

Persistent, Aspiring, Noble, Diligent, Achieving

# SHSID | TIMES

November December 2022 Edition

snowflakes  
& cinammon

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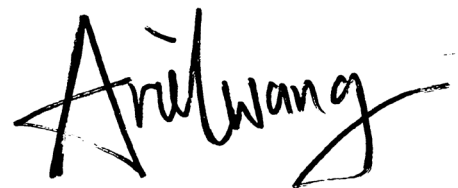


## Letter From the Editors

Winter is coming! Have you ever wondered what it would be like to hibernate? Do you have a winter-specific tradition to look forward to? No winter is absent of a cup of hot beverage, a wish for snow, a bed of fluffy blankets, and a TV show to binge. In Winter, time seems to move a little slower, with spare seconds for us to savor the sight of snowflakes and the taste of cinnamon.

Themed SNOWFLAKES & CINNAMON, our NovDec 2022 edition issue explores the winter wonders around us, ranging from the never-ending search for the holiday spirit to a poetic wish for a fresh beginning. Flipping through the pages, you will immerse yourself in the sweet scents of cinnamon and the unique shapes of snowflakes our writers bring under varying contexts. In addition to romanticizing winter, this issue points the camera to the Behind The Scene of student life and school events in honor of the precious memories we created together.

This has been a difficult year, but 2022 is almost over. While the end of 2022 is bound to be filled with both surprises and disappointment, it is not The End. winter will pass, snow will melt, growth will come, but the show won't stop. So, sit back, relax, grab a Cinnamon Mocha Hot Chocolate, and enjoy the winter wonderland we have to offer!

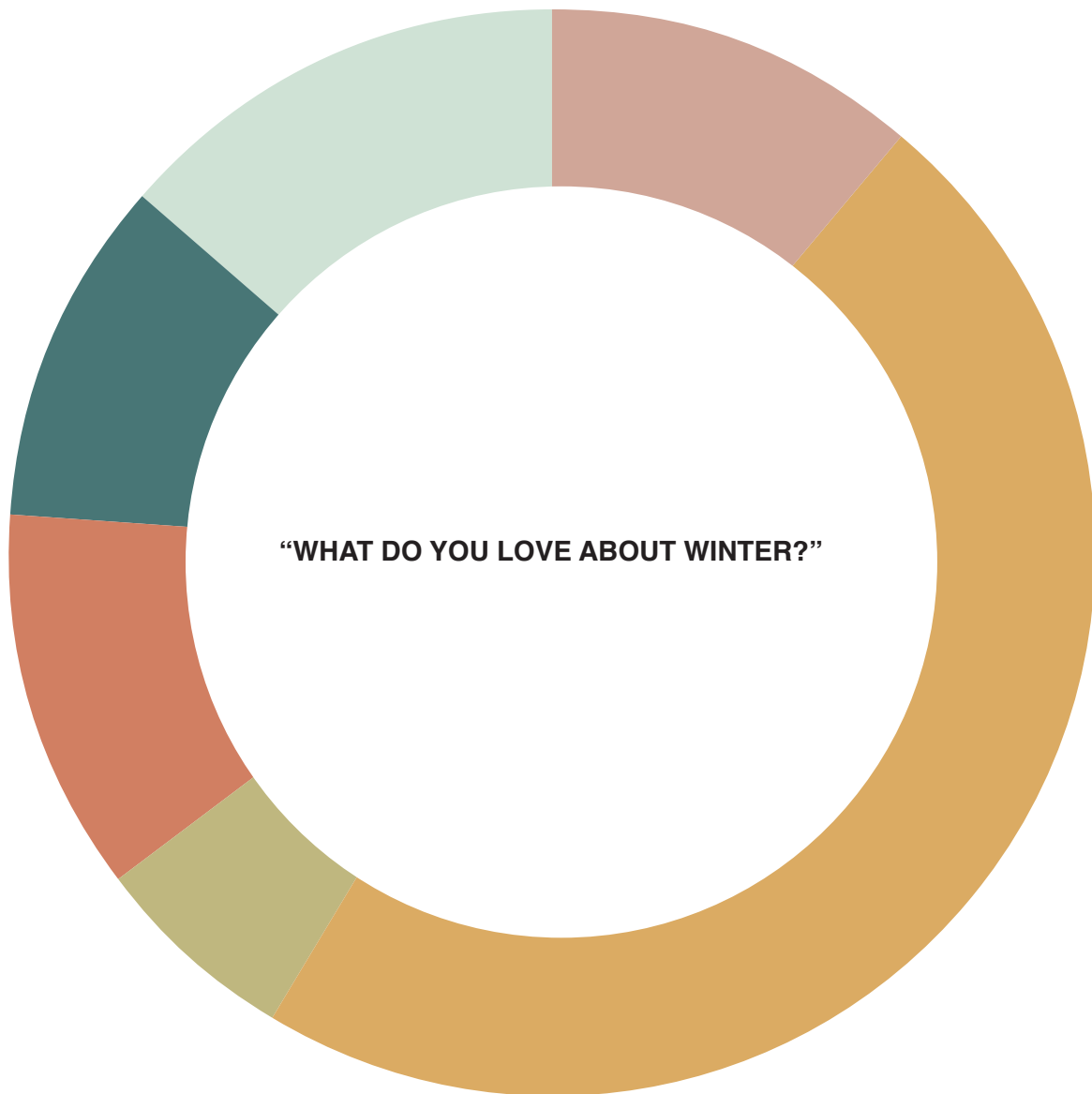


Ariel Wang, Director of Digital Media

# FORUM

The FORUM section is a space of discussion, reflection, and interaction for the readers and writers of *Times*. Whether it's comments, critiques, concerns, or other stories, this section seeks to highlight the importance of everyone's voices. To join FORUM, readers are welcome to submit either written or visual pieces or participate in the online polls on the *Times* official account. A collection of submissions and poll results will be featured in every printed edition to showcase the diverse ideas on campus.

*Email your submissions to [shsidtimes@hotmail.com](mailto:shsidtimes@hotmail.com) and follow SHSID|Times on WeChat to participate in our online polls.*



46% | Hot chocolate & Christmas Gift

13% | Quality time with family & friends

11% | I hate winter :(

11% | The freezing breeze and snow

10% | Never leaving bed

6% | Winter activities (skate, ski, etc.)

## LETTERS

### ON “RHYTHM AND REPETITION”: SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2022 ISSUE

The theme for the SeptOct edition is “Rhythm and Repetition.” Though we haven’t seen the magazine yet, I look forward to seeing all the ways the writers can interpret this prompt. The poll that was posted asked readers how many times we listen to one song. This is a very relatable question to ask since I know many friends who stream songs all the time on different apps. I would love to see how that question is integrated into different pieces to see how various writers can craft stories around the theme.

I think readers would all appreciate it if the editions can be published faster though. The May-June edition still hasn’t come out yet and I wanted to read some pieces on that issue.

– Anonymous

### ON “VIVA LA VIDA: LONG LIVE LIFE”: SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2022 ISSUE

The struggle to accept the ordinary and oftentimes the present is no new experience for me – I’ve always held on dearly to the happiest of times in my memories. Like the main character in Jennifer’s “Viva La Vida: Long Live Life” and by extension the movie *About Time*, I regularly filter experiences that are hard to get by. And now despite having a daily routine that could clearly be improved upon, I have protected myself well enough in this bubble to be unaware. I resonate a lot with the idea of not only “living in the moment,” but “living in the ordinary moment.” To me, the greatest happiness comes from managing an extremely routine life. This could be as simple as going to the gym every other day, or even taking a cold shower every morning. I have yet to balance the small tasks that I dream about and never finish. Instead of imagining the satisfaction that one would gain from achieving a far-away goal, it serves better to take the right step right now.

– Anonymous

1



### 1 | The Youkai Series

Laki Hu 11(10)

This series is inspired by artist Keith Thompson and Japanese decorate scrolls. Each piece of the series presents a unique youkai; the first three being the Kappa , Tengu , and Syutendouji. Unlike Chinese monsters, Japanese youkai do not have a single agreed form. They tend to differ in appearance depending on the area they were spotted. Using this as a starting point, I experimented with the youkai in my drawings by taking pieces of their most representational characteristics and sewing it together with characteristics that I created based on their histories, stories, diet etc.

2



2 | **The Creation of Octavius**  
by Amanda Cheng 12(2)

This painting references “The Creation of Adam” by Michelangelo (c. 1508-1512). Ironically, however, instead of the touch providing the spark of life, the moment that the mass of plastic trash touches the octopus, it will be converted and sucked into the huge “tornado”, becoming part of it as well. The decisive moment brings death, not life.

3 | **The Whale Island**  
by Amanda Cheng 12(2)

This painting is a monthly project for 10th grade Visual Arts course, and is part of my attempt to recreate songs using artworks. The lyrics to this song (can be translated as “the blue whale that transformed into an island”) was inspired by a true story about a blue whale that has a call at a different frequency from other whales, for which it was isolated. While the whale island appears only as a background in my painting, the way the lonely sailor sings simply and happily only for himself is a mirror of the whale and is the central message of the song.

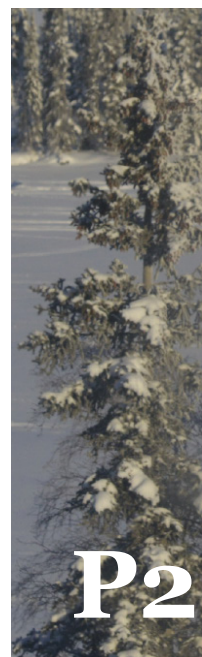
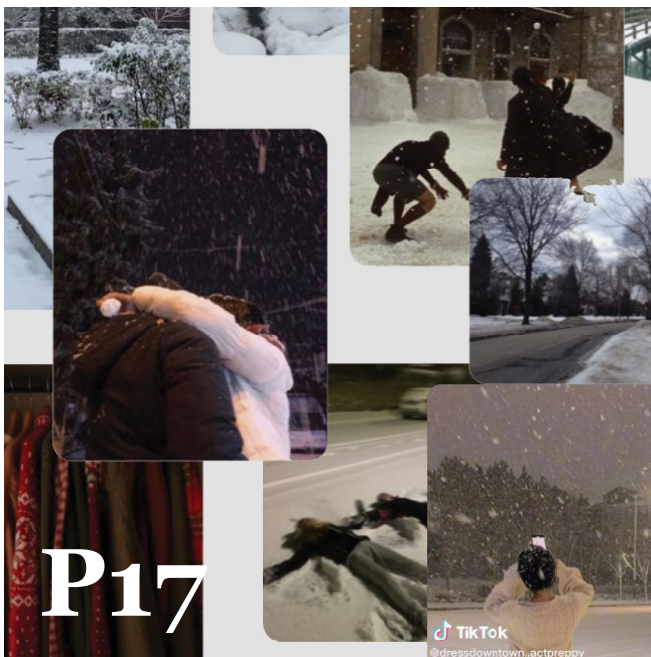
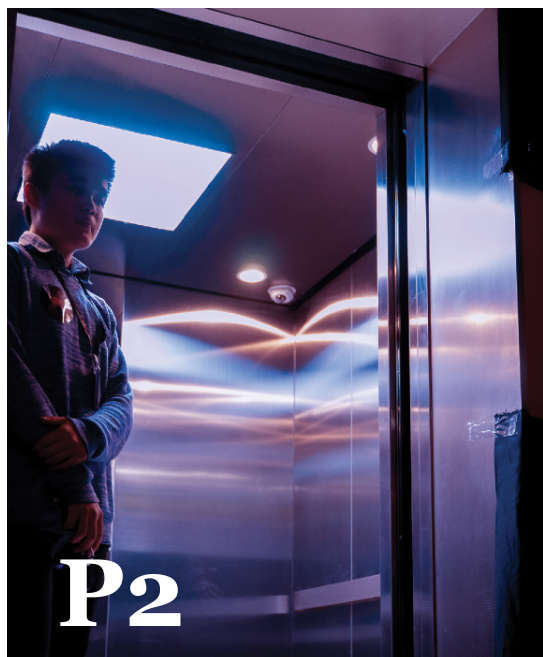
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4 | **Frozen**  
by Annabel Demarino 12(6)

“Frozen“ is related to my inability to let of of the past, depicting a figure in a winter environment surrounded by my objects from my childhood. The cold setting of the piece is meant to symbolize how I wish to be literally frozen in time, trying to escape my present by immersing myself in memories of simpler times.



