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Contact:
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WORCESTER
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Press Release:

South High Community School's Apricot Journal Earns First Class Distinction at 2025 REALM Awards



Photo Caption: From left, The Apricot Journal editors Miles Bai '28, Esther Ong '29, Patience Munyiri '27, Ketlyn Flauzino '27, Natasha Nderitu '27, Madeline Trombly '27, Ashley Serrano '27, Jugeiry Perez '26, and Vasiana Mancoli '27 stand for a photo on February 10, 2026.

WORCESTER, MASS. — Tuesday, March 12, 2026 — [South High Community School's](#) student-led literary magazine, *The Apricot Journal*, has been recognized as a REALM First Class magazine by the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE).

The Recognizing Excellence in Arts and Literacy Magazines (REALM) program honors outstanding literary magazines produced by students with the support of their teachers. *The Apricot Journal* is one of 135 magazines to earn the First Class Award, selected from 456 nominations submitted by schools nationwide.

“The club truly is student driven, so the fact that each year they have received greater recognition really speaks to how passionate and talented the students are,” said Katie Eressy, the club’s staff advisor and an English teacher at South. “I am continually impressed by how the leaders organize not only the journal itself, which is an undertaking, but the other events as well.”

“I think getting that (first-class award) was very rewarding because it’s been such a process and there have been so many opportunities to learn,” said editor-in-chief Madeline Trombly ’27. “I think it’s reflective of how much work, effort and love was put into it.”

The Apricot Journal began during the COVID-19 shutdown in the spring of 2021, when South High students Anya Geist ’24 and Emma Robeau ’23 launched the magazine as a creative outlet for student voices.

Today, the journal is run by a team of student editors with faculty support from South High Community School English teacher Katie Eressy. The current editorial team includes Miles Bai ’28, Esther Ong ’29, Patience Munyiri ’27, Ketlyn Flauzino ’27, Natasha Nderitu ’27, Madeline Trombly ’27, Ashley Serrano ’27, Jugeiry Perez ’26 and Vasiana Mancoli ’27.

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The Apricot Journal

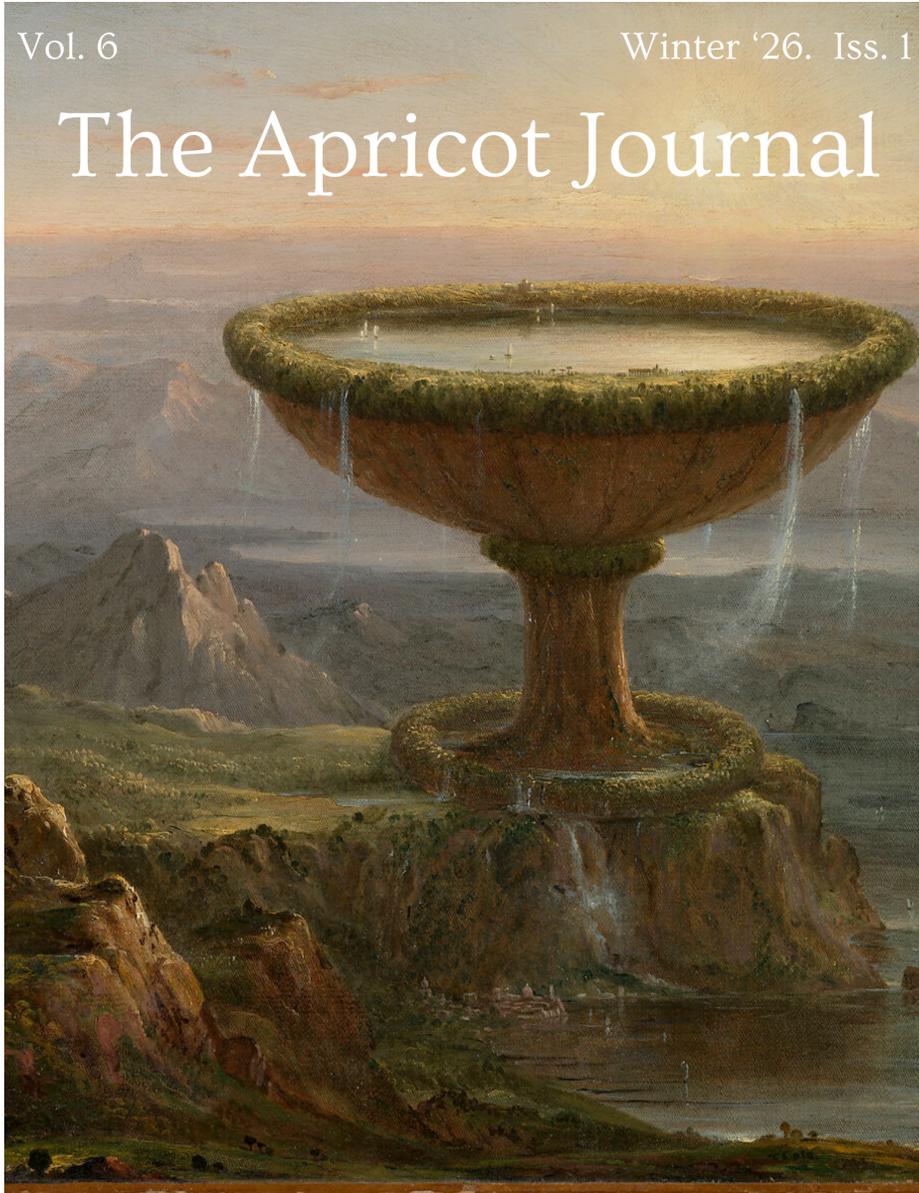


Photo Caption: The cover art for The Apricot Journal's Winter 2026 edition (Vol. 6, Issue 1).

“It has been really exciting to see students become so passionate about writing and collaborating as well as the design and outreach aspects of the Journal,” said Eressy, who has served as a staff advisor since the magazine’s inception in 2021. “I have had many of the editing staff in class, so it is really nice to get to work with the students outside of class and to see the growth and maturity throughout the years.”

The magazine publishes student poetry, essays, artwork and other creative pieces from South High while also accepting submissions from high school students across Worcester Public Schools. Submissions are reviewed through an anonymous editorial process before editors collaboratively shape each issue around a central theme.

“I think the level of collaboration has been helpful,” Trombly said. “I am communicating with a group of 20 to 30 editors so it can be a lot to manage everyone, but when it comes together it is really beautiful.”

The journal typically publishes between two and four issues each year. This year, the team released a large issue in January and hopes to publish two additional editions before the end of the school year.

Beyond producing the magazine itself, members of the club are also active in the community. Through a program called “Apricot Seedlings,” student editors lead writing workshops with elementary school students across Worcester Public Schools to help spark an early love of storytelling and creativity. They also host workshops with high schools with one coming in April for National Poetry Month.

Trombly said the outreach work can feel especially meaningful for editors who experienced disruptions to their own schooling while in elementary school during the pandemic.

“We did the first workshop at my old elementary school and I got strangely emotional,” Trombly said. “Going back and being leaders, and being able to foster a sense of love for writing and creativity and art is really fun, and the kids are really engaged. It’s just a next-level way to connect with our community.”

Eressy expressed excitement for the magazine’s future, with many of the current editors and contributors expected to return for the 2026–27 school year.

Submissions to The Apricot Journal: *Interested Worcester Public Schools students can send their [art submissions](#) and [writing submissions](#) to the editors of The Apricot Journal for consideration for future magazines.*