Dear Reader,

Welcome to the sixth and final edition of Horizons Quarantine Digest! The creation of this wonderful additional publication has been truly fulfilling and inspiring for us, our club, and our school community. Our objective was to unite, motivate and strengthen creative spirit to bring us all together in difficult times. And we hope that along the pages of The Quarantine Digest you found something that made you smile.

And here comes a bittersweet time, the end of the school year. As we submit our final assignments and prepare to say farewell to another year of academic work, we’d like to congratulate all of you. This year has not been easy for our Freshpeople who had to learn to adapt in unimaginable ways, our Sophomores who had to select their majors, our Juniors who started to apply to college, and finally, our Seniors who are graduating to another important phase of their lives. Your ability to adapt and stay strong is just a further indication of your readiness to explore the world. We wish you all the best in the years to come, we know that you will make us and yourselves proud. We celebrate all of you.

Now, let’s take a look at the wonderful work of this issue:
Here is a magnificent haiku
*Immortal* by Kyle Phan.

An immortal tree
truly brilliant it is
standing, living, free

Proudly, Horizons welcomes
the unrestrained writing of one Senior,
Solenne Wolfe.

On March 13, I unknowingly attended my last day of high school. In a few weeks, like thousands of high school seniors around the country, I will officially commence into adulthood. The high school graduating class of 2020 might be seen as the Crisis Generation. Born in the wake of 9/11, starting kindergarten in 2008 during the Financial Crisis, graduating fifth grade just months after the Sandy Hook shooting, and stepping up from middle school right into high school as Trump stepped into the Oval Office. This is America! Neil, from *Dead Poets Society*, comes of age in a time where his parents decide everything for him - from his school to his extracurriculars to his profession. There is nothing that makes this a free land for Neil, and there is not much to make this land free for us either.

Sure, as Tech students, we are able to move freely on public transportation to school and elsewhere, but these United States we live in are built off of plunder, rape and slavery. The Fort Greene we go to school in is hardly the Fort Greene from Spike Lee’s beautiful shots from the opening of *She’s Gotta Have It*. 
Brooklyn Technical High School sits on the edge of Fort Greene Park, where my friends and I lay on the grass after school, and the Barclays Center, where we skateboard on the smooth concrete expanse. On June 22, we would have walked across the stage of the Barclays Center auditorium to receive our diplomas.

Now, these familiar sites are surrounded by a wall of NYPD officers as demonstrations break out protesting the murder of black Minnesota resident George Floyd by a white police officer (and the anti-blackness that constitutes this world). And in protests across the country, young people are fighting on the frontlines for the humanity of black people are met with tear gas, arrests, and more death.

In the middle of a worldwide pandemic, the headlines all seem to point towards one common fact: that our lives are not valued. The lives of the dead are not valued in their apparently zero-sum relationship to the stock market. Black lives are not valued by state-sanctioned police and policing tactics nor by white women breaking off-leash rules in parks. The lives of our loved ones are not valued by the federal government as states are left on their own to determine responses to a pandemic that tears the moral and social fabric of our shared existence. All the while, we high school seniors are plugged into the frenzy of news that seems to be breaking every minute on Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat and even Zoom. This is the country that I am graduating into, one that just a few months ago was embroiled in debates about the sitting President’s impeachment and is now watching that same president tear gas peaceful protestors to make way for his photo shoot with a Bible on the steps of a church.
Instead of pomp and circumstance, YouTube commencement speeches implore my generation to consider what our “essential service” to the world would be. What essential service can I provide? I can barely remember the last four digits of my Social Security number which I’ve only used once to take my driver’s permit test at the DMV. I don’t know how to properly use the BCC function on an email chain.

Up until March, my main responsibility was to wake up and make it to school in time for my P.E. class at 7:56 am. Instead of senior year slump and Senior Skip Day on Coney Island Beach, senioritis has been replaced by the coronavirus, and student chatter about the chants of "Black Lives Matter.”

