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# BIRDSONG

She walked among the towering trees  
Her footsteps made no sound  
She was so slight and tiny  
She could hardly dent the dark, wet ground

There were wild flowers in her hair  
Which shone golden as the sun  
She had been travelling for so long  
But her journey had barely begun

She listened to the birdsong  
She could almost recognize the tune  
She wasn't sure where she had heard it  
But it definitely wasn't new

She sat on the banks of the bubbling river  
The water clear as glass  
She closed her eyes and began to pray  
Hoping it would last

The woodland creatures felt her presence  
They watched over her as she walked along  
And slept beneath the silver stars  
Dreaming of birdsong

One rainy morning  
She took shelter in a pine  
The forest blurry through a sheet of water  
She felt frozen in time

When the clouds parted she disappeared  
Down a trail to her right  
She followed the birdsong all the way  
And the day turned to night

The woodland creatures were silent  
But they weren't afraid  
Though they could no longer feel her  
They knew that she was safe

She was never seen in those woods again  
But her spirit lives on  
She is the river, the wildflowers, the towering trees  
And the beautiful, haunting birdsong



# Of Ghosts, a Stick, and of Conner Noyes

- Written by  
Jonathan Wang
- Edited by  
Julie Cui
- Designed by  
Annie Tian

Look, this town doesn't have ghost stories.

Not anymore, in any case. Not after Conner Noyes.

Who was that, you ask? Well... we're not supposed to say anything about it...but Sycroft can go ahead and put me in the grinder all they want as far as I'm concerned. I'm an old man now and they can screw off with their 'security'.

You see, those Sycroft creeps downriver left a while ago. Why, you ask? Good question. Ask a creep next time you see one. And shoot him, for good measure. Now don't interrupt. All those SSCs prowling around at night, doing who knows what...don't give me that about them 'just' being the security force. The way those 'Sycroft Security Corps' people acted, you would think they were some secret police.

...Oh yeah, sure, Sycroft did stuff. Plenty of stuff, in fact. And a bit too much, if you ask me. Let me tell you something, kid. When people start sticking words like "Technology for Human Development" on some planet in the back of nowhere, you know they're hiding something.

What did I say about not interrupting? Honestly, you city people...

Ahh...let's see...how to describe Conner...hmm. Okay, put it like this. He was the sort of guy that never excelled at anything. I'm not saying that he was a bad kid, no, the other way 'round. He was young, sure, about your age I think, and people thought of him as a reliable person for odd jobs. He never really took an interest in anything this town could offer. Heck, he was a plumber, radio operator, ranger - that was fun, did I tell you about the time Conner - right. Sorry. Anyways, his friends and co-workers would go after him sometimes about it, but they always got the 'Oh, you know, I just wanted to try something else.'

You remember those nut jobs that called them selves the... ahh...'Nature Liberation Front'? Real whackos, that lot. Have you ever seen a mama bear take on a gunship? Nature doesn't need protecting; we start getting crazy it'll just reset itself. Without us in the picture. Off topic again...the mind wanders sometimes, ya know? They decided that they had a problem with the creeps downriver, for some reason. This was just before that cruise ship, Millennial Star or whatever, you see, so everyone just sort of forgot about it.

But anyways, those whackos found out that those creeps - yes, I know they're called Sycroft, my, my, testy

kid, aren't you? Those whackos found out that Sycroft - there, happy now? - used regular 'ole planes for transporting their stuff from their factory - or whatever it was - to the spaceport back when they were closing up shop. Apparently it was too close for a suborbital, and we kicked up a hell of a fuss when they tried to chop a way through.

Those NLF crazies got their hands on a couple of heat-seeking missiles, how, I don't know and I don't want to know. So when the next cargo plane went past, BOOM, down it went just a few kilometers upriver. While Isabelle radioed the spaceport - it would have been odd if we didn't - the rest of us were busy getting a salvage team over to the crash site. I mean, you don't just pass up the chance to get some quality steel - yes, we do know about that policy, what did I say about not interrupting? Anyhow, I was chosen since I was a pretty decent tracker back then. Conner was on the team, of course.

We could smell the melted plastics and see the smoke billowing up way before we saw the plane. It had smashed into the ground, snapping trees and blasting a crater out of the earth. It had thrown up so much dirt that all the fires were extinguished; all that was left were smoldering engines and bits and pieces of the plane strewn over the ground. A wheel here, a wing there...

Another thing: the plane had been carrying black boxes - yes, black boxes - when it went down. And they were lying everywhere, big and small. That got our attention quick.

Yeah, those rumors are true, I guess. Those Sycroft creeps have some weird stuff in those boxes,



or whatever and Conner's hand would fly over the wall, jumping here and there. His illustrations were all so accurate, he was holding back when he drew that circle, that's for sure. They were all done really well – not only could you see stickmen storming castle walls with Ascanian flags, there would be knights fighting with dragons while clowns juggled pies. Not realistic, yes, but that was part of the appeal. When Conner finished a scene or sketch, he would cover the wall with white paint; when he covered all four walls, it signaled the end of the show until the paint dried.

Meanwhile, Conner was ...changing, let's say. Remember when I'd said he was excited, something that never happened with him, when he first came back with that stick? We all thought that his excitement, his fervor, would fade over time...but it never left him. If anything, it seemed to grow stronger, some nervous energy took hold of him. He was always a quiet person with regular schedules, but now he slept less, his opinions became more frenzied, he got into bar fights, and was beginning to make people uneasy when they were in his company. Something in the eyes, see, was just off-putting. I can't really describe it...something just wasn't right in there.

A few months passed, and Conner's audience was expanding faster than summer wildfires. Nearly everyone, from the poorest farmer to the mayor, even, paid to see Conner's art show. He had to rent out larger and larger places now, too. Also, he didn't stop after one scene was done now; instead he drew the next on the blank space next to it. Monsters became more and more creative, the stickmen began using outlandish weapons



– everything was becoming wilder, all for the crowd's interests.

Conner became quite a drinker, and sometimes when he got really drunk, he would whip out a notepad and start drawing with that stick with a gigantic grin on his face. No one ever saw what he was drawing, but –put it this way, when the SSCs came, they had it incinerated by a termite burner– I'm getting ahead of myself, point is, he was hitting the bottle, and that's what ruined everything.

