



IS IT
UP TO
YOU?

TABLE OF CONTENTS

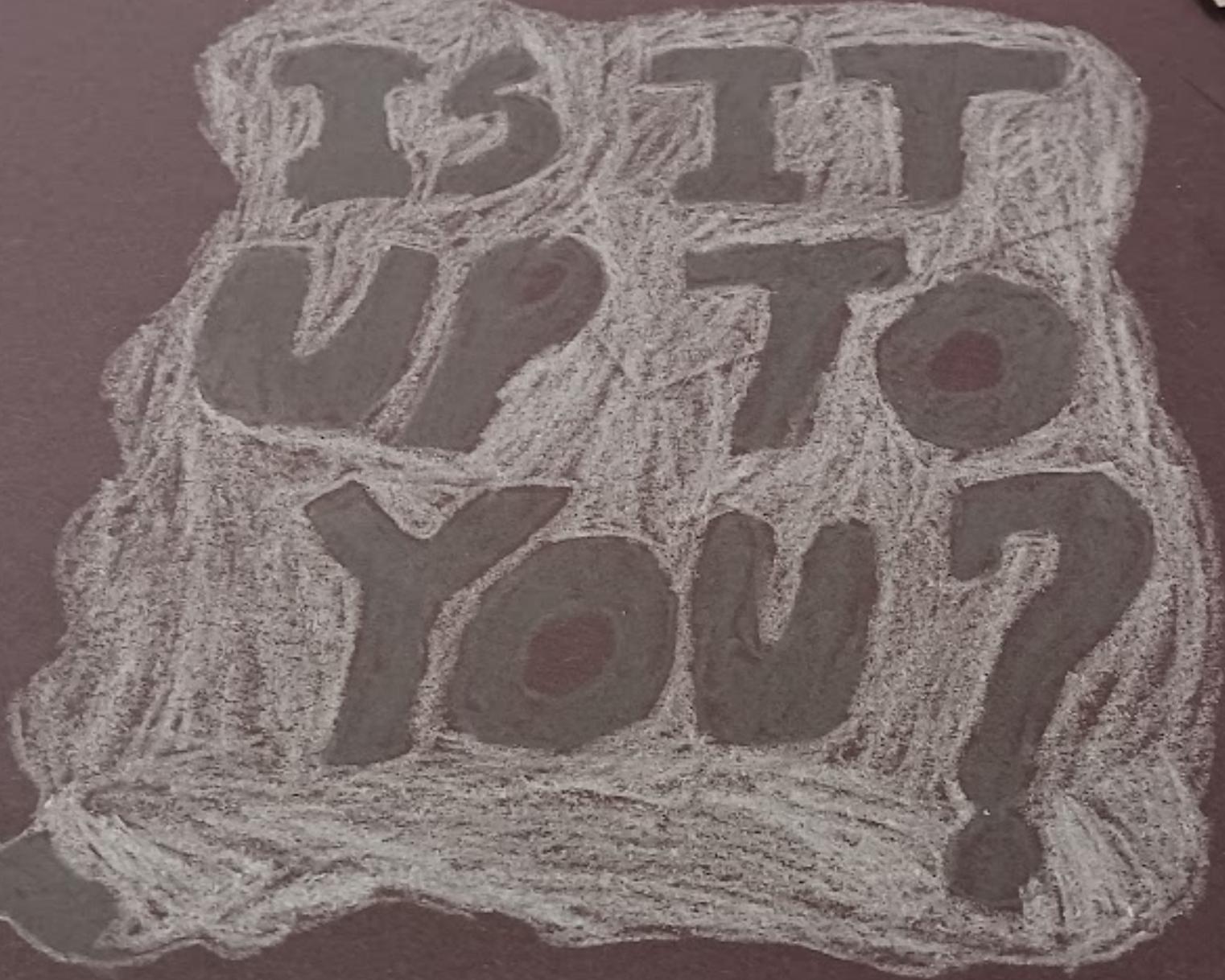
1. "PRESSURE" POEM
2. "IS IT UP TO YOU?" ARTWORK
3. POET BIO: OCEAN VUONG
4. "ON EARTH WE'RE BRIEFLY GORGEOUS"
5. CONT'D
6. "RISE AND SHINE"
7. ARTIST STATEMENT-JACKSON MILLER
8. CONTRIBUTIONS-JACKSON MILLER
9. "TONIGHT IN HER MIND" POEM
10. COLLAGE
11. WHAT TEENS ARE REALLY FEELING
12. ARTIST STATEMENT-KAYLA STRICKLAND
13. CONTRIBUTIONS-KAYLA STRICKLAND
14. "OLD CONFESSIONS AND NEW"
15. DRUG ABUSE INTERVIEW
16. ARTIST STATEMENT-CASHMIR JOHNSON

