

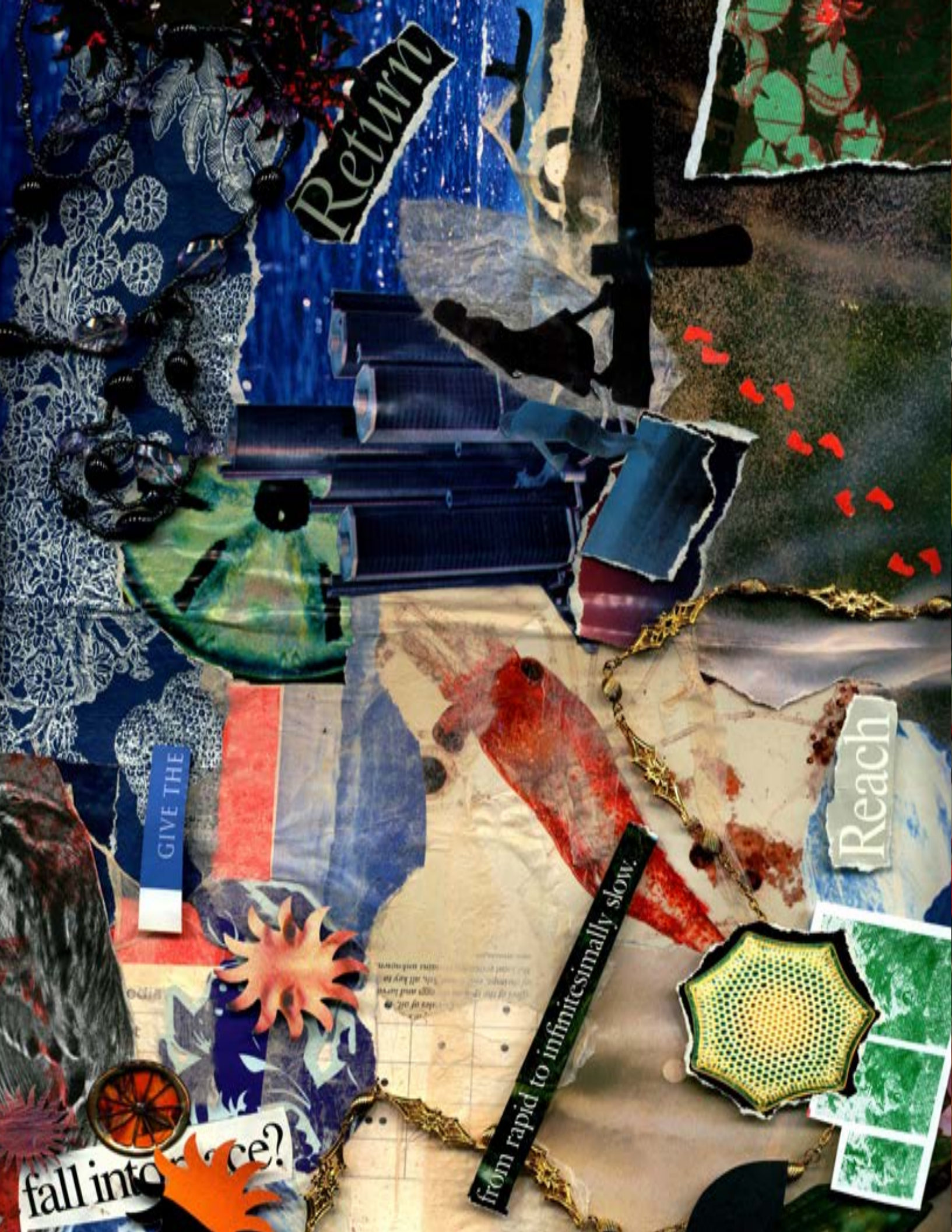
issue 48

METAMORPHOSIS

voices 2025

TUFTS
ASIAN
STUDENT
COALITION

*meta
mor
phosis*



Return

Reach

from rapid to infinitesimally slow.

GIVE THE

fall into...ce?

...of the ...
...all key to
...the ...



Wonders to behold

Dreams to fulfill.

Family to embrace

brate
h



Find your own road.



SORCERERS, AND
DREAMERS.

I hope





VOICES 2025

METAMORPHOSIS



Mission Statement

Voices, New England's oldest undergraduate Asian and Asian American literary and arts magazine, is published annually by Tufts Asian Student Coalition (TASC). We are a Pan-Asian identifying student organization that mobilizes for progressive change and uplifts the experiences of our community. Given the complex intersectionality between Asian identity and being in the United States, we create space for our community to reflect on and celebrate differing histories and lived experiences. *Voices*, now in its 48th year, continues to provide a platform to document, examine, and celebrate the experiences of Tufts University's Asian and Asian American community.

Land Acknowledgment

Tufts University campuses are located on the unceded traditional lands of the Pawtucket, Naumkeag, Nipmuc, Agawam, and Massachusetts Tribes. This acknowledgement reminds us of our ongoing commitment to solidarity with Indigenous peoples both here and in our motherlands as we continue to uproot and challenge oppressive institutions that aim to erase our ways of being and collective knowledge under US imperialism.

Letter from the (lead) editors

Dear Reader,

Welcome to *Voices 2025: Metamorphosis*. The world around us is changing at a faster rate than ever, and so are our individual lives. As a result, we want to present you with this collection to document and celebrate the impactful transformations that have taken place in our lives.

Whether this metamorphosis has occurred far in the past or very recently, we welcome all of our writers and artists to think deeply about where and when these changes occurred, who was involved, what caused it, or what the results were. We recognize that in our community, metamorphosis can often be the result of Asian diasporas through legacies of displacement, violence, resistance, and celebration, and we allow our creations to speak or embody these reflections. Thank you again to all of our writers and artists for their vulnerability and courage to document their metamorphoses through creating, whether that be alone or together.

