# THE BLISSFUL PURSUIT



SPRING 2024



## THE BLISSFUL PURSUIT

GLOBAL ART & LITERARY MAGAZINE

SPRING 2024 | VOL 6 | ISSUE NO. 13

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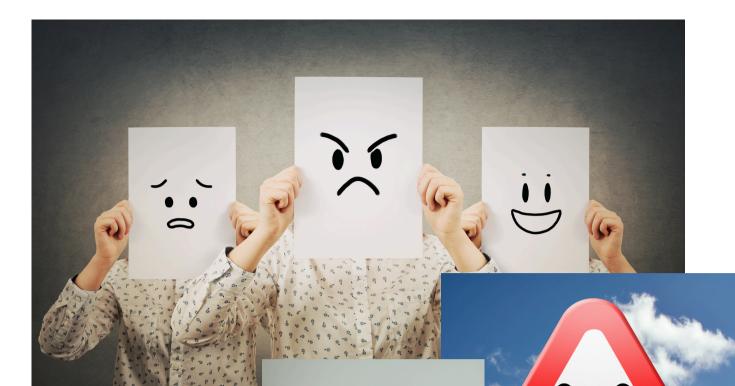
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# Silent struggle by Sophia Kim

Why do I feel so overwhelmed? Why am I not good enough? Is it just me who thinks these thoughts? Does everyone feel the same way? Unfortunately, many kids think these thoughts and worse. About 60% of youth face severe depression but don't receive help, and not just because of financial issues. Some kids who face depression are scared to reach out for guidance. They are embarrassed and worried about how their friends and families will react if they discover their secret. They suffer physically and emotionally leading to self-destructive behaviors. Sometimes, people who are suffering will hurt themselves by cutting themselves, trying to relieve the pain temporarily.

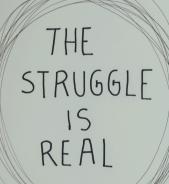
Untreated mental health issues can cause eating disorders, including anorexia and bulimia which leads to physical problems. The anxiety of mental health issues also leads to a misuse of alcohol and drugs. Very often, mental illness is hiding in plain sight and people who are suffering don't even know they have an illness. All they know is that they feel out of place in this world and don't know what to do, so they ignore and hide their feelings. When they push these feelings away because they don't want to be judged for having a problem nobody wants to deal with, their problem often worsens.

Mental illnesses can be felt deeply but can't be seen which can make it easy for people to ignore. It can be hard to diagnose because people can try to cover the situation with excuses convincing others and sometimes themselves that they are fine. People shouldn't have to live like this and we as a society need to take action to help those who struggle in silence.





self-destructive behaviors





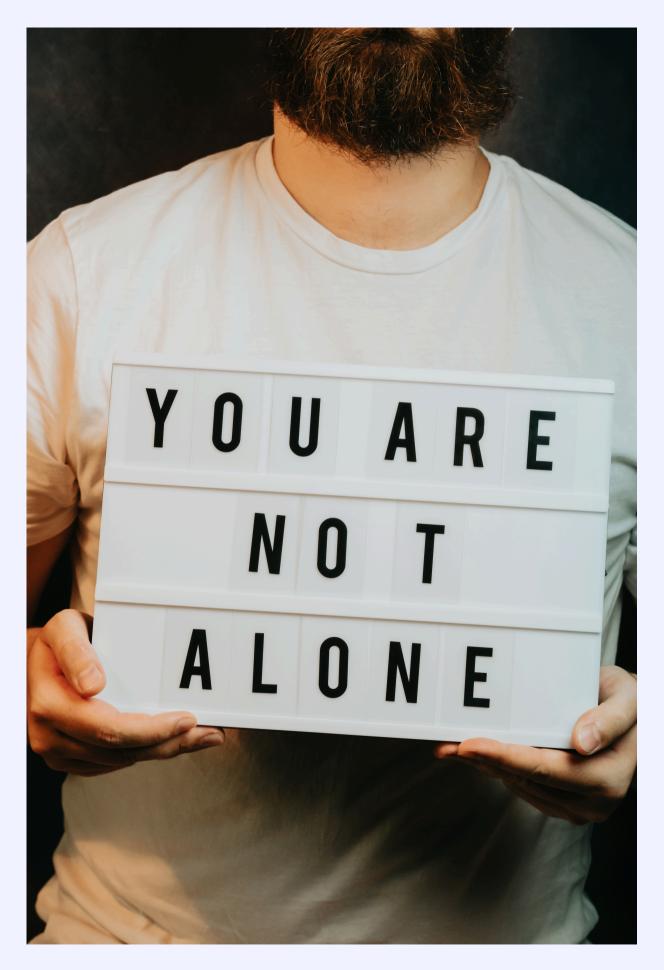
eating disorders, including anorexia and bulimia