Granted, my high school already was a microcosm of racial tensions, and not just the Chinese boys in the lunchroom wearing du-rags, or the Russian girls calling each other the n-word. It’s an elite public high school in New York City with admissions granted by a single standardized test that is said to favor those with the cultural background and/or the means to prepare for it. The school’s demographics, 63% Asian and 6% Black, are now barely representative of the real estate it sits on; the gentrification of Fort Greene exploited eminent domain that developed Brooklyn for millionaires through the first two decades of the aughts. Still down the block from the high school is the first studio of director Spike Lee, who displayed the neighborhood proudly in the opening scenes of his 1989 film, She’s Gotta Have It. In 2000, Fort Greene was 40% Black but by 2018, a mere 20% Black. Students at my high school have seen this change taking place firsthand.

In a televised commencement speech, Obama reminded us high school Seniors of the fact that we’ve had to grow up faster than most generations, living with
the “pressures of social media, reports of school shootings, and the specter of climate change.” What will my generation make of the world? Who exactly is “my generation?” In his speech, there is an assumed monolith of “my generation.” There is a presumed unity in these references to “my generation” that is belied by the disunity of our vastly different experiences.

We aren’t spending quarantine the same way. Those of us living in New York City are in the epicenter of the pandemic. On a walk around my neighborhood, I see two sets of long white refrigerator trucks, built to store dead bodies piling up too fast to be buried. For some, the pandemic means having family members constantly exposed to the COVID-19 virus as nurses, doctors, EMTs, delivery workers, grocery store clerks, cashiers, deli owners, and epidemiologists. For others, it means their families are shelling out a few hundred thousand dollars on a rental home on the Jersey Shore. In other states, seniors hang out in each other’s cars and listen to music. Perhaps they cruise around their reopened towns looking for places to eat.

On a typical morning pre-pandemic, I would dash out of the house through the sliding doors of my building opening onto the commercial giant of 14th St. Union Square was my subway stop, a convergence of almost all of the city’s many train lines, the station that welcomed me on late-nights spent in Brooklyn and early mornings on the way to P.E. But it was also the station where two teenagers were filmed being arrested and thrown to the wall by officers attempting to curb fare evasion, long before the riots of today. This world was already unraveling. This world has been erected on stolen land, and was built with slave labor.
On a morning a few days ago, the New York Times’ live reports of protests show the GameStop across the street from my building smashed and looted. Young men are seen running in and filling bags with video games. Down the block, the CVS where I get my flu shots and acne medication has all of its windows and doors smashed in. Shattered glass litters the grey streets. The Cohen’s where I get my eyeglasses is surrounded by a swarm of protestors and officers. Outside the Strand Bookstore, my refuge of 18 miles of books, a cop is filmed pulling guns on protestors. An NYPD car is on fire in front of Little Italy Pizza III, a pizza place where I’d crunch Dr. Pepper flavored ice and run into friends as they walked home.

All that I love about New York can be boiled down into one word: freedom. The freedom to leave the house when I want to and to be immersed in beauty, the freedom to glide in trains over bridges, under tunnels, and across huge swaths of land to my friends in all of the boroughs, the freedom to sit outside in the summer, watching beautiful people walk by in flowy clothing and thinking about how anything is possible. Governor Cuomo putting a curfew in place feels like the end of an era. There is no freedom after 11pm tonight¹, after 8pm tomorrow night, when anyone on the street can be arrested for living. In this new New York, we will all live unfree.

In a way, it’s always been New York City culture to hate cops. Long before the country was on fire, references to cops as “pigs” spread like flame across the lunchroom. When my human geography teacher asks us to complete an institutional privilege check, all of my white friends don’t check off: “I can call the police if something happens to me and not worry about my safety.”

¹ [This was submitted on June 4th, 2020.]
I ask them, *you wouldn’t call the cops if you were mugged while walking home? You wouldn’t call them if your sister was pushed off her bike and had it stolen?* They tell me that they don’t trust the NYPD.