2025 marked yet another "unprecedented" year, a word our generation has grown to witness and accept too many times. Not only did we metamorphose TASC's internal working structure, but also we extended the editing process for *Voices* from its original one-semester period to the whole school year. This piece of work in your hands reflects the passage of time we experienced, as well as the various creations that crystalized through them.

With all of that said, we hope you thoroughly enjoy this year's edition of *Voices*. Please give all of your attention, respect, and admiration for the complex transformations rooted in the work of our writers and artists this year.

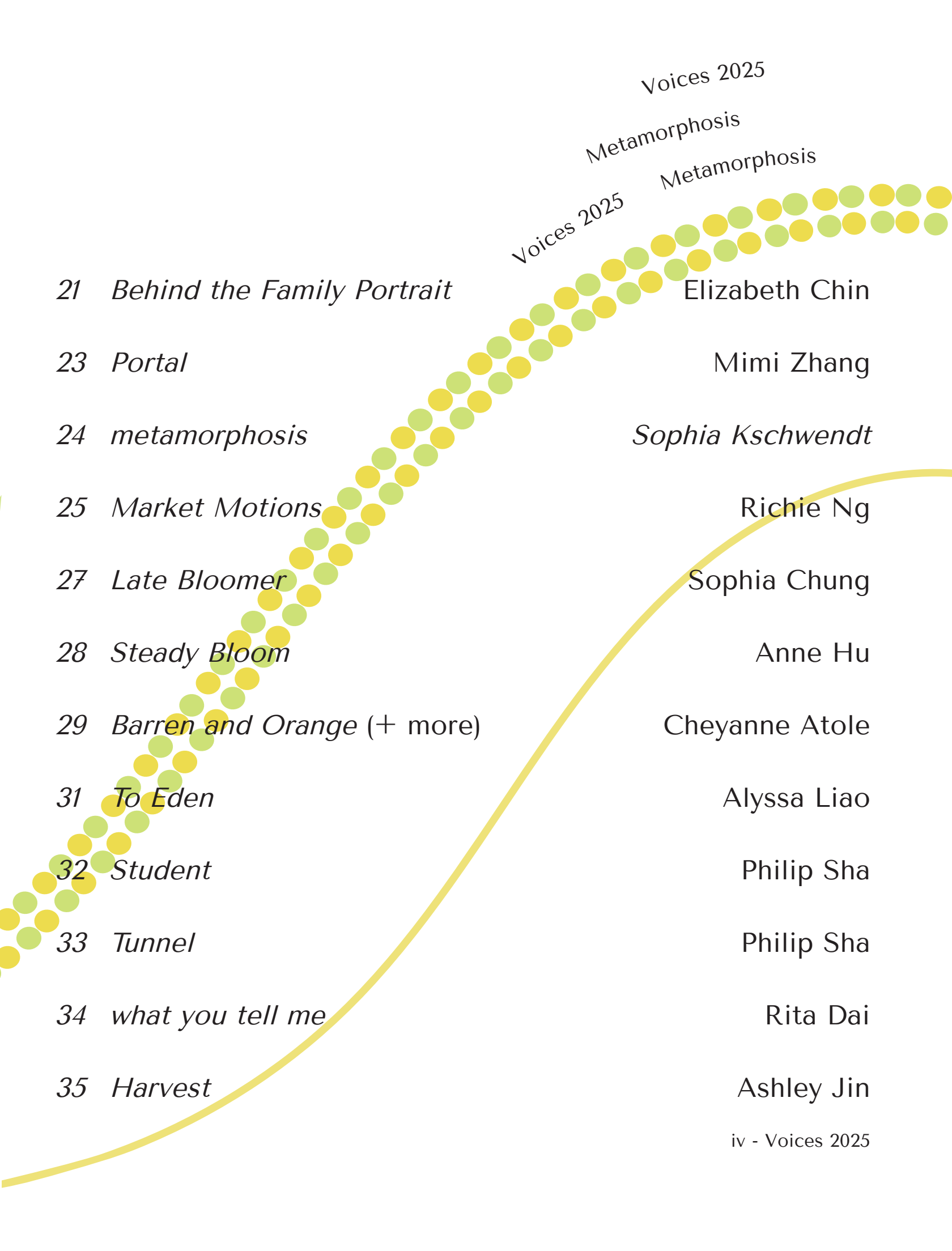
With love and hope,

Voices lead editors

Anna Zhang '25
Rose Fotino '25
Alyssa Liao '25
Arya Radhakrishnan '27
Emily Tran '27
Andie Cabochan '27
Sophia Kschwendt '27
Thea Loh '27

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Voices 2025

Metamorphosis

Metamorphosis

Voices 2025

Elizabeth Chin

Mimi Zhang

Sophia Kschwendt

Richie Ng

Sophia Chung

Anne Hu

Cheyenne Atole

Alyssa Liao

Philip Sha

Philip Sha

Rita Dai

Ashley Jin

stars





Waka Okuda
watercolor, acrylic, colored pencil
on paper
176 × 250 mm
2025

there is **SO** much *magic* in

Foreword: I have participated in Inktober every October since 2019, resulting in stacks of drawings that function as mini time capsules for the kind of person I was at that time. Looking through them now, it is breathtaking to see the evolution that I went through year to year. There are multiple themes and struggles that come up time and time again and that reflect significant growth, and this piece showcases four of those transformations.

My dear reader, when the time to metamorphose comes, I hope you embrace it.

"this isn't how it's supposed to be" 10/26/20

growing up in a traditional Christian household, there was so much love

i couldn't reach, so much love i couldn't feel.

it's because you're a sinner, i told myself, you're not worthy.

they took that and sharpened it into a stake and a cage.

it's time to metamorphose.



"Midnight Rain" 10/27/22

it turns out that there is so much love out there, so much love *for me*.

and it seems i have more than enough love to give.