misuse of alcohol and drugs



hard to diagnose





It's time to stop the judgment and accept that mental health issues are a reality that must be addressed and treated. Those who struggle with depression, anxiety, and other challenges to their mental health, need to find a trustworthy adult and talk it out with them.



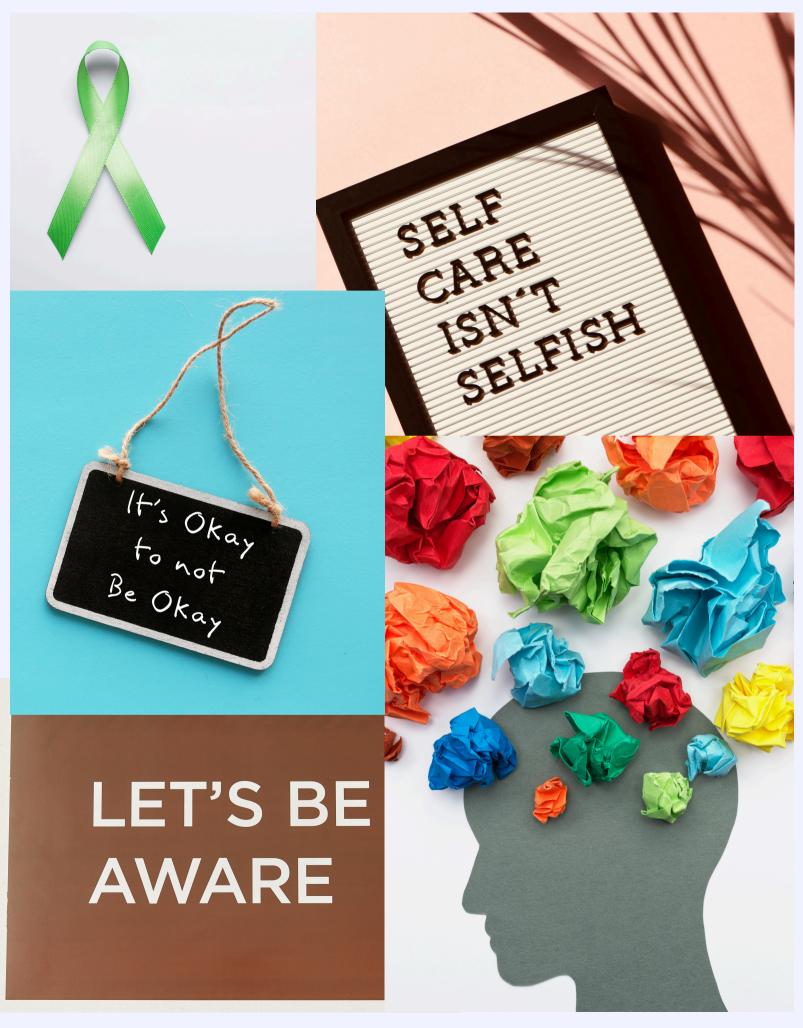
It is important that those who do not suffer from mental health issues, be educated and aware of how it affects people so they can help. Part of the reason people continue to struggle silently is the fear that when their problem is exposed, people will view them in a negative way.







