

LABYRINTH





Labyrinth
Alexandria City High School's Literary and Creative Arts Magazine
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Dear Reader,

You are holding in your hands the first Labyrinth issue of the 2021-2022 school year, and the first issue of the magazine to be physically published since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic (the 2020-2021 issue of the magazine is available online at labyrinthmagazine.com). While COVID-19 continues to affect everyone's life, we took our inspiration for the theme of the issue, "Behind the Mask," directly from the pandemic. The wonderfully creative students of Alexandria City High School interpreted this in various ways, from literal masks to masking emotions, and submitted writing, drawings, 3D art, photographs and more. We hope you enjoy reading the magazine as much as the staff enjoyed putting it together.

- *Alex Radt*

**MEET THE STAFF
OF LABYRINTH**



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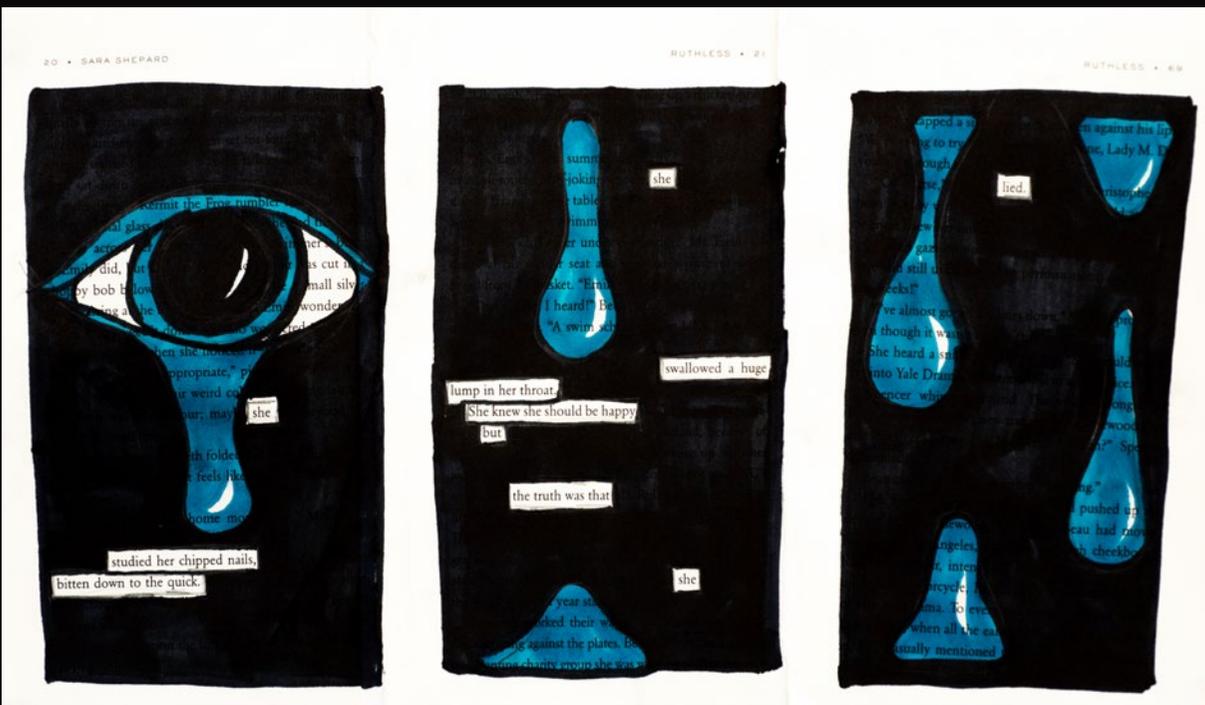
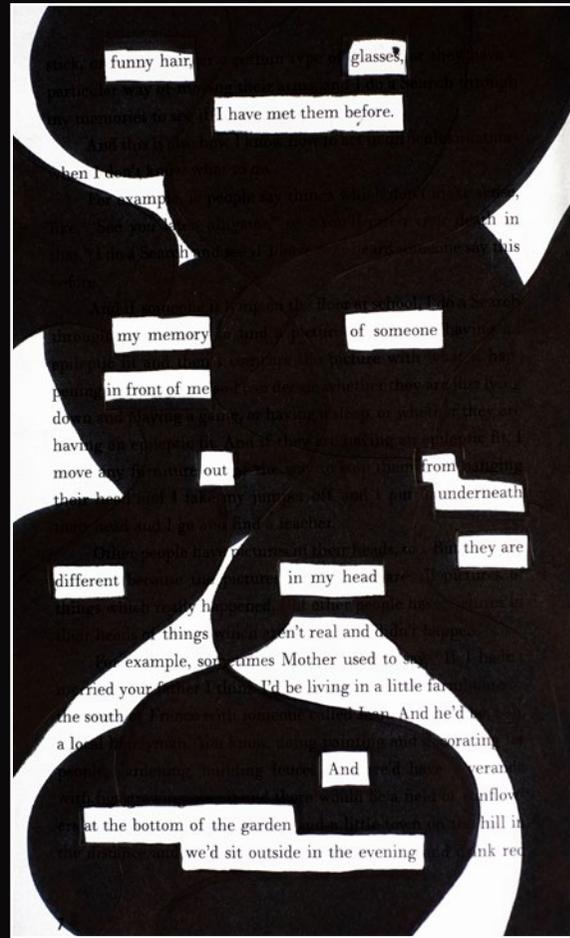
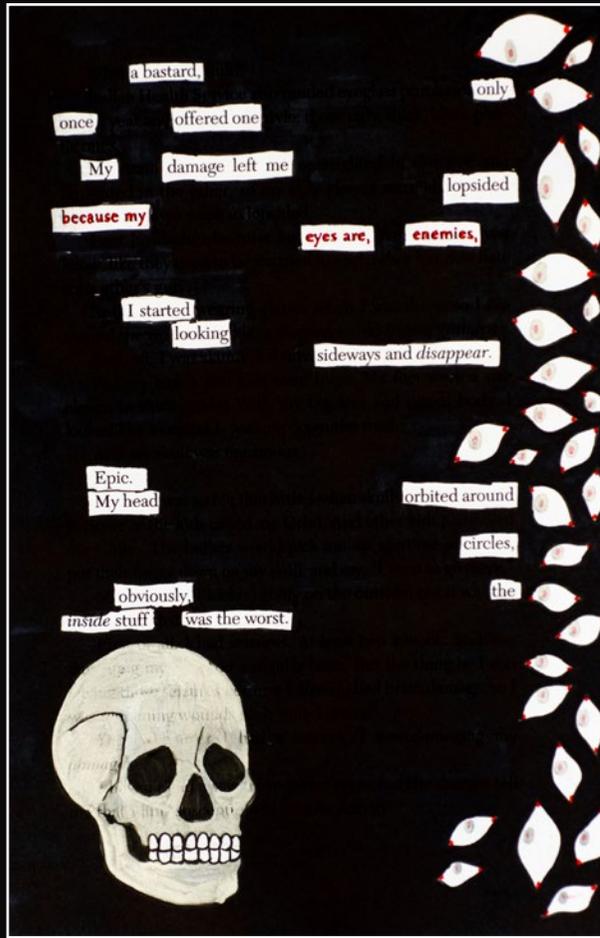


