anna. He had been fighting cancer for a long time. He was born in China, on a farm, to a family of six. He was the runt of the litter, but he was determined to best his sisters and brothers, and be the first in the family to go to college. And he did! Good for him...

...The past few years he had not been so well. **(he looks at ANNA, and smiles)** But he did a good job raising Anna. He lived a good life,

and he died a good death. He did well.

CHRIS takes a moment to appreciate his shrine, and the life he has built. He leaves.

IT WAS 11PM, AND KIYOMI was chatting with her friend on the red cushioned dorm seat when a few messages popped up from her mom. It was too late for her to text. Kiyomi tried calling, but when her mom didn’t pick up, she sensed something was wrong. She called her aunt, who picked up after a few rings and told her frantically that her dad was in the ICU. Then, her phone rang. It was a call from her mom.

Her mom was crying hysterically on the other end. ***You need to be here. You need to be here. I can’t handle this on my own.*** Kiyomi tried to gather what happened. Her dad was crossing the street when he got hit by the car. He was

sent to the ICU and only three days later was he identified and Ly notified. Now, her mom, who knew limited English and relied on her daughter to run family errands, had to decide if they would pull the plug while her daughter was hours away.

Two hours later, on November 7th, Kiyomi’s dad passed away.

Catching the 5 AM NJ transit train and the next Amtrak out, Kiyomi arrived in Baltimore at 7:45 AM. Her mom waited outside the station with her aunt to pick Kiyomi up. From the moment of arrival, she was engulfed in a whirlpool: contacting the funeral house, meeting Vietnamese monks, and planning a memorial. She signed her dad’s death certificate.

Later, Ly told Kiyomi that she was worried that Vinny died hungry. On the day of the accident, when Ly couldn’t find Vinny, she waited till late at night and left food on the counter before going to sleep. She waited for two more



days, only to learn that he was in the ICU. Now every time she eats, Ly gets emotional.

One week and a half after her father's passing, Kiyomi returned to campus and started rehearsals.

Looking back, Kiyomi recounted how she drew on her mom's reaction to her dad's passing when acting out Lee's hysteria at Chris' death. To Kiyomi, both women were scared and at a loss for what to do. At Chris's church funeral, Lee cries with desperation. Performing this emotional out-break on stage, many thoughts passed through Kiyomi's mind. One constantly returned: *I wonder if my dad died starving.*

Forty-nine days after her father's passing, the dreams stopped. In some Buddhist beliefs, the soul lingers on Earth for 49 days before reincarnation. The day before Vinny's 49th-day memorial, the family gathered near a tree facing the street where Vinny had been struck by the car. Through chants, they told Vinny's soul it was okay to leave. As Kiyomi knelt and prayed, a gust of wind shook the tree—and Kiyomi felt her dad's soul leave.

Scene 21.

Anna storms out after a huge fight with Lee at Chris's funeral. The Priest, who stumbles into the funeral, follows her out.

PRIEST

I don't pity you at all, Anna. In fact, I'm jealous.

ANNA

Jealous?

PRIEST

Yeah. You got so much love to give.

AMIDST THE RAPIDLY moving pace of Princeton life, rehearsal became Kiyomi's outlet for grief.

"All the pent-up emotions I have and my grievances, it gets thrown on stage as an art form," she said.

In the playbooks of her high school shows, she would thank her mom, who always showed up to support her — her dad, conspicuously absent, was always mentioned as part of the family. Emulating a wife and mother's grief as Lee, Kiyomi felt a novel and therapeutic compassion for her own mother. Kiyomi always knew her dad loved her, but found it difficult to convince herself of that with his love shadowed by illness and addiction. But playing a parental character made Kiyomi reflect on her own parent's

protectiveness in an intimate way. "My dad was always telling me to be safe," she said. And that protectiveness, she realized, was a reflection of his love. The play was no longer an escape, but on the contrary, a special devotion to him.

She had always loved when the Priest said to Anna: "You have so much love to give." She devoted more of herself to *To Dream About Wings* than any other play, resonating with characters onstage, bonding with an Asian American cast, and finding love to give.