I’m suspicious of the way my friends think they are outside of the racial biases that govern police behavior. This removes their accountability. They feel they have already done the “work,” they have fought the good fight against men in uniform. As an Asian-American woman, I’ve always been hyper aware of my liminal racial status. I benefit from and live in a civil society constituted by anti-black violence from its very inception. I do not fear for my life when one of my dad’s drinking buddies tells me how “exotic” I look, nor when a boy in seventh grade tells me that I have “tiny, tiny hands” and that they would make his dick look huge. I do not choke to death when I am called the Napalm girl even though I am Chinese, not Vietnamese. Meanwhile Park Slope born-and-bred kids at a specialized high school think that their act of not ticking a box is radical in its own right. *You guys just think that cops are bad because you smoke weed,* I think to myself. They have a contingent relationship to the police; the police might stop them because they regularly engage in violations of the law. Their relationship is not one constituted by gratuitous acts of violence. Acts of violence that occur outside of any rhyme or reason. Acts of violence that occur because their very life is a threat to civil society.

The truth is, Fresh Direct trucks idling in the South Bronx lots give black children asthma while they deliver my family ready-made Chicken Tikka Masala and barbecue potato chips. The truth is, when NYPD officers walk over to my circle of friends in a park, our hearts drop to our stomachs, but we are not scared for our lives. They ask us what is being smoked and pull aside the two of my friends seen holding the blunt. They tell the rest of us to leave, to
scatter, and we do. My boyfriend is one of the two left talking to officers. I’m scared, but his best friend tells me to be calm. Every time this happens (and it’s happened multiple times), our group of friends just sit in a Dunkin Donuts and wait for the cops to finish taking their information.

In 45 minutes and a Thin Mint iced latte later, my boyfriend has a court date. He also has one untouched head, two working arms that will cook dinners and sail boats, two legs that will skateboard and dance, and a beating heart that will continue to love. He will pay a fine and keep living. As much as the police have infringed on our Friday afternoon’s plans, they have not infringed upon our right to eat donuts, drink coffee, and be together. In Manhattan where we are, black people are arrested at a rate of fifteen times that of white people for marijuana-related offenses.

That is why I feel a strange mixture of feelings when I see the prime locations of my teen-hood become the site of protests. Everyone should be able to enjoy my New York, the New York of bike rides over bridges and summer nights in parks. Nights where subway rats and big mosquitoes are the main concern. The New York of spontaneity is not determined by unannounced police raids but by those moments when you run into your retired middle school music teacher who has taken up dog-walking, and you strike up a long conversation about your lives now. The New York I know is teeming with possibility. The possibility of a new life, a new job, a new lover, all of that just outside the door. For me. Not for the countless others who will lose their lives because some white nationalist in uniform had a bad day.

The New York that I live for is not stored in Bloomingdales or Macy’s. It is not sold in the aisles of CVS. The New York that I live for is the one that lives in all
of us who have finally, for the first time felt comfortable in a place because it promises to accept us. This New York looks at our ugly crying on the Q train and says, *Honey, I’ve seen worse*. This New York is the one that claps at 7pm for healthcare workers. This New York knows that the world we are striving for is a world beyond what we know to be possible today. So, let it burn if it must; let New York burn to the ground. Let it burn for the dead, and for the living dead. From the ashes of the liberal order, may freedom bloom for all.

But then, who is doing the burning? Is it white anarchist man-splainers in pickup trucks driving up with their buddies to get Supreme and PS4 games for free? People who read the first pages of the *Communist Manifesto* or *The Coming Insurrection* and think that they are the vanguard? One out of the seven arrested during protests in New York City are from out of state, says the *Times*. Some even come from Minnesota or Texas. Who are these unknown agitators, and are they really unknown? Or is it more comforting for most people to cloak their terror of black rage in an unknown? Because I suppose that statistic would mean that six out of seven arrested are New Yorkers. New Yorkers who are fed up. New Yorkers who ride trains together, who bounced back from 9/11 together, who teach and live and love in the same five boroughs and yet are vastly divided by their incomes and skin colors.

Seniors are being thrust into this burning world a lot faster than we thought we'd be.

We are supposedly shaping the world for the future, and yet we don’t have the simple pleasure of a moment of closure. We haven’t had a senior spring to negotiate what sorts of adults we might want to be, what kinds of friends we want to have around, what major to study in college. But then, what closure do
police care about when they shoot to kill? Do they care about the closure a black mother will never have when her son leaves in the morning, never to come back?

