

## Ode to Boba Tea

Andy Zeng, Phillips Academy Andover 20' (Harvard University 24')

Nothing pleases the soul more than to  
hold your slender frame on a midsummer's day.

When I wrap my  
fingers tight around your waist and slip my straw deep into you  
and hear the satisfying "pop"

I came to know, through our *pas de deux*,  
the evanescent radiance of love.

The old minstrels sing of your different labels:

boba, bubble, pearl, tapioca—  
but whatever they name you,  
wherever you were brewed,  
and whatever cup size you come in  
you will find solace  
at the tip of my tongue.

You are so flavorful,  
so complex, contradictory, colorful,  
a divine concoction of creamy chocolate and condensed ambrosia.

The moment you waltz onto my pallet,  
I feel a wave of pure ecstasy ride down my trachea,  
choking my soul.

When I suck  
on your luscious black pearls, feeling them  
jiggle with my pursed lips,  
I can't help but marvel at the perky texture that

seems to somehow always  
elude my caress by the length of a fingertip.  
You sound of a cacophonous symphony:  
Rich and mild, hard but soft,  
bitter yet sweet, harmoniously contradictory.  
As I savor your taste, I'm reminded of how you're not  
like those other *basic* beverages.  
Not *wine*, with his debonair dullness,  
Or hot chocolate with her haughty heat;  
Not orange juice with her sadistic sass  
Or cotton candy Frappuccino with her cloying clinginess—  
You are irreplaceably irresistible.  
Yet, the course of true love never did run smooth.  
When the sea of tea runs dry,  
the last few pearls, once hugged  
by their sun-kissed skin,  
tremble naked at the grace of the straw—  
as if beckoning,  
not wanting to say goodbye.  
You, my darling,  
you—  
put an end to the age-old question:  
coffee or tea?