One the night of his last performance, he walked onto the stage in front of the cheering crowd. It was obvious he was drunk; I could smell the whiskey on him from where I was sitting in the third row. The show started, he went through some sketches and scenarios when someone yelled out that he draw himself. He obliged, of course.

The moment Conner finished connecting the last two lines of his coat, every single character on the wall stopped what they were doing and looked at the illustration. Elephants stopped trumpeting, wizards stopped casting spells,

clowns stopped laughing, everything stopped and looked at the drawing of Conner. The crowd died down

instantly – I remember Conner's face at that moment, pale white as comprehension dawned and drunkenly looking around desperately for the white paint that he had forgotten to set out for the show. Everyone else? They were looking at the Conner on the wall.

In that moment of silence, that Conner reached into his pocket, pulled out a black stick, and drew a door. That drawing – hold on, I need a drink; I've never forgotten that moment –pushed on it.

The door swung open, and the Conner on the wall walked into the auditorium.

Absolute, absolute chaos. Just...I can't describe it. People began screaming and ran for the exits as Conner's characters, those on the wall and those which had been covered up before, ran out of their door. Spells whizzed through the air, pies were thrown, monstrous insects flapped above, robots shot lasers, all sorts of the impossible



alright. A lot of strange stuff was going on with them boxes while we were there. Jennica wandered off and came up to me holding a radio-sized box in her hand. She had a funny look on her face and told me take it. So I did, and when she dumped it into my arms, this incredible heat seared my arms. I could feel it cooking me alive. I dropped it screaming. But after much prodding by Jennica, I, with great reluctance, picked up the box again, expecting the worst.

Only this time, it was numbingly cold. And while we were hauling steel onto the wagons, Morey came upon a black box that was about a quarter meter wide and about two meters long. It seemed to have taken the brunt of the damage; some of the plates were chipped and one plate had even broken off. There were cracks and dents on the inner cover. We also discovered that it was very light when Morey tipped it over to get it out of the way. Well, the moment the box hit the ground, steam came venting out from the cracks and there was a knock from inside the box. Yeah, you heard that right. Morey knocked and shouted if there was anybody in there and if they needed help. There was a pause, and then there were three knocks, just tap tap tap. After that, there was nothing. No knocks, no steam, nothing. Just a badly damaged black box. Then there was that small, palm-sized box that the horses wouldn't even go around... We got out of there quick as we could.

We were on our way back when someone asked where Conner was. Fergus had seen him riding-downriver, but no-one knew what to make of that. All of a sudden he showed up with this

big grin on his face. We found out why soon enough.

He had a black stick with him; it looked like an exceptionally long piece of chalk. We were all wondering what could be so exciting about it when he took out a piece of paper and drew a circle.

It dropped and rested on the border of the paper like a stone.

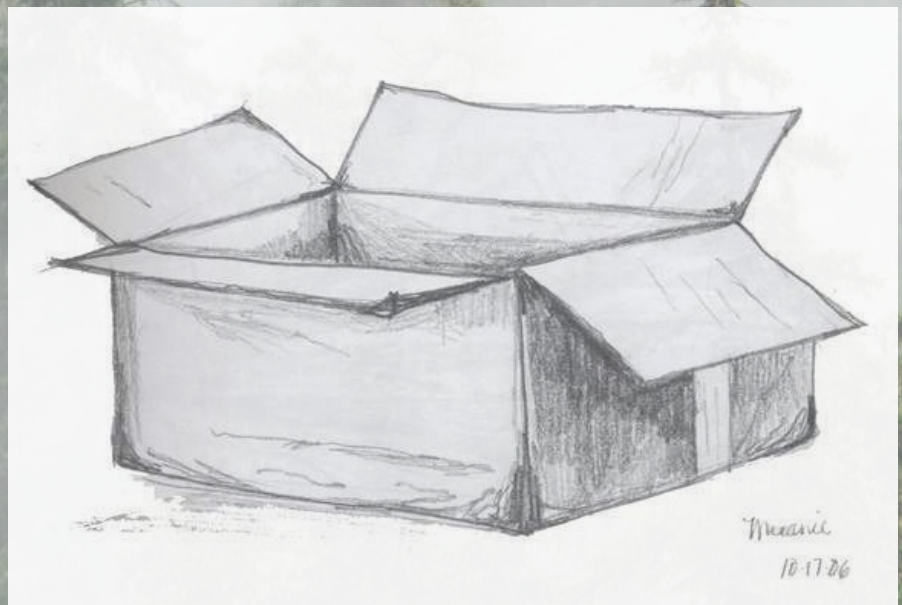
Conner passed around the paper, and as he did so, the circle rolled around. We asked where he got the stick from and he told us it was from the plane. While everyone had been sifting through the wreckage, Conner thought he saw a black box floating downriver and followed it. When he finally caught up with it, he grabbed it...and the box ...ahh...folded back into itself, let's say. He couldn't really describe it himself; it just kind of shrunk up and opened. Nonetheless, inside was the stick.

Poor Conner. He had us entranced by the images he was drawing...and what images! Stick figures in plays, fighting each other, you name it. He announced to us all that he was planning on putting on shows to

pay for his food, his rent and the like. If I wasn't so caught up with the moment, I would have saved him a lot of trouble by telling him to put it back. He would have listened, I'm sure. But I was younger then, we all were, and we didn't foresee any problems with encouraging him to share this incredible thing. Now, keep in mind that this planet was developing quite slowly, so we had no network satellites up yet; everything was either by word of mouth or radio. Excited as we were, we knew better than to advertise over radio; SSCs would have been crawling all over the town in a moment. So word went out, quietly, and a decent amount of people showed up for his first show, about sixty people I think.

At the beginning we were all worried about the Sycroft investigation and kept waiting for truckloads of SSCs to rumble into town during Conner's shows. Somehow, they never caught on to the fact that one of their precious boxes was missing. We soon forgot our fears, and the show went on.

Those shows were fantastic! Someone would shout out characters or a scene from a movie, a play, or





emerged from the door. I was near enough from the exit and made it out, luckily. But before I got out, I looked back and was the only one who saw what was happening back on the stage.

Conner Noyes was being dragged kicking and screaming by his creations towards the door his copy had drawn.

The auditorium burnt down. It brought in the fire crews from the spaceport. They brought in the rangers, which in turn brought in the military. Sycroft arrived a few hours later and hushed everything up.

