

# Freedom Arts Luncheon Featured Artists

## Written Works:

Matthew Alsip

Gabriela Auber

Cole Durdin

Corbin Jimenez

## Photography:

Matthew Alsip (Cover Photo)

Morgan Carolin

Will Endersby

Megan Jordan

Dylan Luna

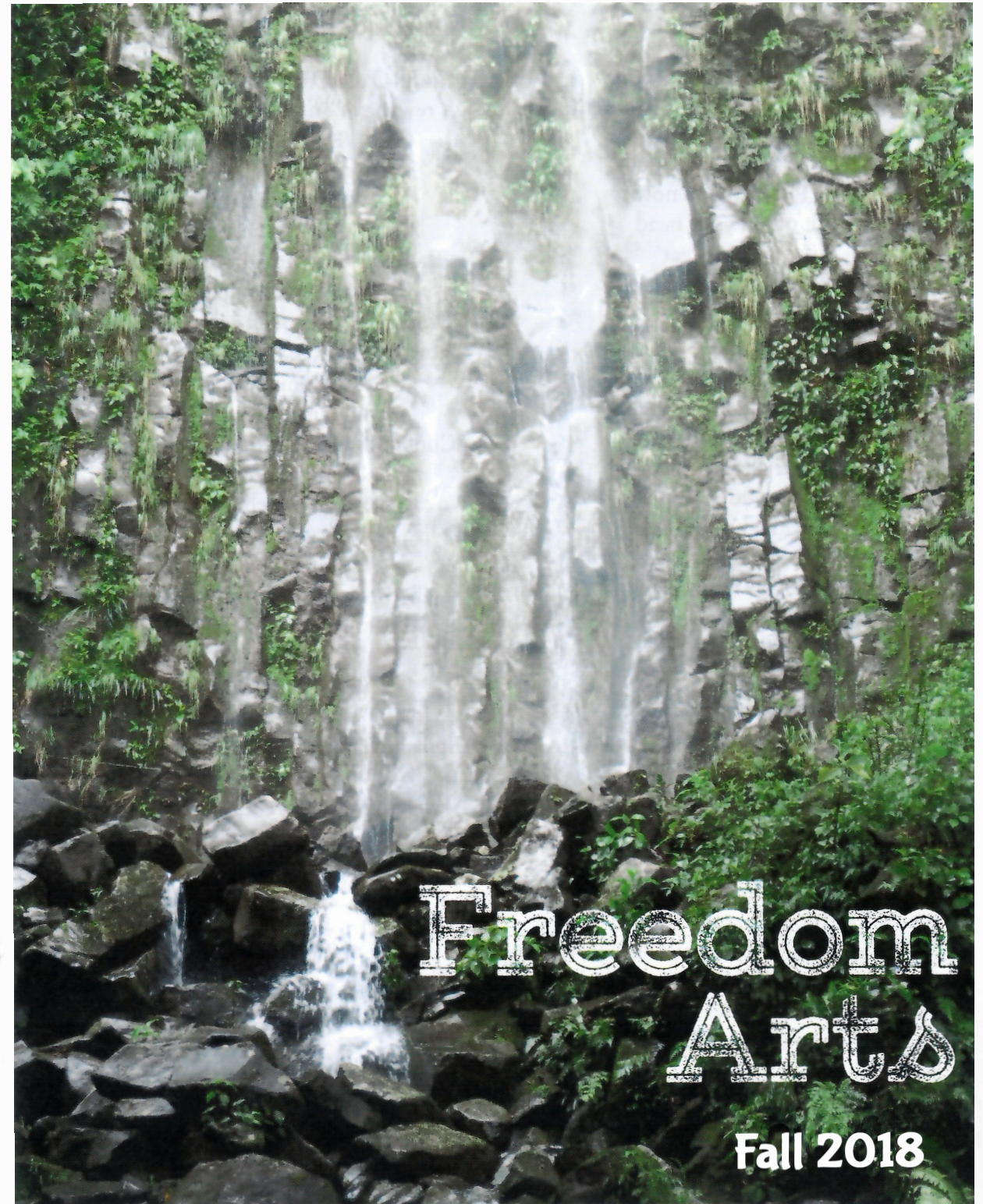
## Art:

Kiera Dunne

Megan Jordan

Dreya Pemberton

Rachel Perry



## The Lonely Ones

A rewrite of Langston Hughes' "Mother to Son"

By: Gabriela Auber

Son, I'll warn you now  
Get it out of your head  
Life's no easy feat  
No sleep 'til you're dead  
But it's not over yet  
You must live on  
Chase a couple hearts  
So yours isn't left in shreds  
Put your faith in me  
Put your trust in my words  
Close your eyes  
Let the lonely ones lead  
Build them  
Repair them  
Fix them  
They'll return the favor  
They've been waiting for you  
Holding their breath  
'Cause they've got everything to lose  
They wait in the shadows  
Listening for the light  
Bring them their hope  
They'll lift you up  
So you don't fall like them  
Lift you up to take flight  
Give you more than me to live for  
So heed my words  
Just remember what I said  
'Cause it isn't over yet