People shouldn't be judged for acknowledging they have a problem. They need to be accepted and be able to stand up for themselves. Society should overcome the stigma of mental health issues. Together, we need to understand these issues and talk about them to eliminate the stereotype that mental illnesses are frightening.





I first became aware of mental health issues because I read many articles about how people were more affected by depression due to the isolation from COVID-19. At first, I just saw depression as temporary but as I learned more about it, I saw that it was far more painful than I thought. I realized that mental health issues are not easy to see, and in fact, can be well hidden. I don't want this to be the case and I want the people who are struggling silently to freely talk about their problems. We as a society need to be more accepting so that we are not the cause of people staying quiet about their pain. A small act of kindness can help someone who is feeling depressed and can be the first step in making someone feel that they don't need to hide their feelings.

# Mental Health Resources <a href="https://www.nimh.nih.gov/h">https://www.nimh.nih.gov/h</a> <a href="ealth/find-help">ealth/find-help</a>



#### About the author

My name is Sophia Kim and I'm a 7th grader. I am a determined fencer and enjoy solving math problems. I wanted to express my opinions on world problems, especially mental health problems. I heard a great deal about these issues and realized that it wasn't just the temporary, sad mood stereotype many people believe. I wanted to change this view so that people can get help and not be afraid of being judged.

#### Note from Editor-In-Chief

Sophia, You've done a great job outlining how important mental health is for self care. We are proud of you!! Take care of yourself and others around you



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### College: A Stressful Experience for All

by Jackson Wong



Impeccable grades, unrealistic expectations, many extracurriculars, and the phasing out of standardized tests have all added unnecessary pressure to future students preparing for college. College is a fairly old concept, dating back to 1088 but the number of people applying and graduating college is rapidly increasing. In the 1960's, only a mere 8% of people graduated from college. Whereas in 2021 roughly 38% of people eligible have graduated from college. With more and more people joining the college admissions, this adds extra competition for each individual student. Similar to evolution, with more competition, students must find different ways to stand out from the other students. Some ways students appeal to colleges is with stellar grades. Grades are the starting point for getting into college. Without good grades colleges hardly even glance at you. In order to obtain these grades, students must put in hours of stressful work often with little gain due to minor improvements in GPA. The main flaw with depending on stellar grades is that they don't carry the same weight as they did in the past.

In 1966 the average GPA at Harvard, one of the most prestigious schools in the world was 2.8. Now it has risen to 3.8, a major increase. To even think about applying to Ivy league schools, you need 3.9 GPA at the minimum, effectively making a 4.0 GPA required. This increase in expectation caused many high schools to add classes with weighted grades and grading leniency making grades that students work so hard to achieve seem insignificant.



Since grades now hold less significance than they used to, many students turn to achieving high standardized tests such as the ACT or SAT scores to stand out. Unfortunately, schools are slowly phasing test scores out of admissions as roughly 1900 will no longer require students to take the ACT or SAT. Making test scores optional or rejecting test scores makes it even harder for many to flaunt their intelligence. The phasing out of standardized tests and the insignificance of grades makes it crucial for students to take part in extracurricular activities.

Extracurriculars are anything outside of school that are education based which show interest and passion in a specific subject. The concept of being involved in extracurriculars sounds good, but many colleges hold unrealistic expectations. To start, colleges look for passion and dedication in specific extracurriculars rather than multiple extracurriculars. Choosing specific extracurriculars can be very challenging for many students because at the time of choosing extracurriculars, they have not found their passion.



This lack of direction causes many students to jump between extracurriculars, which can make students look like they aren't serious. Simply exploring different activities to find true passion as a teen should be promoted by colleges, but instead they want students to stick with one passion. In addition, extracurriculars take time and money, which can add to the stress of preparing for college.

As a student nearing the college admissions process, I find it extremely worrisome to hear that college acceptance rates are declining. It is very frightening to know that you can be rejected from your dream college even after presenting the most significant accomplishments of your academic life. If the goal of the school system is to educate everyone, it should be logical to make the college application process less stressful. It would also be logical to reward hard working intelligent students with an opportunity to go to their dream college.