Sasha Dafkova
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MY POEM ABOUT THINGS BEHIND THE MASK

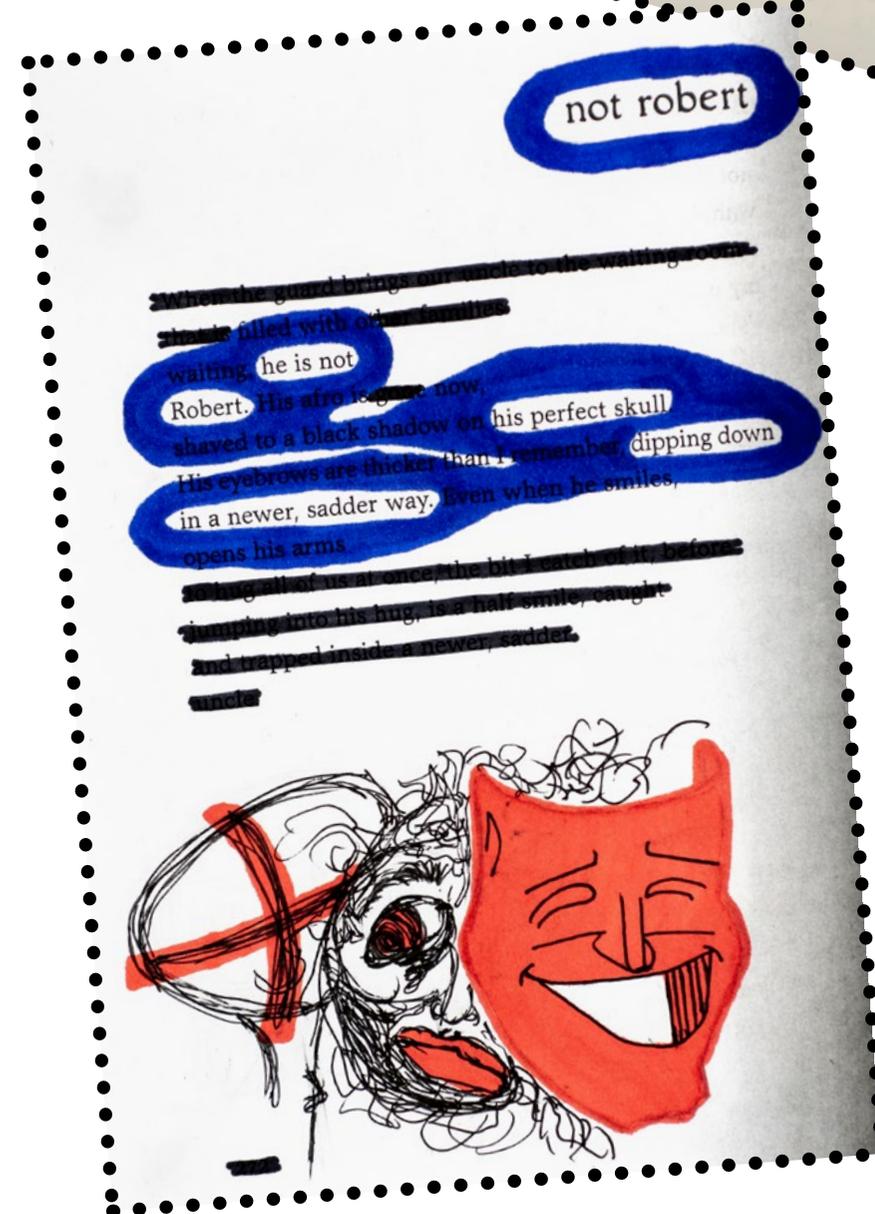
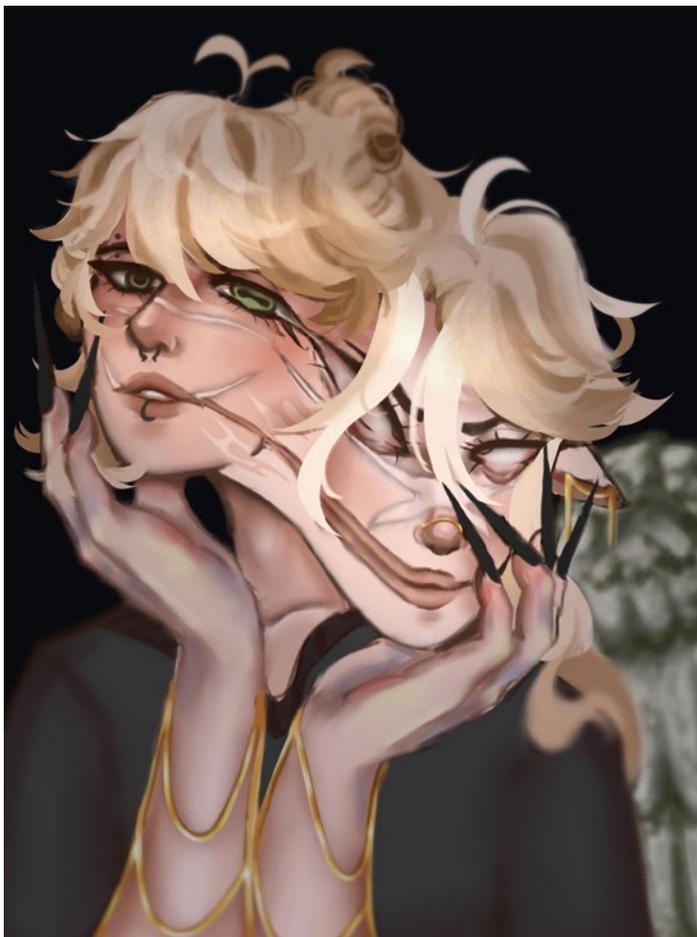
I was walking into the school,
'Course, I was wearing my grey mask
Then I heard an announcement from the speaker,
About a great and important task
It did not require an answer;
What did it require, you may ask?
Well, it was to write a poem,
About the things behind the mask

Well, but, what then, are behind it?
If not mouths, and teeth, and scraps of food?
Might I find a piece of this poem?
Yeah, that won't do me any good
Still don't know what to write for today
Still don't know what to do
Still don't know what to say in my poem
I suppose, that right now,
I am through

Of they say, "Be more abstract!"
Of they say, "Be more true!"
Of I inquire, "Did I ask for your input?"
Of they answer, "I don't know what's wrong
with you"

My commitment to this poem,
Is starting to wear down
Behind the mask, the face-covering,
I am now starting to frown
Annoyed, yet, I am discovering!
Oh my! Yes! I have just found
What to write for my little poem!
Now I won't look like a clown!

