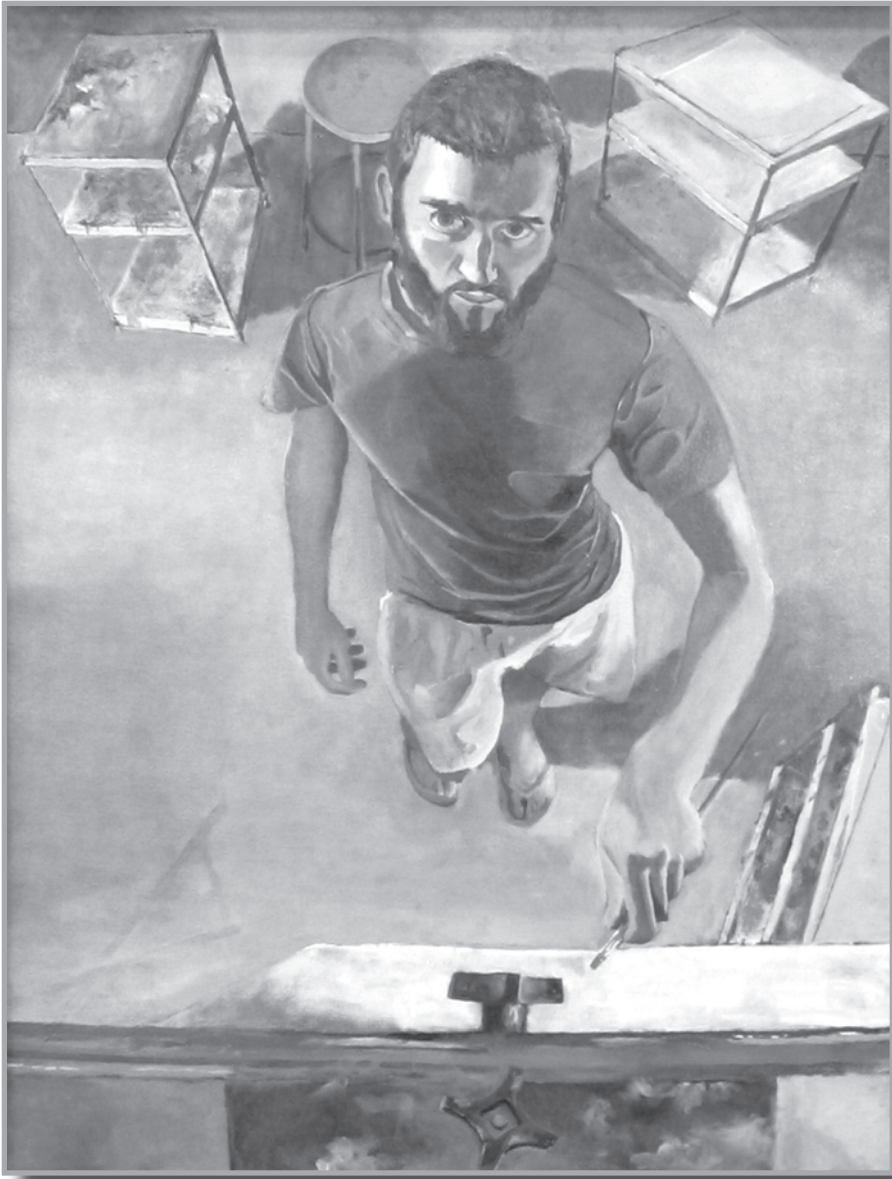


Sampler XVIII
Spring 2006



ART STUDENT HESITATING BEFORE THE FIRST MARK ON A CANVAS - Oil Painting
Benjamin Lund, Senior



STUDENT ART & WRITING
AQUINAS COLLEGE

Sampler Eighteen

A compilation of writing and visual art by Aquinas College students (Grand Rapids, Michigan), spring 2006.

Contributors

Artists

Jen Avery, Jean Boot, Katherine Brines, Adam Chamberlin, Evan Chamberlin, Emily Ferstle, Terri Heibel, Caroline Hulsey, Peter Kaiser, Rickie-Ann Legleitner, Benjamin Lund, Chau Nguyen, Lindsey Steffes, Kim Harris VanderLende, Carol Zander

Writers

Rob Alt, Meg Bolich, Julie Bourke, Sarah Camblin, Erik Colon, Julie Coyne, Rose Daum, Amy Sue Davidson, Kate Dernocoeur, Julie Ferstle, Chelsea Foster, Neill Gage, Amanda Geerts, Elizabeth Leduc, Rickie-Ann Legleitner, Maureen McKenzie, Marnie Rose, Autumn Sabol, Cristina Sills, Marie Snyder, Christina Toppen, Anna Veinbergs, Elise Wisnieski, Amy Zapton

Acknowledgments

Front cover (silver gelatin print): *My Backyard in Fenton, Michigan* Senior
Rickie-Ann Legleitner

Back cover (silver gelatin print) Senior Benjamin Lund

Art selection Art faculty member Ron Pederson (from student art show)