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# BLACKOUT 2022

Written by: Samantha Li  
and Necla Asveren  
Photos by: Yuto and Coco

**B**lackout is an annual tradition in SHSID for high school students to embrace the exhilarating customs of Halloween and express themselves in creative costumes. This year's Blackout was hosted right after a busy week of midterm examinations, leaving everybody plenty of opportunities to relax and enjoy themselves. Weeks prior to the party, however, SHSID's busy high school ASB crew had been restlessly preparing for the event. Every day after school, ASB members could be spotted polishing props, crafting haunted houses, and designing paintings. Many remained working at school even after 8 pm.

It is important to acknowledge that ASB members, along with all the other high school students, are loaded with school work and projects, which makes their willingness to volunteer even more impressive. To cover this event, TIMES sat down with ASB members and students who attended the party to see what they had to say about the experience.

## BEHIND THE SCENES



# Welcome to the Carnival

## THE DAYS BEFORE

Although being clearly qualified, many ASB members initially felt as if they were underprepared for the demanding task ahead. As they worked to put together the party, a few things happened unexpectedly. They simply did not have enough crew, so ASB members gathered their friends to help out after school.

Some online orders were delayed, some simply did not arrive, and so many supplies came from the members' homes. During the party, cupboards in the haunted house collapsed, but the problem was quickly resolved since ASB members volunteered to hold them inside the haunted house.

For several ASB members, this was their very first experience of planning for Blackout. They are neither professional party-planners nor graphic designers, yet they succeeded in producing a spectacular party providing entertainment for nearly 400 students. They all developed new skills in coordination and explored more of their interests through teamwork.

Minnie Chen, the head of the design and decoration department of the ASB, told me that she wasn't expecting to take the role when she entered the ASB despite her preexisting art experience. "I didn't have any experiences on proper designs," she recalls, adding that she "suffered a lot" watching YouTube videos and learning to "qualify" for designing Blackout themes. Her department's main task in preparing for Blackout was making the digital promotions, aesthetic settings, posters, and helping with the decorations, which in her own words, was "basically, all the design elements".



Preparation was a long and tiring process. Minnie and her fellow ASB members stayed afterschool for hours every day starting nearly a month prior to the actual party to work. That collided with her previous extracurricular activities, which she, along with the other ASB members, had to drop. Another main challenge she faced during Blackout preparation was distributing her time. "ASB work really decreased my free time in those periods, and I had issues with organizing my schedule and priorities of work", she reflects.

Minnie, however, did not expect this workload when she ran for ASB in the start of her freshman year of high school. Fortunately, she does not at all resent the time she has spent here. When she ran for ASB, she thought being a part of it would allow her to organize fun events that could bond the school together, and it did. In her words, "the work was tiring, but fun as well". Minnie has also made many good friends in the ASB who are all equally proud of their work. Regardless of the setbacks she had faced in preparation for Blackout, she considers the actual party a blast, and was especially glad all of the ASB's hard work paid off to be a success.



Geoffrey Ku, a sophomore student in charge of public relations in the ASB, voiced similar experiences, saying that the entire process of planning felt new to him: "This is actually my first year in the ASB," he explains. He was responsible for directing the Blackout trailer, organizing members to write the ASB's Blackout promotion articles, as well as ordering McDonald's by reaching out to their manager - "something that [he was] really proud of," he adds. He was also in charge of the morning publicity, the large poster seen during sales, and the Blackout guide handbook alongside a few team mates. Additionally, Geoffrey also worked on the set-up portion of preparation. His section was the hallway wing in the back of the Zhen Tao Building, which also included the dining rooms and the movie rooms in the actual party. He and his teammates bought the decorations and food beforehand and spent weekday afternoons doing design sketches and practices so the rooms would look good.

The variety of food offered at the Blackout party were all purchased and prepared by him and his teammates. He explains further, “If you came around our section, there were usually these very very large packaging boxes.” The ASB unboxed everything present at the party.

Overall, although tiring, ASB members undeniably found the process of planning for Blackout rewarding. The founding philosophy of the ASB is to bond the school together, and the strong will to do so motivated ASB members to venture out their comfort zones. Thanks to their dedication, we were all able to enjoy the splendid party and to feel justified to hope for the next thrilling event.

## THE NIGHT OF

The Blackout theme this year was “Carnivore Carnival”, and they really hit it out of the ballpark for this one!

Upon entering the venue, a ZhenTao building that had been transformed into the site for an entire night of fun through the efforts of our hardworking ASB members and helpers, one was immediately greeted by the lights, sounds, and action of a truly extraordinary party – as well as the grinning skeleton faithfully manning the reception desk. Though I was one of the ASB helpers tasked with setting up the venue, I found it hard to even imagine that just a few hours before, the first floor and basement of ZhenTao had been such mundane places of learning. It’s hard to believe just how much a place could change after some well-planned and creative redecorating; the bright, saturated neon signs and red atmosphere lights immediately bring to one’s mind the image of a bustling city night scene bursting at the seams with life, and the well-made playlist of energetic pop hits made sure that the venue was always buzzing with energy.

In addition to this, there was even more wonderful work done decorating the once ordinary walls and halls of the ZhenTao building down to every last crevice, so that no matter where you were during the party, there would always be something to see. It’s truly amazing how much meticulous work was put in to designing and curating the aesthetics of Blackout, ranging from the photo booth and other picturesque spots throughout the party to even the uniforms that the workers wore. Everything was part of a unified design meant to create the best experience possible for party-goers!



## COVER STORY

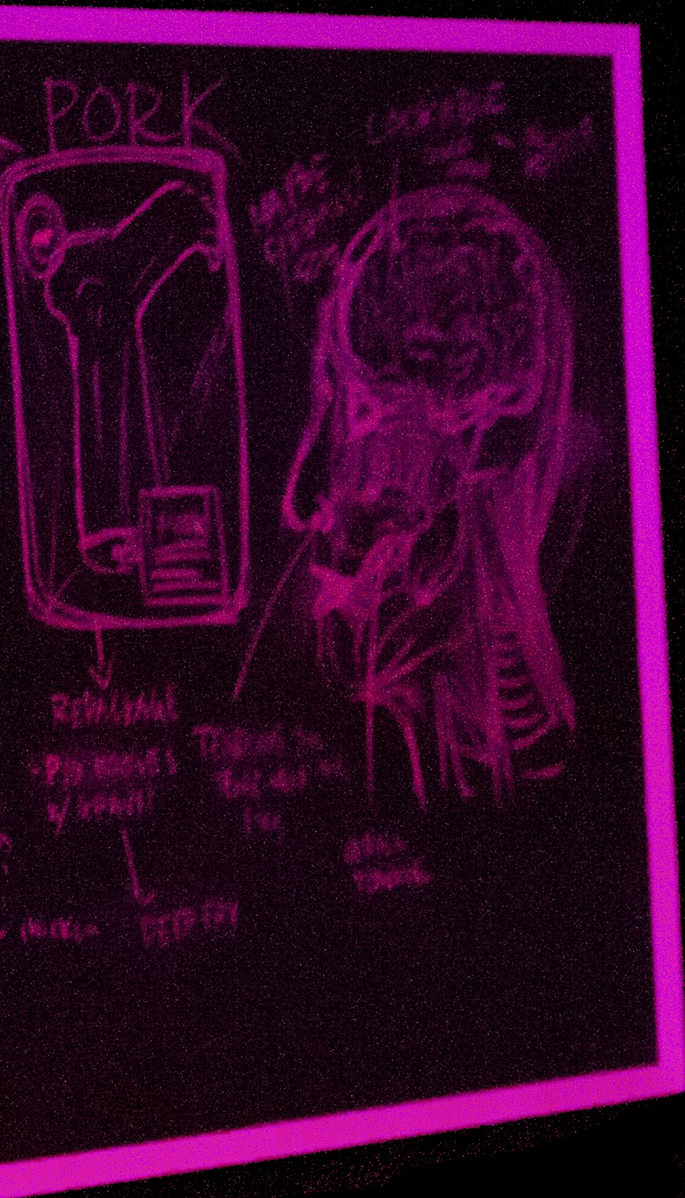
Beyond the exquisite venue and décor, so much remains to be mentioned! Blackout was not all just cannibalistic glitz, gore and glamour, but also offered a plethora of fun attractions. Any esteemed guest could enjoy a scary movie with their friends in the movie room, or accessorize at the hair dye and face paint stations and take

some social media-worthy photos in the photo booth, maybe even indulge their impulses at the casino, bar, disco and nightclub- all of which were, of course, completely legal!

From the moment the doors of ZhenTao opened at 5:00 pm up until the last few minutes before the party had to end at 7:30 pm, every room was completely filled to the brim with excited party-goers who shed the stress and responsibilities of their identities as students and were allowed to simply enjoy themselves together with their friends, letting the woes of everyday mundane life go for an entire evening of hypnotic music, engaging activities, and all manners of unforgettable experiences.

But we still haven't even reached the main attraction of the night: the haunted house! Through the hard work of the ASB members and helpers, the basement of the ZhenTao building underwent an even more striking transformation than the first floor. In this wonderfully engaging and immersive experience, guests - or maybe more fitting for the occasion, "new interns" - could expect to be taken on a comprehensive tour of the pristine and very humane facilities of Kentucky Fried Pork, a company which definitely does not sell human meat as its main product. The lobby that you would enter upon leaving the elevator to the basement was set up in true corporate fashion, perfectly capturing the seemingly unassuming veneer of normalcy that hid a far more sinister secret within. And, traversing farther into the depths of the at first normal KFP facilities, you begin to uncover the dark truth hidden under their bland exterior. It's a truly chilling experience, aided by the well-articulated yet subtle progression in the atmosphere and tone of the setting, as well as all of the dedicated actors that worked tirelessly to spook each and every guest.

All of this, the beautiful scenes that permeated the venue, a mixture of lights, sounds and decorations setting





the perfect mood for an evening of fun, the wide range of events throughout, and the masterpiece of a haunted house, all of these combined together to create an absolutely unforgettable experience.

## THE DAY AFTER

Now that the party's over, what are we left with? Let's see what some of the student body has to say.

Amy Sun from class 9(1), the lead photographer of the media group, says, "The most memorable part of Blackout was simply that students could interact freely as a community. The entire event was all laughter and smiles."