## Look, but Don't Touch

A rewrite of Tupac's "The Rose that Grew"

By: Gabriela Auber

There, right there!  
Do you see it?  
The speck of beauty in our harsh world?  
No, don't do that!  
Don't you dare touch something so pure!  
What would the point of its accomplishment be  
if you picked it?  
If you tainted its lovely virtue?  
Contaminated its wondrous flawlessness?  
Stand here with me  
We can settle for watching it from a distance  
I wish to observe it dancing in the autumn  
breeze while we still can  
See its leaves swaying in the wind?  
It's almost as if they are dove wings  
Preparing to take flight  
To fly its petal to the sky  
Up, up and away  
High above the clouds where its view can be  
blocked  
High up to capture the sunlight from us  
The one other thing in this world as pure as  
itself



As they arrived, they stumbled into the building with the swarm of students and bumped into a strange boy. "Oh, excuse me!" the boy said. Reggie thought the tone of the boy's voice was a bit, well, gay. The boy wasn't looking at them, yet was still talking. He seemed preoccupied by something down the hall. "I'm sorry! I need to go now!" Susan noticed a strange pink light coming from the boy's pocket as he ran down the hall. The boy verbally sighed with annoyance as he turned the corner.

Just an hour later Reggie and Susan noticed something odd. Their two best friends were absent from class. Susan wondered why it took them so long to notice, as they'd been in this class for about 30 minutes. They asked the teacher where their friends were. He said that he didn't know. Susan wasn't the most calm of people. She immediately started worrying about them. All of a sudden it's like she knew that Reggie was worried to. He didn't even say anything, yet she still felt like he was sad. In Reggie's mind WAS slight sadness. All these disappearances over the past few months have left everyone a little freaked out. "No one ever found the people that went missing," he thought to himself, "I can't let this happen to my friends!" As this thought entered his mind, a drink on the teacher's desk fell over and the glass shattered on the ground. "Reggie! Can you go get me some towels?" the teacher asked, "I'm not sure how this happened!" Just then the bell for next period rang.

Their next period was an odd one. Their teacher was this burly old man who seemed to know things that no one else ever did. He was intimidating and he seemed to be a part of the school staff for ages. No one ever knew exactly how long he was at the school. He didn't really get along or even talk to the students that much. Reggie and Susan sat down and noticed that there was a new student in the class. It was Torrey. No one at The Wonton School was really friends with Torrey as she seemed to be much more mature and level headed than the rest of her peers. Reggie and Susan decided to go say hello to Torrey. "Hello!" said Susan. "Are you new to this class?" Torrey wasn't in a good mood. As soon as the two approached her and spoke she got filled with anger. She slammed her fist down on the desk and made a rather large dent in it. Their teacher didn't seem to notice. This action slightly scared Susan and she backed away a bit. "Sorry!" said Torrey "I'm just a bit tired and upset right now." Not only did she not want to be in this class at all, but her good friend had disappeared this morning and she was very concerned.

Later that evening, Reggie and Susan were walking home from school when they noticed two small lights in the sky. They seemed to be moving across the sky very fast and before they knew it the lights were right in front of them and getting bigger. They moved out of the way as the two lights dashed past them. Whatever just flew past could have killed them. The two lights stopped at the end of the street. A figure emerged from them. The figure slowly came into the overhead lights of the streetlamps. Reggie and Susan immediately recognized the figure as the boy genius, Dr. John Librandi. "Hello peoples! I hope you're ready for what's coming!"



# The Awakening

By Corbin Jimenez

10,000 years ago, darkness shrouded the Earth. An ancient evil ruled the planet and made primitive man do its bidding. The darkness claimed one lowly Mesopotamian farmer. He was granted eternal life in exchange for a promise. He must shape human evolution over the course of many thousands of years. He served the evil without hesitation. His name was Aurantiaco, or Auran for short. His life was prolonged and he vowed to shape humanity to the great evil's will. The evil, known to the ancient ones as Corcricia, was an angry goddess. She looked down at the primitive humans and laughed. "This planet has potential," she thought to herself. "If I were to allow it to succeed, I may very well lose what power I have over it." She chuckled with a sly grin. "I must decide carefully the fate of this planet. If I were to lay a curse over them and hide their potentially disastrous abilities that may even rival my own, I may be able to influence them. However, I need this Aurantiaco to act as my subject. He shall be instrumental in guiding the humans to serve me. This curse of nullification shall last ten millennia. My servant shall last twice that. To ensure his cooperation, he shall be allowed to keep his powers and be forever stronger than any human. This planet shall be mine for eternity!"