Manuscript selection: *Faculty*: Dr. Brent Chesley, Dr. Jennifer Dawson,
Dr. Michelle DeRose, Vicki McMillan

LIT members: Meg Bolich, Julie Bourke, Amy Davidson,
Luke Eschenburg, Rickie-Ann Legleitner, Anna Veinbergs

Winning poem judge Author Robert VanderMolen

Sampler XVIII coordination Miriam Pederson, Pamela Waterbury

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Rickie-Ann Legleitner, Anna Veinbergs

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Printer liaison Sally Reeves

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STANDING NUDE – Charcoal Drawing
Carol Zander, Junior

Church Directory Photo

We go to the church for the pictures
We are a family
But these people I used to know so well
Are strangers
We make small talk
And I learn new things that I won't remember
And it's hot as we're scrunched together
We're not used to being this close
But we laugh at the man's jokes, like we're supposed to
As he puts us into arrangement
But in some of the shots my dad isn't smiling
And in another my mom is standing off on her own
Are those really our faces?
It seems I haven't seen them for years
My brother and I fidget
Because we want to go
And the picture looks from the mantle
And people who see it say "aww"
Because we look so perfect

WINNING POEM OF THE ACADEMY OF AMERICAN POETS
UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE POETRY PRIZE

"Church Directory Photo" by Julie Coyne, Senior

The Academy of American Poets, founded in 1934, supports American poets at all stages of their careers and fosters an appreciation for American poetry.

The annual prizes for university and college students are funded by alumni interested in encouraging young writers. We are grateful to Aquinas alumni Dr. Tony Foster and Linda Nemeč Foster for making the prize available for Aquinas College students.

This year's preliminary judges for the contest were: Dr. Michelle DeRose, Vicki McMillan and Dan O'Brien.

The final judge was Robert VanderMolen who has been publishing poetry since the mid-1960s. Author of eight collections and two chapbooks of verse, his most recent collection is titled *Breath* from New Issues Press. In the past few years his work has appeared in such periodicals as *London Review of Books*, *Grand Street*, *Parnassas*, *Poetry*, *Sulfur* and *Epoch*. Recipient of a National Endowment for the Arts grant in 1995, he primarily makes a living as a painting contractor in Grand Rapids.

Robert VanderMolen's comments about Julie Coyne's poem follow:

This poem explains an experience not uncommon among college students, members of the military or those who hire on as circus advancement—though not necessarily a youthful or young adult occurrence, it is perhaps felt more acutely when young. When confronted with alienation/separateness in what had once been comfortably familiar, one gains the unsettling feeling that nothing is what one thought it was. In "Church Directory Photo," such an episode is accomplished with honesty and care—the irony of the ending seals the bargain.

Julie Coyne
*Winner of the Academy of
American Poets Contest*



Photo by Andris Vsockis

The High School Girl Within
by Rickie-Ann Legleitner, Senior

Help! I don't think a twelve step program has yet been invented for my particular ailment, but I am in need of serious help. The first step to recover in any program is recognition, so here it goes: my name is Rickie-Ann, and I was once a bitchy high school girl.

Now this is not to say I am still the same flighty ditzzy adolescent I embraced between the ages of 13 and 17, but certain skills I acquired at the time simply will not die away. Let's go back to the beginning. At the small private Catholic institute I attended, we were not required to have a uniform—we didn't get off so easy. We had a strict dress code that was, according to my high schools' Web site:

Designed to promote neatness, modesty and cleanliness. It is also intended to promote an environment which is business-like and distinguishable from recreation. The school administration reserves the right to determine the suitability of clothing, hairstyle, makeup or excessive accessorizing for school or school activities. Clothes are NOT to be extreme in length, fit or style.

Scary, right? And this is just the introduction. We had to wear tucked in collared shirts and dress slacks, no exceptions. The school officials, including some not so friendly nuns, cracked down on any creative deviation the fashion world attempted to come up with: no tattoos or piercings, no capris, no sandals, no low rise pants, no spandex, etc. And if you were one of the typical disturbingly self-conscious girls that attended my high school, this dress code meant hours upon hours of shopping. Finding trendy and flattering clothing that fell into these requirements was no small feat, let me assure you. Near the turn of the century collared shirts and formal slacks definitely were not the thing—at least not as far as the local malls were concerned.

My local mall, Genessee Valley Center, was especially unaccommodating. This inadequacy forced me to drive 45 minutes away to a mall that was more appropriate (and terribly more expensive): The Sommerset Collection. This three-story mall that took up two sides of a major road in Troy, Michigan, included such fine stores as Tiffany & Co., Saks Fifth Avenue, BCBG, Bebe,

Louis Vuitton, Arden G., Armani Express, Nordstroms, etc.—you get the picture. I spent an average three hours hunting every store imaginable on these trips, and did so four times a month for four years. That adds up to at least 576 hours spent looking at over-priced pieces of fabric—a feat which I am sure would warp anyone, and I am no exception. It was through all these hours spent shopping that I acquired a terrible skill. I have the ability to price tag a person's clothing from top to bottom the instant I look at them.