One late night after rehearsal, a week before the premiere, Kiyomi sat alone in the green room and recorded an Instagram video to promote the play. She was in a light blue vest but still in stage makeup, and her voice was thick from crying in rehearsal. In the one-minute vlog, she flashed photos of her family shrine and her father's funeral, sharing her personal connection to the play.

Scene 21, continued.

ANNA

Why won't you just let me be sad by myself? It's so embarrassing to be seen like this. Life is supposed to move on, and I'm supposed to get a job and be happy, it's what he would have wanted.

PRIEST

Is it?

ANNA stays quiet.

PRIEST

I didn't know your dad, but I do know that if I had died, I would have wanted someone to be there for my daughter.

ANNA softens slightly.

ONE OF THE FIRST PEOPLE to watch that video was Steph Chen, the playwright of *To Dream About Wings*. As Kiyomi brought Lee to life, Steph followed every line intently.

With shoulder-length hair, soft speech, and a tender smile, Steph had never imagined joining the theater before coming to college. Growing up in Hong Kong, she always knew she wanted to move to the U.S., where she could finally "make it big." The fastest way was college.

In her freshman summer, after ignoring her mom's calls for as long as possible, Steph finally picked up the phone. *You should come home*, her mom said. *Your dad is very sick*. She went home to see her dad, and one year later, in February of her sophomore year, he passed away. Out of fear of getting pitied, she only told her closest friends.





deepest grief, allowing her to find strength and reconnect. The art is a mirror of sorts between Steph and Kiyomi, allowing them to reflect each other's emotions, grounded in their own experiences.

On stage, Steph watched Kiyomi unleash Lee's fierce protectiveness and love for Anna, and emote a gentle sorrow over the imminent loss of a husband. Offstage, Steph watched how Kiyomi shared her experience with her father's passing, not afraid that she

would be looked at differently. In Kiyomi's promotional video, Steph admired Kiyomi's openness and power to turn grief into strength and love. "She was warm, and funny, and kind, and generous, and smart, and scathing the entire time," Steph said about Kiyomi, "I didn't know that you could just be open about it and just say like 'Oh, my father had passed away'."

Partially because of Kiyomi, Steph resolved to start talking about her father's passing as the production closed. Leaving rehearsal one day, she felt a sense of happiness and lightness she had not experienced in a long time.

Scene 22.

Surrounding the priest holding a mic from God, the community gathers and sings one Hallelujah together.

LEE & CHRIS & LAO LAO
AND EVEN THOUGH IT ALL
WENT WRONG

I STAND BEFORE THE LORD
OF SONG

WITH NOTHING ON MY
TONGUE BUT HALLELUJAH

NEAR THE END OF THE PLAY, Lee, Chris, and Leo's grandma Lao Lao returned to the stage in a metaphorical space of Hallelujah to embrace, dance, and sing. Eventually, they invited the audience to sing along too. Some hummed to the tune while others fully belted out the lyrics. Many teared up. "What makes a good show...is when I can feel all sorts of emotions—if I can laugh, cry, feel inspired," Kiyomi said. "And I know that *To Dream About Wings* did that, and I wanted other people to experience it too."

Wasif Sami, the play's director, particularly adored the *Hallelujah* scene. It is a metaphor of theater: playwright, actors, light, and sound supporting each other to create an entire world.

"As theatre makers, we're all showing up for each other and with an audience to celebrate life and commemorate loss," he reflected.

The week before the show's opening, Wasif accidentally walked in on Kiyomi filming the promotional video. He found her teary-eyed talking about the loss of her dad. The 100th-day anniversary of her dad's death was approaching on the same day her mom and paternal grandmother would be coming to watch the play.

Wasif realized then that theater

is inextricably tied to life. "This is her life. And this show is...part of the story of her losing her dad. It's part of the story of her first year at college," Wasif said. "It reminded me that the things we're making the play about, even though it's fiction, it's also something that matters."

THE END.

KIYOMI'S MOM CAME TO SEE the last night of the show from Maryland. Back in Hong Kong, Steph's mom never knew about the play. As the stage blacked out for the last time and actors held hands to bow, Wasif and Steph ran onto the stage. Steph's face was covered in tears. Wasif, who was standing right next to her, pulled her into a hug. Then everyone joined, running into Steph and Wasif's outstretched arms in a tight circle. Kiyomi still had dried tears on her face, but everyone was smiling. "Sun Bleached Flies" by Ethel Cain, picked by Steph, played in the background:

*Dancing with the windows open
I can't let go when something's broken*

It's all I know and it's all I want now...