In retrospect, I think we got off easy. I think Sycroft wanted to get over this as quickly as possible, too. They went over Conner's

place, questioned everyone that was at the auditorium, and gave us all a stern talking-down for holding Sycroft property. The fire was blamed on an errant cigarette and the SSC ensured the entire town was sworn to secrecy. Conner was made to never have existed. The rubble from the auditorium was carted off and the area was turned into a garden, a gift from Sycroft to remember those who died in the fire and to honor those who died fighting it. The official line was that it was merely a fire. Only a fire, you understand. Nothing more than that.

Now think about this: there were other black boxes larger than a man, a horse, even, where the plane crashed. Most of them were much larger than the one holding Conner's stick. If a box that small

could hold something so awful, what were in those other boxes?

That's a question that I don't think anyone on the salvage team wanted to think about, of the close calls we might've had. Conner's fate stuck in our minds; notice that we don't go salvaging much anymore.

We also don't go into the forest on the outskirts of the town. Ever. And it will do you good to do the same. Now I don't know how many of Conner's creations escaped and how many the SSCs caught, but I'll tell you this: You were asking about those white figures?

This town doesn't have ghost stories.







# Photography







*By Annie Tian*

*Designed By Sandra Zheng*



# ARTWORK



Title: Hymenopetra  
Medium: Mixed Media  
Artist: Sandra Zheng



Title: Elf  
Medium: Digital  
Artist: Amy Chen





Title: Time  
Medium: Watercolour  
Artist: Sandra Zheng



Title: Karma  
Medium: Acrylic Paint  
Artist: Sandra Zheng



# Interview with Ms. Webber



Interview and  
design by  
Tiffany Wong  
Edited by  
Kristine Ho  
Photography by  
Sharon Siu

## Let's begin with a typical day in your life.

I wake up at 6 am, prepare myself for the day and make my lunch. I drive to school with Ms. McKay. We drive through the park, over a bridge and along the beach. It's a pretty route.

When I arrive at school, I make my tea and boil water for the other teachers. I open the studio, ready the room for students, help the kids that arrive and prepare for class. Sometimes, I read the paper. Then I teach all day.

## What inspires your fashion?

Fabrics. I also look at what students wear. I will do a grown-up version of what they are wearing. And I do like shoes. *Fancy shoes.*

## Some things that make you happy?

I enjoy cooking, bake and gardening. I also do a lot of sewing and interior design - that kind of thing.

I like sports. I love swimming and playing sports with my grandnieces.

I like playing. I don't have to be good at anything. I just have to be involved, and that's all that counts.

My favourite food is ice cream and my favourite colour is definitely blue.

## What is one piece of advice you would give to us high schoolers?

If a door opens, if something new comes up, try it. You should really take the chances and try things while you're young, because you don't know what's out there. The more things you try, the better you get to know yourself.

## Any advice for artists?

Keep working, keep trying. Experiment with different mediums, try working with different subjects. If your painting isn't going well, draw. If your drawing isn't going well, go out and take photographs.

Talk to fellow artists and form a group so you can support one another. Always say something kind about somebody else's work. Be supportive, and be serious about your feedback on other people's artwork.

## Don't stop working.

Always work on something.



### Which high school did you attend?

I attended Sir Charles Tupper Secondary School.

### What's your favourite childhood memory?

On Sunday mornings, we went fishing with my dad. We leave for Lion's Bay in a little, tiny boat at 3 AM. There were lots of salmon when I was young, so you could go fishing for salmon and catch a salmon every time. We'd bring the fish home, show it to my mom and then have salmon for dinner.

That was one of my favourite memories with my dad. Oh, and also going to Disneyland. That was fun.

### Any differences between teenagers now and when you were in school?

Nowadays you're very well cared for. There's a lot of forgiveness for youth. The opportunities are also better for you. In my day, we had to be much more responsible for ourselves. We were more resilient.

Today people are more materialistic. People are more focused about owning things. Back then, we didn't have anything, really. So it was about relying on yourself and being humble.

### Can you list all your jobs in order?

When I was a kid, I was a berry picker who picked strawberries and blueberries. When I was 18 or 19, I got a job at Made Ribbons and Bows in a factory warehouse. I worked a variety of jobs there while I went to university. Some tasks included packaging, repackaging, and making souvenirs. I also worked at BC Directories during my university years. We cut up the phone book so people could make new directories. This job was called a stripper, believe it or not.

Later, I worked as a cook, and then made hamburgers at A&W.

When I was in Toronto, I did operations for a dress company. I also worked as a Revlon representative and modeled for the company's promotions. When I came back to Vancouver, I was a teacher-on-call for a long time.

I later worked as a librarian for 22 years. I owned a flower shop, and I also have a gardening business. I do gardening and design gardens for different clients. I'm still doing that right now. Besides that, I paint and hold painting exhibitions to sell my artwork.

### What's the difference between Vancouver then and Vancouver now?

Before, in Vancouver, we were always willing to help people in our communities. We mowed lawns for the neighbors. There was no expectation for helping others. It was just the right thing to do.

I think now you're more anonymous in the big city. You don't know the people in your neighborhood. You wouldn't know if the person two blocks away from you could use your help and might need the leaves on their lawns raked. Maybe you would feel too nervous to go and do it. In our generation, we would just go over and do it. It's like a random act of kindness. It was your social responsibility to do that for your neighborhood, for the people in your community. And now I think

**we have become so afraid of doing the wrong things,**

of stepping on someone's toes, that you're not given that opportunity to perform those random acts of kindness. You would feel like you would need permission.





INTERVIEW WITH

# COGNITION



Interview and Design by Kristine Ho  
Edited by Jessica Li

“Some superheroes  
die.”

**I**t's not often that you see a group of students try to take on a full-scale movie challenge. But Byng students this year have tried their hand at just that. A mix of sci-fi and thriller, *Cognition* is a superhero film project entered in the Cinecoup competition and created by Byng students of all grades. *Avolution* has had the pleasure of interviewing Bobby Zheng, Ben Fieschi-Rose and Megan McDonald, three students involved in the project's production.





**avo** So what's this film you're producing?

**cog** It's called Cognition, and it's set in the near future. A form of technology that improves brain function has recently been created by the company Cognition. Cognition performs beta tests for the technology on regular people, including the protagonists. At first, the experiment appears to be a failure, but the participants soon begin to develop superpowers. The company doesn't want its investors or the public to discover the truth, so they begin to hunt down the project's participants. The remaining survivors have two choices: run away, or kill the mastermind behind the experiment.