Now you may be thinking that this is not so bad, but I assure you it truly is a curse. It isn't something I can turn off and everyone is victim to my secret ability. I do this to anyone and everyone within the first 30 seconds of looking at them. In high school this led to some very obnoxious comments whispered to my friends in the hallway as I observed the people around me: "She so bought that shirt at Meijer and wore it with Armani slacks—who does that,?" or "Wow, she spent \$110 on those pants and her ass still looks huge," or "How one girl can spend so much on clothing and still look like a trashy ho from some rap video is beyond me." And those are just the examples I am willing to put down in writing. I cut down just about everyone, especially after my school decided to enforce the no-panty-line rule, which led to some very interesting thong and lack-of-underwear scenarios, but that's an entirely different story. Now this was all fine and dandy back in the competitive days of teen angst, but it doesn't do me any good now that I've grown beyond such cutthroat behavior (at least when it comes to clothing). I still size up every single person I encounter by their price tags. And I wish I could honestly say this did not affect my perception of people, but first impressions last a long time. The bitchy high school girl within simply will not die.

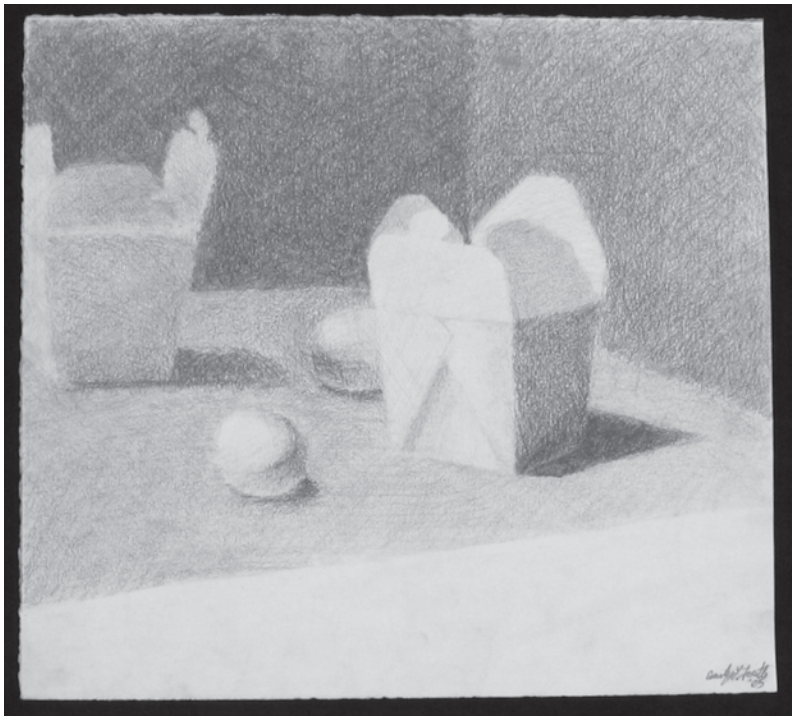
Upon making this confession, I find that I am not experiencing any of the blissful joys associated with cathartic relief. It has only added to my grief the greater stress of knowing all who read this will look at me as they once looked upon that idiotic group of girls in their own high school. And we all know no one ever liked that group of girls, not even the girls who had the unfortunate pleasure of belonging to the proud, the few and the snobby. But hopefully my shame will lead to a solution to my problem, once and for all finding a way to shut up that stupid high school girl within me.

the pink bathroom

that bathroom dove soap
was my favorite room lilies of the valley
in the entire house

it was the color of the bathtub
 carpet
no boys allowed tile
 sweetness even the toilet
 femininity were all perfectly
 pink
it was the smell of
 soft powder *Julie Ferstle, Senior*

CHINESE & EGGS – Drawing *Emily Ferstle, Freshman*



We, Your Daughters

You fought to keep death at bay.
We, your daughters, watched as you retreated
Entering a world of your own.
We, your daughters, cried silent tears.

Your eyes, once vibrant with life
Faded to dulled glass.
Your hand, once so expressive
Shook with a life of its own.

Your sharp mind was no more
In its place – a jumble of disconnected thoughts.
Your voice, which inspired comfort or fear
Now quieted to low mutterings.

We, who were never enough
Held your hand.
We, who wanted your love
Stroked your brow.

We, burdened and hurt,
Kept vigil for you.

- Marnie Rose, Graduate

**In Which Birdzilla Poses for a Photograph and
I Commune with a Royal Guardsmen**

by Autumn Sabol, Sophomore,

(An excerpt from *Osmosis and White Knowledge*)

The Tower of London is not actually a tower. This is the third biggest misconception that tourists to the city bring with them.¹ The Tower is, in fact, more of a fortress, having once served as the royal seat as well as a royal prison. Exact facts were a little hard to recall as we paid the admission fee and walked through the ancient stone gates; all I was certain of was that the place was *huge*. Constructed of stone work centuries old, it sprawled, it loomed, it...well, it towered, actually.