"Let me out" 10/23/19

i thought my body was my enemy

a monster inside, waiting to ruin me.

i thought i was dirty and wretched and impure.

i was wrong.

it's time to metamorphose.



"Masterpiece" 10/23/22

turns out that it's okay to love my body

that the "monster" is just *me*.

turns out, i'm just a girl.

now in the mirror, I see a dragon

a masterpiece.

me.



by Ai Grace Acton

"I want NEED to be free." 10/17/23

my parents meant well, they really did (they still do)
they want me to be safe and happy (as long as i obey)
mother knows best, after all (*you're hurting me*)
"we only do this because we love you" (*they love me, right?*)
i'm older now, i'm out of your reach (at least i thought so...)
(can we start over?)

it's time to metamorphose.



"Sweethearts <3" 10/02/24

i've grown up. (*i love my parents*)
i know they only project what they've been unable to heal in themselves.
(break the cycle)
but i'm healing, i'm setting boundaries, i'm out of their reach. (it's so hard)
maybe we'll start over someday, but right now
i'm living with just a little bit of 'fuck you' energy and a whole lot of joy.



"It's beautiful, but I can't" 10/31/20

have i hurt too many people?
am i too broken for love?
who would want to stay?
i push everyone away...
it's time to metamorphose.



"Girlhood" 10/31/24

trauma builds walls, grows thorns, breeds demons
but it's never too late to heal,
it's never too late to love,
and it's never too late to find your fairies.





Searching for Clarity

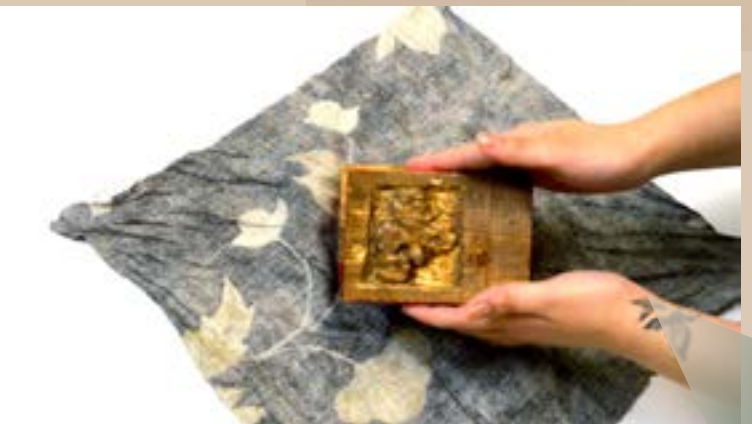
Veena Bulusu
Mixed fiber media
3' x 6'
2022





Butterfly Lovers Artist Book

Mimi Zhang
Wood, fabric
2025





Oriflamme

by Dorothea Mah

It's well known that when you plant a seed in some dirt, there's a good chance that it'll grow. It's also fairly common knowledge that when you water and maybe fertilize a seed you've planted, it'll actually germinate. Of course, it should be well-established that plants don't need human intervention to grow. They've been doing well without us for millions of years, and us humans thinking that they're worth spending some effort on isn't going to change that.

It's also well known that too much of a good thing can be bad. If you overwater a plant, it could drown. If you use too much fertilizer, it could bleach the plant, or worse, leach out of the soil and into underground waterways where it ends up feeding fatal algae blooms in other bodies of water. If you plant too many seeds in too small of an area, they'll all suffer from competition for resources and space, decreasing the overall growth of your sprouts.

That isn't to say that plants can't thrive in suboptimal or, should I say, over-optimal conditions. Nature is far crueller to life than humans in our little greenhouses can be. At least some of us try to save our dying plants; nature doesn't show that kind of mercy. But because of that, we can find unexpected surprises.

Take a plant growing in a rainy plot of mud. Mud, a disgusting material when wet. It isn't much better after it dries back into dirt. It's dark, crumbly, and gets everywhere you don't want it to. But a plant growing in a rainy plot of mud has an excess of both water and space. Many plants would simply perish in its place.

Assume that this plant survives in this rainy plot of mud. It can tolerate the excess water, the unsteadiness of the ground it put its roots in, the washed out dirt that doesn't have many nutrients left. It rains so much that the sun can rarely peek out from behind the clouds, and yet it perseveres with the little photosynthesis it can do. As long as there's some light out there, it'll take what it can get.

Now imagine that against all these odds stacked against it, it blooms into a beautiful flower in the middle of a rainy plot of mud. A speck of color against a world that has only been gray and brown, rainy and cold. Would this not be considered beautiful? A flower that can bloom in mud like this could only thrive even better under human hands. If compared to the beauty of other flowers, perhaps its beauty would be seen as ordinary, instead of extraordinary. Maybe it would be nothing special in the face of other flowers. Maybe its beauty comes from how it thrives, both because of and in spite of the rainy plot of mud in which it grows.

Maybe I am the only one who ascribes beauty to this flower because I was fortunate enough to have witnessed its metamorphosis.