“PRESSURE”

I note the obvious differences
Between pressure and personal choice
From ones who did it to themselves
And others with no voice
Some declare it's a benefit
And they're not gonna stop
Others claim it ruined them
And they can never come out on top
The problems in our neighborhood are never unique
And we blame the impressionables with no new
techniques
The ones who hook others on
The ones who can't change their views
The ones who can't stop
No matter how hard they try
And fail
And fail
And fail
Are always destined to lose

BY

JACKSON MILLER



“IS IT UP TO YOU?”
-JACKSON MILLER

POET BIO: OCEAN VUONG

OCEAN VUONG WAS BORN IN SAIGON, VIETNAM BUT RAISED IN HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT. VUONG'S FATHER LEFT THE FAMILY SOON AFTER THEIR MOVE. ONLY LEARNING TO READ AT AGE ELEVEN, HE ATTENDED HIGH SCHOOL GLATONSBURY AND ONLY ACHIEVED AS HIGH AS A 1.7 GPA. HIS TEACHERS DID MANY DRUGS AND ACTIVELY



ENCOURAGED SUBSTANCE ABUSE. HE ONCE SAID HE WAS AT ONE POINT, "ADDICTED TO ANYTHING YOU COULD CRUSH INTO A WHITE POWDER OR SPRINKLE OVER A BLUNT." HIS POEMS TALK ABOUT THE HARDSHIPS OF ADDICTION AS WELL AS SELF-IMPROVEMENT AND DISCOVERY.

SOME OF VUONG'S WORK RELATING TO ADDICTION INCLUDES "ON EARTH WE'RE BRIEFLY GORGEOUS" AND "RISE AND SHINE".

“ON EARTH WE’RE BRIEFLY GORGEOUS”

TELL ME IT WAS FOR THE HUNGER
& NOTHING LESS. FOR HUNGER IS TO GIVE
THE BODY WHAT IT KNOWS
IT CANNOT KEEP. THAT THIS AMBER LIGHT
WHITTLED DOWN BY ANOTHER WAR
IS ALL THAT PINS MY HAND
TO YOUR CHEST.

YOU, DROWNING
BETWEEN MY ARMS —
STAY.

YOU, PUSHING YOUR BODY
INTO THE RIVER
ONLY TO BE LEFT
WITH YOURSELF —
STAY.

SAY SURRENDER. SAY ALABASTER. SWITCHBLADE.

HONEYSUCKLE. GOLDENROD. SAY AUTUMN.

SAY AUTUMN DESPITE THE GREEN

IN YOUR EYES. BEAUTY DESPITE

DAYLIGHT. SAY YOU’D KILL FOR IT. UNBREAKABLE

DAWN

MOUNTING IN YOUR THROAT.

MY THRASHING BENEATH YOU

LIKE A SPARROW STUNNED

WITH FALLING.

SAY AMEN. SAY AMEND.

SAY YES. SAY YES

ANYWAY

"ON EARTH WE'RE BRIEFLY GORGEOUS"

IN THE SHOWER, SWEATING UNDER COLD WATER, I SCRUBBED
& SCRUBBED.

SOME DAYS I AM STILL INSIDE THE PICKUP.
SOME DAYS I KEEP WAITING.