Neatly manicured lawns of lush grass were spread out inside the Tower grounds, but subtle fences and polite signs warned us to “Keep Off the Grass, Please.” Because of these fences, therefore, there was no one to disturb the bathing of what appeared to my mother and me to be the world’s biggest crow, splashing contentedly in a puddle in the middle of a lawn. This creature was one of the flightless Tower ravens, and it was beyond big; it was gargantuan, larger than two footballs!

I hissed at my mom to take a picture before it finished its ablutions and hopped out of sight, but before my mom could get the camera out of its case, Birdzilla snapped its head up and fixed its beady little eyes on the pair of us. We froze, harkening back to some primeval state where, if a larger-than-average animal glared at you, it generally meant you were on the menu. However, the raven did not make to devour us, nor did it hop away in a huff at our intrusion. Instead, it bounded over to the edge of the green, propelled itself up onto a fencepost with a few wing-flaps, and preened vainly, puffing its glossy black feathers to make it seem even larger. It was *posing* for us. Dumbfounded, we were barely able to shut our open mouths and snap a few beautiful pictures before Birdzilla hopped down from the post and calmly resumed his bath. You know you’re in England when even the birds are polite.

Another interesting fact about the Tower of London is that it is the official holding place for the Crown Jewels of Great Britain. They were very pretty and shiny, with enough historical importance to be worth the extremely long line, but what fascinated me more was the Royal Guardsman standing outside the entrance to the building. Tall and aloof in his red dress jacket and big fuzzy hat, he was staring with the thousand-yard-stare that spoke of either keen military training or a total lack of mental processes. Apparently, the same disregard for rules applied to guardsmen as well as ravens, for the gentleman was standing behind the fences and next to the wall, treading on the grass with those spit-shined shoes as bold as you please, without a glance at those very polite signs. What cheek!

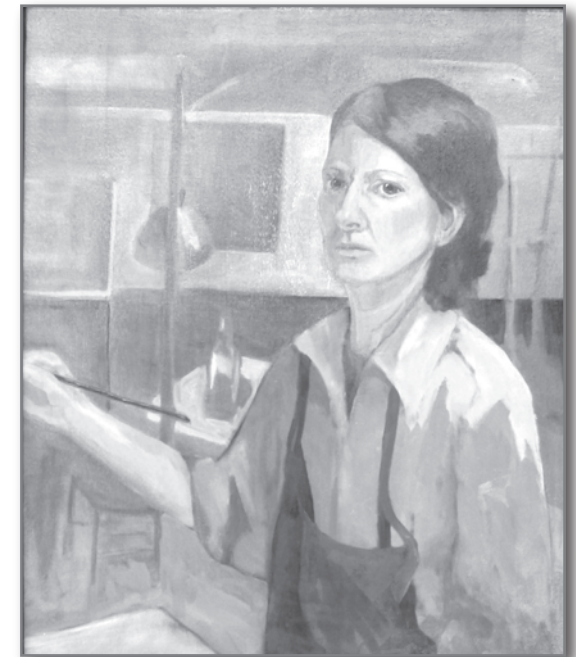
As I stood against the fence and watched in vain for any hint of movement, the grayish clouds that had gathered overhead in the course of the afternoon decided that if it was going to rain, it was as good a time as any.

The first few warning drops on my head gave me ample time to reach for my umbrella² and, once I had wrestled it open, returned my attention to the Guardsman, still unflinching in the face of inclement weather. “Oi!” I called, for he was only a few yards away. “What do you do when it rains?”

Snap! I hadn’t expected an answer, but no sooner had the words left my mouth than his arm lashed out from his side, bayonet in his grasp, startling me into a gasp. After a few artful twirls of the weapon, he took a measured step backwards, then another, until he was safely ensconced in a small guard-hut, just big enough to shield one man from the elements. “Oh,” I said. I gave my umbrella a thoughtful spin, cocked my head in contemplations and replied, “Oh. I see. Well, that’s all right, then.” I don’t delude myself into thinking that he winked at me, but there seemed to be a subtle shift in his aura that might have suggested a wink. Perhaps I am reading too much into the circumstances, but in hindsight, I like to think that the young man answered my question, the best and only way he could.

¹The second biggest misconception is that the large and ornate bridge spanning the Thames River is London Bridge from the nursery rhyme; it’s actually Tower Bridge. The biggest is the misguided notion that said tourist is actually going to meet a member of the Royal Family if they drive past Buckingham Palace. I mean, seriously.

²Even the *weather* is polite in England.



SELF-PORTRAIT
Oil Painting
Kim Harris VanderLende,
Continuing Education



SELF-PORTRAIT – Oil Painting
Katherine Brines, Junior

Displacement

she accuses:

(sleep

comes when your hands

finally fall from my skin

dark breath light voice

you talk

in japanese

and leave me free

to leave

undoing the tangle of our limbs

i slip away from

the animal clutch

of your emotions)

he replies:

(in half-sleep, your fingers

disengage my arms

fold them neatly

on to the mattress

slow, deliberate

unforgiving

skin awake

i plead forgiveness in tongues)

i am branded

by your

eyelashes fluttering

morse code

- *Meg Bolich, Senior*

Rembrandt's Dance

Rembrandt danced on ballerina feet
bound in pink.

