

Dear Jim

By Shibani Mishra - Richard Montgomery High School

i'm not sure if you are seeing this, if you believed you could (perhaps you were an atheist).

when i drove by, your name was in colored graffiti on some nearby tunnel next to the word *RIP*.

whether in a new life, or in heaven, or in a rich patch of soil, i hope you are resting in peace that is.

i envision you as a businessman, with a wife and two kids, who wore a striped tie on the weekdays and a shirt that said "man of the house." who walked crooked on friday nights and brainstormed sobriety test ideas the next morning.

who went fishing with his friends and wrote poetry on the docks.

who clapped when planes landed and held the door open for strangers.

but the truth is i'll never know.

maybe you were scared of heights and hated children.

maybe you had instagram comments taken down and one too many bans from the liquor store.

maybe you couldn't read or tie a tie or eat seafood.

i guess that's what hope is.

it's a glint of stardust amidst a black hole, the anchor's crown, hardly hanging on through the storm.

it's my decision to give you the benefit of the doubt,

the last grain of stardust even as the world plummets into shambles.

you jim, to whom i can attribute nothing but a sloppy, bubble-lettered name, yet still have hope in the reasons it was remembered on a random tunnel.