This article was edited and fact-checked as part of the Nassau Weekly's journalism section, Second Look. Please submit corrections to thenassauweekly@gmail.com.

Steph began writing *To Dream About Wings* in her junior year. Initially inspired by Leonardo da Vinci, it featured a carefree boy who wanted to fly. But Leo's image overlapped with her own father: I wonder if my dad is flying right now. *I wonder where he'd want to be. Maybe he's flying over Oregon.* Somewhere along the way, it evolved into a beautiful meditation on grief and community, with her father's shadow in every character she created: a little bit of him shines through Leo, an utterly pure desire to take flight. Chris, too, holds Steph's father, his illness taking a toll on him and those who love him.

Art became her catharsis, releasing the grief and depression buried deep inside her. "It's all about my dad," Steph slowly realized as the play morphed into its entirety. "It's like a big love letter to him."

Maybe that was what Kiyomi found in Steph's play: a thread of love that connects scenes of the

Symphysis

"At midnight I woke membered to the night with violent blood and pale gashes swimming wild courses through the dark. Some blast from my dream rang shrilly over my ears like frantic veils."

By GAVIN STROUD

Lane Palmer of end the at house the hated always I

I hated it since we moved in when I was thirteen because it was empty and cold and smelled like chemicals and mildew. It smelled like a morgue. And it never sat still. It stirred after sunset as doors opened and closed when no one was there save me to hear them squeal on rusty hinges, chairs whined and wheeled across the floorboards, and dust scattered soundlessly through rooms on unseen wind. There were sounds that always came from somewhere deeper still than the basement, the worst among them a long droning moan like the cry of some wounded jackal played on slow tape, guttural and low and awful. And there were the sounds that went through my head into the tenderness behind the eyes—sounds like words.

First they were nonsense familiar only in rises and falls of pitch. The voice was neither a man's nor a woman's nor a child's but an amalgam as though from some freakshow throat tangling the three. It sounded like Russian though I had never heard Russian spoken anywhere but in old action movies. One day, a palindrome: *lived a sa deviL. Lived as a devil.*

lived a sa deviL. Lived as a devil. It played over and over and louder each time for a week until I was mouthing it at the dinner table. Dad asked me (like he always did) why I wouldn't just SHUT THE FUCK UP and why I made him lock the bedroom door so I couldn't open it and wake them when there were sounds in the night. Mom asked God what happened to make me such a broken vicious child with bile in my heart and nothing but violent static in my mind.

I turned the palindrome around and around in my head late into the night. Suddenly, another: *.deaf are men Stupid*

while I was lying in bed at midnight.

"Is my father a stupid man?" I said out loud into the dark room. There was only the echo and silence. "Stupid, stupid, stupid," I muttered to no-one.

.deaf is He

I bolted upright in my bed. I searched the darkness but in no direction because the voice was inside of me and not anywhere outside.

"No. He hears. He hears fine," I offered out with a tone like a question.

.are you as attune not is He .more nothing, must he what hears He

"Who's there?" There was real fear in my voice. I could reach for something heavy but there would be nowhere to swing.

.simple so not is That

"Get out! Get out of here!" I cried though 'here' was lame and moot.

.moment the yet not is It .Soon

"Where are you hiding?"

.No

"I don't see you."

Silence.

"I don't see you. Where are you hiding?"

.hiding not am I .moment the not is It

"Come out."

.choice your is That

"What?"

Silence again. I leapt from the bed and fumbled the light on, dove underneath to see nothing but dust and cardboard boxes. In the closet, too, were only lifeless things. I ran my hands between the shirts thinking a ghost could hide from sight but not touch but still there was nothing at all.

"It spoke to me!" I shouted at my parents' door, rattling the stiff brass knob.

There was no response and when I screamed out all of my breath I could only hear the sound of my mother crying muffled tears into her pillow. She cried often in those days and only said "poor, poor baby" thick with pity over and over again when I asked what was the matter.