Although I may not have a solution for the college admission crisis, it is important to understand that the application process has devolved into an overly competitive stressful nightmare for future college students.



#### About the author

My name is Jackson Wong and I am in 8th grade. I'm from New York and I am a student athlete. I wrote this essay because I am nearing the college admission process, and it is stressful to think about applying to college.

#### A Twist in the Plot

#### by Cooper Anderson

A man by the name of John Cab made his way home from work one night expecting dinner to be prepared at his arrival. Little did he know that things would be much different. Once John arrived home he realized that his wife was gone, but with her car still parked outside it worried him.

There was nothing out of the ordinary inside the house though as John looked about. John wasn't the smartest guy and he immediately made himself a sandwich and went to bed thinking that Lucille was just out late with some friends. And without really looking into it he did just that.

He woke the next morning and there was still no sign of Lucille. John called the police and alerted the authorities that his wife was missing.

Cooper Anderson arrived at work that day.





He was the best detective in town even though he never went to college. In fact he was homeless and was found on the side of the street. A local cop by the name of Jerry Pippin found him and said, "he will do", and gave him a job.

Since then Cooper has solved over ten major crimes at that point. It was over three years with no major crime, since crime had died down since Cooper's arrival. Things would change that day with just a phone call.

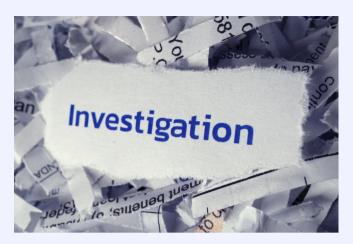


After John had made the phone call he received another from an unknown number. He quickly answered as he was desperate for any answers at that point. Once he did his whole world would spin upside down as the details that the person on the other end were giving scared him.



The caller said that he knew John's name and the money that flows through and in his bank account every week as John was easily the richest man in his city. He also stated that he had his wife and he would seriously harm her if his demands were not met. Cooper made his way down to the Cab's house and immediately knocked on the door.

Of course John was to answer and the two immediately sat down to talk. Cooper would not let any suspects out of his sight and knowledge, and he did the smart thing by immediately questioning the husband. In most cases there would be a murder and the husband usually would play a huge role in those crimes.



Cooper didn't care if this was a kidnapping or not he was going to get to the bottom of this one way or another. John originally called about a missing persons case but now revealed the disturbing phone call he had received earlier to the detective. The two parted ways and Cooper was given the contacts number and began his investigation.

The caller had not made another phone call all night and so Cooper asked John more details about his life to see if there was anyone in his family or friend group that would have a grudge against him. John revealed the issues between he and his brother Jace had shared throughout their entire life. Even up to that point.

Cooper knew where to head next and immediately made a phone call to the man himself and scheduled a planned meeting for questioning.

During Cooper's wait he had attempted to call the supposed kidnapper three times that day, but sadly with no answer. And it was finally time to meet up with Jace at the police station in Cooper's office.



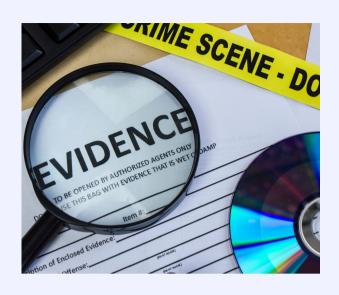
The two talked and Cooper asked where Jace had been throughout the day when John returned home to find his wife missing. Jace revealed he was out with his family out of state and that they made it back at midnight of the day Lucille went missing. In fact the time she did disappear would have been several hours before they made it home.

Jace also shared the pictures on his phone with his wife and kids on their vacation with clear dates and time. They clearly were shown to be the time when Jace said where he was and Jace also had flight records as well. Cooper had hit another roadblock and the two men shook hands and Jace left.

John sat silently on the couch watching the news when he received another phone call. It was from the kidnapper, but when he answered he was surprised to hear his wife's voice. Her concerned voice echoed through his head as she revealed that they want to meet with the money at an abandoned Mcdonalds parking lot.