To bring us all of the memorable events we experienced during Blackout, the ASB had to begin planning long beforehand, as well as working tirelessly alongside their helpers to put together the final product. So, what do the ASB members behind it all think about the way the event turned out?

Minnie Chen tells me that "It would be quite a lot to list one by one, but generally, I think that everything turned out quite well. I was not in charge of all of it, because each ASB member was put in charge of just one section of the event, which was planned out with the help of all the departments. I managed GTA, the freezer room part

of the haunted house, and on event day I was assigned to the face paint, photo booth, and hair dye sections. Both turned out to be very fun and successful with the help of my dear helpers and all other members." Minnie goes on to recount the vivid emotional experience she had reflecting on the event with her fellow students after it was all over. She continues, "Personally, the most memorable part was the bonding session after Blackout ended. Everyone was so exhausted, but we all felt very accomplished and proud. We went through the last part of the process, cleaning up after the party, as all of the Blackout crew went over and tried to relive the experience ourselves and share our feelings while we crowded together and melted down on the B1 stairs. At that moment, I felt so incredibly filled with all sorts of emotions as I bent over and hugged my friends. Blackout just made me feel so sad and happy and everything in between even what's completely off of the spectrum simultaneously."

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With all its ups and downs, this year's Blackout was an exhilarating night for the student body and a spectacular achievement on the part of the 9-10 ASB. We here at TIMES loved the event and look forward to being blown away by next year's Blackout!



# Russo-Ukraine War: *Resisting Russian Narratives and Propaganda – Part 2*

Written by: Allen Woo  
Photographs from Google

## *NATO Expansionism: Not Broken Promises, But Imperative Measure*

In 2008, a strongly pro-Western leader was democratically elected. Soon, Russian tanks crossed the national border, with the Russian government accusing the country of “genocide” and “oppression” of minorities. Sound familiar? The story of Georgia in 2008 is a perfect replica of Ukraine’s story in 2014. A pro-Western leader is elected in a liberal democracy, Russian tanks roll into the country, a referendum takes place in which an absurd number of people vote to either secede from their mother country or to join the Russian Federation, and Russia officially annexes the territory. In the case of Georgia, South Ossetia and Abkhazia had already gained de facto independence

(that nobody recognizes) in the 1990s and early 2000s with help from Russia. The Russo-Georgian War of 2008 further reaffirmed Russian influence on the two breakaway regions, essentially turning them into Russian satellite states. South Ossetian War in 1991, the War in Abkhazia in 1992, the Transnistria War in 1992 (in which Transnistria gained de facto independence from Moldova), the two Chechen Wars in 1994 and 1999, the Russo-Georgian War of 2008, the Russo-Ukrainian War in 2014, Russian intervention in the Syrian Civil War in 2015... ***The goal is clear: to rebuild the former Russian empire and restore its glory.*** It is no wonder why Russia’s neighbors are so terrified and so eager to build a better political relationship with the West.

Yet Vladimir Putin and other Russian officials often accuse the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), a defensive military alliance consisting of 30 member states, of its “imperialistic expansion” to the East. In late January,



Putin explicitly declared, “You promised us in the 1990s that NATO would not move an inch to the east.” This statement is blatantly false and misleading. The “one inch to the east” statement was originally made by the U.S. secretary of state James Baker in his 1989 meeting with Mikhail Gorbachev, the leader of the Soviet Union. A memorandum of their conversation, along with 29 other classified documents relevant to NATO’s “expansion” was declassified and released from both the U.S. and Russian archives. The documents show clearly that this statement, along with many other out-of-context quotes that Russia often cites, was made in the context of the discussion of German reunification in 1989. The unofficial promise made by Baker to Gorbachev was that in the context of German reunification, NATO troops and military establishments stationed in West Germany will not move an inch eastward into former East German territory to threaten Soviet security interests. In an interview, Mikhail Gorbachev commented on this topic, saying that:

*“The topic of ‘NATO expansion’ was not discussed at all, and it wasn’t brought up in those years. ... Another issue we brought up was discussed: making sure that NATO’s military structures would not advance and that additional armed forces would not be deployed on the territory of the then-GDR after German reunification. Baker’s statement was made in that context... Everything that could have been and needed to be done to solidify that political obligation was done. And fulfilled.” Furthermore, he stated that, “the agreement on a final settlement with Germany said that no new military structures would be created in the eastern part of the country; no additional troops would be deployed; no weapons of mass destruction would be*

*placed there. It has been obeyed all these years.”*

Years after the German reunification, in 1997, NATO said that in “the current and foreseeable security environment,” there would be no stationing of substantial NATO forces in its new members. This has been true even after dozens of new members joining the organization until Russia’s annexation of Crimea in 2014 when NATO increased its military presence in its Eastern European member states upon their agreement. Even if all of Putin’s claims were true, this “promise” was not ratified into a formal treaty, making it completely invalid in global politics. Furthermore, the time of this agreement does not even make sense. The Warsaw Pact was still largely intact in 1989, and so was the Soviet Union. No one expected Eastern Europe to crumble or foresaw the sudden dissolution of the USSR in 1991. Where would NATO expand to in 1989? To Poland, which was a member of the Warsaw Pact? To Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, which were part of the USSR until 1991? To Sweden, Switzerland, and Austria, all of which were non-aligned and remained mostly neutral until the Russian invasion in 2022? This is obviously a baseless and misleading lie: prime example of Putin’s cleverly constructed information warfare technique. Even the term “NATO expansion” is misleading. NATO requires its member state to conduct democratic referendums under the supervision of third-party organizations in order for them to join. The vast majority of its voting population must agree to the membership in order for it to be validated. So if NATO membership is determined by the will of the people instead of the evil imperialistic West forcing the membership onto these countries, why should Rus-



Moreover, NATO poses no realistic “security threat” to Russia. No NATO member state would ever invade the Russian Federation. NATO is officially a defensive alliance for a reason. No matter how “evil” the West is, they certainly do not intend to initiate a nuclear conflict with Russia. The only “security threat” that NATO poses to Russia is a threat against Russia’s ability to conduct imperialistic expansion against its neighbors.

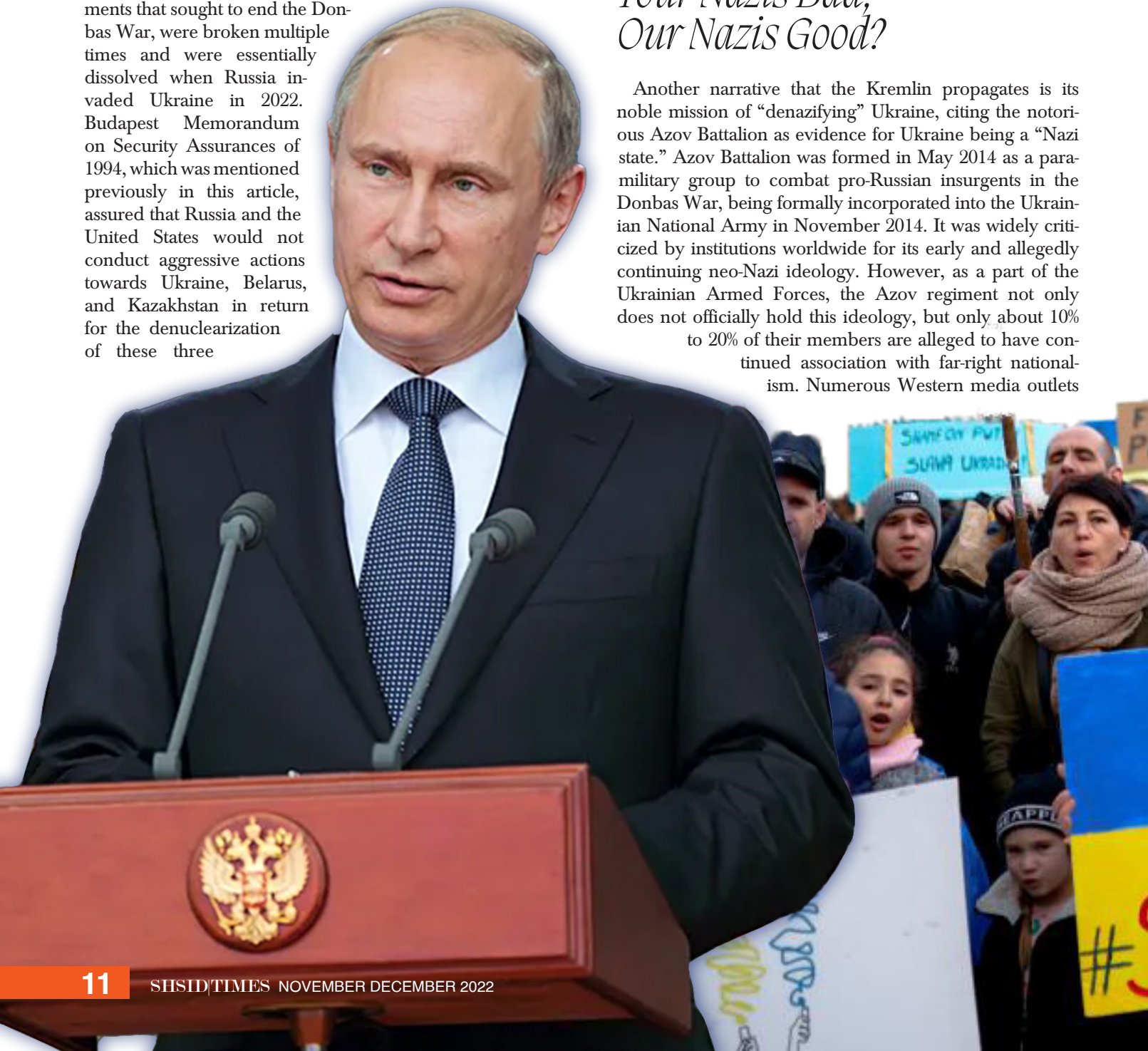
In fact, Russia has been the one who continuously disregards formal treaties made with Ukraine and the West. Russian-Ukrainian Friendship Treaty of 1997, which fixed the recognition of the inviolability of existing borders, respect for territorial integrity, and mutual commitment not to use its territory to harm each other was violated by Russia in 2014. Minsk agreements (Minsk Protocol of 2014 and Minsk II of 2015), which were a series of agreements that sought to end the Donbas War, were broken multiple times and were essentially dissolved when Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022. Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances of 1994, which was mentioned previously in this article, assured that Russia and the United States would not conduct aggressive actions towards Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan in return for the denuclearization of these three

countries. It has been violated by Russia multiple times since 2014. These are only three of the many other smaller treaties that were completely disregarded by the Russian Federation.

