

2024 Elie Wiesel Competition
Special Commendation, Senior Poetry

Noelle Chaing, 12th Grade
Norfolk Academy, Charlotte Zito

Embracing My Roots

Oh to be blonde.
I want to pull every strand of my Asian hair out
to be the same as every girl around me,
to not feel different.

Oh to be the girl that boys obsess over.
Social media shows me who I should look like,
blue eyes, small nose, and that darn blonde hair.

To not be embarrassed of where I come from,
and to like my Chinese last name,
seems nearly impossible.

Oh to be blonde,
to fit in,
to feel normal,
to feel comfort in who I am.

“With age” they say, “you will appreciate your beauty”,
and with age, that has seemed to be true.
With time, the beauty of my dark hair has emerged,
and appreciation for my heritage.

Seeing my culture in a new light,
I found peace in my uniqueness,
which sets me apart from everyone else.
Something I never thought I would want.