His wife also said that they knew he had called the police and if there was any more involvement with them or if they decided to show up to the meeting that things would get ugly and Lucille would get harmed, but if things went smoothly than in just a few days John would get her back. Once the arrangements were made the phone was hung up and John immediately received another phone call, but this time from Anderson.



Cooper gave word that the interview with Jace had gone well and that all statements of his whereabouts around the time were checked by evidence and he was cleared as a suspect.

John then told the detective what the kidnappers had asked of him, and a plan was set to catch them.

The day was monday June 19th, and several officers and agents were spaced about hidden with detective Anderson among them ready to lead the charge when prompted.

Out in the open was John with a bag full of real cash, but not the amount promised which was \$200,000. He actually only had \$50,000. The group had been waiting for twenty minutes with still no sign of any suspicious person or vehicle.



The kidnappers did not give any details on the car they might have driven to the location so they couldn't get tracked down as easily. But a white van was spotted slowing down close to a turnoff to the parking lot. It made the turn and stopped ten feet in front of the cab.



The windows were pains of dark glass that were hard to see through, but the driver side window rolled down slightly and a gloved hand popped out, signaling to come forward. The back doors slowly slid open to reveal an open area to lay the bag, but it didn't matter as three police cruisers and several armed officers swarmed and surrounded the van, one of them being detective



"We got him", said detective Anderson.

The man slowly opened the door and was quickly patted down, handcuffed, and put in the backseat of one of the police cruisers to be taken to the station for questioning. It was a half an hour drive back to the station but the squad finally arrived and the assailant was escorted to a back room for questioning with detective Anderson. The man quickly revealed his name to be Alberto Raymond and quickly gave his whole story.

But before Alberto could finish, Detective Anderson stopped him and demanded Lucille's location. The police busted down the door to reveal a surprisingly clean Lucille who stood in a kept bedroom with a nightgown and shorts on. The local sheriff who attended this operation immediately grew suspicious and took her back to the police station to visit with her husband.



After Alberto gave the explanation and the location of Lucille, the squad led by the sheriff were sent out long ago and then returned with Lucille just a few hours later with some shocking news. Both Lucille and Alberto were arrested.

In court, the Detective recorded the explanation of the supposed kidnapping which was actually a ploy to get money from Lucille's husband so Lucille and her new lover Alberto could run off together.



The news was kept from John for so long and his heart dropped at the sound of it. He immediately broke down into tears but when it came turn for him at the stand he cursed the name of his wife over Alberto over the ten years they had been married. And this incident united both Jace and John for the first time in their lives as after the session outside the courthouse Jace immediately comforted his sobbing brother.

Detective Anderson was heavily praised for solving the crime. After the whole incident a whole day later Cooper sat at his desk and with a sigh of relief stated the words "case closed", before lazily falling asleep and staying there until the next morning. John became more involved in his brother's life helping to babysit his nieces and nephews as much as he could and the two never had an issue again.



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## Deep Fried, Transplants, and Brains, Oh My! by Lexing Liu



I'm sure I can't be the only one that likes deep-fried food, seeing as Chicken McNuggets are so popular. But now there is no reason to feel guilty, because there is a new fryer in town! (I know I sound like an advertiser but stick with me). The air fryer has the capability to "fry" food with only 20-30 percent of the calories! It was invented by Fred van der Weij of the Netherlands, who was trying to fry a french fry without using a deep fryer. Other alternative methods he tried produced worse results and took longer. Deep fried foods increase risk of heart disease, obesity, and type 2 diabetes.