NATO did not expand eastward. The correct expression would be that Russian neighbors fled to the West. Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary fled to the West in 1999 after almost a decade of continuous Russian aggression toward nearby states. Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Bulgaria, Romania, Slovenia, and Slovakia fled to NATO in 2004 after another 5 years of aggression. Albania and Croatia fled to NATO in 2009 after the Russian invasion of Georgia. Yet Putin continues to play the victim and ludicrously claims that NATO’s “expansion” prompted the Russian invasion and annexation of sovereign nations

## *Your Nazis Bad, Our Nazis Good?*

Another narrative that the Kremlin propagates is its noble mission of “denazifying” Ukraine, citing the notorious Azov Battalion as evidence for Ukraine being a “Nazi state.” Azov Battalion was formed in May 2014 as a paramilitary group to combat pro-Russian insurgents in the Donbas War, being formally incorporated into the Ukrainian National Army in November 2014. It was widely criticized by institutions worldwide for its early and allegedly continuing neo-Nazi ideology. However, as a part of the Ukrainian Armed Forces, the Azov regiment not only does not officially hold this ideology, but only about 10% to 20% of their members are alleged to have continued association with far-right nationalism. Numerous Western media outlets



have criticized the regiment for its far-right nationalism and neo-Nazism during the 2022 invasion. But what if they are Nazis? The ideologies of the soldiers in the regiment is not relevant to the discourse on the invasion. Not only does the ideologies of the individual soldiers do not matter in the case of a foreign fascist invasion, it is disrespectful and condescending to millions of Ukrainians who had been protected and guaranteed peaceful daily lives by the regiment since 2014. *Worrying about whether their protectors are neo-Nazis or not is an unimaginable privilege for millions of Ukrainians when they are the only ones standing between life and utter destruction.* Moreover, Russian invasion and imperialism was by far the most effective catalyst for the widespread far-right nationalism and destabilization in Ukraine. This is similar to the rise of radical jihadist groups in the Middle East following multiple US interventions in the region. It is a well established historical pattern that foreign invasion is the most prominent cause of ultranationalism and far-right extremism.

The claim that Ukraine is a “Nazi state” is ludicrous. According to a Pew Research Center poll from 2016, Ukraine boasts the lowest rate of antisemitism in Eastern Europe and possibly most Western Europe as well with 5%

of those surveyed feeling uncomfortable having Jews living among them and 83% of them having a favorable view of Jews: a stark contrast with Russia, with 14% not wanting Jews as fellow citizens. Furthermore, after the Euro-Maidan Protests and Revolution of Dignity, Svoboda, a far-right ultranationalist party, lost 31 seats in the Ukrainian Parliament, retaining only 6 seats out of 450 total seats. In the 2019 Parliamentary election, Svoboda lost 5 more seats, keeping only 1 out of 450 seats in the government.

## War Crimes, War Crimes, and More War Crimes

On April 8th, 2022, a Russian missile struck a rail station in the eastern city of Kramatorsk, killing 50 civilians, including 5 children, and wounding more than a hundred. The remnants the missile read: “For the children.” This is only one of the hundreds of war crimes that Russia has committed for the past few months during its invasion of Ukraine. Over the course of the invasion, Russian armed forces committed crimes in the form of deliberate attacks against civilian targets, massacres of civilians, torture and rape of children, and indiscriminate attacks on densely populated areas.

After Russian forces withdrew from Bucha north of Kyiv, at the end of March, video footages revealed dozens of bodies lying on the street and hundreds more buried in mass graves. Drone footages from the New York Times confirmed Russian armored vehicles killing a civilian walking with a bicycle. The Economist reported an ac-





count of a survivor of a mass execution. In Vorzel, west of Bucha, Russian soldiers killed a woman and her 14-year-old child by throwing smoke grenades into their basement. Some civilian bodies in a local temple had their hands and legs tied together and others had been crushed and mutilated by a tank. Bucha massacre is only a representative case of Russian war crimes in Ukraine and hundreds of other cases have revealed torture chambers, abduction of civilians, missile strikes on children’s hospitals, and more, accumulating to about 100,000 military deaths on both sides, 6,000 civilian deaths and 9,000 injuries as of November 2022.

## Putin’s Real Motive

The motive behind Putin’s invasion was not “responding NATO expansionism,” “denazifying Ukraine,” or “to protect Russian-speaking minorities.” It is a war initiated on the basis of irredentism, expansionism, and ethnonationalism. Putin expounded his imperial vision at an event in Moscow marking the 350th birthday of the Russian Tsar Peter the Great on June 9th, 2022. He stated that the lands taken from Sweden by Peter the Great during the Great Northern War were historically Russian and that Peter was merely returning them to their rightful owners. Speaking admiringly of the Tsar, Putin drew parallels between Russian imperial expansion under Peter and his own: “Apparently, it is now also our responsibility to return (Russian) land,” clearly referring to the ongoing war in Ukraine. For years, Putin had been undermining the identity and sovereignty of Ukraine, questioning the historical legitimacy of Ukrainian statehood and insisting that Russians and Ukrainians are “one people.” In his 7000 word essay regarding his romantic nostalgia for the glory of the former Russian empire, he wrote: ***“I am confident that true sovereignty of Ukraine is possible only in partnership with Russia. For we are one people.”*** The ongoing war in Ukraine is not a “proxy war” between Russia or NATO or any other great powers, nor is it a war against the Nazis (quite the opposite in reality). It is a war for Ukrainian independence and freedom against a neighboring empire that regards it merely as a colony to be subjugated and will not stop until all of Ukraine becomes Russia.

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# THE BURIED SECRETS

## *of the Monarchy*

Written by: Zane Lu  
Photos from: Google



On September 8, the world was engulfed by an unforeseen news report that shocked the whole of England. Buckingham palace announced that Queen Elizabeth II, the public but inscrutable icon of continuity in the United Kingdom, has passed away. As the longest reigning monarch in British history, it is understandable that many Britons might lament at this passing, with many bringing it to social media and posting the “God Save the Queen” slogan.



The death of Queen Elizabeth II has certainly caused a surge of tributes from many mourning her passing, but many people are just as willing to sit out from the pomp and instead take this as an opportunity to point out the dire history of the British monarchy. Amidst numerous public memorials and rallies, there have been various people who openly criticized the monarchy by pointing out the atrocities and war crimes committed by the British Monarchy in the past century, remembering the offenses committed by the Royal Family. But not only were these criticisms silenced and ignored, protestors were further apprehended and punished for speaking out. Even the mildest dissent against the crown has been shut down, with many people arrested for anti-monarchist placards or slogans.

A Scottish woman who held a sign against imperialism during a memorial rally was charged with breach of the peace. Another man at Oxford was almost arrested for shouting "Who elected him?" at Prince Charles during a proclamation ceremony. In Edinburgh, another protestor was arrested for shouting "You're a sick old man!" at Prince Andrew.

So why are people criticizing the crown in the first place? Is it right for the law to arrest people for simply voicing their opinions?

After seven long decades of having Queen Elizabeth II serve as the figurehead of the UK, it is important that we also remember all the atrocities committed by the British royal family and why people are protesting in the first place. Therefore, let us reflect on the history of the British royal family through two of its main colonies.



## African Colonialism

To begin with, the colonialism of the British Royal Family led a significant impact on the modern development of many African countries. The colonial efforts destroyed native cultures and jeopardized local economies, hindering the growth of many nations. On top of that, the Monarchy openly suppressed and quelled all forms of resistance from local inhabitants.

A prominent example would be Kenya. When Queen Elizabeth II visited Kenya in 1952, local freedom fighters immediately resisted colo-



onial rule by launching a rebellion. According to *The Guardian*, "British colonial authorities in Kenya suppressed a rebellion against the colonial regime known as Mau Mau, which led to the establishment of a vast system of detention camps and the torture, rape, castration and killing of tens of thousands of people." Many locals, including members of the Kikuyu tribe, were detained in camps, where they allege they were systematically tortured and suffered serious sexual assault. Harvard professor Caroline Elkins estimates that between 160,000 and 320,000 were interned in detention camps also known as concentration camps.

The British also seized countless indigenous items from Africa during the colonial period. Ranging from precious minerals such as the Cullinan Diamond to cultural artifacts such as arrowheads and spears. A report from Aljazeera elucidates that "Curator labels available online about the background of the items at the British Museum – which holds around 73,000 African objects – make no mention of how the spears got



there, nor of the town's resistance against "punitive" colonization."

While many curators defend their collections as a representation of art regardless of how they were acquired, critics suggest they have not done enough to accurately present the complex histories of the objects and erased the violent history associated with the taking of these items.

## *Indian Colonialism*

Likewise, the British Royal Family also committed a series of similar crimes across India. New research by the renowned economist Utsa Patnaik calculated that Britain drained a total of nearly \$45 trillion from India during the period 1765 to 1938.

Throughout the entire duration of colonialism in India, the monarchy destroyed many thriving domestic industries through imposing British products and exports on the Indian people. The consequences were precariously distressing, as the British rule led to a series of famines, massacres, and the eradication of local cultures.

One of the biggest crimes that the British committed in India was the Bengal Famine. Winston Churchill infamously made the statement "I hate Indians. They are a beastly people with a beastly religion." During 1942, Colonial Britain decided to take away grain from India to increase reserve stocks for the British Army, causing the Great Bengal Famine. The British raised the prices of rice of 300 percent while not increasing wages of the local population to "decrease local consumption", leading 4.3 million Indians into malnutrition and eventually death. Churchill declared 'the famine was their own fault for breeding like rabbits', an outrageous claim to make especially after being responsible for the death of millions.

The British is also responsible for a multitude of massacres and unlawful killings across the history of India. An example would be the Jallianwala massacre of 1919. During April, peaceful protestors defied a government order and rallied against British colonial rule in the city of Amritsar. Instead of negotiating, the British deployed soldiers and ordered them to open fire at the civilians until they ran out of ammunition, killing between 379 and 1,000 protestors and injuring another 1,100 within 10 minutes.

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These transgressions are only the tip of the iceberg, as the crimes of the Monarchy are too vast in number to list out. It is also worthy to note that the Royal Family also launched a project to wipe out any files or documents that might reveal more of their wrongdoings and deep-rooted hypocrisy, known as Operation Legacy. As James Bridle comments, "Operation Legacy was a deliberate and knowing effort to obscure the violence and coercion that enabled imperialism."

What is required of Britain in light of this history? An apology, to the least—which to date has never been given. Throughout her reign, Queen Elizabeth II has never addressed these past atrocities or even recognized them. Next time when you see someone refusing to mourn, think about these atrocities first before condemning or antagonizing them.

The oppressed cannot be expected to mourn for the oppressor. Henceforth, trying to silence or arrest people for simply stating their opinions is essentially forcing people to mourn for the Queen's death—which is the equivalent of recolonizing people. History doesn't repeat itself, but it certainly does rhyme.