Brush strokes magnify chiaroscuro
on the stage
as waves of light splash across
faces of dancers.

The painter is young, unlike old self portraits:
face rounded, eyes brown, color dark and true.

Stage area all cherry wood,
smooth as glass, slippery, challenging to maneuver across.

Rolling in his grave is the revered painter,
yet maybe he is laughing.

Art, Dancing, Writing,
all acts of expression in artistic speculation,
where rules are sometimes meant to be broken.

- *Anna Veinbergs, Senior*



SELF-PORTRAIT
Oil Painting
Terri Heibel
Continuing Education

Round

by Kate Dernocoeur, Senior

The week beginning with September 12, 1986, was very round.

“Am I late?” This from my usually snappy, together mom, an hour and a half late for lunch the day before her 60th birthday. She was tired, diminished. Something was very wrong.

CT scans were new then. I knew the ED staff, worked with them. So they let me be there when they snapped the scan of her brain to the x-ray backlight. There they were, like cherries in a bowl, the tumors that had wrought neural devastation, the eerie reappearance of the “C” word on the anniversary of her own father’s death from cancer on September 12, 1951.

The week became an endless round of visits with doctors, radiation, trials of medications, phone calls to far-flung family. The birthday celebration was cancelled. I gave her gift to her at the hospital. It was a music box of a porcelain girl with a horse that played “Somewhere Over The Rainbow.”

Midweek she went missing. We went round and round the hospital, searching. I was friends with the director of nursing. She couldn’t meet my eye. We expanded the search, outside. We called the police. Would she step in front of a bus to end it all?

A few hours into the search, I pulled into the ED lot and the officious security guard pounced. “You can’t park here.”

“Sir, my mother is missing from this hospital and I suggest you suspend that rule for me until we find her.”

He stared at, yes, my full-term belly, the one with the protruding navel that bumped out the stretched fabric of my maternity blouse like a cherry on a sideways sundae.

He backpedalled in near panic. “OK, lady, no problem.”

At last, we found her, asleep on someone’s front porch four blocks from the hospital. To unwind, I would have loved a beer, but settled instead for a piece of pie.

Mom got impressively more lucid—actually, almost normal—with the drugs and radiation. A week after being admitted, on Friday morning, they let her go home to start her 18-month descent to death. That night, Friday night, they admitted me and my round belly to start my daughter’s 21-hour descent to life.

The week ending with September 20, 1986, was very round.

Something

The car remains still
yet the light has turned green.
A horde of cars are honking their horns
yet the driver remains serene.
He is stalled by
 something, something . . .

Still as a stone statue
the road worker stands
Deaf to the jack-hammer
that numbs his hands.
His senses are numbed by
 something, something . . .

The basketball game is suddenly
 interrupted.
Unnoticed the ball rolls away
Timeout is called;
something else holds sway.
Time stops for
 something, something . . .

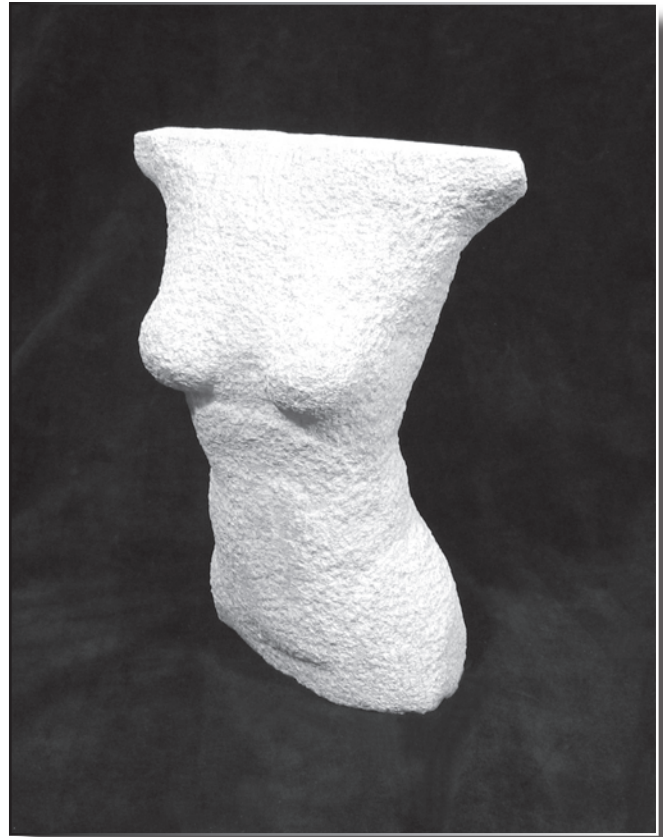
Vulgar words and punches thrown—
one man grabs and rips the other's
shirt.
Suddenly the fighting comes to a halt.
Luckily no one is hurt.
Yet they are wounded by
 something, something . . .