Book of



mon



ni
Book of mon



leave

Us As Fish

Thea Loh
Lino cut print, water color, paper
7x7
2025





Do We

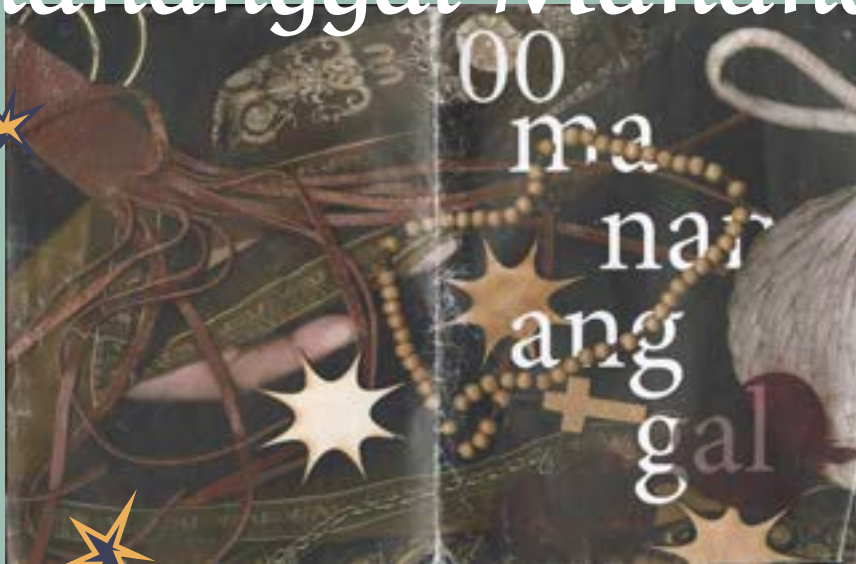


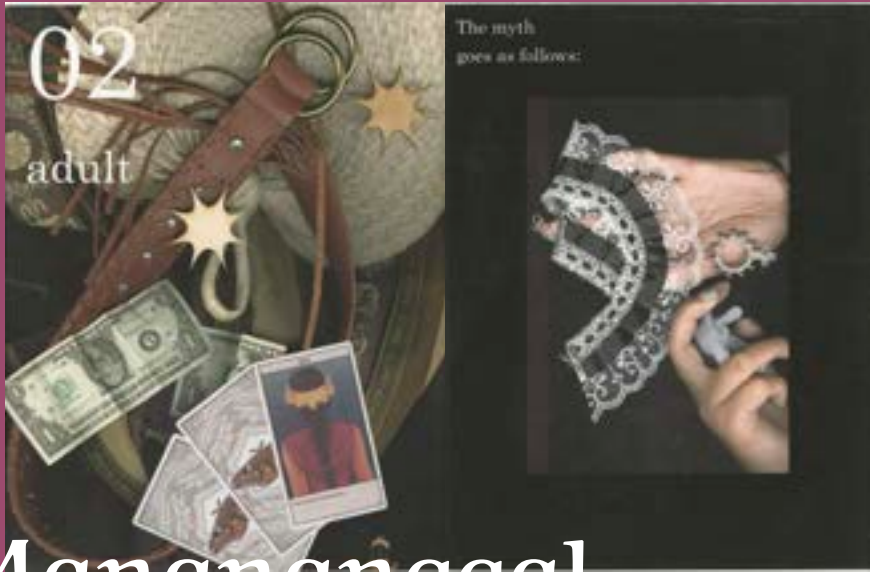
Look Alike?



Manananggal Manananggal

Andie Cabochan
Zine
11x17
2025





Manananggal



The Ghosts of Beach Street

Rose Fotino

Oh, Boston Chinatown. How I love you so much. You're
My first living memory, first love, like a duckling and her mother.
Your sights, sounds, and smells are so alluring. Yet, I used to always
Walk straight past them, bound to my mother's left hand. And in the
Off chance we would stop, it was always for McDonald's. Never for the
Warm, fuzzy bakeries nor the umami love of auntie's shop
Working hard for her family, her home. Never for the
Only people in my life who looked like me.

Fast forward ten or so years. Once again I am in you everyday,
Broken free from the confines of white suburban Massachusetts,
from years of the echo chamber of those who misunderstood. My
Friends always complained about the half hour train ride, but nothing beat
Binging Shameless with pork and leek dumplings from Dumpling King, or
Smoking while blasting Patched Up on the rooftops of Tyler Street, but
Heartbroken to the closure of Mrs. Huang's China King on the corner of Oxford,
Haunted by the pothole ghosts that haunted the barren Beach St.

Guardian Lion

Sophia Chung
Linocut, colored Pencil
9" x 5"
2024



home

Sophia Chung
Gouache
10" x 14"
2025



I Hope My Children are Happier

by Anh Ngo

Tie my hands, I can't dig deeper.
A man with a gun to my grandfather's head —
My mom softly chanted Buddha's name, until it became synonymous
with the sounds of boots, stepping on her father's tears.

Between you and me, the bloodline turns, spinning its thread tighter
and tighter,
each knowing the ghost of battles unspoken, each silence a wound
sewn shut with guilt.

How dare my tears touch the floor, when the only thing to my head
is the gentle hand of the woman I love stroking my pitch black hair
in pink, purple, and blue,
as the boat you've built for me floats away to evermore.

To a distant shore, I drift, dissolving myself beneath the waves
I mouthed: Mom, I'm sorry,
I don't know the way back home.

Here's the silence after New Year sleeps, its breath thick with songs
I only sing once a year, with names I've almost forgotten.
Here's a plastic table, they used to hide from gunshots on Saigonese
streets.

Here's a plastic table, I used to sail
along the waves to a land so open and soul-close,
I woke up an infant wrapped in my mother's arms.

Here's a night with empty stars, the dreams I left unfinished,
moving through my blood like a song carried by the wind.

Untie our hands, I can hear my children crying.
To my mom, I'll find her on this island,
and to my children, I hope they lead happier lives.

Behind the Family Portrait

Growing up in a white suburb of greater Boston, I inherently believed in the Asian immigrant family myth even if I didn't know its name. According to the myth, Asians hold Confucian values of hard work that align with white American norms and allow for social mobility. The myth simultaneously paints Asian families as emotionally stifling due to the oppressive patriarch and overbearing matriarch. The children of these immigrants, while hard working, are themselves emotionless; they grow to resent their parent's culture and detach themselves from their ethnicity by assimilating into American culture. Is this truly the nature of Asian immigrants and their children? My mom shared her story with me a little while back, a mix between a memory and a tale.