**avo** What are some of the protagonists' powers?

**cog** All the protagonists only have small powers, like the ability to change an object's colour or going back in time for five minutes.

**avo** How is Cognition a unique superhero movie?

**cog** Unlike most mainstream superheroes, our protagonists are average Joes who only have small powers limited in range and use. They're forced to rely on intelligence rather than their powers, since their powers will disappear if used too often. If they don't plan their actions well, they'll die. So unlike Batman or Superman, they can't just rely on brute strength.

**avo** Can you tell us about the Cinecoup challenge?

**cog** You produce snippets of a film and upload it to Cinecoup's website. The film's popularity moves up the rankings based on public votes. We had to promote Cognition through social media and the student body in order to get votes... we even had Cognition posters and merchandise made! Each Sunday we received a new "mission" for the film that we had to complete the following week. The top five films will be optioned for development, and the winning one will receive \$1 million in production financing and will be shown in Cineplex theatres.





**avo** What were some filming challenges you faced during the competition?

**cog** Nighttime shoots, actor availability, our small budget... The time stress was a big one. We would receive Cinecoup missions on Sunday every week, discuss plans on Monday, shoot on Tuesday and get the clip edited on Thursday. We also had different schedules outside of school, and weren't able to film during school hours.

**avo** What was the best part of filmmaking?

**cog** Definitely hanging out with others and knowing you were part of the filmmaking. It's a really tiring process, but you can't do alone. Filmmaking involves a lot different talents, so everyone on the crew - actors, makeup artists, cameraman, etc. - can shine. It's gratifying when you can watch the film and pick out what you contributed to it.

**avo** Any advice for aspiring filmmakers?

**cog** Get a good team that's committed. It's all about the team. You really have to work together. And just go out and shoot. Even if you don't produce something good, you just gotta keep doing it. You might make 10 bad movies, but don't be discouraged. One day it'll be funny to watch.

Students involved in Cognition include Bobby Zheng, Tyler Han, Daniel Joo, Ben Fieschi-Rose, Trevor McGrady, Megan McDonald, Patrick McDermott, Nikita Kalugin, Andreas Pertersen, Ethan Cook, Emma Fenty, Mark Walter and Connor Sandover. Teachers involved include Mr. Pelletier, Ms. Mann and Mr. Howes. [Kudos to all who took part!](#)

“ It's all about the team.  
You really have  
to work together. ”

To watch the trailer, go to:  
[www.cinecoup.com/cognition/trailer](http://www.cinecoup.com/cognition/trailer)



Let's talk about the Internet for a minute.

I'm sure you are all familiar with that enormous network of computers that can bring in information instantaneously from anywhere at any time around the globe. It has immense potential, I'm sure we can all agree, to change the world around us for the better. However, how many of us actually use it as it says on the label?

A little bit of digression:

I believe it is safe to say that everyone, or a large majority of it, quite certainly knows of Justin Bieber's drunken shenanigans on January 23, 2014.

But how many of us know that on the exact same date, the Euromaidan protests reached a new level of violence? Scratch that, how many of us even know that Ukrainians are protesting against their corrupt government?

And closer to home, perhaps you have heard of Cory Monteith's death from a drug overdose at the Fairmont on July 13, 2013? I am sure you have heard of the candlelight vigil held for him.

On July 19, 2013, a train that was carrying oil exploded in the middle of Lac-Mégantic, killing forty-seven people and flattening most of the center of town. But no-one who died there was a celebrity, so of course Cory's death overshadowed that little incident.

Most definitely, they take place in areas that are far from Vancouver. Does that make it any less relevant, though? In our developed and relatively safe little corner of

the world, we have fallen into the pattern of thinking that all that matters is the 'here', and everything else is somewhere out there in the great unknown called 'not my problem'.

A good question could be why, with the near-instantaneous availability of news, why no one seems to be cognizant of such huge events. But more importantly, I believe, how many people care?

When we idly stand by, engrossed in our own petty lives, while thousands of others your age are beaten, raped, executed, and enslaved, what does that say about us as a society?

What does it say about as individuals, as humans?

The next time you pick up a phone or boot up a computer and connect to the Internet, ready to update yourself on the latest gossip on who likes whom, what celebrity did what, which Korean pop star is the 'cutest', pause for a moment and think: does it really matter? Does obsessing over people who do not know of nor care for your existence except for the fact you make them money really matter in the long run? Does obsessing over who likes who at school really matter in the long run?

Would it really hurt to perhaps check up on what's happening around the world? At the very least, you would find out about the Euromaidan protests in Ukraine and the ongoing Syrian Civil War. If you do not know what I just wrote, there is Google. And Twitter. And Facebook. And every other news site, search engine, and social media site. With the plentitude of videos, eyewitness

accounts, and photos floating around the Internet, your argument of "I didn't know" has never been so invalid.

I am not encouraging you to throw away your smartphones. I am not asking you to stop using your computers. I am encouraging you to use them, use them in a way that would help others by bringing attention to their fears, to their efforts, and to their courage. I am asking you to realize that there is a whole wide world out there, and you are a part of it. While you may be thousands of kilometers from an issue by bringing awareness to it, you CAN make a difference.

Remember, you have access to the summation of millennia of technological development.

Make sure you use it wisely.

# On the Internet and You

Written by Jonathan Wang

Edited by Julie Cui

Designed by Annie Tian





# Anime

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## *What it is and why you should watch it*

WRITTEN BY ANNIE DU  
EDITED BY INGRID MA & JULIA HO  
DESIGNED BY KRISTINE HO

**“W**HY DO YOU LIKE THIS anime cartoon stuff anyway?” is a common question posed to me whenever someone catches me watching anime. It is the perpetual question raised to most anime fans in the West at some point. Time and time again, I find myself pausing my show and trying to formulate the proper response. Here are some points for those who either don't understand what all the fuss is about, or are newcomers to the genre.

In Japan, anything animated is categorized under the blanket term of anime, but in North America, anime specifically refers to animation produced in Japan. One of the most recognizable conventions of anime is its unique artistic style (usually with large eyes and unusual hair colours). As with all mediums, anime plot genres branch in

many directions, from romance, to horror, to fantasy. Different animes target different age groups. For example, *shoujo* is the term for girls' anime, and generally involves heavy elements of romance and effeminate characters, while *shonen* is boys' anime and usually focuses on action sequences and adventures or camaraderie between members of sports teams and fighting squads. Some popular titles in *shoujo* are *Fruits Basket*, *Ouran High School Host Club*, and *Sailor Moon*, while *Naruto*, *Bleach*, and *One Piece* are the animes that reign supreme in the Western shonen fanbase.