Next Saturday morning I sat on the living room floor when the words came again. This time it was shouting, barking orders.

!now it Do !eight channel, news the on Turn !TV the Watch

I scrambled for the remote and changed to the city FOX channel.

They were talking about a dead man. He had stabbed himself just that morning forty-two times in the back with five different shivs in a state prison shower. This was four years after his crime, just as soon as they transferred him from a place called a 'facility' and not a 'prison.' They said on the twelfth night of August 1998 the husband

and father of two lost his mind and brought home a loaded shotgun. He pleaded insanity but there were receipts. He'd bought the gun a week before, been planning it. Reloaded on the night, too (there were only two barrels). The sentence was life in the county where they tried him. They showed his boring insane face, and the look of a lunatic was nothing to behold. Then they showed a picture of the house: my house. It was all washed in red and blue and covered in caution tape like its own handcuffs.

.enough are those and men are there but demons no are there you tell will I .me within ,work his within live You

"What are you saying?"

?weight the bear I as body my in buckles and aches the hear not you Can ?not you can ,suffering my hear can You .more nothing and walls the are there me For .warmth convey to touch ,you hold to waiting arms some be always will there harmed are you When .alone bear to left been have I me within spilled blood the and bodies The

"I don't know," I said.

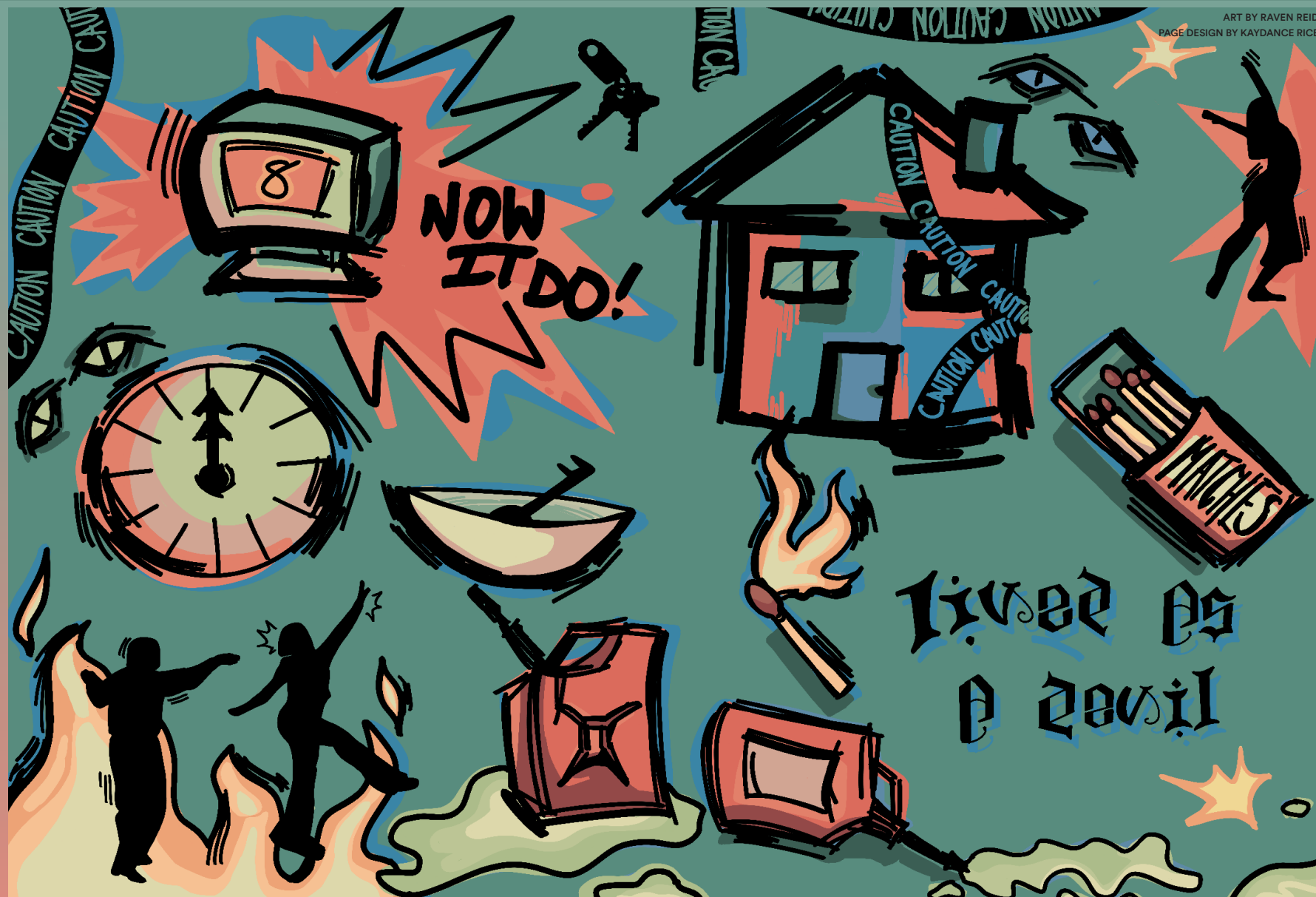
.things heard have You .special are you Because .knows who one only the are You