My mom grew up with her siblings in her parents' corner store in Tucson, and her grandparents used to visit every day to help. She said, "when they arrived and my grandfather stepped behind the butcher counter, 'I would only get out, 'Hi,' and he would respond without looking up, 'Hi.' He got straight to work; my grandmother got to cooking. Lunch was at 11:30 a.m. every day. I watched her slaughter chickens, drain their blood, pick off all of the feathers. And I was her mini-me, her little helper. We didn't talk a lot, but she taught me everything." Her grandmother cut one green bean; she watched and cut the rest. Her grandmother washed one Chinese broccoli and then she would wash the rest. "She would glance at me, and we would smile at each other," my mom said, "Everyone in our family knew the aroma of browning rice on the stovetop: nung fan.

My mouth would water today if I smelled that smell. I remember our family working so hard, and it was important to make them lunch. I felt like the chosen one to help my grandmother cook."

After all the pots and pans were washed, my mom and her siblings walked their grandparents home about five blocks away. Through the gate and around the back of the house there were two kumquat trees. My mom exclaimed, "They were so healthy! Every time I passed by the kumquat trees I would steal 2 or 3. I rubbed them on my shirt, ate the skin with my teeth, and then I threw the inside over the fence so my grandfather wouldn't know." Her grandfather was a farmer. She and her siblings helped water the plants and feed the chickens. He built troughs around the rows of crops so simply turning on the hose would allow the water to trickle down to all of the crops. My mom claimed, "My father took after him in that way, very clever—me and you too." Wit was not the only piece of my grandfather inherited by future generations. My mom's father, my gung gung, passed away when I was too young to remember his voice or character, but I do remember the kumquat trees he kept in his backyard. Hearing from my mom that his dad before him also grew these bountiful trees made me emotional, the symbol from my childhood passed down through the generations—my way to remember my grandfather and my mom's way to remember hers. My mom said, "We helped our grandparents around with whatever they needed. It taught me how a family works together to survive. My parents needed help in the store, and my grandma would come cook. We made sure our grandparents got home okay; it was just expected of us."

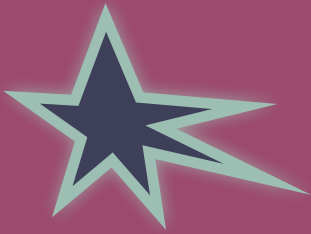
Portal

Mimi Zhang
Reclaimed wood, acrylic,
and lenticular print
12" x 9" x 3"
2025





to be set free



by Sophia Kschwendt



i am a caterpillar
eating its way
through
a marble pillar


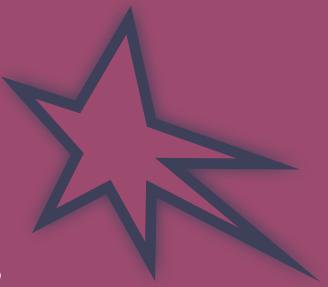


sometimes
as i search for four leaf clovers
in the yellowed yards
of the yellow home i sprouted from
now painted blue
i find myself among withered worms





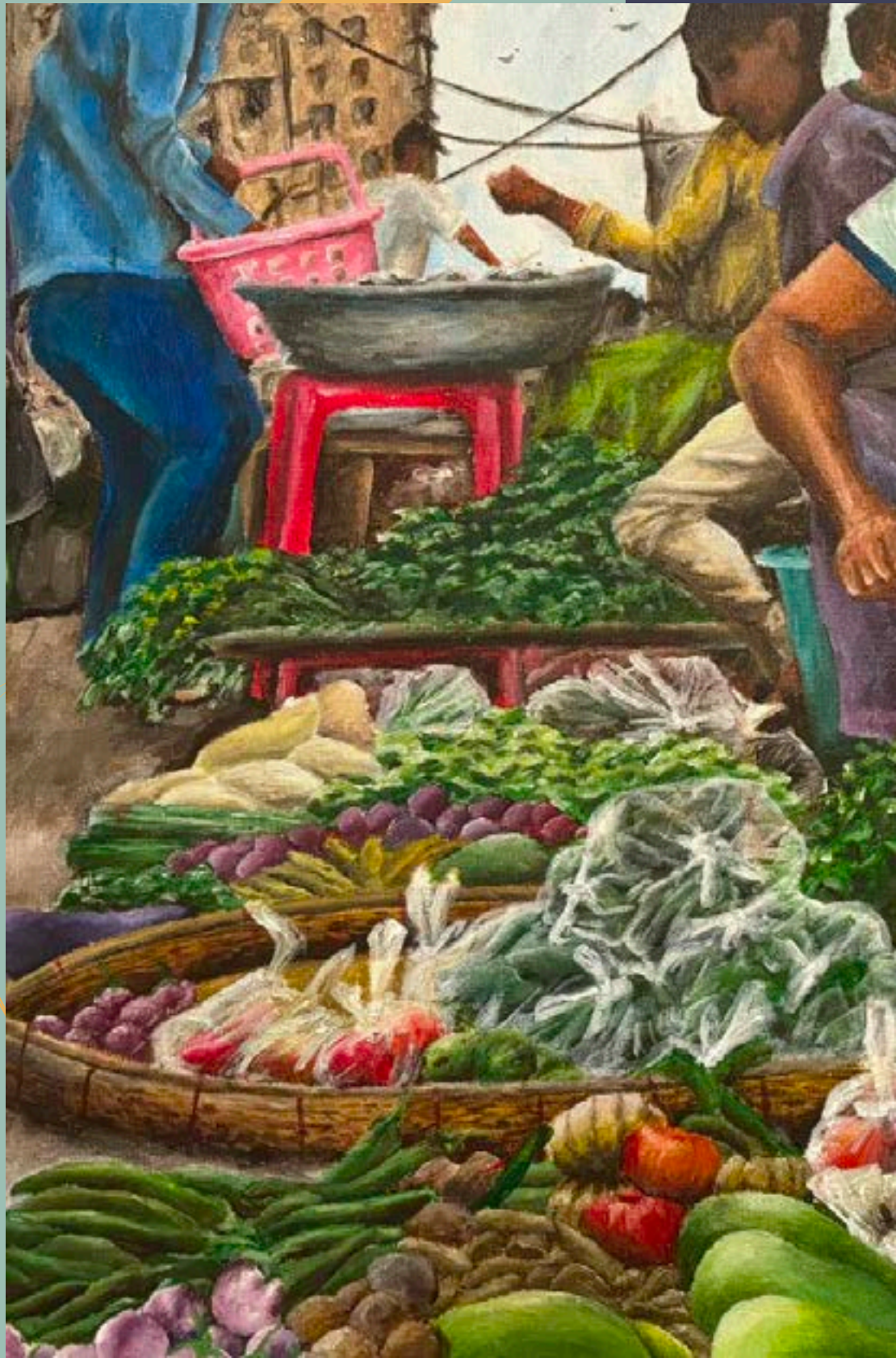
engulfed in silken shrouds
i wonder if i am underwater
the pressure grips my cage of organs
and wrings my milky lungs