On the other end of the age scale, *seinen* is anime aimed at college-aged or older men. This genre differs from the shonen genre in its wider range of artistic styles and subject matter. Although *seinen* also focuses on much the same

themes as shonen, it usually places more emphasis on plot and is more rooted in reality, making it darker than most shonen. *Death Note*, *Monster*, and *Cowboy Bebop* are familiar titles in this category. *Josei* is the anime equivalent of the Harlequin novel and is the female counterpart to *seinen*, with titles such as *Paradise Kiss*, *Honey and Clover*, and *Tramps Like Us*. Recurring themes in *josei* include office life, marriage, infidelity, and very large amounts of romance.

With this captivating range of subject material and artistic styles, anime has the capability to present very engaging storylines and characters. It is possible to animate almost anything, and therefore almost everything *is* animated, from transforming magical girls to arms dealers to detectives gathering evidence at a gruesome crime scene.







## Tokyo Ghoul, a dark fantasy seinen

Set in modern day Japan, Tokyo Ghoul follows the story of university student Kaneki Ken, a boy who is attacked by a flesh-eating ghoul and soon becomes one himself.

Many Japanese *manga*, or comics, are also adapted into anime. Even Western live-action shows, such as the popular TV series *Supernatural*, have received the anime adaptation treatment.

When North American audiences think of animation, they often tend to associate the word with Disney, child-friendly shows, or to adult humor, such as *Family Guy* or *The Simpsons*. In North America, animation is linked to children's cartoons, and therefore animation as a medium that is inaccurately judged to be unsuitable for anything except shallow, juvenile themes, characters, and storylines. Since anime is Japanese animation, it is lumped

together with cartoons and often brushed off as inconsequential. Some people think: cartoons are "for kids", so anime must also be "for kids".

With the aforementioned range of subject material, however, it is almost impossible for anime to be shallow. Anime is a medium that can produce shows and franchises that are just as magnetic and thought-provoking as any of their live-action counterparts. I challenge anyone who has watched *Game of Thrones* to watch *Fate/Zero* and the rest of the *Fate/Stay Night* franchise and deny that a parallel exists; both shows raise serious questions about the nature of

leadership and justice (be warned, however, that producer Gen Urobuchi has the fan nickname 'Urobutcher' and possesses the same tendencies as George R. R. Martin.). *Neon Genesis Evangelion* raises enough Biblical references and allusions to rival the complexity of *The Golden Compass* by Philip Pullman. *Monster* is just as intriguing as a psychological thriller as *Inception* (if not creepier), and if *Death Note* does not strike you as a theological and philosophical argument disguised as a crime drama, I don't know what does. Some anime also deals with real life events and issues: *Grave of the Fireflies* deals with the experiences and harsh





realities of World War II, and *Tokyo Magnitude 8.0* tells the story of the very possible tragedy of a large scale earthquake in Tokyo.

Another point of appeal that draws in fans is the fact that anime also throws a distinctly Japanese flair into the stories and their elements. Shrine maidens, spirits, and exorcists pepper the fantasy realm, while the Winter Cup of Tokyo features regularly in high school basketball animes. I'm not saying that you can get an *accurate* representation of Japanese culture through anime; it'll be like asking someone to draw an accurate sketch of American culture during the 1800s by watching Westerns. You can, however, get a small taste of a culture that is completely different from the one you're familiar with,

and you might be drawn in.

Of course, anime isn't *all* good. There are really bad ones (*Mad Bull 34* was a total waste of twenty minutes of my life), mediocre ones, and some weird ones. Live action movies and TV series have their flops and horrible mentions; anime does too. This does not detract from the true gems in the genre in any way, just as bad movies don't stop people from watching movies.

Animation is a type of pop art that is slowly gaining mainstream popularity in North American pop culture. There are thousands upon thousands of anime fans in Canada and abroad; there are enough fans in Vancouver alone to support at least two large scale annual conventions, Anime Evolution and Anime Revolution. Influences of

the anime art style can be found in American animated shows, such as *Avatar: the Last Airbender* and more recently *The Legend of Korra*.

Despite this enthusiastic support, anime still suffers from juvenile connotations in North America. If you've ever had someone get mad at you for calling anime 'cartoons', this is the reason: yes, anime is animated, like cartoons. However, the treatment of the subject material and the artistic value in the shows differentiate anime from cartoons. Just because something is animated like cartoons does not mean that it is "for kids". Keep this in mind the next time you ask someone why they enjoy anime.



# T

he blank paper stared at me critically, questioning my ability to record an idea worthy enough to be placed upon its faint blue lines. I sighed, shifting my eyes to the trashcan beside me. Filled to the brim with crumpled paper, it served as a constant reminder of my failed attempts of grandeur, originality and intrigue.

I had never believed in writer's block, and would stubbornly argue that a great writer should always have something remarkable or significant to compose. As I analyzed my helpless state, I felt that I was betraying myself, and that I had given into the worldly opinions I previously disregarded. The itching sense of doubt as to whether or not I had been wrong all this time caused me to reconsider my former disputes. I soon realized that my argument had been one-sided; it was blissfully disguised by eloquent language, but lacked the personal experience I was currently facing.

I summed up my opponent, and in return the paper mocked me with the empty lines I so desperately longed to fill. I was forced to face the undeniable truth – I had writer's block.



Written by  
Bryony Pratt

Edited by  
Myra Niu

Designed by  
Kristine Ho

# BLANK PAPER

*... when tragedy strikes, and you're plagued with the inability to write.*





# TV Recommendations

Have you ever slumped on the couch, TV remote in hand, flipping through the channels in vain search of a unique, good quality show that is worth your time? In an attempt to help you find what you may be looking for, I recommend to you a couple of British TV shows you may not have seen.

## Doctor Who (BBC)

You may have heard of this one because it is the longest running sci-fi show ever with a huge fan base that spans generations. (Shout out to the many Whovians at Byng!) Basically, the show is about a centuries-old alien Time Lord called the Doctor. He travels through space and time in a space ship disguised as a police telephone box (that is actually infinitely bigger on the inside) to help people and right wrongs. One of the great things about the show is its constant renewal. Although the central messages of the show and the Doctor's core personality stay the same, the portrayals of the Doctor and the humans he travels with change. This is because the Doctor has the ability to regenerate, renewing into another version of himself with a different appearance and set of mannerisms when dying. His companions, obviously, cannot travel with him forever.