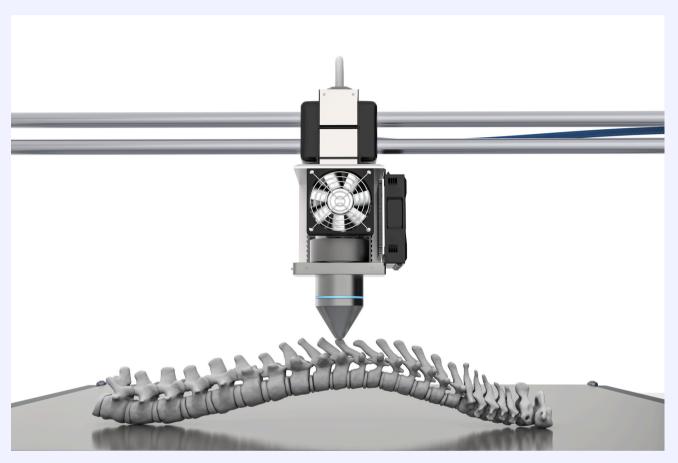


Air fryers have also made their way to social media, with over 2.6 billion views with #airfryer and nearly 700 million views under **#airfryerrecipes**. There's no wonder they're popular, as they reduce calories and reduce the chances of certain diseases with the same taste and texture of the traditional deep-fried foods.

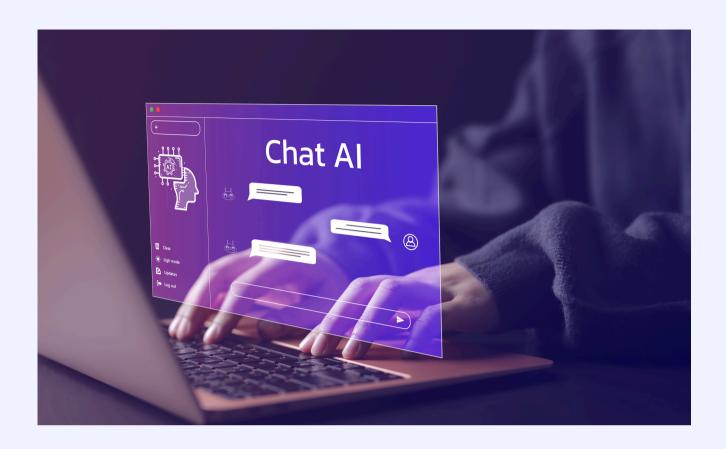


Besides, air fryers are much more versatile as an appliance, as seen on some social media, where they make everything from corn to hard-boiled eggs to desserts!

On a more serious note, bioprinting is an invention under development to make artificial organs and body parts. Bioprinting goes through a process similar to 3D-printing, which came first in 1981. 3D printing was barely expected to work, but now companies are 3D printing cars and houses.



In the future, using 3D printing can revolutionize medicine, creating organs to save lives of people in need of transplants. Scientists are currently working on this mechanic to improve efficiency and safety to prevent the organs from harming the body. The bioprinting "filament" is composed of cells, bioinks, and biomaterials to create a new body part. This machine will help people awaiting organ transplants, a number rising through 100,000 in the United States alone. 17 people a day are dying waiting for a transplant, and every nine minutes, another person is added to the transplant waiting list. Being able to print an exact match for each and every patient could save a lot of lives. Bioprinting will likely become a successful invention in the medical field at some point in our future.

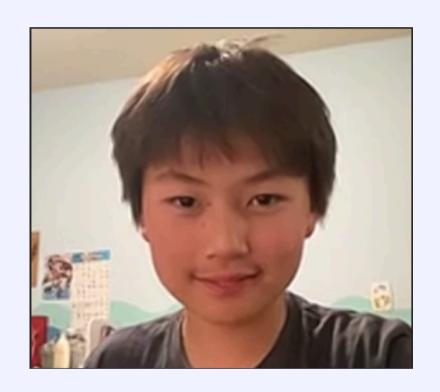


There are also more inventions, like artificial intelligence, that will help improve people's lives. They are currently being used in many industries, such as fraud prevention, autopilot, and even serving in restaurants.



Overall, technology is the fine line between creating useful and lifesaving products and the world being ruled by robots. While some inventions, like the air fryer, are harmless, if Al goes on the loose, there is not much we can do to stop it besides some form of violence. Bioprinting can save many, many lives, but if the body rejects the new body part, the results may not be pretty. Some risks, like accepting a bioprinted organ, can be favorable and acceptable, while others, like creating a robot with a higher IQ than any human, is likely going to result in disaster.