sometimes
i find a four leaf clover
i raise it up to the sun
so the rays catch its tips
a crown of life dances
through beams of fire
until the whole flimsy plant is ablaze



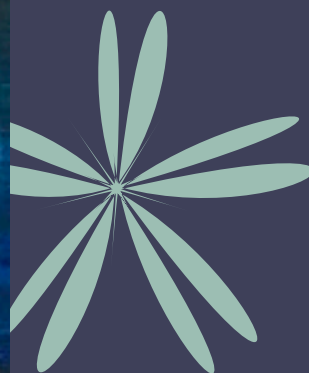
i am a butterfly
a brilliant flash of orange
trembling softly
i unfold my body to meet the sky



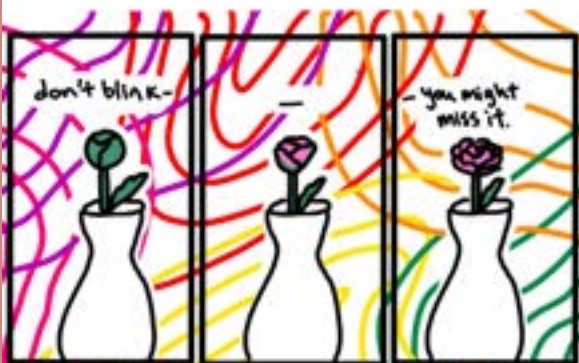
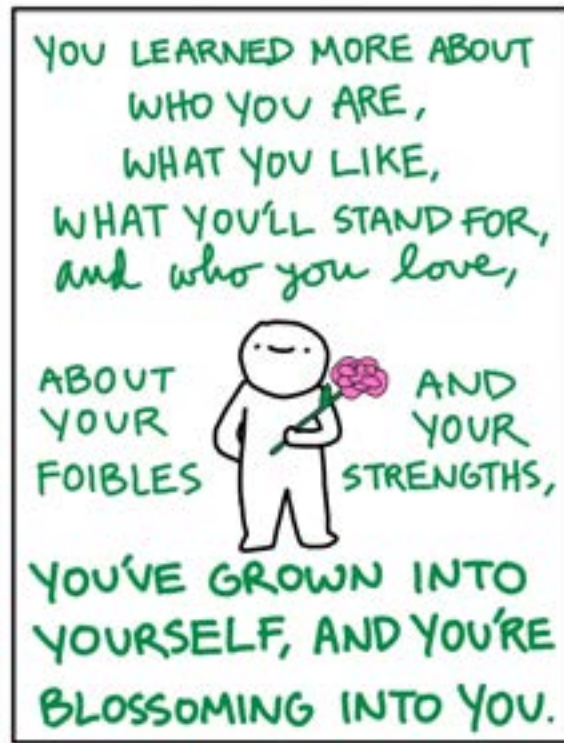
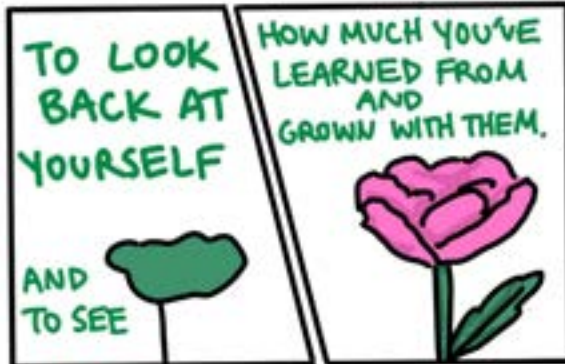
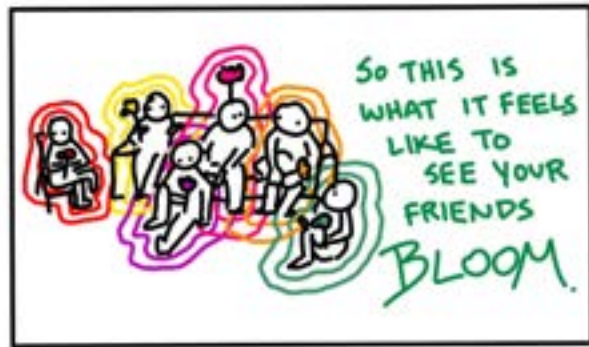


Market Motions

Richie Ng
Acrylic
20" x 16"
2024



STEADY BLOOM



Anne Hu
Digital Comic
8.5" by 11"
2025

Steady Bloom



Call Me Mr. Blue
18" x 24"

Picture of Poot
12" x 9"



Cheyenne Atole
Acrylic on panels
var.
2024

Barren and Orange
9" x 12"



Missing a Third Star
12" x 16"

TO EDEN

Alyssa Liao

4.5"x5.5"