Doctor Who started out as an educational show for kids back in 1963 with the 1st Doctor in black and white, and ran until 1989. Though this clas-

sic era was loved by older generations, it understandably falls short of modern standards in terms of production and effects. After a lapse in production and a TV film in 1996, the series was rebooted in 2005 with the 9th Doctor and gained huge popularity. The 10th and the 11th Doctors, played by David Tennant and Matt Smith respectively, were arguably the most well-known and loved portrayals to date.

In the rebooted version of the show, there are generally 14 episodes in a season, each a little less than an hour long. There are also the occasional specials and mini episodes in addition to several spinoff series. Doctor Who returns fall of 2014 with the 8th season, featuring the newly-regenerated 12th Doctor, played by Peter Capaldi.

Aspects you might like:

- Ingenious plot arcs connecting episodes and seasons
- Plot twists, double meanings, generaw-dropping moments—lots of them
- Great sets and special effects, making the scenes more lifelike

- Relatable characters and emotional situations
- Interesting twists on history (\*Spoilers!\* The Doctor and companions accidentally saving Hitler and proceeding to shove him in a cupboard, the Doctor “marrying” Queen Elizabeth I, the lost play of Shakespeare destroyed because it contained spells of “witchcraft” etc.)
- The many unique monsters and creatures the Doctor encounters
- Plenty of action and epic-ness

However:

There is quite a bit of time travel lore and whatnot to explain seemingly impossible situations, which may be a little confusing. It doesn't take away from the quality of the show though. It can get emotional, especially when fans have to say goodbye to certain portrayals of the Doctor and his companions.

Because the show's style, writers, and actors change, you many come some storylines or characters that you don't like as much compared to others.



## Sherlock (BBC)

This is the crime drama show that somewhat took over the internet on New Year's Day with the airing of its 3rd season. A modern version of the detective stories by Arthur Conan Doyle, it is written by the writers of Doctor Who. Benedict Cumberbatch stars as Sherlock Holmes and Martin Freeman stars as Dr. John Watson. In this series, Sherlock Holmes is depicted as an absolute genius who uses unique methods of deduction to help the London police solve crimes. He calls himself "the world's only consulting detective." Holmes notices seemingly insignificant details and makes incredible connections, able to "identify a software designer by his tie and an airline pilot by his left thumb." However, he is completely clueless when it comes to social interactions, appearing unsympathetic and rude. Sherlock doesn't have any "friends" because of his unsociable attitude, strange mannerisms (talking to a skull, for example), and mental talent—until John

becomes his flatmate. The two quickly develop a strong bond and start solving crimes together, with John helping solve cases with his medical expertise and keeping Sherlock morally grounded.

Sherlock currently has 3 seasons, each with 3 movie-quality episodes that are 90 minutes. Every episode generally follows an independent plotline in solving a case. The most recent season aired in January, with the next season likely to air in 2016.

Aspects you might like:

- Plot twists and surprising revelations
- Great mix of comedy and suspense
- Funny banter between characters
- Amazing details in the props and sets
- Cinematography and effects (breath-taking shots of London, creative on-screen text, zoom effects explaining deductions)
- Great music
- The episodes are often full of hidden clues about coming episodes.

However... \*spoilers!\*

- Includes people being shot, people being blown up, guns, blood, and some scary moments. It is crime drama, after all.
- You may be sometimes left wondering: "How on earth did he make sense of that?" Just go along with the genius.
- The writers love to leave fans with suspenseful cliff-hanger season endings. With the 2 years between seasons, it can be frustrating.

Both Doctor Who and Sherlock are truly great shows, and Doctor Who, especially, is such an iconic part of British popular culture. For me, Doctor Who is really exceptional in terms of the storylines and I think it has something for almost everyone. Sherlock, on the other hand, is wonderful because of the way the story is told and the intense moments of suspense and action. I really didn't do the shows justice trying to explain them in a nutshell. Please feel free to check out Doctor Who and Sherlock and I hope you like them!

Both of these shows have large, diverse, and dedicated fan bases that swear by the shows' production qualities, actor performances, and story arcs.