"Time is a strange thing. You see, it's not as cause-and-effect as it seems! It's actually more like a mess of..." The radio was turned off. Torrey Verde, a senior at the Wonton School, always thought that this new radio "celebrity" was a total nerd. She considered throwing away her radio as the only person she heard anyone talking about was some young genius who spent his high school life studying freaking time travel. She decided to head out for school. She would run along the streets of New York, eventually reaching her Metro station and heading on the earliest northbound train. Being a teenager in the middle of central New York in 2017 meant she had to grow up fast. Her family wasn't particularly rich and her ADD landed her in a specialized school for "special" kids. She loathed that school. So many screeching and wild children who didn't grow up as fast as she did. She longed to be free from this place that she affectionately called a prison.

"This just in: three more disappearances in the last 24 hours. Three more teenagers have mysteriously vanished from the streets of New York. Victoria Waterfield has more at 11:00." The TV was surprisingly loud and could be heard from outside. Susan Engelmann was walking past her neighbor's apartment and spotted her friend Reggie Freesia. "Reggie!" she called. "Wait up!" she sped her pace up to a light jog to catch up with him. "What's up Susan?" said Reggie as the two continued down the sidewalk. They were headed to school, which just so happened to be the same school that Torrey attended. Neither Reggie or Susan were the smartest in their class, but they got by.

# The Creature in the Dark

By Cole Durdin

I have always heard stories about the terrifying creature that was lurking in the dark caves of Thunder Hill, but I always thought they were just stories from a crazy old man. My grandpa used to tell me of a fire breathing beast that he spotted once while hiking near Thunder Hill. He tried to warn others, but when they went to hunt down the beast there was nothing to be found. I never thought that my crazy old grandpa's story could possibly be true. That is until one day I was with my friends telling scary stories. I told them the story my grandpa used to tell me religiously. They all laughed except for Georgy, he turned white. When I asked him what was wrong he said "I thought I was the only one." We looked at each other with the same thought, Georgey wasn't messing around.

My friend Michael, who thinks he is bullet proof, came up with a plan: go check for ourselves if this tale had any truth to it. Of course nobody wanted to seem like a wuss so we agreed to join him. We planned to meet up at Vista Point near Thunder Hill. That Friday after school we all met at the small deserted lot called Vista Point, it almost seemed that the air was heavy. One by one all of my friends showed up. Everyone looked like an over prepared tourist going into the jungle. I, however, had on my hiking boot and a backpack with the bare essentials.

We headed into the poor excuse for a trail that looked like it hadn't been used for years. The hike to Thunder Hill is about a seven mile trek. It was hot, humid, and miserable. When we reached the bottom of Thunder Hill after three hours of trudging through nasty woods, we could tell right away that there was something up in that hill, and it wasn't some little pussy cat. We climbed to the first cave entrance and the sight almost knocked us to the ground. There, merely five feet from the entrance, was a pile of rotting meat and bone. From what we could tell there were bones from cows, goats, and a few other animals we didn't recognise. Then, Georgy, with that same terrified, pale look in his eyes raised a shaking finger. He saw a different pile, this one consisted of only one kind of bones, human.

As we stared in disbelief at the pile of human bones, we heard movement from deeper within the cave. We froze in fear. I quickly looked around and spotted a little alcove in the wall of the cave near the pile of human bones. I motioned to my friends and we all rushed to hide.

While we sat, in utter terror, we heard a new noise coming from the cave. THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP!! It was the sound of giant foot steps on the floor of the cave. We all held our breath and closed our eyes tight. Then, all of a sudden the noise stopped. I opened my eyes and saw a huge beast. The beast was a huge, black dragon, and it was staring right at us. With one blow he shot fire and burned all of us. I was severely hurt, but unlike the rest of my friends, I was alive. I watched in terror as the dragon dragged my friends out one by one. I was so scared, but the pain from the burns was too intense for me to even move. After all my friend were gone, I whimpered and cried in terror, the dragon grabbed hold of my leg and dragged me out of the hole, picked me up and dropped me in his enormous mouth.

# The Truth About Santa's Naughty Kids

By Matthew Alsip

On Christmas Eve a strange noise on the roof awoke me from my slumber. The sky was orange and pink; the sun was rising. I checked my nearby clock to check that I had not overslept through Christmas Eve. The clock said 5:41, December 24, 1987. I thought to myself, "If it's still Christmas Eve, the noise couldn't be Santa's sleigh, it's way too early for that." I hopped out of bed and went downstairs only to find my dad watching Frosty the Snowman. He turned his head, looking confused. "What're you doing out a bed this early in the morning?" he said. "I don't know, just couldn't sleep," I responded. He turned back around, and I went into the kitchen to grab myself some breakfast.