RISO on french
paper, book

2024



学生 The Student 2024 - May

小学的你

You, the elementary school student

发现了世界的乐趣

Saw the wonder in all things

同时在操场上

And, on the playground

感受到了欺负的恶意

The malice of the bullies

中学的你

You, the middle school student

发现了学习的意义

Saw the importance of studies

同时在校门外

And, outside the schoolyard

感受到了社会的压力

The pressures of society

大学的你

You, the college student

发现了理想的光明

Saw the light of a better world

同时在黑暗中

And, in the darkest times

感受到了镇压的暴行

The violence of the oppressor

未来的你

You, in the future

会不会反抗一切不公平

Will you fight every last injustice

学生的你

You, the student

会不会坚持下去

Will you always persist

Tunnel

Philip Sha



I will stand in the cold
until the morning train comes
when I will warm my hands
and pack away my gloves

I will sit by the window
until the view turns to black
when I will hear the distant thunder
and lay down by the tracks

I will lie in the tunnel
until the bombs stop falling
when I will climb through the dirt
and dig past the buried bodies

I will dig myself out
and when the ground opens wide
I will walk the barren land
until I see the blue sky

a conversation between a cat and a crow

Rita Dai

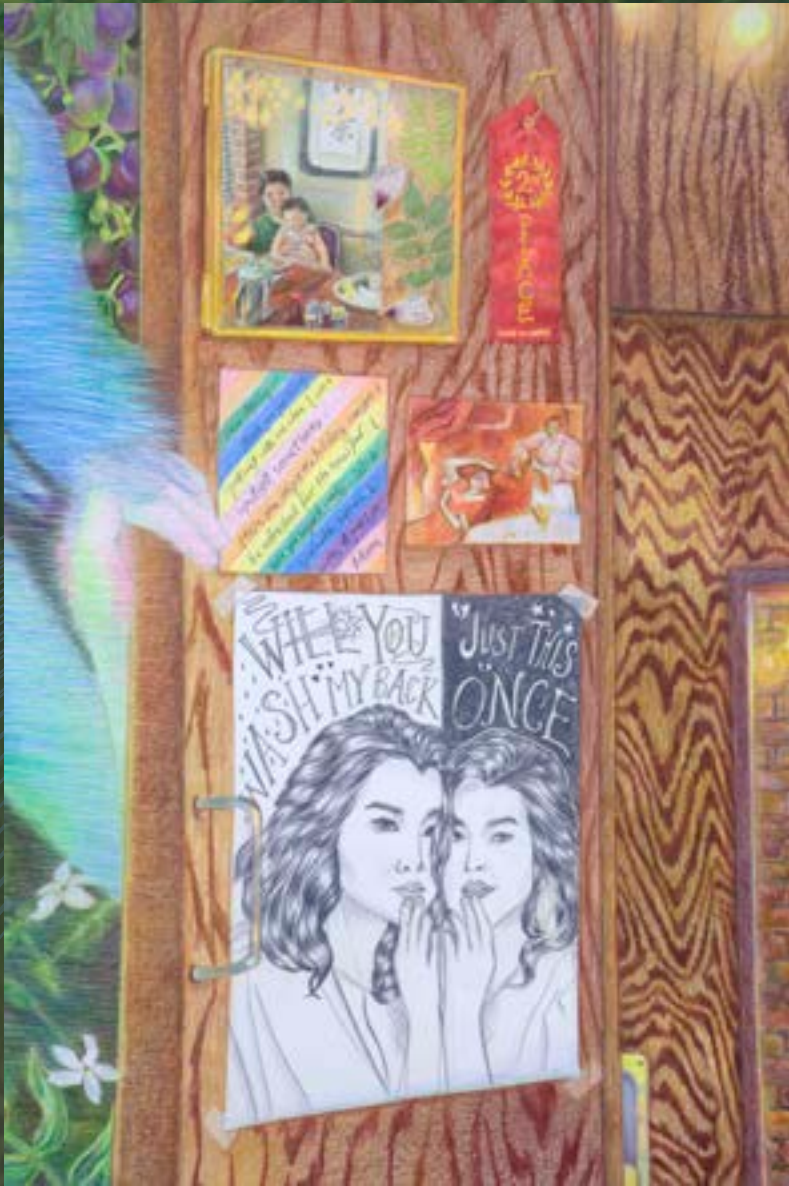
You've discovered your humanity again, you say, as you carve the rubber off of a soon-to-be stamp. You tell me that it's been years since you've touched a pair of craft scissors, that you miss the fuzziness of construction paper. The thumping of tiny feet on multicolored carpet brings you back to those years where you didn't yet know what the roar of inhumanity sounded like. Or perhaps you did, but the fullness of our laughter and the ring of the school bell distanced you from those other sounds.

You've discovered your humanity again, you say: it's in the ginger ale we share, sharp with fizz. It pricks your throat and reminds you that you're alive. We share so often it makes us sick. Remember that day we all got mono and texted to the rise of the morning sun? Sometimes, you say, you want to return there. You can still feel the cats and dogs in your throat, the way they scratch and paw at your organs, begging to be released. You don't miss that feeling. (It's still there.) What you miss is opening your eyes and ears to the shiny ping of a text, like a present under your pillow.

You've discovered your humanity again, you say, after reading that one poem by that one author that no one really knows. You found it on

twitter, a notes app screenshot, and you shared it with me. It says what we've all been thinking, in a way we've not yet articulated. Well, maybe it's been articulated once or twice. Something about laundry and taxes, something about making soup during the slaughter of thousands, something about changing the toilet paper for your roommates...You and I—our families, our ancestors—have swam in the metaphorical mud of empire long enough to know that those somethings are what ensure our survival. Our thriving.

You discover your humanity more than you think, my love. I fear that the honest truth is that you find it—humanity—within other humans. That's the tragedy. We're a cat and a crow. I wonder if humans remember when they were fur and feathers, too.