There is no telling how much I want a moment to think back on the formative years I spent in high school and to have the pain and growth we have all gone through recognized. But that moment of closure should exist for all of humanity, and until it does I’ll wait.

Check out this remarkable artwork inspired by one of our art prompts “Home” by Isabella Blanco.
Take a look at this beautiful poem
by Wesley Kwok

Brown leaf catching sun
spinning down; With a crisp wind
November winter

And a shout-out to Miles Palminteri for this wonderful header!

We hope that among the art and writing prompts and opportunities below, you will find something that inspires you to create in summer.

➔ Writing Prompts Week 6:

◆ In Khalid Hosseini’s The Kite Runner the author explores the themes of cowardice and courage, betrayal and loyalty, shamelessness and guilt, and questions the likelihood of the past mistakes being capable of changing the person for the better. Once, the protagonist’s father says that a boy who can’t defend himself will grow to become a man who can’t stand up to anything, and foreshadows the main character’s lack of courage to stand up for his friend. Think of the importance to defend what one believes in. View the full prompt on our website.

◆ “We need not to be let alone. We need to be really bothered once in a while. How long is it since you were really bothered? About something important, about something real?,” asked Guy Montag to his indifferent wife Mildred in Fahrenheit 451 by Ray Bradbury.
Reflect on when can dismissiveness and apathy be deteriorative to the society of today. View the full prompt on our website.

◆ From Poets & Writers — “One week before my wedding day, upon returning to my hotel room with a tube of borrowed toothpaste, I find a small bird waiting inside the area called the antechamber and know within moments it is my grandmother.” In Marie-Helene Bertino’s second novel, Parakeet (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2020), the narrator’s dead grandmother returns to life as a parakeet and bestows the bride-to-be with the task of finding her estranged brother. Write a story in which your protagonist is confronted with a lost loved one who has come back to life in another form. View the full prompt on our website.

◆ From Poets & Writers — The first 858 lines of Geoffrey Chaucer’s fourteenth-century masterpiece The Canterbury Tales is the focus of a new web and mobile phone app that allows users to listen to the text read aloud in Middle English. Developed by a team at the University of Saskatchewan, General Prologue pairs a digitized version of the original manuscript with explanations and a new line-by-line modern translation by the late Monty Python actor Terry Jones, who wrote two books on Chaucer. The lively stories of the group of pilgrims traveling from London to Canterbury, which are notable for being written in the common vernacular, are told from different viewpoints and form a humorously critical portrait of social classes of the time. View the full prompt on our website.

➔ Writing Opportunities for Summer:
  ◆ English Composition I - a free online course offered by Duke University → You will gain a foundation for college-level writing
valuable for nearly any field. Students will learn how to read carefully, write effective arguments, understand the writing process, engage with others' ideas, cite accurately, and craft powerful prose.

◆ **Good With Words: Writing and Editing Specialization - a free online course offered by the University of Michigan** → Perhaps the most important thing students and professionals of all kinds can do to improve their effectiveness is embrace the following advice: become good with words. This series of courses targets the writing side of that recommendation. The skills it focuses on include everything from how to arrange a complex set of information in a reader-friendly way, to how to give and receive high-quality feedback, to how to consistently hit deadlines.

◆ **Learning How to Learn: powerful mental tools to help you master tough subjects - a free online course offered by the McMaster University and the University of California San Diego** → This course gives you easy access to the invaluable learning techniques used by experts in art, music, literature, math, science, sports, and many other disciplines. We’ll learn about how the brain uses two very different learning modes and how it encapsulates (“chunks”) information. We’ll also cover illusions of learning, memory techniques, dealing with procrastination, and best practices shown by research to be most effective in helping you master tough subjects.