As I poured the milk into my cereal the strange noise pierced my ears once again. The sound was fainter this time than the previous. I walked out of the room, my dad had changed the channel to yesterday's football game reairing. "Dad, did you hear something on the roof?" I asked with a questionable voice. "I don't think so, why don't you go check it out and make sure it's nothing bad," he replied. I strolled back into the kitchen, my cereal soggy and wet.

I went out into the backyard and grabbed my family's tall ladder. We had always used the ladder for decorating our big neighborhood Christmas tree, but this year, the person who had always brought the tree moved away, so we all went back to small trees in the houses. I propped the ladder up against the battered roof and slowly began to climb. The ladder shook as a strong wind blew past. I grabbed a pair of shingles to keep it stable. Then, I heard the noise again louder and closer to me than ever before. I speed up the ladder, and as soon as I got to the top, nothing big caught my eye. The roof was covered in old leaves and stuff I thought had lost years ago. My old basketball and soccer ball were sitting together in a crevas. "That's it, found the problem," I thought to myself. I threw both down into our sandpit and slowly climbed down the ladder.

My dad had taken my sister to a friend's house for a Christmas party, when I heard the noise again. I had been listening to AC/DC when it happened. My mom came rushing up the stairs. She burst through my door like someone outrunning a murderer. "Hey, sorry to burst in, but I heard something coming up from the attic." "This house has an attic?" I said surprised. "When did we ever have an attic?" My mom then got that stern look on her face. Her eyes, gazing out the window, were in the thousand yard stare. She began to sweat lightly, her breathing became more prevalent. She took a deep breath. "Yes . . . we do have an attic, and I didn't tell you because there is stuff up there that your father and I don't want you to see. Since I have to look nice for this evening I'm hoping you can go up there and investigate the noise." I nodded my head, curious about what was hiding up in the dusty attic. My mom then showed me to the area outside our bathroom. She pulled out a unique-looking key and inserted it into a hole in the wall I had thought came from when I threw my yo-yo too hard. She turned the key and pulled out a small piece of the wall. Inside there hung a brittle, old string.

"Be my guest," my mom said suddenly. I pulled down on the string, and a part of the ceiling popped open. Dust came flying out; a small ladder also appeared. I nodded at my mom and climbed the cracked, broken ladder. The large attic was pitch black. From the light down below, I could see hundreds of little spider webs hung from all over the place. My mom told me to find a small light switch behind the ladder. Behind what looked like a piles of clothes I flipped the switch on. The bulb was old and yellow, but it did the job well. I turned around and saw the magnitude of the attic. Clothes encompassed the rear of the attic, boxes upon boxes adorned the sides, and furniture that I had never seen sat still in the front. I slowly crept toward the front of the attic, the wooden floor creaking below me. I came upon a stack of cardboard boxes, and then, without any warning, I heard the noise again.

I swiftly began to unstack the boxes. The noise sounded like it came from the very bottom of the pile. Dust began to cover me, droplets of water emerged from the boxes. After a couple of minutes, I stumbled upon an old metal crate. I dragged it out revealing a skeleton of what appeared to be a dead opossum. I brushed off the dust to reveal a worn tag. From what I could see, it read: Christmas, 1958-1967.

I opened the crate up and found an old record player, some black and white photos, and a few vintage Christmas decorations. I pulled out the record player and found that the arm was somehow beating upon a record attached to it. I found an outlet in the front of the attic and plugged the record player in. It began playing a really crackling, vintage song I had never heard of before. The record suddenly stopped playing, a lady's scream could be heard and another voice began to talk: "Hello children, I just want to say Merry Christmas to all of my nice kids out there. To all of my naughty little children, sleep well tonight because you might miss Christmas all together if you don't get your beauty sleep, Ho! Ho! Ho! . . ."

The record crackled and the old song was heard again. My eyes were wide open, my heart was beating like a speeding train, my hands were shaking. I immediately rushed to the crate and grabbed the photos. In one of the photos, I saw my father with someone I had never seen personally: my grandfather. He had mysteriously vanished many years ago around Christmas. Police called off the search after three months and the case has been cold ever since. The photos were the whole family standing around a Christmas tree covered in lights. Yet in spite of all this, my eyes drifted to the far right side of the photo. A plump, heavy-weight person with red eyes covered in shadows gazed towards the family. I flipped the picture around, a small message was written in very big text. LAST SEEN: DECEMBER 24, 1967 5:41 P.M. Suddenly, the bulb went out and I raced back to the exit, but it had been closed. I pounded on the door and yelled for help. I then heard stomping feet coming closer to me. I turned around and immediately saw the bright red eyes gazing down on me. "You have been a bad boy this year!" Santa said.