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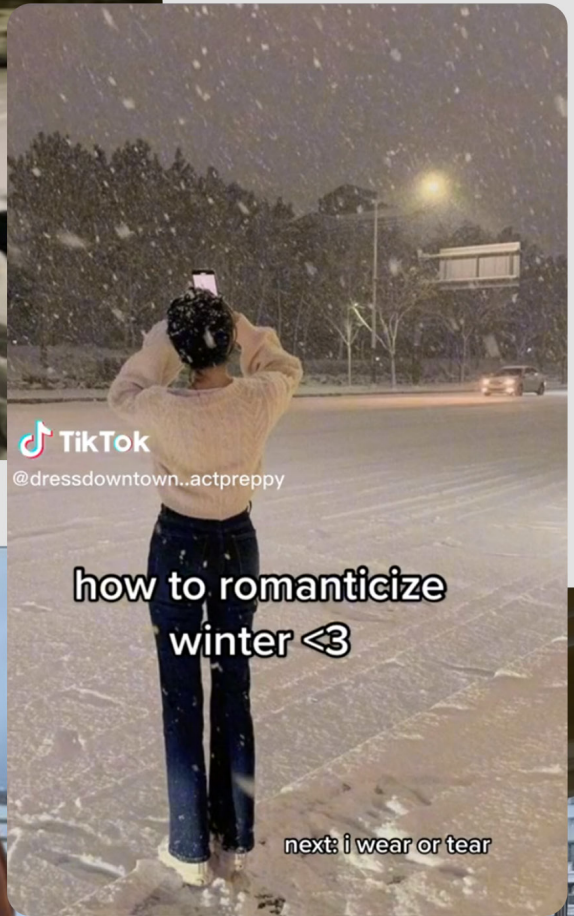
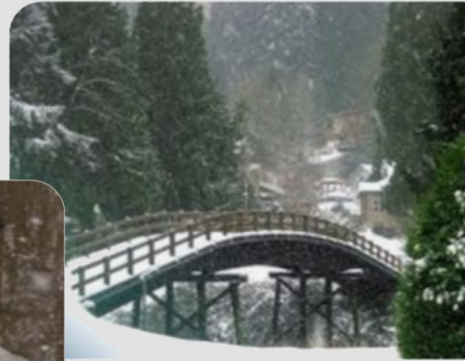
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# LIFESTYLE



TikTok  
@rowengracee



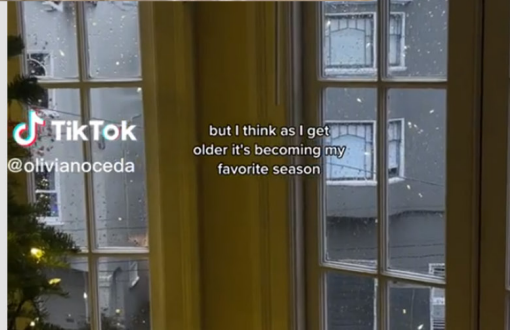
TikTok  
@dressdowntown..actpreppy

how to romanticize winter <3

next: i wear or tear



Got my closet Christmas-ready



TikTok  
@olivianoceda

but I think as I get older it's becoming my favorite season

As winter creeps closer and closer, we start to notice an interesting trend: people slow down with their duties, start doing more activities that they enjoy, and begin to post aesthetic and happy pictures on social media related to winter. This trend is especially popular on social media platforms, such as Instagram, Youtube, etc., many of which have pictures/posts paired with captions like “Romanticizing Winter”. And that begs the question: why do we do this?

To answer this question, we need to first understand the ways we romanticize winter. The romanticization of winter can be separated into two categories: on social media, or in real life. These are inherently linked together, because more often than not, the pictures people take and post on social media are of things people do in real life. For example, I could be having a fun day with my friends, enjoying winter activities such like ice skating and drinking hot chocolate. I could take many pictures, and post it on Moments to remember the joyful experience. But the posting of these pictures fundamentally stems from me having a good time. Not all people post “aesthetic Christmas activities” on social media, and can also romanticize winter without publicizing it, such as knitting cute sweaters and then wearing them, or simply staying up late and watching Christmas movies alone with your pet and some snacks. But if someone decides to post about it, it doesn’t have to be activities that they did in real life either; it could’ve just been beautiful scenery that they saw and decided that they wanted to share the wonder with friends.

Now, to get to the bottom of the question, why do people do these things? Well, there isn’t exactly one single reason. But all the reasons go down to the core of the issue: *romanticizing the mundane*. This has been a trend for the last two years since the Gen-Zs started it on Tiktok during the pandemic, where people romanticize the most ordinary of things in their lives. Many state the reason for doing so was to practice mindfulness; they realize that the majority of life is going to be these little things, and they should enjoy it while they can. It provides a sense of agency, because you can control what you do to your plants or your journal or what you wear in the process of “romanticization”, and that sense of agency is exactly what many need during the pandemic and the continued lockdowns. Especially for winter, when it is often cold and dark and gloomy, people would want to make their lives

more aesthetic because it helps them gain a positive mindset, understanding gratitude and appreciating beauty.

Another aspect that leads to the trend of romanticization is consumerism. On social media, there are certain things you can do that is considered “aesthetic”. These look like doing face masks, going to the gym, drinking Starbucks coffee, etc. None of these things are game changers: *just* doing face masks don’t give you flawless skin, *just* going to the gym won’t give you your dream body, and Starbucks doesn’t taste much better than your average coffee. At this point, it’s more of a lifestyle than the product itself. However, the majority of things here are only affordable for those of the upper middle class and have to be purchased in order for you to claim to be “an aesthetic person”. Companies uses this trend to pressurize the public and promote that their product is the key to having a better life, by using celebrities and famous people who seems very put-together to be a spokesperson for said product. Thus, this form of associated thinking makes people think that they absolutely need the product in order to live a more fulfilled life, and many would end up buying it even if they don’t want to or don’t have the economic capability.

The fundamental basis of “romanticization” is still located on social media, as that is where people showcase what they did the most. And with social media most likely will come peer pressure to do these acts as well or try to romanticize winter, even if they don’t want to, just because it’s promoted to look like the end-all-be-all of living a great life. Or even if the audience wanted to romanticize winter, there are always limitations. If they are still kids, they might not have as much freedom as the 20-somethings on Tiktok do. If they don’t live in an area that snows (like Shanghai :’()), they might miss out on a lot of activities. Or even if they are fully grown and living in areas that snow, they might not have the economic capabilities or even the time to build a Christmas tree or go skiing. And because of that, they may feel left out, because they can’t participate in many of the things social media has labeled “romantic”. In contrast to glorious pictures and cute selfies, they will be considered “dull” and “boring”.

At the end of the day, the origins of the romanticization of winter stems from social media and influence from outside sources such as peers or advertisements. When done well, or when done by one’s own inclination, it can end up being be a healthy way to enjoy the uniqueness of winter.

Written by:  
Sophia Fang  
Photos from:  
TikTok,  
Pinterest

# ‘TIS THE SEASON

# Holiday Spirit IN Shanghai

Written by: Lianna Pan

Photos from: 小红书, Pinterest, Google

Friends, it is That time of the year again. Mariah Carey is defrosting as we speak. From sweater weather to winter world, we are officially stepping into holiday season—a time reserved exclusively for kitschy ornaments and peppermint eggnog. I know the city may seem quite disheartened with the uncertainty of future hanging ahead—the game of whack-a-mole with covid soon gets tiring. Our spirits may be battered by a little, but our holiday spirit is not extinguished. It is time for us to confront our tiny inner grinchies and do a little “stealing back” Christmas. Better are the days to come; I am hopeful that the liveliness of Shanghai will be fully restored.

Whether you are an avid lover of Christmas foods, on-the-whim city explorer, or scratching your head for holiday venues, you are in the right place. This article is your unofficial guide to finding holiday spirit in Shanghai. All the venues and activities listed below are gathered with love by fellow peers, family, and foodie moms (the true experts).

Disclaimer: the following events/venues may be subject to change/cancellation with the uncertainty of covid. We'll have our fingers crossed.

## CHRISTMAS MARKETS

From my favorite foodie mom who makes the Best cakes and pies: “For sure for sure, the number one thing to do is to go to a Christmas market. It will definitely get you into the mood for Christmas”

### Christkindlmarkt @ The Inlet8

ADDRESS 1: 989 Sichuan Bei Lu, near Wujin Lu, Hongkou District 四川北路989, 近武进路

EVENT TIME: (TBD) 3rd December -25th December

OPENING HOURS: Wed-Fri: 4pm-10pm

Weekend: 12pm-10pm

TICKET FEE: 30RMB (Pre-sale) 40RMB (Door)

Experiencing a German Christmas in Shanghai! Christkindlmarkt offers a variety of traditional German foods to savor pretzels, bratwurst sausages, and gingerbread. Might you even take some naughty sips of peppermint eggnog and booze to warm up the night. As you scour the stands you'll delightfully find Christmas knickknacks, wooden toys, and glassy trinkets—a perfect keepsake for the after event.



## Paulaner Market

ADDRESS: 长宁来福士  
 EVENT TIME: December 3rd - January 2nd  
 OPENING HOURS: Friday: 3pm-9pm Weekends: 11am-9pm  
 TICKET FEE: 50rmb

With dozens of wooden booths and tabletops filled with holiday handicrafts and inviting traditional delicacies, the Paulaner Market awaits you! Stringed lights and Douglas Fur branches promises a holiday atmosphere.



## bfc 外滩金融中心

*They say the BFC Christmas Tree was the first to be put up in Shanghai.*

THE DÉCOR: As early as November, The Bund Finance Center dressed itself up in holiday cheer. Right in front of the mall is a nutcracker themed edifice with pointed vaults and obelisks. On top stands a giant Christmas tree up to 10 meters tall! The decorations give off rich Christmas color with a palette of poinsettia red and glossy gold. Explore the mall interior for more nutcrackers, mini castles and clock towers.

外滩枫泾 Weekend Market:  
 EVENT TIME: December  
 10—25th Weekends

Definitely look forward to its Christmas themed market this December!

# 光影市集

ADDRESS: 虹桥天地

EVENT TIME: November 18 - January 8

OPENING HOURS: Thursday - Sunday 11:00-21:30

If the girlies like to take pictures, check out this Christmas décor heavy market.



# Green Escape 安义夜巷

*"I go to the Kerry center Christmas market with my mom sometimes, it is quite fun."*

ADDRESS: 静安嘉里中心—安义路

EVENT TIME: 11.19—01.02

OPENING HOURS: Weekends and  
Holidays 14:00-22:00

Check out the Kerry center market for plenty of holiday foods and handmade gifts! You might as well tune in to a lunch hour holiday special performance—belting, jazz, pop, they have it all.



# Carols by Candlelight

**\*SPECIAL CHRISTMAS CHARITY EVENT\***  
I am glad to share a church organized Christmas market and caroling show~ All profits will go to the church affiliated charities. Cultivate a giving heart and carol along with the joyous choir!

ADDRESS: Ramada Hotel, Jinqiao, Pudong

EVENT TIME: December 10 (makers market starts at 3pm; caroling show at 4pm)



## EXPLORING SHANGHAI STREETS

If you're in for the risk of receiving either a sweet surprise or utter disappointment, you are the heart of a true explorer. Hold no expectations, enjoy the moment. Here are a few streets (that usually don't disappoint!)

### *Anfu Road* 安福路

A word from a friend—the number one person I would hit up for window-shopping/ wander in Shanghai streets just for the fun of it:

*"If I had to choose a random place I think I'd choose 安福路 and it's surrounding roads. There's just so many shops n stuff there it's like a whole new world out there."*

Anfu Road is a street no longer than 900m but filled with quaint architecture, whimsical shops, and quiet cafes. Already the perfect place for a stroll on any Sunday afternoon, I promise December will have more in store for you. Pick up the sweet, yeasty aromas from Baker and Spice and Boom Boom bagel; step into and thrift your next book/piece of clothing that catches your eye; spend a cultured hour reading in tiny Mediterranean book café. Look out for the small touches of holiday—faint jazz flowing from restaurants, tiny Christmas shop decorations.



# 永康路咖啡店

AUTHOR'S PICK:

A personal favorite of mine! What more can one ask for than an entire street of cafes? Holding a cup of creamy latte or hot coco on a chilly day is one of those small things that in the moment, make you the happiest girl in the world. One road, two rows of tightly nestled coffee shops, three reasons to sit in a café for the entire day: people watching, food appreciating, life musings.