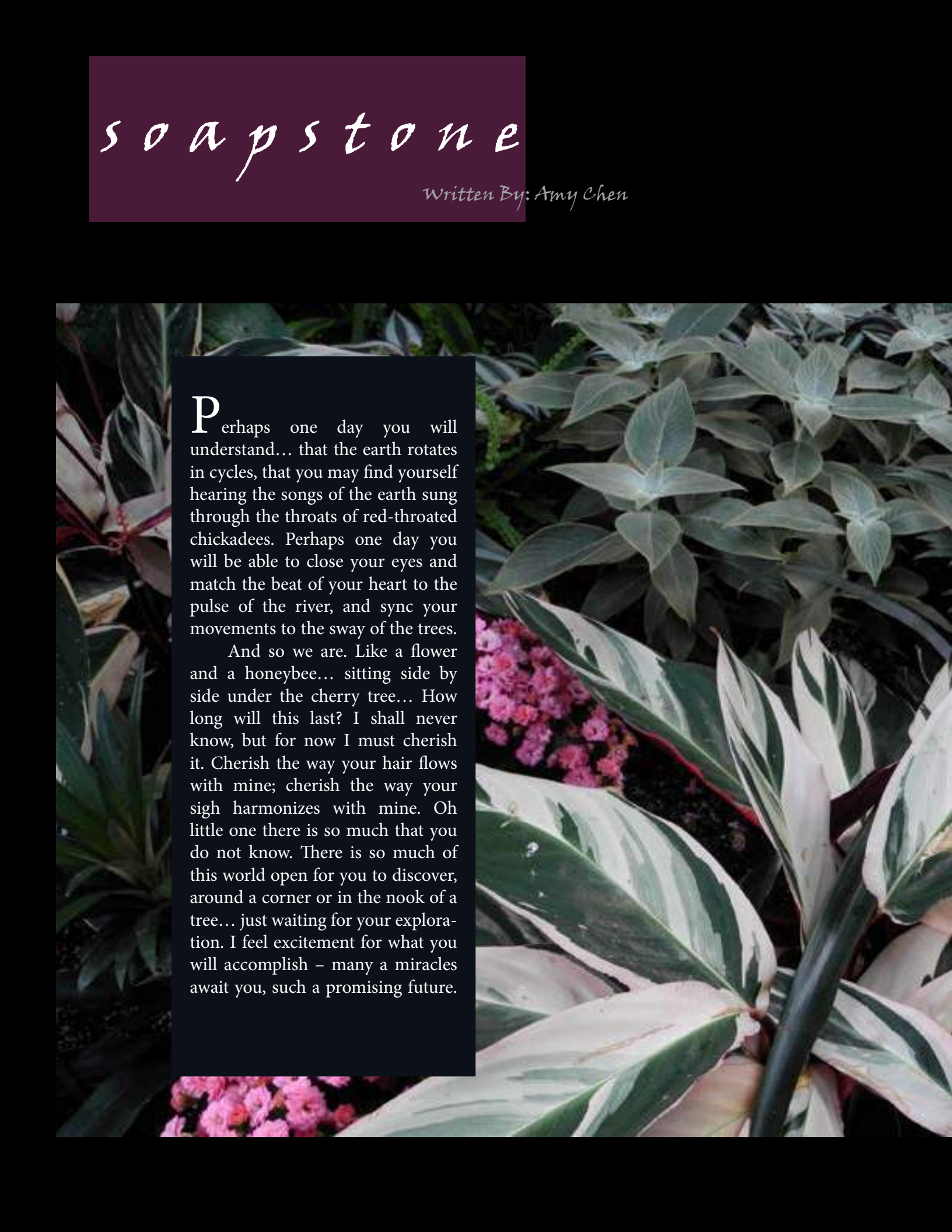


Article by Julie Cui  
Edited by Amy Chen  
Designed by Sharon Siu



# soapstone

*Written By: Amy Chen*



Perhaps one day you will understand... that the earth rotates in cycles, that you may find yourself hearing the songs of the earth sung through the throats of red-throated chickadees. Perhaps one day you will be able to close your eyes and match the beat of your heart to the pulse of the river, and sync your movements to the sway of the trees.

And so we are. Like a flower and a honeybee... sitting side by side under the cherry tree... How long will this last? I shall never know, but for now I must cherish it. Cherish the way your hair flows with mine; cherish the way your sigh harmonizes with mine. Oh little one there is so much that you do not know. There is so much of this world open for you to discover, around a corner or in the nook of a tree... just waiting for your exploration. I feel excitement for what you will accomplish – many a miracles await you, such a promising future.



*Edited By: Myra Niu*

*Designed By: Sandra Zheng*



## ...But

I'm afraid I'm holding you back. For I am no longer myself. A ghost of who I once was. My legs, when once strong and flexible, are now weak and wrought with exhaustion. My bones, when once hardy and compact, are now feeble and brittle. You cannot take me with you anymore. You must continue through this world without me, move with the sound of the birds, sail with the current of the wind. Listen to me little one, you must always move forward, but when it is all over, you must not look back at me, for I am old and wasted.

Do me but one last favor, and I shall be content. Lay me down once more on the soft grasses of our endless meadow, let me feel my nose get tickled and massaged by the thousand wildflowers that sprout. Allow me once more to sniff the scent of rosemary, and watch as the faraway swallows dip and dive in glee. Bring me once more to the riverbed, where the ducks waddle with their quaint yellow fans quivering with joy; let me feel once more the sand tickle my soles and

the cool water caress my legs. But most of all, I wish to cuddle with you one last time, like we always do, in the rocking chair on the porch, gazing up at the moon, wondering what our tomorrow will bring. Yet the answer had always been there. Way up there... towards the silver moon, beyond the moon, beyond the stars, to a place a place where darkness swirls to light.

Tomorrow, my dearest girl, is what you make it. Fate is a word made by the mindless, the afraid. Our path is a bland piece of soapstone, and we are the artists. We chisel and scrape however we wish. Our results, although not perfect, will always hold a place in our hearts, and in the hearts of the ones we show them to. Promise me this... never let the creations of others bother you – they may be more beautiful, more extravagant, grander, but everyone has a unique beauty that outshines the stars. And I'm sure yours will too. Beauty is a state of mind. Nothing is truly more beautiful than another – for opinion is art. You must perfect that, little one, and you will surely see the true wonders life can bring.



# FISTS

---

His hands are smeared with the scars of his struggle;  
Yet sweetened by the perfume of promises;  
Knowing that such visions  
That once seemed impossible to the oppressor and the oppressed  
To reality are raised.  
Billowing in victory: dreams.

There are some particular individuals who can tell you about dreams;  
Their sun-dappled hope amid struggles  
Becomes harder to retrieve every time their oppressors' chins are raised.  
Poised like a fragile bird on a nest of cautious promises,  
A sliver of hope is often oppressed.  
Today, the world finds its reference through the photograph of a vision.

Through metal bars, the Mvezo landscape comes into vision.  
Vibrant hues of swaying grasslands fill his dreams  
And the checkerboard no longer exists; the mere thought is oppressed.  
The never-ending game of chess presents itself like a fruitless struggle;  
It is too dangerous to make any promises  
Or for fists to be raised.

Yet everything changes when a fist is raised-  
Forget impossible. Onwards with the visions,  
Though the hills ahead do not appear promising.  
Deliverance always comes with the dreams,  
A sweet embrace of comfort between the mountainous struggles  
Of the oppressed.