When you do start to feel blue,
When you do think that you're a clown
Look at my foolish struggles here,
And then take a look around
See that work you've just completed?
See that book that you've just read?
Way better than what I've written
Still, I hope, you did like what I've made.



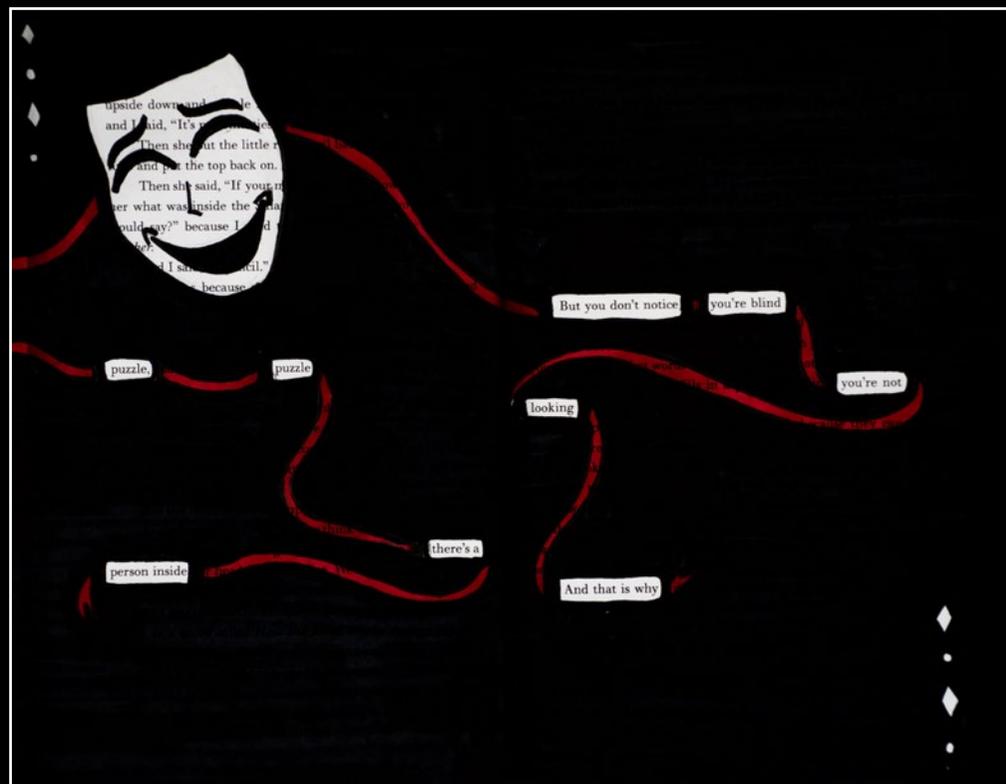
MASKED BY THE DARKNESS

Night does not thunder into day like sudden summer rain
but floats ever so slowly down from the heavens,
easing over the sky like fine silk.

She does not slice the sun like a knife
but wraps herself around it like a long unseen friend.
She does not dance with the devils that revel in her cover
but weeps for the innocent,
those she could not save
from the faceless devils masked by the darkness
despite her sky full of stars
to illuminate their wicked ways.

She is one with the owls, the trees, and bats -
her loving companions who never question the illumination she lacks.
She loves the moon like an ailing friend.
Only then does she wish for her reign not to come to an end.
She is gentle, not like the unforgiving day
but people are people and they prefer who best can brighten their way.

It is not night that wishes for darkness and dread,
but the day who wishes, for he is seen as a gift of safety and promise of protection.
The night would trade all the darkness for the gold of the day
if she thought it could protect
those whom her stars couldn't save.