As much as I like new tech, everything has its risks, and some are more worth taking than others. Just because we can do something doesn't mean we should, so we will have to control what we create and use new technology conservatively.



About the author

I am in seventh grade and live in Fremont, California in the United States. I like to read, play games, and listen to music. Technology is a tool we have, but some of the population is still unaware of these new innovations and their dangers.



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#### Plan then Attack

#### by Anusha Bansal Editor-In-Chief

Spirit,

What surges through you during a bout.

Strength,

How many, many times you develop this while fencing,

Personality,

What changes with you during your life of fencing,

Complications,

What comes through your mind while you whirl your wrist with force.

It transforms you, fencing does.

Satisfaction,

What spreads on your face when you suit up in the protection of the equipment.

Muscles,

What expands on your inside when attacking at 50 mph,

You plan, then attack.

You attack, then you are victorious.

You win.

What if you lose?

You plan, then attack.

You attack, then you are defeated.

You lose.

Try again.

Fencing will always give you a second chance, But only if you will take it.



### Shampoo

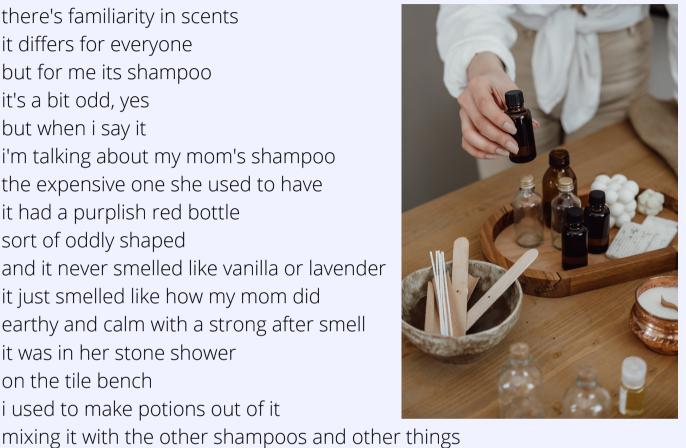
#### by Mia Tolpa

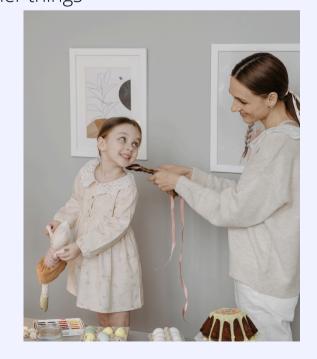
there's familiarity in scents it differs for everyone but for me its shampoo it's a bit odd, yes but when i say it i'm talking about my mom's shampoo the expensive one she used to have it had a purplish red bottle sort of oddly shaped and it never smelled like vanilla or lavender it just smelled like how my mom did earthy and calm with a strong after smell it was in her stone shower on the tile bench i used to make potions out of it

into the empty, leftover bottles unused but not tossed i remember when she would do my hair i would sit in front of her bright vanity on her white, leather seat it was a little cracked worn but comfy she would stand on the warmed tile floor braiding my hair

a serene lift to the air

i could smell it





familiar and nice
she stopped using it years ago
my parents moved homes
split
found new homes
new shampoos
i can still smell it sometimes
lingering on her old clothes
when i bug her

when i hug her her hugging back holding my body but the mind and heart of a younger me.



### About the author

I'm in 9th grade and I'm from Chester, New Jersey in the U.S. Most of my hobbies surround the arts to different degrees such as poetry, music and painting. The reason I am submitting this entry is because for one, I was encouraged by my poetry teacher and second, I want to have my poetry out in the world.

## Solar Eclipse

by a digital artist

In skies ablaze with daylight's gleam, A cosmic secret, a whispered dream. The sun, a fiery orb of might, Yields to the moon, in celestial flight.



In twenty twenty-four's embrace, A dance of shadows, a mystic grace. The earth below, in hushed repose, As heavens align, in rare tableau.

> Across the land, anticipation thrums, As time suspends, and wonder comes. Eyes adorned with tinted veil, Gaze upon the celestial tale.