IT'S NOT TOO LATE. OUR HEADS HALOED
WITH GNATS & SUMMER TOO EARLY
TO LEAVE ANY MARKS.
YOUR HAND UNDER MY SHIRT AS STATIC
INTENSIFIES ON THE RADIO.
YOUR OTHER HAND POINTING
YOUR DADDY'S REVOLVER
TO THE SKY. STARS FALLING ONE
BY ONE IN THE CROSS HAIRS.
THIS MEANS I WON'T BE
AFRAID IF WE'RE ALREADY
HERE. ALREADY MORE
THAN SKIN CAN HOLD. THAT A BODY
BESIDE A BODY
MUST MAKE A FIELD
FULL OF TICKING. THAT YOUR NAME
IS ONLY THE SOUND OF CLOCKS
BEING SET BACK ANOTHER HOUR
& MORNING
FINDS OUR CLOTHES
ON YOUR MOTHER'S FRONT PORCH, SHED
LIKE WEEK-OLD LILIES.

“RISE AND SHINE”

SCRAPED THE LAST \$8.48
FROM THE GLASS JAR.
YOUR DAY'S WORTH OF TIPS
AT THE NAIL SALON. ENOUGH
FOR ONE HIT. ENOUGH
TO BE GOOD
TILL NOON BUT
THESE HANDS ALREADY
BLURRING. THE MONEY A WEIRD
HUMMINGBIRD CAUGHT
IN MY FINGERS. I TAKE OUT
THE CARTON OF EGGS. CRACK
FOUR YOLKS INTO A SKY
-BLUE BOWL, SPOON
THE SHELLS. SCALLIONS HISS
IN OIL. A FLICK
OF FISH SAUCE, GARLIC CRUSHED
THE WAY YOU
TAUGHT ME. THE PAN BUBBLING
INTO A SMALL POSSIBLE
SUN.

ARTIST'S STATEMENT

FOR MY POEM, I EMULATED THE STYLE OF MAYA ANGELOU'S "HUMAN FAMILY POEM, IN ORDER TO SHOW THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PEOPLE WHO ARE AWARE OF THE DANGERS OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE, AND THOSE WHO ARE BLINDED BY IT.

THE CENTRAL THEME FOR MY ARTWORK IS HOW THE COMPLICATIONS OF PEER PRESSURE OFTEN LEAD TEENS DOWN DARK PATHS, AND HOW THEY HAVE THE CHOICE TO GO IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION.

CONTRIBUTIONS

ALL MY LIFE I HAD BEEN TOLD TO STAY AWAY FROM ANY AND ALL DRUGS, AND THE MERE MENTION OF THEM WAS TABOO. IT WAS ONLY UNTIL I GREW INTO ADOLESCENCE THAT I HEARD THESE THINGS BEING TALKED ABOUT MUCH MORE NONCHALANTLY ONLINE AND IN-PERSON. THANKFULLY I HAVEN'T BECOME A VICTIM TO DRUG ABUSE OR PEER PRESSURE, BUT I KNOW SOME PEOPLE WHO ARE MUCH LESS FORTUNATE THAN ME. MAYBE THIS ZINE WILL CATCH THE EYE OF SOMEONE WHO REALLY NEEDS GUIDANCE. MAYBE NOT. BUT IF IT CAN MAKE A POSITIVE DIFFERENCE IN SOMEONE'S LIFE, THEN IT WOULD HAVE ACHIEVED ITS GOAL.

TONIGHT, IN HER MIND

I did not come here for therapy
Lately, I open my mind

& out comes the darkness that holds me.
I came to lighten my sorrows.

Give me magic or give me peace
I can't catch a break.

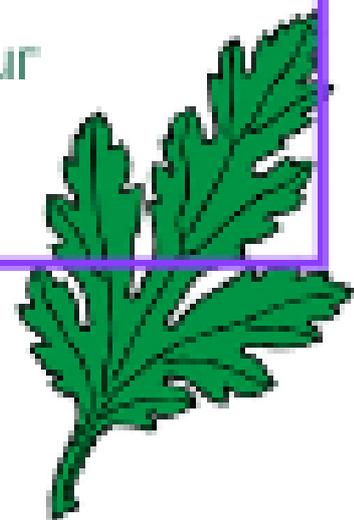
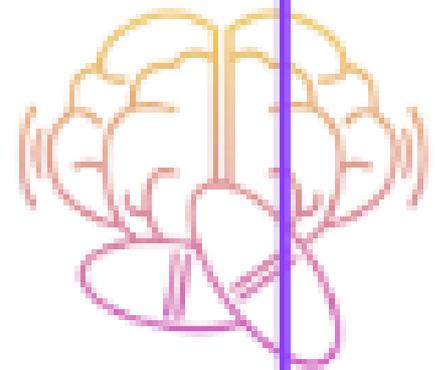
I walk down a dark alley to a place.
When I get there I won't remember

A single thing that reminds me that
I am human. I seek substance to dampen my mind.