Harvest

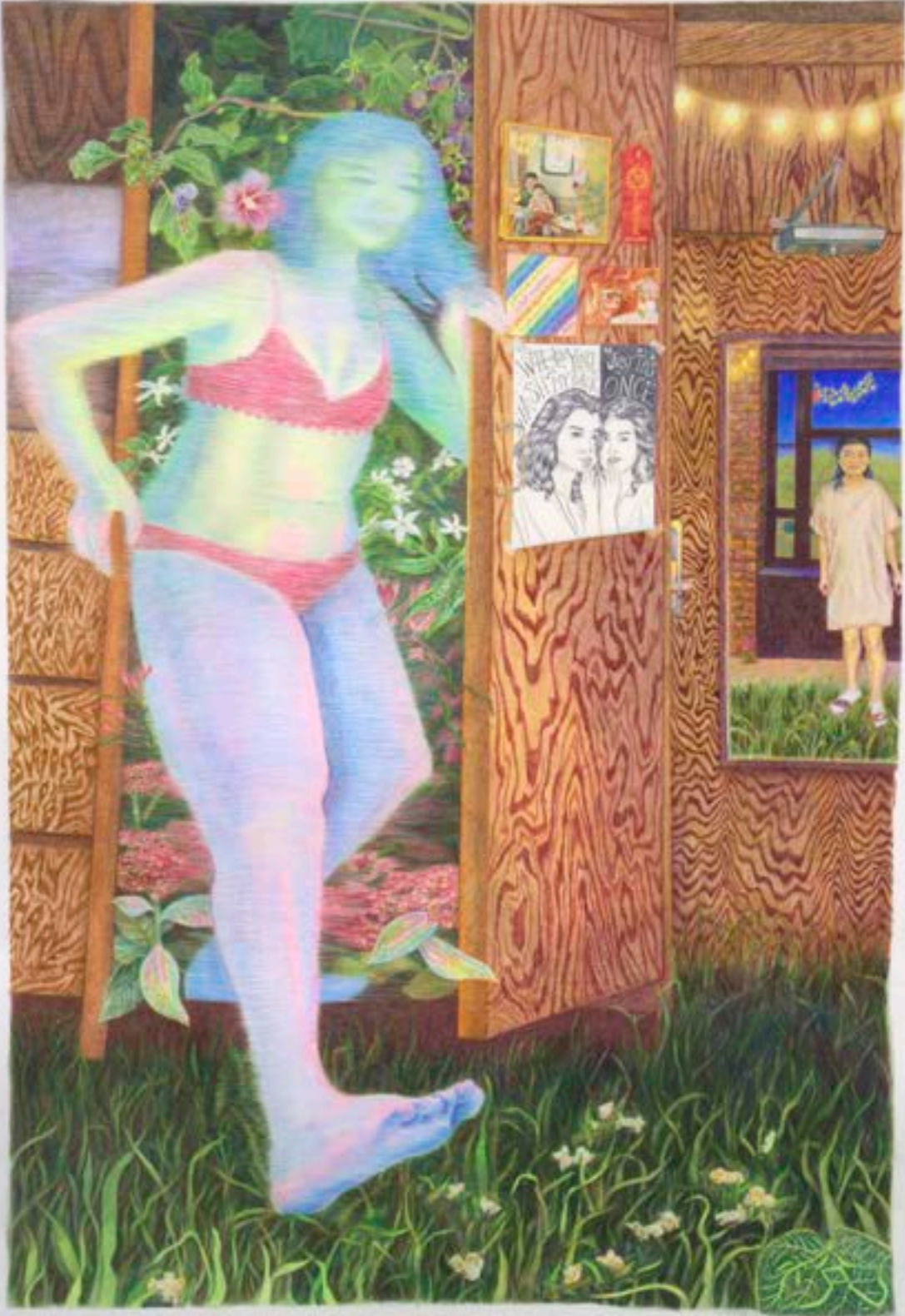
Ashley Jin

Colored pencil on paper

60" x 40"

2025





TASC: our own *metamorphosis*

Throughout this year, TASC has undergone significant restructuring with such a large graduating class from the previous academic year. This very publication you are reading has historically been worked on only during the spring semester of each academic year. To accommodate for structural changes and to make working on the magazine more accessible, we began this past September to bring you the best version of our Asian/Asian American community's annual literary and art magazine.



As young organizers, a great way to express community needs and demands is through art. Some of our members used their artistic expertise to facilitate a workshop on stamp and kite making, with the intention of flying these kites and displaying these stamps at future collective movements and events.

To expand our knowledge of political history within the Asian diaspora, we collaborated with Cambodian Student Coalition (CSC), a new Asian culture club for this academic year, to give an educational workshop on the Khmer Rouge genocide. We are very fortunate to have had guest speakers with first-person perspective on the genocide.



One of our main goals is to help educate Tufts' broader Asian/Asian American diaspora on our politically, socially connected histories and identities. To do so, we hosted an interactive workshop that engaged students with their identity in ways they may have not thought about before. We also helped educate students on how formal and socially-constructed institutions have interacted with our identities through history to make students more consciously aware of systemic power.



Staff List

Lead Layout Editors

Anna Zhang A '25



Alyssa Liao A '25



Andrea Cabochan A' 27



Thea Loh A' 27

"Mao Mao"

Sophia Kschwendt A' 27

"Smiski"

What is a trinket you own that best represents you?

Lead Writing Edit

Rose Fotino A '25

Arya Radhakrishnan A '27

"My tiny mouse band"



Emily Tran A '27



Writing Editors

Sonia Dhar A '26

Emily Sullivan A '26

Anneke Chan A '25

Ai Grace Acton A '26
"Unicorn pat lamp"



Layout Editors

Emma Luo A '25
"moose and bear arm wrestling!"



Jacob Chen A '25
"cat"



Jewel Kyaw A '25

Mimi Zhang A '25



Nikhita Goel A '26
"My purple bracelet"

Samantha Ko E '26
"Smiski laying down - i like laying down"







