Welcome to the October issue of the Gauntlet, a showcase of pieces written by your fellow Academy students. I am honored to serve as this month’s editor, and I am delighted to present you with this edition.

- Ray Phillips

Sarah Choi returns with a shocking new edition of in(SCI)ghts

Bryce Bussert offers a new perspective on everyone's favorite holiday

Second Year Makayla Virdi speaks about her thoughts on NaNoWriMo

Dylan Kling-DuBose provides a crash course on Hawaiian history

Special thanks to:
Sarah Choi
Makayla Virdi
Hannah Peeples
Dylan Kling-DuBose
Bryce Bussert
WELCOME to in(SCI)ghts, where we explore the particularly odd, quirky, or outright disgusting scientific discoveries made by renowned professionals (or extraordinary novices) throughout the month. From timeless gamma-ray reversal bursts to severed deer heads, we’ll gain short in(SCI)ghts into the various things that occur within our universe. If reading actual science journals makes you feel frustrated to the point that your head might explode (this can actually happen; a chess player once died in the middle of a championship game) or searching the web for the latest science news is far too laborious for your exhausted fingers, please continue reading.

I hope you’ll realize that our world is considerably stranger than you once perceived.

**TOPIC 3: HA HA HA**

The cold wind is blowing the curtains softly in the breeze, and the leaves are falling in harmonious patterns. The sky is dark, but the fireplace is warm and welcoming. A lamp is lit, and all seems to be well.

Suddenly, the lights flicker. A strong wind comes in and shoves the curtain against the lamp, causing it to fall over with a loud CRASH. The lights are out, and the fire has lost its warmth.

And in the distance, you hear the faint giggles of a little girl.

In most cases, laughter is a heartwarming sound that can bring a smile to anyone’s face. However, in the context of scenarios such as the one aforementioned, laughter is nowhere near friendly or welcoming. Instead, it can fill our hearts with dread and anxiety.

**Why is that?**

According to Margee Kerr, a sociologist at the University of Pittsburgh, most fears are brought about by a dissonance or violation of our expectations. So, when events such as laughter occur in a solemn or foreboding situation, we get scared. When we take emotions or responses linked to positive situations and flip them by using them in sinister or unpleasant circumstances, our brains begin to frantically wave a red flag.

At the physiological level, laughter and fear are similar in that they’re both high-arousal states that produce intense emotions. This is why in many cases, after a person screams, he or she may begin to laugh if the situation isn’t actually dangerous. All of that energy is simply transformed into a more appropriate response.

So the next time you find yourself trapped in a dark room and all you hear are the sounds of a giggling clown or child, at least you know why you should be terrified.
Boo! Spooky season is in full swing, and it has brought with it a much-awaited relent in ninety-degree temperatures. In the spirit of Halloween, allow me to tell you a story:

One day, five hundred and one years ago, a man in Germany became famous for nailing his beliefs to the door of a Castle Church in Wittenberg. If you are really nerdy and love Christian history like I do, you know this day as Oct 31st – Reformation Day. While not as beloved as Halloween, not as intriguing as All Hallows Eve, and not in Spanish like Dia de los Muertos, Reformation Day is still pretty neat.

First of all, how cool would it to be say that you went to “Castle Church in Wittenberg” every week? All of a sudden, I’m not sure if being “dragged to church” means you are going to Sunday School or being taken prisoner by Crusaders. In addition to that, regardless of whether or not you agree with what Martin Luther had to say, his boldness in expressing his ideas was commendable.

Remember, Martin Luther was dissing the Catholic Church, which was arguably the greatest power in the world at that time. Luther experienced a truth so bold, so valuable, that he sacrificed his livelihood and risked his life to stand behind his convictions. In spite of fear, Martin Luther chose to live a hard and difficult life because of what he believed. Regardless of your religious beliefs, we can all agree that this kind of devotion and dedication in the face of immense danger is something that we all need more of.

As we scavenge for leftover and discount candy in the coming days, remember October 31 for its candy, costumes, decorations, and for the courage exhibited by a simple man all those years ago.

No Regerts, Bryce
Can you feel that in the air? That energy that's humming in the background. It arrived with a gust of the wind and the changing of seasons. I'm hesitant to label this force. It's affected me every fall for as long as I can remember, but I still cannot tell you exactly what it is. Creativity pumps through the air consistently, but what's flowing right now is different.

It's different from the delectable laziness that lingers in the summer. This is sharp, focused, and almost tangible. You may notice it when you sit down to write that English essay and the words come out quicker than before, or if you turn on a movie and you find yourself analyzing the camerawork and the score instead of losing yourself the plot.

This force... this awareness is what propels thousands of people across the world during the challenge of a life time each November - National Novel Writing Month. Known to participants as NaNoWriMo, the task is clear: write 50,000 words of a novel in one month. That breaks down to about 1700 words each day, if you stay on top of things.

Why would anyone subscribe themselves to 30 days of what some would deem torture? It's in part due to writers’ relationship with deadlines, but also because of that force I described earlier.

NaNoWriMo is a mental marathon that creators love to dread. The implementation of a cut-off date forces them to give the stories in their heads their full attention.

The magical force of autumn gives them the focus needed to complete such a difficult task each day. This year will be my fourth time participating in NanoWriMo, and each year I learn something profound about myself as a writer and a person. The magic that it invites into my life each year is unmatched.

If you are interested in participating in National Novel Writing Month, even if your goal is just to write more, I encourage you to reach out to me.

- Makayla Virdi
The kapu system was the religious law system that ruled over almost every act of Hawaiian life. It included thousands of rules which identified what people could and could not do. The kapu system was based on beliefs about mana (spiritual power.)

Mana

The Hawaiians believed that anything associated with the gods had mana. They believed that the kapu (rules) were made by the gods and interpreted by the ali‘i and the kahuna, who were also required to observe the kapu. The ali‘i were descendants of the gods, and as a result, they had much mana.

There were strict kapus placed on all the personal items of the ali‘i. No one could touch the clothing or anything else that the ali‘i had touched except for the kaukauali‘i (lesser chiefs) who were assigned to the care of his belongings and personal items. A loss of mana would occur if anyone of lesser rank came in contact with the ali‘i’s personal items.

Types of Kapu

There were kapu about nearly everything in Hawaiian life. For example, when fishers were lashing their hooks, everyone in the community had to keep quiet. Other kapu did not allow women to eat certain kinds of food, regulated the building of a house, a canoe, or heiau, or regulated birth and death ceremonies.

Penalties for Breaking Kapu

Penalties were severe for breaking kapu. The law officer (‘ilamuku) hunted down kapu breakers and saw to it that they were put to death by strangulation, clubbing, stoning, burning, or drowning. There was no trial, no probation, no compassion. Often, guilty kapu breakers caused their own death before the ‘ilamuku got to them. They knew that the gods were tremendously powerful, and this affected their thinking.

There was one place of safety to keep the kapu system from being overly demanding – the pu‘uhonua (place of refuge and forgiveness) which was established in each moku (district).

If a kapu breaker was able to reach the pu‘uhonua ahead of those seeking to kill him or her, the kahuna would then provide shelter, protection, and forgiveness. The kapu breaker could then reenter the community in safety. The gods would have been satisfied through the prayers and rituals of the kahuna.

Purpose and Strength of the Kapu System

The kapu system helped the ali‘i and kahuna keep their power over the people. The people believed that breaking the kapu would bring the anger of the gods on themselves and their community. They made every effort to follow the kapu set down by the ali‘i and kahuna.

Dylan Kling-DuBose