Hotdog suspended in motionless hand
ketchup and mustard drip on Gucci
suit.
A man's appetite is forgotten
while his hungry eyes hunt in pursuit.
His eyes feast upon
 something, something . . .

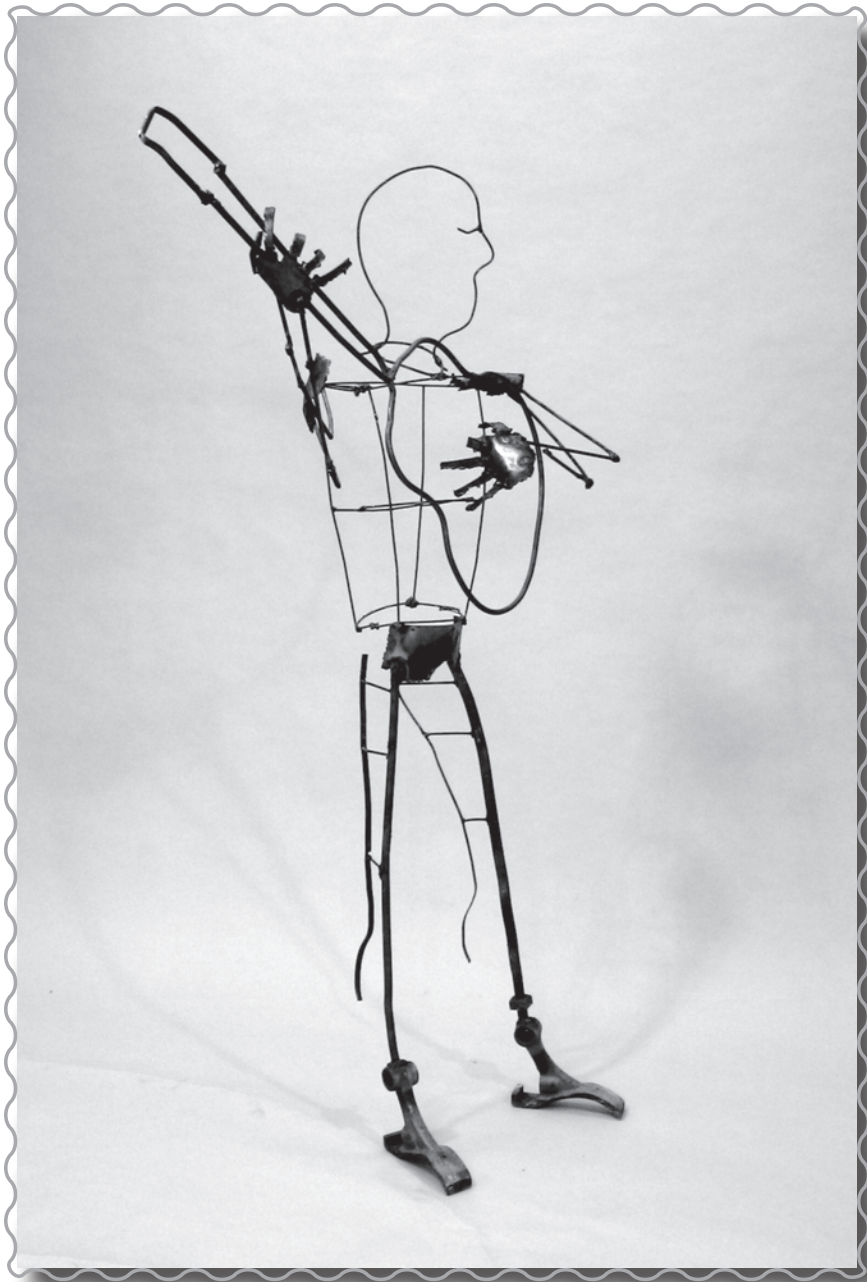
Another wears a ring
but forgets what it is for.
For a moment forgotten—
the one he vowed to adore.
His heart is enticed by
 something, something . . .

What is this something?
If I told you would you believe?
This something is nothing other
Than an ill-clad daughter of Eve.
Isn't that
 something . . .

- Neill Gage, Junior



LIMESTONE SCULPTURE
Benjamin Lund, Senior



WIRE FIGURE — *Peter Kaiser, Senior*

I am a Bagel

I sing to you in the morning; you hear my voice
rising and dipping in harmony with your stomach.
Early predawns I sing you out: stiff feet, cold floor
POP! down, up! from the toaster:
a percussion interlude in my Bagel Song.
I slide, greased along a chill white plate
up, in, down again—
a terminal slide.
I take my bagel rest,
and you pick up my Bagel Song.
It's a pretty melody of humming "mmm, mm, mmm's,"
of clinking dishes in your stainless sink.
I am a Bagel, and I can teach you to sing.

- Sarah Camblin, Senior

Parking Lot

by Chelsea Foster, Senior

I go and hide myself and I'm the one leaving, instead of being left. I park the car in the lot of the drugstore and shut it off. Orange lights briefly blink "Warning" at me and then fade.

