

# THE IDEATE REVIEW

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# Editor's Note

Dear Readers –

Welcome to Issue 5 of *The Ideate Review*! We are thrilled to showcase our newest selection of poetry, prose, and art from across the globe on our magazine's theme, "identity."

As we approach the beginning of a new decade, we may take a moment to reflect on ourselves. While writers and artists speak from their observations and experiences, they also realize new aspects of themselves in the process. When appreciating art, readers are transported to another dimension that helps them view the world from a different perspective. In this dimension, readers may see pieces of themselves and thereby empathize with the work.

When selecting work for inclusion in this issue, we searched for work that moved us, that invited us to the artist's world. In "Kepler's Ellipse" by Divya Gupta, the author integrates astronomy with poetry to illustrate the confusion that a teenager experiences while constructing his or her identity. In "The Lucky Ones" by Ethan Phan, the speaker comes to terms with his Vietnamese-American identity in a new environment.

Once again, we welcome you to Issue 5 of *The Ideate Review*.

Jimin Lee  
Founder & Editor-In-Chief  
of *The Ideate Review*

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# Kepler's Ellipse

Divya Gupta

The lead from his pencil spins around in my head,  
slightly, abnormally, exactly, dizzying,

until my eyelids are lost and shaking in the dark.  
Every car and grate etched into the faded

stone street, swings wildly on our shared home,  
around a flaming ball of irrationality.

Dust borders the rim of my lamp and I pluck them off,  
one by one, until the crescent moon

from my fingernail becomes my print.  
Shadows around me, dynamically static,

run around my room, tauntingly dancing  
from the window and syncopating along the branches.

The paint from my walls drip, colorless.  
The heat from my lamp, vanished.

Only the clock *tick tick tick* whips my neck  
from any senses until I'm lying on the ground,

wishing that ellipses were just circles.



# Timekeeping

Vivian Wagner

The moon marks minutes,  
days, seasons, scrolling  
across the sky like a watch  
thrown into the heavens,  
taking its time to fall.

# Abduction

Celine Choi

Water pools in crevices of my body  
submerged in shadows of rice stalks  
the air stings the million interfaces of exposed humanity  
pricks piece by piece, skeletal creature

Alienated

kernels of what I think they call hope fall as if  
wanting to replicate the melodrama of autumn leaves,

The advantage of biological degradation is how  
bones can't lie,  
and so etiolated girl, reminiscing for moments she was not alone,  
when she was not scared of all the space she takes up,  
closes the hollows of her carved out eyes.

# Me

Hyewon Cho



# Daily Practice

Vivian Wagner

The day whirls into being,  
with crows all-seeing  
and chipmunks treeing.  
What more can we bring  
but this: a slow, loving  
awareness of sunlight's bling?  
I have, of late, been trying  
to watch each moment's arriving—  
and, perhaps tentatively, to sing.



# For Ian, #1

Liwa Sun

Wait

Don't illuminate my human condition yet  
Debase me or barf me out like water  
Do not disclose yourself to me

For your birthday I have prepared a room  
and all of my entrails in it  
One massive echo  
A phlegm-like uncertainty  
Two shots of vodka (keep pouring)

After the typhoon we took the high road and watched the swans  
dissolving in swollen water  
Do not stop pouring, my love,  
pour and I will take you in-  
we conduct this love in colossal pantomimes

There's no more to life than this.  
I mix fluids to hold you hostage and  
to write my way into a non-finitude

# The Lucky Ones

Ethan Phan

My mom says we have lots of family in Vietnam. Many cousins, she tells me. And grumpy uncles that have endless stories from their time in some war and aunts that cook and clean and gossip. I think I believe her.

Seven uncles and aunts, to be exact. Two boys and five girls. One of my uncles, who lives in California, comes around Christmas every year. It is always fun like playing cards, plus he has five daughters so the house gets really crowded when they come over. My mom says he and she are the lucky ones. I don't know what that means.