As sun and moon converge their course, A fleeting darkness, a cosmic force. The world below, in soft eclipse, A moment held in nature's grips.

> In whispered awe, the crowd looks on, As day meets night, and shadows spawn. A sight to cherish, a memory made, In the symphony of light and shade.

> > So let us stand, in silent cheer, As the solar eclipse draws near. For in its beauty, we find our art, A masterpiece painted on the heart.



## CURRENT EVENTS

GLOBAL ART & LITERARY MAGAZINE

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### What Students Are Saying About Bullying Today

Teenagers tell us what it's like to navigate the social world in the age of smartphones and social media.



Avantika, left, Angourie Rice, Renee Rapp and Bebe Wood in a scene from "Mean Girls." Jojo Whilden/Paramount Pictures, via Associated Press

## By The Learning Network March 21, 2024

Article copied from The New York Times, "The Learning Network". Please click on the article link to go directly to their website to read.

#### Is TikTok a National Security Risk?

The House has passed a bill that would force the app's Chinese owner to sell it or face a ban in the United States. Is this a good idea?



If the TikTok bill were to become law, it would probably deepen tensions between the United States and China over the control of important technologies.

Kenny Holston/The New York Times

By Natalie Proulx, The Learning Network

March 21, 2024

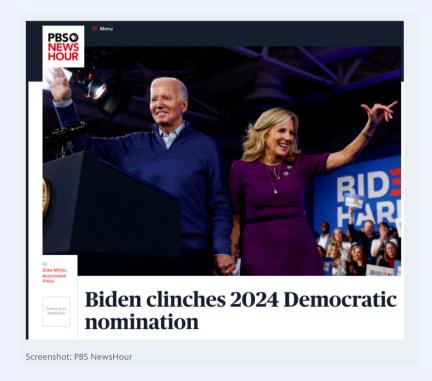
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### **Trump clinches 2024 Republican nomination**



DRS NaweHour: Screenshot

#### **Biden clinches 2024 Democratic nomination**



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#### How2Internet: How to produce a fact-check video

Learn media literacy through media creation — A good digital citizen makes sure that information liked, shared or posted online is accurate, fair, balanced and appropriate for the audience. Learn how to produce your own fact-check video about potential misinformation online to demonstrate your media literacy skills.



By Chris Schwalm, a youth producer at PBS NewsHour Student Reporting Labs (SRL).

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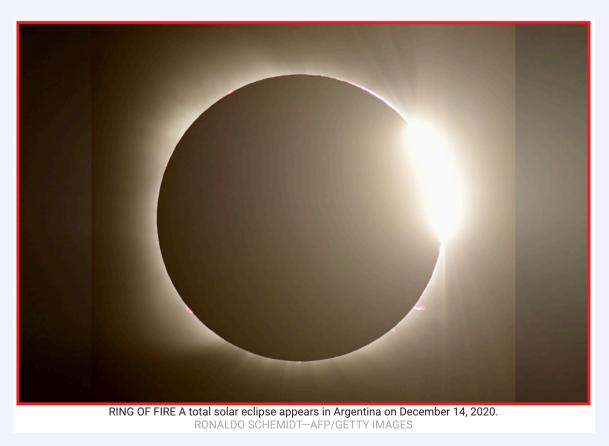
#### Solar Eclipse Excitement

Parts of the United States are preparing for quite the astrological event.

On April 8, a total solar eclipse will be visible in 15 states. The other continental states will be able to see a partial solar eclipse.

A solar eclipse happens when the moon passes in front of the sun, and the moon's shadow falls on part of Earth. This happens rarely, because the moon's orbit is rarely aligned with the sun and Earth.

April's eclipse is special because it's total. This means the moon will completely cover the sun. Places in the moon's shadow will experience sudden darkness in the middle of the day. They'll see a ring of fire, or the outline of the sun behind the moon. After April 8, a total eclipse visible in the United States won't happen again until 2044.



By Cristina Fernandez, Time for Kids

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Stay Fearless Westing Whiting



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