Tonight, we must address instead of numb. Tonight,
down that alley, two students, eyes glazed with a

Blank gaze, distanced from the world, but tonight,
Let them find peace! Tonight, the pill doesn't exist.

Tonight we absorb peace and strength
Not foreign clouds that cloud our
consciousness.



By Kayla Strickland

COLLAGE



WHAT TEENS ARE REALLY FEELING:

There are many statistics on websites about drug use among teens, and although this information is very useful, it is much more impactful when the information comes from people around you, like your school. Getting information straight from your peers will give you better insight as to why teens are engaging in drug use, what drives them to continue, and how they are impacted by their chosen substances.

According to a survey that was sent out to the students of SLA Beeber, 36.4% of the students who answered the question have tried drugs, while 63.4% have not. The most commonly used drug among teens that have tried them is marijuana at 66.7%. Other drugs that have been used, but are not limited to, cocaine, shrooms, exotic weed, and acid.



The main reasons that these teens have tried drugs was out of curiosity (64.7%) and the runner ups were peer pressure, rebellion and lack of confidence. Excluding the 60% of teens who do not use drugs, the stats for teens who have tried them are: 10% of these teens use drugs a couple times a year, 6.7% use them at least once a month, 10% use them weekly, and another 10 percent use them daily.

When asked if the use of drugs has negatively impacted their lives, 73.7% claimed that it does not, with some comments such as "It's very relaxing and helps me sleep." and "It doesn't affect me much." The 26.3% who claimed that it does have a negative impact stated things such as "I had the experience of it and never did them again. There is more to life." Among teens, the opinions and experiences regarding the use of drugs differ from person to person.

69.7% of teens have friends that are regular drug users, and luckily, 64.3 percent of those teens do not feel pressured to do drugs when with those friends. More than half of these teens with regular drug using friends believe that it affects the quality of their friend's life and encouraged them to get help.

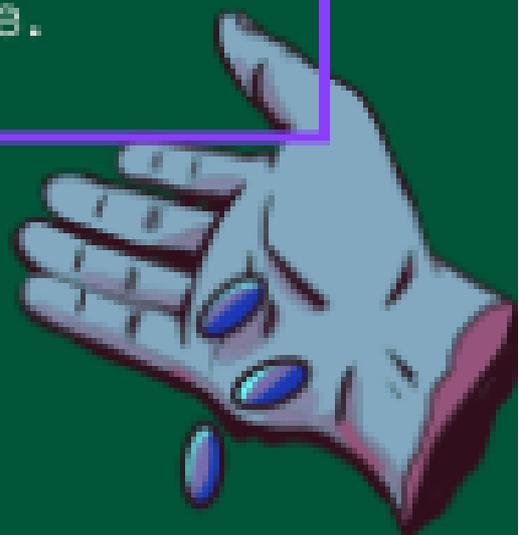
Overall, every teen has a different opinion on drugs, but the standard view is indifference. Only a few of the teens care that drug use among them is increasing, while most of them state that "They are going to do them anyway so as long as they are safe they should be fine." The issue of drugs is an issue that should not be overlooked, and this should cause even more of a focus on teen mental health.

ARTISTS STATEMENT

For my poem, Tonight, in Her Mind, I emulated the style of Danez Smith's Poem Tonight, in Oakland. I wanted my poem to have the same undertone of finding peace and being free from whatever is holding you. Breaking free from an addiction is not easy, but it absolutely worth it.

My collage is a representation of how drugs give you a temporary feeling of relief, while the long term affect is debilitating. Addiction is something that can ruin a person. Although they feel like it is helping, it is making their situation worse.