We get to Vietnam after getting on a plane and sitting for hours, getting on another plane, sitting for some more hours, getting on another plane, and then sitting for some more hours. We leave the airport to a crazy crowd of people waiting outside, and they are yelling names and holding signs. We look around, and then my mom sees her family. And there is lots of crying and hugging and sweating and feeling.

We all squish into one taxi, and I sit on my aunt's lap. They love getting close, those Vietnamese people, and everyone is always sticky and sweaty and hot but no one cares. Also there is a lot of yelling and clamor and taxi blares. And the heavy taxi keeps driving. And the dashboard meter keeps ticking.

We finally get to the house of one of my aunts, the house we will be staying in. The floor was marble and the ceiling touched the sky. There were pillars like thick jungle trees, and the wooden bench was detailed in its carvings and could hold a thousand people. The staircase seemed to curl up and up forever.

Once we move our stuff inside, it is two in the morning. We take a seat on the bench, and my aunts all line up in front of us. Can you name all of us, they say through chuckles and grins. I squint, looking for something to trigger anything, eye color, nose, cheekbones. My sister blows through them like an important test. And I can't name any. Then we sleep.

\*\*\*

On the second floor there are two showers. One of them, in my aunt's room, lights up purple like the big signs downtown. Also, you can listen to the radio while you shower, but I don't understand what they are saying. I just wash myself and leave.

We take two showers a day because it's so hot. My mom would never let me do this at home, but we have enough water here to shower forever. The bigger the house, the bigger the water supply, I think.

Ding dong, as I put on my pajamas. I run to the staircase and look toward the door. The man in the crowd of relatives at the airport, my uncle. And his son, Duc, runs to the box of Legos on the bench. His sister, I think her name is Ngoc, wants to play, but he shoos her away because there is a dollhouse on the other side of the room. Huy, come down here, my mom says.

I hug him, the stranger, my uncle, and then we talk. Is school going well? Yes. Are you enjoying Vietnam? Yes. Do you have a girlfriend? No. The adults laugh, but I don't know why.

I walk to Duc on the floor. Your cousins aren't poor, my mom says. Their parents just don't want to buy them toys. No one is allowed to have fun. Just study, get good grades, and play your role in the family. We are walking around the Toys-R-Us looking for presents to bring to Vietnam. What would Ngoc want, my mom asks. She grabs the small dollhouse and puts it on top of the Legos in the cart. Good.

We manage to get through half of the spaceship, along with my brother. Duc is learning English in school, so he understands yes and no. Plus, he can look at the pictures on the instructions. My sister and Ngoc watch from the bench.

The Legos are boring, so we watch some TV. Wrestling is on. Ew, gross, my sister says, and she and Ngoc go upstairs. Duc has no younger brother, and he wants to try some moves on my younger brother. We go upstairs and Boom, Bang, Pow. Just like the TV.

Flip. Kick. Drop. And then my brother is sitting on the mattress, crying. Shhh, shhh, no cry, Duc says. He looks like he saw a ghost, the ones that haunt the empty houses on the corner. Footsteps come from the stairs, my uncle and my mom.

My mom carries my brother to bed to calm him down. My uncle with a scary face takes Duc into another room. Boom, Bang, Pow. Just like the TV.

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Because it's always hot in Vietnam, mosquitos are everywhere -- even in my room. At night. Doors locked. Windows closed. A/C blasting. Blankets shielding my body. And I still wake up with 3 bites.

Maybe you have good blood, my cousins say. We are walking to a restaurant for breakfast because it's a good experience, according to my mom. She says they are different than the ones in America, but I don't know how.

We get there, and we sit on short plastic chairs around a red fold-up table outside like drunk men on Poker Night. My aunt walks to the counter to put in our order. I don't know what I will eat, but everyone says I'll like it. They know what's best for me.

A boy in dirty clothes with one arm gone walks to our table while we are waiting. Do you want any scratch tickets, he asks to the back of my aunt's head. She pretends like he isn't there, but my mom buys 15 from him. Then all the kids get two, and we scratch the tickets but no one wins anything.