# Disney Village 迪士尼小镇

ME AND MY NO. 1 FOODIE MOM'S FAVORITE DESTINATION

If just Disney Town's entrance music is enough to enchant me into elated fantasy, I'm afraid I won't be able to withstand the extra magic of Christmas in Disney town. For a celebratory feast, go Cheesecake Factory. (the Disney town venue doesn't allow reservations, be sure to arrive early to wait in line!!) For a holiday shopping spree, save up to purchase souvenirs from World Disney. End the night spectacular with the 8:30pm castle-light show and fireworks.





## WINTERTIME ACTIVITIES

Ice Skating is the perfect activity for a wintry welcome.

## 三林滑雪场

Recommended by our school's lovely ice-skating coach (ps. A very high chance you'd met her as she teaches there!)

What's better than embracing winter weather than gliding across icy surfaces? Although we live in a south where fully frozen lakes are virtually nonexistent, (Oh how I long to experience the opening scene of Charlie Brown's Christmas) indoor skating rinks are still great runner-up's. Some friendly tips:

- You will need to push through the first few awkward minutes in adapting to the ice and the skates but once you gain the confidence, you should Skate with a friend! Share an air pod and listen to music as you run laps together.
- Bond! Share your holiday aspirations, excitement, and best Christmas gift ideas.
- Lighten up the mood! You are permitted to poke fun at each other's occasional clumsiness



## HOLIDAY FLAVORS

Picks of our fam's go-to restaurants

*Green and Safe*

NO. 1 CHOICE ADDRESS: 黄浦区太仓路181弄上海新天地北里22号1层

Don't be fooled by its inconspicuous storefront. Once you walk up the narrow entrance, you will enter in a cavernous space of urban farmhouse interior with a touch of Christmas. Its rustic wooden tables, now entangled with stringed lights and tinsel, glow underneath a dimly lit yellow for holiday ambience. Enjoy a main of quail egg thin crust pizza, a 3-combo salad, a side of truffle mashed potatoes, and red velvet pancakes for desert. Upon leaving, browse the pastries and grocery shop to bring a few cinnamon rolls home.



# In Memory Of

Written by: Rika Hayashi | Illustrated by: Laki Hu

DECEMBER 2010

We were making cinnamon rolls in our small kitchen. Or rather, my parents were, while I ran back and forth behind them, making small messes here and there. The gentle fragrance of baking bread and the pleasantly pungent scent of warm cinnamon spice escaped the oven to expand and fill the little room. The temptation that the cozy mixture of smells had to me was immeasurable. While I was aware that the rolls weren't ready yet, the snowy, mouthwateringly sweet frosting was lying there, rather defenselessly, on the kitchen table.

"Mommy," I tugged at the corner of her shirt, trying to hide the grin on my little face. "Can I please have a tiny bit of frosting?"

"No," she replied sternly. "If you eat it now, we won't have any more of it left to eat with the cinnamon rolls."

Unsatisfied with my mother's response, I turned to my father.

"Daddy?" I said, looking up. "Can I please have some frosting?"

"Your mommy said no, so no," he told me with a shrug.

Dejected, I leaned against the kitchen wall, resorted to sniffing in the scent of the bread as much as I can. Yet when my mother exited the kitchen, my father held out a little spoonful of frosting to me.

"Don't tell mommy," he whispered.

JULY 2014

We were walking in the shades of the buildings on the side of the road on our way to the supermarket. The brightness blurred my vision with suppressed waves of heat as I gazed into the stretching canvas of layered blue.

"I don't understand why mom has to yell at me for everything. What's so unforgivable about spilling a cup of water? Would it hurt her to be nicer for once?"

"She doesn't intend to come off as mean. You know she only wants the best for you, and she only yells because she has a short temper. Besides, you're not the only person she yells at, remember?" My dad turns to me very slightly, grimacing.

It was the day of Christmas Eve. I decided that it would be a good time to visit him.

The sky grayed quietly as I strode down the pavement. The roaring winds slapped my face, reddening my cheeks with cruel patches. I hugged my coat tighter to my breasts and pushed into the little cafe at the corner of the road.

I don't have a usual order. After gaping awkwardly at the menu on the wall for several minutes, I asked the barista if she had any suggestions. She asked me if I would like to try the Christmas special, and I, unintrigued by the banal name of the drink but devoid of other orders, nodded absentmindedly.

Shuddering as I stepped back into the chilly air, I took a large gulp of my drink and instantly regretted the decision. The hot liquid washed needles down my tongue and throat, making my mouth and neck burn with pain while the rest of my body continued to shiver with cold. I frowned at the little cup in accusation and then carried it in one hand, not taking another sip.

I arrived about ten minutes later. It was a serene place, the cemetery—one of the few places in the city where people unanimously respected the public space and allowed those around them mind to their own businesses in peace. Yet every time I come here, my head rings in response to the glaring silence. This time was no different. Tuning out the eerie sound in my head, I walked stiffly towards his tomb, a slab of granite hunching in the cold.

“Yeah, sure, but don’t you want the best for me too? Why don’t you yell at me then?”

“That’s different. I just don’t yell at people in general.”

I didn’t get the answer I was looking for, but it seemed like the conversation had ended there.

“Okay.”

The wind tickled my cheeks, flapping my hair behind my face. In that moment, the blinding heat of the summer seemed to clear my vision instead of blur it.

## NOVEMBER 2018.

I realized that it was a foolish move the moment I slammed the drawer as I stomped out of the argument with my mother. Thinking back, I can’t even remember what the argument was about. It may have been about my grades, or my disrespectful attitude, or my lack of time management skills. What I did remember was that, as a middle schooler, I was very, very furious. While I continued to storm ahead, pressing the thoughts of dread deep into the back of my head, my father walked up to me with a look of icy, piercing fury in his darkened eyes, cheeks blotchy with red patches, fists clenched so hard that his knuckles were white.

“What the hell do you think you’re doing?”

There was an instant where seconds seemed to lapse into minutes, hours, days. Dread washed over my head with blunt pressure as I stood there, holding my arms to my sides limply. My father, who always listened to both sides of a story, who always listened to me when my mother was too impatient, who was always so gentle, so tender, now towered over me with such power that I feared he was going to strike me with a swift movement of his clenched, whitened fists. Like the time when I was eight and he grabbed me by the arms so hard that I was scared that he was going to rip them off. Like the time when I was ten and he slammed the dinner table and almost sent it toppling on me. Like all the times I hid at the bottom of my mind, assuming, thinking, wishing, that those times would stop coming as I grow up, that those times would fade into the years. In that instant, my father had disappeared.

As time began to accelerate back into hours, minutes, seconds, my father returned without the slightest footprint, as if he had never left. Fear was probably scribbled childishly, sloppily, all over my face.

“I’m sorry for scaring you,” his corners of his eyes softening, drooping with regret, his arms stretching out hesitantly towards me, who stepped back in fear, in confusion, in subtle disgust, “I know I’d always told you that

I don’t get mad very easily, but that’s not true. Before you were born, I used to get so angry all the time. I try to be better now, but sometimes it gets through. I promise you that I will never yell at you again. Okay?”

I nodded briefly and turned around for a box of tissues to wipe away the trickles of saltiness that had appeared, as if magically, on my cheeks. He walked into his own room, closing the door behind him.

## APRIL 2019

At the age of fourteen, there were many things I didn’t understand about people. For one, many do not like it when people attack realities they have believed in for their entire lives. For another, they especially don’t like it when that conversation happens at 1am.

“I don’t see why married gay couples don’t get the rights they deserve here. It’s so messed up.”

“Well, maybe because they’re not real?”

“What do you mean they’re not real?”

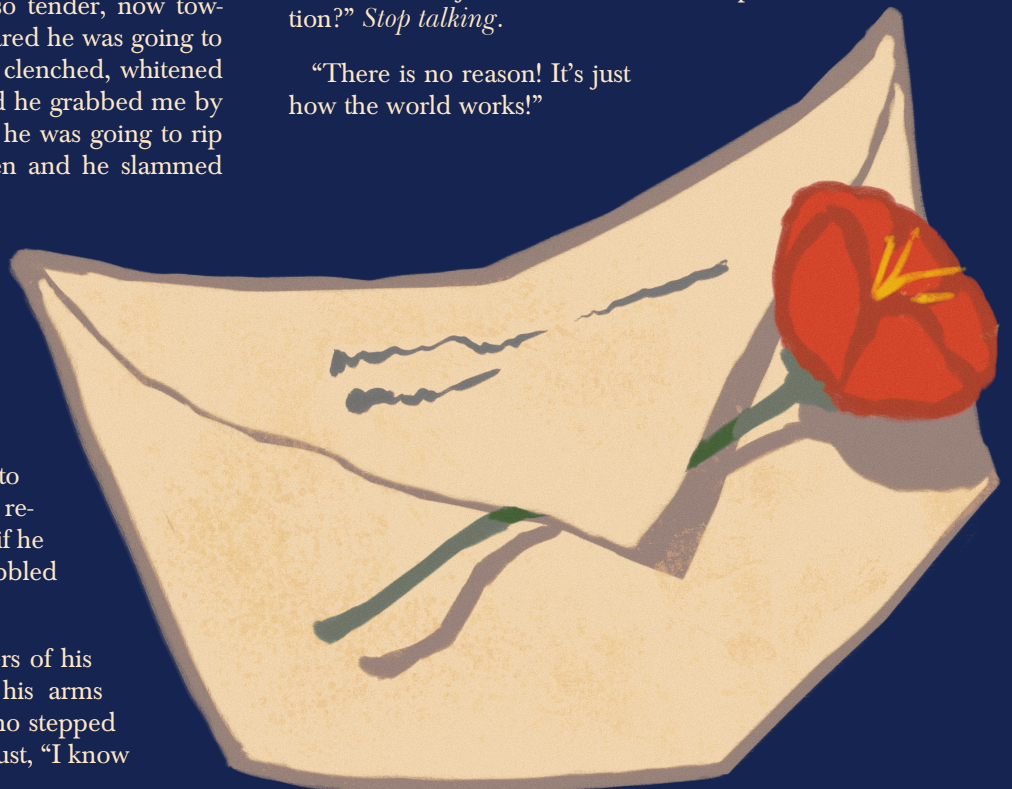
“People can’t fall in love with other people of the same gender. It’s physically impossible.”

“How do you know that? Have you not seen any gay couples in this world?”

“They’re just friends. It’s simply not okay or possible to be gay.”

“But why? If you can’t provide any reasons then isn’t this just a baseless misconception?” *Stop talking.*

“There is no reason! It’s just how the world works!”





"Yeah well, what if I told you that I like girls?"  
*Stop talking now.*

*Silence.*

"If you really told me that you're a lesbian, I'd disown you. I would not allow for my daughter to make such a disgraceful choice."

"Why don't you try, just for this once, to think about things from a different perspective? If you did maybe you would be able stop being so homophobic!" *Please. Just shut up for this once.*

"Just go shower and sleep, okay? I don't want to talk about this anymore."

"That's your way of responding to me, dad? By shutting me up? I'd always thought that you're more understanding than mom, but apparently, I'm wrong. You act as if you're so gentle, so empathetic, as if you're the better parent, when all you do shove all of our issues under a rug. Why? Because you're incapable of solving them? Because you're too lazy to deal with them? Because you don't care? And what are you going to do if I keep talking? Hit me? Like how you always do?"

"Oh my... For god's sake, what do you want me to do then? Jump off a goddamn building? What did I even do to get a daughter like you?"