◆ **Sharpened Visions: a poetry workshop - a free online workshop offered by CALARTS** → Why just write poems when you can write better ones? This course is built on the notion that the most exciting writing begins after the first draft. It is specifically for folks who believe that writing poems just to express oneself is like using the Internet just for email. After all, poetry can change the way you and
your readers think of the world and its inhabitants; it can break new
ground for language; turn a blank sheet of paper into a teeming
concert of voices and music.
◆ **LIVE POETS SOCIETY CONTEST** → In an effort to encourage the
youth of America in the pursuit of literary exploration and
excellence, and to help provide a venue in which American High
School students may share their poetic works; The Live Poets Society
of New Jersey presents our 22nd annual, National High School Poetry
Contest.

→ **Art Prompts Week 6:**

◆ Every artist has a role model whose work they look up to. Pick a piece
from an artist you like and you can relate with. Re-create that artwork
in your own style. What differences do you notice? What is
something unique and peculiar in your artwork that is not present in
the original piece?

◆ Look at the object nearest to you. Imagine that object in a different
light to give it a surprising meaning and purpose. What can the
audience infer from your painting? How can different people
perceive different objects?

◆ Draw with your non-dominant hand.

→ **Art Opportunities for Summer:**

◆ **Seeing Through Photographs - a free online course offered by MOMA** → Although taking, sharing, and viewing photographs has
become second nature for many of us, our regular engagement with
images does not necessarily make us visually literate. This course
aims to address the gap between seeing and truly understanding
photographs by introducing a diversity of ideas, approaches, and technologies that inform their making.

◆ Modern Art & Ideas - a free online course offered by MOMA → Welcome to Modern Art & Ideas! This course is designed for anyone interested in learning more about modern and contemporary art. Over the next five weeks, you will look at art through a variety of themes: Places & Spaces, Art & Identity, Transforming Everyday Objects, and Art & Society. Each week kicks off with a video that connects works of art from The Museum of Modern Art’s collection to the theme. You will hear audio interviews with artists, designers, and curators and learn more about selected works in the additional readings and resources.

◆ Fundamentals of Graphic Design - a free online course offered by CALARTS → Graphic Design is all around us! Words and pictures—the building blocks of graphic design—are the elements that carry the majority of the content in both the digital world and the printed world. As graphic design becomes more visible and prevalent in our lives, graphic design as a practice becomes more important in our culture. Through visual examples, this course will teach you the fundamental principles of graphic design: image-making, typography, composition, working with color and shape...foundational skills that are common in all areas of graphic design practice. I don't just want you to watch a video of someone talking about design, I want you to MAKE design! If you want to be a designer you have to be a maker and a communicator, so this course will offer you lots of opportunities to get your hands dirty with exercises and with more practical projects.
◆ **Songwriting: Writing the Lyrics - a free online course offered by Berklee College of Music**  →  There’s a songwriter lurking somewhere inside you, peeking around corners, wondering if it’s safe to come out. Now it is. This course is an invitation to let your inner songwriter step into the sunlight. All it takes is a simple “yes” and you’ll be climbing that windy hill, marveling at the view.

◆ **BEAUTIFUL BIZARRE ART PRIZE**  →  The Beautiful Bizarre Art Prize is an annual non-acquisitive international art prize that celebrates diversity and excellence in the representational visual arts. In all static mediums including Traditional Art media, Digital Art media, and Photographic media; and all styles from realism and hyperrealism to pop surrealism and lowbrow. The Prize seeks to inspire creatives from around the world to pursue a life and career in the arts, and to help careers grow through funding and increased exposure of their work to galleries, collectors, and media, globally.

And finally, we would like to thank all of our wonderful artists and writers for their contributions to The Horizons’ Quarantine Digest. We celebrate your talent, we appreciate your dedication, and we value your persistence. Thank you for making this community so bright and so full of energy.

And most importantly, thank you dear Reader, for staying with us for so long, for reading, supporting and for participating in the artistic whirl of our community.

We wish for your happiness and your peace in summer. As artists and as humans, we have the vital role of listening, feeling and depicting. Spend this summer listening to nature and people, understanding their wishes and needs and taking
them as your own, and sharing your knowledge with the rest of the world. We believe in your power and we await your successes. We are with you.

With most loving regards,

The Editors of *Horizons*

[https://bthshorizonspeople.wordpress.com](https://bthshorizonspeople.wordpress.com)