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Mutation

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Science & the Arts

In its founding issues, the *Berkeley Scientific Journal* would originally print science-inspired artwork created by its writing staff. For this edition of the journal, we decided to bring back this tradition. We asked Berkeley students to submit pieces of visual art or poetry that were inspired by this issue's title, *Potential*. Below are the submissions we received.

Superbloom

BY AASHI PARIKH

BSJ Features Writer
Class of 2026
English and Linguistics

The poem describes the intensity with which a superbloom occurs, inspired by this year's California superbloom that was the result of intense rains after a long drought. The metaphors found throughout the poem are used to emphasize the stark differences in the land before and during the superbloom—after excessive periods of dryness, the flowers appear entrancingly, as if they were meant to be there. Their seeds held the potential to sprout such a remarkable phenomenon but could only reveal themselves under the right conditions.

Parched, barren, desolate soils,
chapped, chafed, robbed of green.
Faith fleets, foreign and forgotten,
for golden only plasters the hills
when really they are gray...
unless... a light unseen
burrows below,
fluttering, fragile fairy dust, so fretful,
for the passage of time creeps so egregiously slow.
When will the moment arrive?
Should it ever arrive? It must
occur soon, before the fuse blows
and the cracks turn to scars.
Time ticks...
...until at last the moisture wicks
out from the prison chambers
like missiles chasing the land and
now like magic, the seeds of promise
meet their day,
like fireworks flashing, every hue,
violet, pink and blue. United
in an elegant, swirling dance, they expertly feign
annual tradition, rather than
a miracle. As if it is simply a bloom,
and not a superbloom.

Mutation

BY IRENA SUN

Class of 2024
Molecular and Cell Biology & Data Science Minor

This piece represents the high rate of mutation of HIV. Receptors on the surface of an HIV virion are depicted through an ink drawing as well as through various materials sticking out of the canvas. The chaos of materials used indicates the unpredictable nature of mutations. As such, despite there being antiretroviral therapies to treat HIV, safety precautions are still necessary due to the virus' potential to change and mutate.