They just want your money, says my aunt. But you don't feel bad for him? That kid had no arm, my mom says back. It is all for sympathy, my aunt says. Does that kid have parents, I say, and then strangers look at me. Don't speak English, my mom mutters to me. Then it seems like we have money.

Then the food comes out, and everyone is happy and hungry and eager. Everyone got the same thing: rice and grilled pork and vegetables and an egg. Can I get water. No, the tap water is really dirty and unhealthy, so wait until we get home so you can drink the boiled water, my mom says.

Before we finish eating, five more kids walk up to us looking to sell scratch tickets. You guys are the lucky ones, my mom says to us. And maybe I am. To have toys. And restaurants with chairs and clean water. And an arm. And a little brother and a big sister. And a family that doesn't make me sell scratch tickets. That's what my mom means.



# The Space Where I Can Go

Ian Lee



# Contributors

## DIVYA GUPTA

Divya Gupta is a junior in Highschool and enjoys creating poetry and prose that reflect the modern world. She has been published multiple times for her poems and strives to create works that everyone can relate to personally. Divya also participates in theatre and tennis, inside and outside of her school activities.

## VIVIAN WAGNER

Vivian Wagner lives in New Concord, Ohio, where she's an associate professor of English at Muskingum University. Her work has appeared in *Slice Magazine*, *Muse/A Journal*, *Forge Poetry Journal*, *Pittsburgh Poetry Review*, *McSweeney's Internet Tendency*, *Gone Lawn*, *The Atlantic*, *Narratively*, *The Ilanot Review*, *Silk Road Review*, *Zone 3*, *Bending Genres*, and other publications. She's the author of a memoir, *Fiddle: One Woman, Four Strings, and 8,000 Miles of Music* (Citadel-Kensington); a full-length poetry collection, *Raising* (Clare Songbirds Publishing House); and three poetry chapbooks: *The Village* (Aldrich Press-Kelsay Books), *Making* (Origami Poems Project), and *Curiosities* (Unsolicited Press).

## CELINE CHOI

Celine Choi is a high school junior hailing from the booming metropolis of College Station, Texas. She attended the Kenyon Young Writers Studio the summer of junior year, but has always loved literature and poetry. Her works have been published or are forthcoming in *Crashtest*, the Live Poets Society, and *Ephemiliar Journal*. She is deeply passionate about embracing her Korean culture, spreading political awareness, and curating the perfect Spotify playlists.

## HYEWON CHO

Hyewon Cho is a sophomore attending Korean International School in Seoul, South Korea. When she is not making artwork, her hobbies include walking her two-year-old collie and experimenting with old film cameras. She is currently building a portfolio for university.

## LIWA SUN

Liwa Sun is a Chinese writer, poet, and a game-theorist-wannabe. Her works are forthcoming in *The Bare Life Review* and elsewhere. She lets poetry contaminate her memory, in which she rejoices. She lives in Philadelphia with a small couch and mountains of books.

## ETHAN PHAN

Ethan Phan is a writer from Boston, Massachusetts. He has attended the Kenyon Young Writers Workshop and workshops at GrubStreet. He is currently a junior at The Roxbury Latin School and regularly writes for both the school newspaper and the school's literary arts magazine.

## IAN LEE

Ian Lee is a sophomore attending Westminster High School in Simsbury, Connecticut. Including art, his interests are listening to music and playing the cello. His future plans are to become a shoe designer.



# THE IDEATE REVIEW

Literary magazine dedicated to providing a voice  
for writers and artists from across the globe

## ISSUE 5

### **Editor-in-Chief**

Jimin Lee

### **Poetry Editor**

Smriti Verma

### **Prose Editor**

Vivian Parkin DeRosa

### **Prose Readers**

Amanda Huang

Esmé Kaplan-Kinsey

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Website: [www.theideatereview.org](http://www.theideatereview.org)

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