In a car parked across from me, a small life peers out. He doesn't bark, but looks as if he is contemplating the act. Instead, he merely peers with rounded brown eyes and a muff of fur clustering into fluffy eyebrows that lift and furrow, making expression possible even on a canine face.

The drugstore is busy today, people walking in and out of self-made clouds of breath and clutching the flimsy handles of papery bags full of remedies for life. Photos, shampoo, bags of candy. Prescriptions for the tight chest, the tired mind, and the sick child at home. Prescriptions that stop things from happening, and prescriptions that make things happen.

With them all around, my fellow customers, I feel simultaneously less alone and more alone. But this time, my face behind this thick windshield, my legs beneath this strong steering wheel, I am in control of my own invisibility.

The dog has decided on a game. If he is playing guard, then his protection of the car is unyielding. If he is playing guard, he is unaware that he is actually locked inside. He doesn't keep them out. He is kept in. But his sharp barks make him seem unaware.

The cars glide in and out, staying always inside the yellow lines. The dog is ready. He scrambles on light paws across the seats to the different windows and he makes his call.

A tall, lean man with wintering hair and a Northface fleece is the first to hear him. On the way to his Mercedes, he sends the dog an acknowledging nod and continues to watch him, as though half-expecting to see the dog nod back. He merely barks more, pivoting in the seat as the man makes his way across the parking lot.

The next lady to emerge from the drugstore is parked right next to the dog. I watch her wince and glare at him as she pulls the keys from the pocket of her cracked leather jacket. Her face grimaces and her neck even swivels a little bit as she stares at the barking animal. I feel sure that, if there hadn't been a pane of glass between them, she may have kicked him in the gut.

A gray truck pulls in next, two spots down from the dog's car. A woman slides out of the driver's seat, the sides of her sweatshirt falling apart to reveal an "I Heart the Ladies" T-shirt. The dog resumes its incessant barking. She smiles, I believe, although it's not quite a smile. Not at all.

More the smirk that suppresses a laugh. Amused, she seems, by the scruffy dog's inability to back up its loud threat, locked behind the Subaru's doors.

Next a small man, swaying side to side as he extends one leg far in front of the other, and pulls his body up to meet it. A thin moustache lines the top of his upper lip, like a fine shadow tracing his mouth. He hears the dog first, and then takes a slow moment to locate it. His reaction is placid, unaffected, and as he reaches his hand into his jacket pocket, I feel suddenly as if it will emerge with a gun.

"Oh Jesus," I think. "Don't shoot the dog."

On second thought. An image of his small eyes, lined up with mine over the top of that gun, and with a snap, a flower, broken into the windowpane with spidery legs of fractured glass crawling out in every direction.

How would they all react? I imagine the spread in the newspaper at school, in the city, at home. But no. It wouldn't be a spread. An obituary, maybe. A short piece on the grief of the family, the contributions of the life, if I'm lucky.

He passes. His hand remains in his pocket.

The poor dog lies down and he begins to howl. It occurs to me, I've never seen a dog howl before. Lying in the driver's seat, all I can see is the tip of his nose, his wet dog lips rounded into an "O" and the cascading notes of his mournful howl. There is a beauty in it, too. How terribly cliché. Or maybe I'm just jealous. Jealous he can so eloquently send his voice out and insist it is heard. I watch the faces turn towards him and wait for the one that actually belongs to him to rush to the door, unlock it, and tell him to "Hush." No one comes.

But the small man comes back. I sink in my chair and in my head; my friends are on the phone dialing me repeatedly with no answer. And then they hear. Some take it with stunned silence. Others fall immediately into fits of hysteria. Would they get drunk to forget me that night? And get drunk to finally sleep? And then, would they get drunk again the next night to forget how they had forgotten?

My mom, my sisters, my brother flash into my head, one hundred thirty miles away. But that is finally too much. With them, the vision turns to palpable pain, and I end it.

On the seat beside me, my phone is blank. No missed calls. No messages. I turn to my dog friend. He has surrendered his howling. His owner comes back and unlocks the door, shooing him, with a gentle flick of the hand, from the driver's seat. I wish he would look at me, or that she might look at me, because the corners of my mouth are poised to smile. Smile goodbye, smile hello? I'm not sure really, and it doesn't really matter. I never get the chance.

For You

In memory of Natalie Knott

We pulled into Fairfield's,
Flicking out the last butt
Between ashes and dirt.

Stone rows, still as the trees.
The doors of the Ford click, lock on.
Pacing, searching
for your carved face.

All these faces,
Silent—

Between each mound,
Fresh or sunken

Crisp air caught betwixt shortened light
And, stumble I did,
Startled to find this black rock
Where your body sits and now,
In your name, so sweet—

Sinking slowly, my knees follow
Thin wisps of grass softening my seat
This stick keeps me steady around your silence.

The silent whisper of unlit smoke,
“For you,” I whisper, so only you may hear,
Flicking the flame

 A sticky, smoldering gold.
The wind stood still,
 While I shook by your side,
 Streams welling broken damns.