THE SS CENTRAL AMERICA

Parting through clouds
A ray of sun upon a steamer's side
Cutting through the tropic waters
Straight on course to never falter

Her destination
Far from blue sky and greener grounds
Snow laden streets
A New Yorkers home that knew no bounds

Sails billowing in the wind
Her cargo shone from within
A hoard that glittered, it held it's glow
Gold pieces in her hold, down below

All her 2,141 tons
Stop in Havana paradise
Her stay was needed though it was short
On her way to New York's port

As she cut through dark blue waters
The crew worked below
The boilers heat melting surrounding air
Skin like wax dripping with sweat, firelight aglow

The air seemed to move
Her fires seemed to roar
Voices rounded on the walls
Conversations within conversations
As echos ran through calls

Above the commotion, the hard work and sweat
Calmly slept the passengers
Her women, children, and men
Eyes closed to what would become them

It churned within the blackening sky
The winds picked up far from it's eye
Ripping through her sails
Sounds like that of the gods fighting and banging on pails

Light thrown like spears across the horizon
The worst was yet to come
The waves grew as her bow fell forward
Drowning walkways, beating her like a drum

Waves no longer lived outside of her body
Her cabins' water levels rose
The screams that came from within
Held fear of death and dispose

The crew called out for help around
But though they screamed there was no sound
A message sent through a flying flag
Their signal not to be found

The survivors were few
Two boats their savior
As they watched the ship get eaten by the ocean
As if it had the most flavor

The bodies of men who hadn't made it aboard
The life rafts floating so far from Carolina shore
The winds picked up and took them away
Many who were saved were women and children that day

Its jaws gaping like a beast ready to devour
The ship of gold
And all its power
It sank that day September 12
At 8:00 in night's great stealth

What if time could be rewound
Before the ship was New York bound
Would that save SS Central America
The ship of gold its crown

between two stations so that all you get is white noise and then you turn the volume right up so that this is all you can hear and then you know you are safe because you cannot hear anything else.

The policeman took hold of my arm and took me onto my feet.

I want like him touching me like that.

This is when I hit him.

It is not a funny book. I cannot tell jokes because I do not know them. Here is a joke, as an example. It is about curtains.

His face was drawn but the curtains were real.

I know what this is meant to be funny. I asked. It is because there are three meanings, and they are (1) drawn with a pencil, (2) painted, and (3) pulled across a window, and meaning 1 refers to both the face and the curtains, meaning 2 refers only to the face, and meaning 3 refers only to the curtains.

If I try to say the joke to myself, the word mean the three different things at the same time. It is like hearing three different pieces of noise at the same time, which is uncomfortable and confusing and not nice like white noise. It is like three people trying to talk to you at the same time about different things.

And that is why there are no jokes in this book.

I wanted to know if I was. Tyler had said I was special once, years before. He'd read me a passage of scripture from the back of Morrison's book (a sober child, quick to observe.) It reminds me of what Tyler had said. The passage described the greatest of the women, the most confusing. A woman could never be a prophet, yet here was the greatest. I reminded him of some of the greatest prophets of all. I still don't know what he meant by it, but what I understood at the time was that I could trust myself. It felt like something in me, something like what was in the prophets, and that it was not male or female, not even a kind of worth that was inherent and unchangeable. But now, as I gazed at the shadow, I saw, cast on my wall, aware of my maturing body, of its evils and of my desire to do good, the meaning of that moment shifted, suddenly that worth was not mine, like it could be taken or squandered. It was not mine, it was restored. What was of worth was not me, but the weight of constraints and obligations that obscured me. I looked at my brother. He seemed so at that moment, like he knew about the world. He knew about women, women who told him to keep me from becoming one. "Okay, Fish Eyes," he said. "I will."

isolated, disconnected, After, a waking dream, life, 300 days of the, year, walked on eggshells, around, "Everyone", depression, headaches, anxiety, memories slowed, a dead father, horror, up, trauma, subconscious, hiding in your, pull, you, When, over, antidepressants, didn't help, I wasn't impulsive, I had no anxiety, wasn't depressed, pressed

lips °*



PHASES OF THE MOON

Ever thought about the Moon?
Like how every day it shows at night
Even the moon wears a mask

The same way how we all know one side of the moon
That's the side everyone knows about us
When the sun rises the moon takes a break
The end of an act
The mask that we all wear - is it all an act?

I guess it is
People really don't know who we are
Until we reveal what's true
Becoming vulnerable is our worst fear
But if we do, do we drop the act?

We feel that we are in a constant cycle
Finding out what we need to do
That realization on how life is supposed to work
All that pressured takes a toll
Which seems easy to cover with a mask