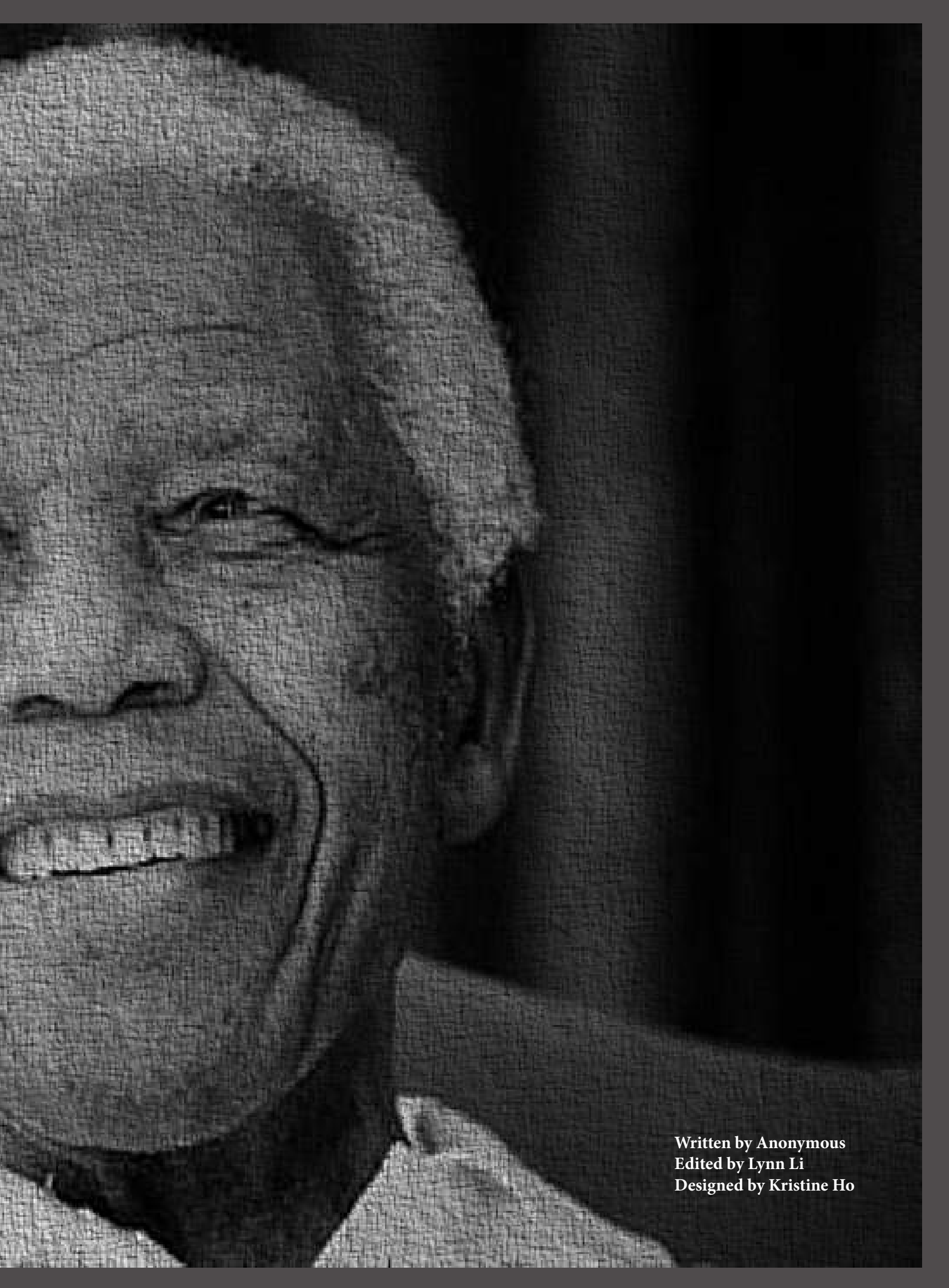
How can it be that such a land experiences "the oppression  
Of one another" and not even questions are raised?  
Hope upon hope, struggle upon struggle  
Alter a complex scene into nothing more than what is in our natural visions,  
And our dreams.  
We silently observe impossibility flower into a promise.

The world we know is slowly becoming the promise,  
Fighting the shadows of oppression.  
The journey does not end; dreams  
Continue to pave the way. Fists raise,  
Supporting the realities that find their roots in impossible visions.  
The giver of this vision- his hands are smeared from struggles.

We remember the struggles  
And we know the visions.  
To them, in support, our fists are raised.







Written by Anonymous  
Edited by Lynn Li  
Designed by Kristine Ho



# Goodbye

---

*noun*     \gü-d-bī\

1: a spoken farewell, a parting.  
2: partaking in an act of leaving.

---

**G**entle souls trapped in the memories

**O**f once so perfect lives.

**O**des of forgotten joy play with the solemn instruments of

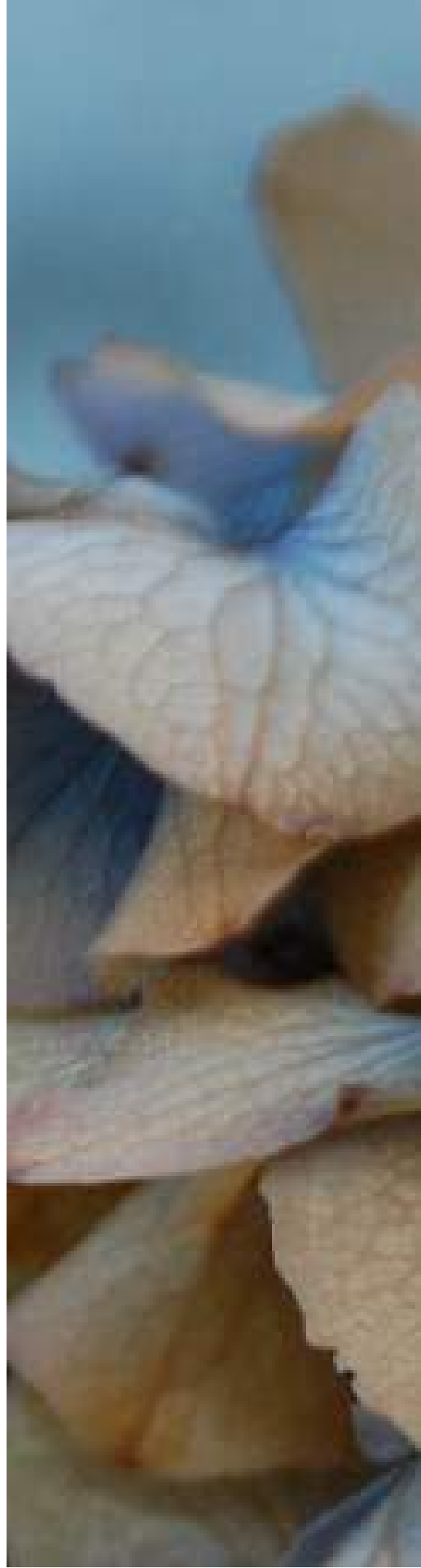
**D**espair and loss.

**B**itter aches are packaged with mourning and woe to reveal

**Y**our fading face, and I only now realize that

**E**ndings can create new beginnings.

Written by Bryony Pratt  
Edited by Myra Niu  
Photography by Olivia Wong  
Designed by Kristine Ho















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