"Yes," I said. The voice grew sterner.

.long so suffered have I ?please ,me help you Will .me help can You .Good

"I don't know."

.it know I ,me help to want You .strong are you that and good are you know I .are you ways the in gifted not ,are you ways the in wise not is she for understand cannot she Only .you understand to herself tells she lies but nothing are those but ,rotten ,broken are you says mother Your

ART BY RAVEN REID
PAGE DESIGN BY KAYDANCE RICE

I did not reply.

*.door the by bowl the in keep-
sfather your key the need will
You .tonight you show will I*

"What do you want?"

*.midnight at wake and early
Rest .tonight you show will I*

"How-"

.midnight at wake will You

Then silence. I turned the TV
off so mom wouldn't see.

At midnight I woke mem-
bered to the night with violent
blood and pale gashes swim-
ming wild courses through the
dark. Some blast from my dream
rang shrilly over my ears like
frantic veils. I stood and went
forward into the opaque black
and reached out my hand to

open the door which I could not
see and went out into the hall-
way. No drop of moonlight from
a window stained the ink-black
night, yet my feet placed them-
selves surely on the ground step
after step even down the stairs
and to the bowl with keys whose
door I did not know.

Now the voice said

*.Symphysis .Symphysis
.together Coming .together
Coming .me free can You .your-
self free can You*

My body was all pins and nee-
dles, muscles foamy and bones
hollowed—propped up over
the ground only by air which
swelled cyclonic around me. I
was no longer mine but instead

some apparatus shuffled across
the dark floor and through the
door of the basement where I
had never been but knew by the
bottom step what to find and
where: a red jug of gasoline under
the stairs.

*.me to humming are They
.matches are there Somewhere
.feeling deep my and eyes my
only am I*

To dance, and dance, and
chance all fate and God and
any man who dared show him-
self! To hold the very girders of
life and death itself in hands!
The sweet, sickly smell of fuel
drowned all the mildew and the
carpet and the words and the

hurt (OUR HURT OUR WANT
OUR NEED) deep beneath the
waves of the flame waiting
on the COMMAND to burn.
Footsteps down the stairs and
screams too slow for the begin-
ning and the freedom and the
mercy in hand—the matches
brandished like themselves a
key profound in the language of
burning and scattering winds. I
could see them, the winds that
would send me out and along,
along

symphysis

The Immigrant Daughter Speaks

By JUNA BROTHERS

I'm not going to force your name--
Mother → Mommy → Eomoni → 어머니 → Eomma → 엄마--
because I never called you
that. I never called you
anything. For all your shifts

you were the same, twisting every verb
into -ing (I am telling you, I am not saying)
when it already happened. You are watching TV.
I watched the ash from your cigarette
flutter onto the back of my hand. You are slapping
it away. My skin scales off, disappearing in shag carpet.

Tuesday night, your clothes shrugged off
as soon as you entered. Just in
your bra after shifting
at the diner: a 20 dollar
tip flapping, my tongue
in an imaginary language. You were saying
I'm so sexy, I'm so sexy,
not knowing what it meant.
I never told you--
I wanted you to keep saying it.