There are times when the most improbable of events occur, without reason, and without sensibility. There are times when people say the most improbable of things—things that they cannot take back, things that never fade away even after years. Things that accidentally brand into people and leave permanent burns.

My father wanted to commit suicide. Because of me. Talking with me made him want to end his life. He was threatening me with his own death just to make me shut up. I was an annoyance. A pestilence. someone not just unimportant to him, but something that made him so disturbed, so miserable, so excruciated, that he would end his own life just to be freed of such a nuisance. My father didn't hit me this time. I wondered if it would have been better if he did.

1 A.M. is not a good time to talk.

That was the last time I talked to my father.

## JUNE 2022

Stacks of dusty paper boxes lines the barren walls of my room. I sat down beside a lone, unfilled box littered with miscellaneous objects from

my childhood and gazed out the window. Another scorching, blinding summer was approaching, but it was early in the morning, and the sun only exhibited a warm, tender sheen of light. A cool breeze blew at my curtains, sending ripples through them from the sides. I picked an article from the box on the floor and examined it. It was a faded, yellowed envelop titled "to my dearest daughter."

Reluctantly, I plucked the crisp, surprisingly well-kept piece of paper from the envelop.

*Ten years have passed in the blink of an eye. It is my greatest pleasure to be able to see you become the happy, healthy young girl you are today. The next years of your life will undoubtedly come with greater challenges that you will have to overcome. Never run away from those obstacles, for they will help you grow. most importantly, I wish for you to be able to experience the future with pleasure and embrace the hardships it yields with courage.*

*From your loving father. March 18, 2014.*

It's been many years since I had last seen that letter. My heart contracted harder with every sentence I absorbed, with every word I skimmed over, with every letter I read through too fast to truly appreciate.

I chucked the letter and the envelop back into the box. Then I kicked the box into a corner of things that I planned on leaving here.

The next day, I boarded the plane to Boston for college.

It seemed even chillier than when I came. Specks of ice crystals fluttered onto my shoulders, perching on them for the briefest moment before disappearing into the surface of my coat.

I stood in front of the tomb, glancing at the thin sheet of snow that was collecting at the top. The rims of my trench coat were darkened with melted snow.

I took a sip of the drink, now lukewarm, that they called a Christmas special just because there's cinnamon in it. The oddly pungent spice blended poorly with the coffee and milk. Christmas specials continue to disappoint year after year.

Setting down my drink in front of the tomb, I took a final glance at the faintly carved letters on the slab of stone and walked towards the barbed gate that stood, perpetually unmoved, in the falling snow.

# WINTER HAPPENINGS

## HAIKU COLLECTION

Written by: Evelyn Zhang | Photos by: Fenya Lyn Walter

*Author's note:*  
Snowflakes, cinnamon  
Frosty mornings, heartfelt nights  
—winter happenings

*First Snow by the Hearth*  
a breath held too long,  
the flickering warmth awaits  
the first shred of white.

*Cinnamon on Latte*  
down the rabbit hole.  
woody sprinkles, cashmere scents  
whirls on mellow foams.

*A Hug?*  
wooly cardigan  
remembers the mirth found in  
your rosy solace

*Winter Miracle*

by the second star  
make a wish for Peter Pan  
whisk away again.

*On the field*

The swoosh of the goal  
magnified, clean as ever  
winter air sliced through.

*Bustling Crowd, but Alone*

Pushing through the crowd  
me, wrapped up in a palette  
Of silencing white.

*Christmas Gift for Mom?*

a bursting giggle  
fumbling chords, off key singing  
race you to the door.

*All the little lights*

there, you blinked again  
perhaps, crushed little stars had  
wandered to your eyes.

Every time I am reborn, I am destined to die within a few days. If I am lucky, a week. Every time I'm born, I know I should enjoy my time, but I can only focus on counting—the days, hours, seconds until I die again. Children sing songs about me a month every year before they forget about me. But the moment I lose my physical body, that's when the suffering begins. My mind feels like it's splitting apart as my translucent body swirls around in the atmosphere. I can't think straight because my essence is in pieces, in droplets waiting for the temperature to drop.

The first time I was born was in 1950. Jimmy Durante had written a song about me, and kids gradually started to name the deformed snow figures they created after me. An abomination was born. And the torture began. I don't remember much other than the constant state of nausea and disorientation when I'm not in a physical state. As soon as a snowman is created, I fling my soul into that shape to stop the constant spinning and agony. However, typically that means I find the nearest snowman and not the most cared for. I typically only have a few hours in smaller snowmen before they physically cannot hold me anymore. Then I am on the motion-sickening journey to find another snowman to hold me. Good thing American culture is spreading so that kids in the Southern hemisphere are starting to build more snowmen for me to inhabit.

You think that children are innocent and naive. In fact, they are the creators of torture. Toys are at the mercy of children's oily and sticky hands, drowning when the younger beasts stick toys inside their mouths. Toys are thrown and thrashed by children with no empathy or feeling. Of course, some children are caring and clean and gentle. I just haven't had the luck to meet many myself. Most are spoiled, hot-tempered, and downright barbarous. And it is to these little beasts that I am at their mercy. Once, my soul found itself in a snowman built by several gangly-looking boys. Some were taller than others, and others had odd stubs of hair poking out under their nose and under their chin. I initially thought they treated me quite well. Yet, after they had given me a suitable number of appendages, which is already quite a painful affair, the savages continued to stab me with sticks all over my back. Each ball of my body was pierced with thin tree branches that they had collected. As the boys laughed and pointed at how I looked like a hedgehog, I screamed. The world blackened as I felt my head tip off my body. That season was particularly brutal.

# FROZEN WITH TIME

Written by: Hannah Zhou  
Photos by: Jennifer Suh



Even if the children are kind to me, which, thank God, they sometimes are, no one cares about a snowman enough to prevent it from melting. While they see it as a natural process, nature taking back what it has gifted to them momentarily, I see it as a lack of kindness, a testament to the lack of love that humans have to give to everyone but themselves. I would be happy if they treated me half as well as their pets. Clearly they have enough love to go around that they treat their pets as children. Why can't they share some with me? What I need is one snowman in the Arctic or Antarctica that melts so slowly that I won't have to change bodies constantly. But even then, since temperatures are rising and the snow and ice are slowly disappearing, I would still need another human to build yet another snowman. Why did humans create me if they couldn't take care of me?



## 《我》

“我已经很久没有见到过繁星璀璨、古木参天；眼目所及之处尽是摩登的冷漠，不眠的孤独；这日新月异的陌生都市，是我仅剩的容身之所。”

这是我半年前在计划清单的封面上，一笔一划地将笔墨渗透纸张留下的痕迹。

我如今心中不剩多少得过且过的侥幸，连同“摆烂”或“躺平”的心态都不再于心中徘徊，满腔惊恐和警惕，在计划清单本划下的那一条一条鲜红的墨迹分明能嗅出些许腥味。马上，千万不能拖到死线——

我必须按照计划清单行动，因为只有这样才能在死神镰刀下婉转起舞，又不至血肉横飞。

这诡异的清单来到我家时，我妈兴高采烈地用她那惯常只能感动自己的语调跟我说，“这金贵玩意儿花了我一万，但有个我也忘记了什么领域的专家说过了，用来矫正孩子的不正常不要太嘞！就这个物流还能到，那是！”

我的学习成绩向来优异，这就是他们口中的“正常”；但是我不常与人沟通，没有朋友，毫无社交能力，这就是他们深恶痛绝的懦弱，胆怯，和“不正常”了。

我平时不与人来往，也不在恰当的场所说恰当的话，总让他们丢了面子；我的沉默同样蔓延到家庭……他们感觉不到对孩子诉诸暴力后，孩子对他们这没有门槛或边界的父母权柄诞生的畏惧。

他们对于“不正常”的愤怒好像一双无形的手，压迫着我，我几乎要喘不过气来。我还是沉默——这是我日以为继的生存本能。他们说，“多说多错”。

我想要逃，所以试过绝食，上吊，害怕血所以没有割腕。

他们更加愤怒了。

原本或许只是一次两次的谩骂，可是楼下门口被封锁的黄线，永远有人在排队的核酸亭，和日复一日缓慢的物流激化了他们的怒火。

“我含辛茹苦养你这个妮子长大，是让你去死的吗？”说这句话时，我那从不在半夜前结束应酬，身上永远有着不同的女人口红印子的父亲，脸涨得通红，唾沫差点飞到眼睛里。

而一旁我的母亲则开始她那陈腔滥调，脸上的褶皱堆积在一起，好像不合身的裙摆被塞进了束腰里，滑稽地令人想

哭，又想笑：“你爸这样了我还跟他凑合过不就是为了你这赔钱玩意儿吗？你要自杀还摔了我最近才给你买的一个翡翠镯子？邻里说起来有多难听，你让你妈怎么过！”

那翡翠镯子是十几块钱的地摊货，妈妈平时新买的包又都是十几万起步，我脸上挂着笑容，不敢丝毫僵硬。

昨日的伤疤尚还红肿，与洗得太久之后变得粗糙的衣服摩擦着，隐隐作痛。

况且这镯子，不过是为了为我“驱邪”，让我变得“正常”的努力的一部分罢了。其他时候，邻里能够听见的，不过是我母亲歇斯底里的谩骂。

我缄默着，与我素来一样。他们说，“多说多错”。

已经风干的口水几乎将我上下唇瓣黏在一起。

最终，他们的愤怒的出口是丢给我这本他们每天会检查的计划清单。母亲没有看见我点头的细微幅度，借着我不尊重她的由头发挥了半个小时，之后才放我离开去处理我们家要交给门外志愿者的垃圾。

我分明在干垃圾的袋子中，纸片的残骸里，看见被翻出陈旧的“重度抑郁”这五个字的诊断，前面跟的是我的名字。

那时的我轻易地收下了计划清单，仿佛每次收下近乎满分的成绩单，面上毫无波澜。

清单上的第一条叫做：在新的班级群里空闲时，发一条微信，不能撤回。截止日期是当晚十一点五十九分。

我本能地抗拒这类的活动，因此我选择了最简单的处理方式——弃之不顾。

可当截止时间越来越近，相对于我的心跳而言，屋内时钟的运行开始变得缓慢了。我的心跳在我的身体处于连思考都几乎是停止的休息时仍然没来由的加快，并且越变越快，没有停下的趋势。我仔细数了数，确认了它的跳动超过了我身体理论上能达到的最快速度。

我的手颤抖着敲下一句：“大家晚上好”。

发送。

心跳在几秒钟之内恢复了正常频率。

计划事项上极不合理地渗出了一条不符合我审美的血红色横线，划去了第一条事项。

我学会了按照计划清单行事。

# 雪花 消失 之前

Written by:  
Joanna Jiang  
Photos  
by: Fenya  
Lyn Walter

工厂的黑烟模糊了四季  
起点终点复制粘贴  
日历比常青树还要平稳  
秋意的逝去归功于人造的运营

又是一年冬天  
我蜷缩在冷风中  
大脑昏昏欲睡  
不支撑复杂的加减乘除  
仅剩下最原始的欲望  
但这也足以

永动机的运转  
工厂的流水线  
不需要脑电波的搭桥

白昼敲击沙漏的玻璃  
黄昏轻易流失在指间  
我久久凝视晚风的影子  
在字里行间盲目狂奔  
结局却停留在十字以内

身体被泡沫纸包裹  
被囚禁在真空层中  
安置进喧嚣的机器  
周而复始地运行着  
一遍又一遍  
穿过山谷与森林  
雪原与漫天飞絮  
越过初夏大雨  
季风与火烧云