-Kayla Strickland

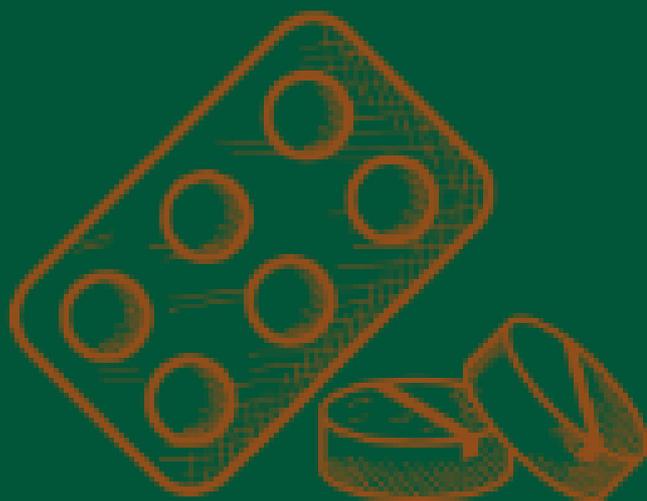


CONTRIBUTORS



Though I do not suffer from mental health issues myself, I have close friends who struggle with it daily. In a couple of their cases, they have turned to drugs. It slowly escalated from that point until their addiction was out of control. I made this zine to bring to light what teens are really thinking about the increasing use of drugs among them and the reasonings behind it. When knowledge of this is brought to the surface, teens will know how to avoid using drugs based on the information around them

-Kayla Strickland



**OLD
CONFESSIONS**

cONfession

AND NEW.

BY CASHMIR

JOHNSON...



CREATIVE SUBMISSIONS

HELLO THIS WILL BE AN INTERVIEW ABOUT THE POEM "OLD CONFESSIONS AND NEW" BY DANEZ SMITH. IN THIS POEM THE AUTHOR TALKS ABOUT HIS REGRETS FROM THE PAST AND NOW AND TALKS ABOUT SOME OF HIS COPING METHODS WAS TAKING DRUGS. I WAS WONDERING IF YOU HAD ANY COPING METHODS YOU WANTED TO TELL US ABOUT. "YEA SOME OF THE WAYS I DEAL WITH STRESS IS I TEND TO JUST TAKE A BREAK FROM EVERYTHING INCLUDING INSTAGRAM, PEOPLE, AND SNAP. AFTER TAKING SOME TIME AWAY I WILL COME BACK BETTER." AH OK SO YOU TAKE SPACE TO DEAL WITH YOUR PROBLEMS, IS THAT A GOOD WAY TO DEAL WITH STRESS? "FOR ME IT WORKS, IT JUST ALLOWS ME TO REALLY REALIZE WHAT I DID WRONG AND HOPEFULLY MAKE A CHANGE IN THE FUTURE FOR BETTER." OK THAT MAKES SENSE. DANEZ SMITH IS A BLACK POET PORTRAYING HIS PROBLEMS IN LIFE. HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT AFRICAN AMERICAN PEOPLE DOING THIS? I FEEL AS THOUGH THIS IS GREAT. I THINK WE ALL HAVE STORIES THAT SHOULD BE TOLD AND ONE OF THE BEST WAYS TO INFORM ME IS TO MAKE MUSIC, POEMS, OR STORIES ABOUT OUR MISFORTUNE." ALRIGHT THANK YOU THAT'S ALL. INTERVIEW END.

WAR
Against DRUGS

+



on
DRUGS

The View

OLD
CONFESSIONS
AND NEW...

ARTIST STATEMENT...

SOME OF THE WAYS I USED MY CREATIVITY IS EXPRESSING HOW THE POET DANEZ SMITH WHO TOOK DRUGS WHEN HE GOT STRESSED OR FELT LIKE HE NEEDED AN ESCAPE FROM THE WORLD WAS FIGHTING A WAR ON DRUGS. WHAT I MEAN IS HE WAS DEALING WITH A LOT OF THINGS THAT IN HIS HEAD COULD'VE MADE HIM FEEL LIKE IT WAS A CONSTANT WAR IN HIS HEAD, WHILE FIGHTING THAT WAR THE ENTIRE TIME HE WAS ON DRUGS. I THINK HE THAT PROBLEM IS VERY COMMON IN THE UNITED STATES AND SHOULD BE LOOKED AT MORE OFTEN.