Written by: Norah Cen  
Illustrated by: Yiyi Zhou

双眼注视前方  
齿轮滚动  
一刻不停  
一遍又一遍  
错过窗外飞驰的目的地

清晨的寒风肆虐  
钢笔在作文纸上停留许久  
我还是写不出未目睹过的雪  
与未经历过的一生

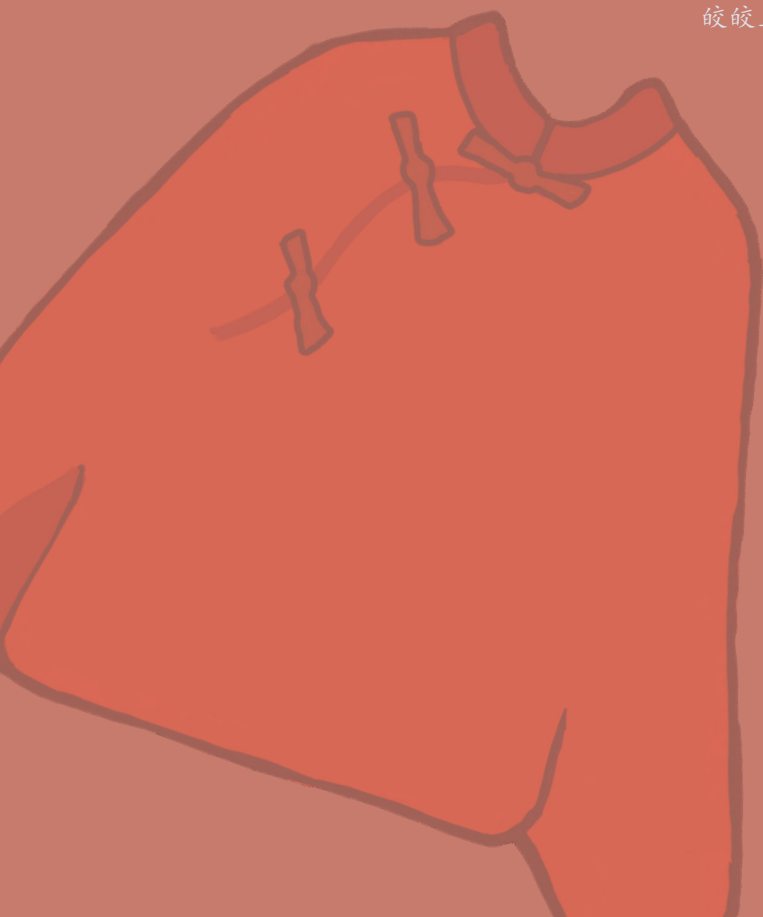
只能朝窗户上哈一口气  
暗骂一声  
“冬天怎么还过不去。”



# 迎新

Written by: Rika Hayashi  
Illustrations by: Wakana Yokoyama

无奈七月不流火  
又念九月弗授衣  
岁末飞禽走兽绝  
朝霞日暮在眼前  
盘中肉桂皆兄弟  
粒粒分明思故亲  
果然热饮味无穷  
长歌欢颜把辞诵  
寒气渐消年复始  
皎皎玉兔随春至



# Preface to Christmas

Written by: Han Su  
Illustrated by: Brianna Sun

**W**e students are busy people. Balancing schoolwork, socializing and a manageable sleep schedule, we often don't have the time to engage in other activities, such as entertainment or rest. Some of us are also guilty of not spending enough quality time with family, the people that we're the closest to. It is thus why one should take the time to celebrate Christmas: as it is the perfect time to rest and reconnect with family.

You need to take a break during Christmas. The last time you had such a break was back at the start of October, and ever since you have been working hard, striving for your goals. It's time to rest, especially because you have the Finals, like a range of mountains, looming ahead of you. So kick back and enjoy a perfectly timed break. Although there is no snow, go outside, breathe in the cold winter air and enjoy the present. Catch up on TV shows and watch new ones during the holiday season. Sleep in during a cold winter night, and wake up huddled in your blankets with a cup of hot chocolate in your hands. Do the things you love, the things you didn't have time for during school yet make you feel relaxed. Play a sport, instrument, game... have fun, and you'll reap the benefits of increased happiness. Personally, I find decorating the house during Christmas extremely satisfying and relaxing. I have a tree at home, and so every year I would adorn it with different ornaments and decorations, such as bells, candy-canes and Christmas lights. I also enjoy experimenting with different aromas in order to complement the visuals. For example, I find that buying some cinnamon oil or even Chinese medical incense can significantly boost the festive mood and also calm my frayed nerves. Ultimately, the point is to rest and have fun doing the things you love during Christmas, as it is the perfect time to do so.

Christmas is also the perfect time to reconnect with

families. During school days, we students are often absorbed with schoolwork and have no quality time with our families, the people who love us the most. With Christmas however, we get to stay at home and rebuild that sense of intimacy. Once you're well rested, put down your computer and go find something to do with your family. Whether that be playing sports, exchanging gifts, watching a movie or even just talking together, you'll immediately sense the increased familial warmth during the process. If you run out of things to do, I recommend cooking and having dinner with your family, as the process is extremely rewarding. Roast a turkey together, or if you don't like Turkey, make dumplings while watching the TV, and soon you'll have a delicious dinner filled with a sense of family. Finally, tell your family how much you love them. Keep it simple, as it is the least you can do to appreciate them for all they've done for you.

Christmas is coming, and if you want to celebrate it because of the reasons above, start preparing. I wish you a merry Christmas and a happy New Year!







Our first midterm exams were on Halloween. On the morning of the exam, I saw a little chipmunk and a princess holding a wand rush past me. I wasn't surprised by the special attire because my Halloween fright was not vampires, werewolves, and bats but the pages of questions I soon had to answer.

The hallway was dotted with students with their heads bent, staring at the paper in their hands. These were the last drops of freedom before we were pressed under the wicked hand of time, and we did everything to savor them.

At 8:30 AM, everyone was seated at their desks, and the teacher passed the papers down each row. I took a deep breath and dug into the ocean of questions. The exam room was so quiet I felt like my heartbeat could swallow me whole.

When I looked up to see the whiteboard, the blue letters read *10 minutes*. I heard the distant, wild laughter of children and I made a fatal mistake. I turned my head and allowed my eyes to wander beyond the window's black frame; beyond the yellow ginkgo leaves to the field, only angels roam. I saw little skeletons, zombies, and princesses zoom over the green hill playing dead, biting their companions, and casting spells. This was a scene I had long forgotten—my mind, accustomed to the cycle of homework, review, and tests, had denied the existence of this heaven. Sitting with a pen in my hand, I felt as if the rolling hill had some kind of magic where feuds faded, and enemies held hands. I yearned for the rolling hill's magic; all I wanted was to drop my pen and run into the sunshine with my hands in the air.

However, I realized it was too late. We, the people who bickered with math equations and essays till midnight's clock struck, had transferred from an early lunch to an overdue lunch long ago. But to my surprise, I recalled my simple days. Not long ago, a shorter version of me dressed as a ghost and rode the hills of heaven. And in the near future, the little skeletons and princesses will sit in my seat as well.

Looking at the shadow of the chipmunk flash past the tree, I realized how we, the little angels and I, are sparks of life growing at our stages. We are different yet the same; we are all part of something larger than we could imagine—the cycle of life and death. We are but a speck in the cycle of primary, middle, and high school, a system whose history is older than a hundred-old oak tree. The students sitting on the top floor of the XianMian Building are not the oldest students in the school but the generations of students who have studied and learned there before them. These tests I took have been administrated for tens and hundreds of years to thousands of students. And these students have laughed and bickered in these classrooms long before I sit here, taking this test.

Life is not only the piece of paper in front of you. It is the screaming newborn in their mother's arms. It is the children with new backpacks stepping into a school for the first time. It is the seniors who wave goodbye at the campus. We are infinite and we are one. Together, we will ride into the sunlight of *life*.

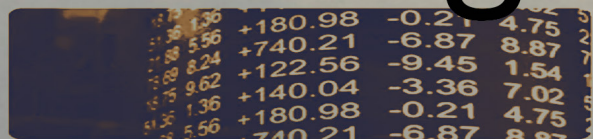
Looking Past  
the Ginkgo  
leaves

Written by: Jesika Tham  
Photos by: Nina Ma

For most of space exploration's history, rockets carried payloads or even astronauts to outer space. Once rockets reach space, however, components usually detach one by one from the main spacecraft to become waste floating in space, and eventually, only a small pod returns to Earth, if one returns at all. However, on December 2015, SpaceX, a private American spacecraft and satellite company founded by entrepreneur and billionaire Elon Musk, created history by successfully returning a Falcon 9 rocket booster to its landing pad. Since then, it has achieved over 80 rocket landings, both on land and on barges at sea. Meanwhile, Amazon founder Jeff Bezos' space venture Blue Origin is also promoting reusability with their New Shepherd rocket, designed to take astronauts into space and land safely. Even though the New Shepherd is only built for suborbital use, Blue Origin plans to build reusability into their next heavy-life rocket, the New Glenn.

Written by: Kevin Wang  
 Photos from: Google

# Reusable Rockets: Making Space Travel Sustainable



The Falcon 9 lands with four small carbon-fiber landing legs stowed flat against its fuselage. As the rocket falls through the atmosphere, cold gas thrusters near the top flip the rocket around so that it is upright. Then the stage engines fire briefly to slow the rocket's fall. As the rocket approaches its target (where to land), the legs deploy, and in the very final phases of its descent, three of the nine Merlin engines fire one last time for what SpaceX denotes as the "boost-back burn." This process slows the rocket down even further, making it almost hover above the target as it makes a soft touchdown.

The primary benefit of reusable rockets is the price. By being able to reuse certain parts of the rocket, the cost of launching a rocket can be drastically reduced, in turn lowering the barrier of access to space, ushering in an era of plentiful space exploration ventures, and contributing to the enthusiast's dream of space colonization. For example, NASA has calculated that costs for launches to the International Space Station have been reduced by a factor of 4, and those to low earth orbit have been reduced by a factor of 20, from \$54,500 / kg of payload for the NASA Space Shuttles to the \$2,720 / kg per payload for the Falcon 9.

Though the concept of reusable rockets has been proven, the technology is not yet perfected. It should be noted that even though the rocket is termed "reusable", the rocket is not completely reusable. For instance, some components, such as heat shielding and landing engines, only have

a limited lifespan and should be replaced after a number of launches. Specifically, SpaceX has stated that most parts of the Falcon 9 rocket will withstand 100 launches, although heat shielding and some other parts must be replaced every 10th launch to ensure safety. Meanwhile, Blue Origin's New Glenn is designed for 25 launches. Even though many parts of the spacecraft and potentially the spacecraft itself may need to be replaced after being used a number of times, the spacecraft is still reusable for a large number of times before needing replacement, a significant feat nonetheless.

Currently, the concept of reusable rockets has been proven and implemented. Given the immense success of such technological advancement, this development is likely to continue, with a major impact on rockets with long-range and heavy-life capabilities, allowing much more space travel and more sophisticated space ventures to occur in the near future.

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