And speaking to you, your stone face stayed
Slightly curved in an unmarked smirk

No—

“It’s for me.”

- Marie Snyder, *Sophomore*

Inheritance

Tully Beach, Co. Galway, Ireland

Stones, faces uplifted to mine,
bear images of galaxies.
Cracks like lightning
scar their surfaces,
smoothed by their waltz with time.
Each tiny universe held in my palm
is heavier than expected;
the weight of mist and history
seeps into my hand,
awakening my fibers
to the ancient pulse.

One hundred years ago
she, my distant relative,
had to remind herself to breathe
when looking west over this ocean,
fated to watch the others leave,
rooted but homeless.

These wise stones have long
felt the weight of souls
like hers, like mine,
seeking solace,
writing sorrow into our wills.

- Rose Daum, Junior



MALE INVESTIGATION I – Photoetching
Evan Chamberlin, Senior

Rush Hour

Bare stage.

I. and II. on opposite sides

- I. Today, coming home from work, I couldn't catch a cab.
II. He called me up. Darling, what's for dinner?
I. I always catch a cab.
II. Turkey salad.
I. I had three weeks' work in two arms.
II. Told me he had his heart set on fried chicken.
I. Standing there on the corner in my heels, cars whizzing past, whistles, horns...
II. There's turkey salad.
I. Rush hour!
II. He told me he was bringing it home. Fried chicken.
I. But this had never happened before. I mean, I always catch a cab.
II. His words were different.
I. Taxi! Taxi!
II. Darling.
I. And all those gallant men?
II. Darling, what's for dinner?
I. Watching, amused even. Laughing.
II. I had my heart set on fried chicken.
I. No one came to rescue me.
II. But there's turkey salad.
I. & II. WHERE'S THE ROMANCE?
II. It used to be, Darling!
I. They always rescue the beautiful heroine.
II. He'd bring me flowers.
I. Taxi!!
II. And now—fried chicken.
I. But I always catch a cab.

- Amanda Geerts, Graduate

An Excuse

I swim to class
In my pink bathing suit
An intricate Atlantis
Praying mantis
On my shoulder

Swallowing salt
Filters for lungs
Lunging and leaning towards the wall.
And here I am

Swollen

Dry

A lost cause waiting for ecstasy
A peephole with a telescope
Sliding into my seat,
A slipping slope.
Pockets full of a dust
And nothing to say

Dramamine, my opiate
Survival is the only way to make it through
Press onward
As the carcass falls in my lap
A red stain

Cotton swabs conceal
A mockery in my head
The silence in the room

But soon to be consumed
Lost again and forgotten
Alone
Eyes shut
No lapping waves
A moment longer

I walk alone in my faded bathing suit
Stumbling in and out the door
Always out
Again
An ear to the floor
And I hear it coming

Sick

Wanting

Forgetting to wait
Miss the bus on purpose
There's always another day.

- *Maureen McKenzie, Sophomore*



SCISSORS – Oil Painting
Kim Harris VanderLende, Continuing Education

Fireflies

by Cristina Sills, *Sohpomore*

A silver face was smiling down at me that night from its hanging position in the twilight sky. I think my eyes smiled back at it—I was grateful for such a warm summer evening. Sounds of the forest kept me company as I rocked back and forth in the tatty wicker chair, occasionally sipping a glass of white merlot. The night was very much alive, and the crickets and frogs and birds didn't quiet down until morning.

But the best part of that night was the fireflies, hundreds of the glowing on-and-off insects floating from the field by my house to the woods in a curvy line. It seemed like a funeral procession, a parade of insects celebrating the death of some great forest god.

As I watched them float ever so slowly into the darkness of the trees, I noticed something else going on. A few deer drew closer to the fireflies, making their way across the blackened field. I decided to turn off the porch light and told myself something important was happening. It couldn't be a storm or a fire—I just finished watching the weather channel. But then there were more strange things occurring, things that made me put the wine glass down and stand up.

My cats started scratching gently at the front door, softly meowing as if they were agitated by something. I hesitated for a moment, but let the two of them outside anyway. They ran off into the field, sort of trailing behind the path the deer had taken. That's when I started to dash into the field myself. I didn't have to chase the cats; there was no way to force them back home now anyway, but the curiosity inside me was in a frenzy.

All sorts of little animals scurried on the ground around me, so I slowed down as not to step on anything. Whatever was happening, I knew I shouldn't be disturbing anyone. Soon enough I caught a glimpse of the fireflies, which had traveled quite some distance. Several feet above the ground they hovered, twinkling like Halloween decorations. And the trees looked eerie; they seemed unusually tall and spooky.

The breeze that night was weak but it produced chills up and down my spine as I got closer to the fireflies. Finally they were surrounding me. It was as if I was in the middle of a slow-motion lightning storm. As I admired the tiny lanterns, I felt an overwhelming presence in the darkness around me. Still, I felt safe with the sporadic glimmering and tiny pitter-patters of insects and mice. A great warmth filled the air, despite the chills, despite the eeriness.

As I drew closer to the middle of the forest, where the paths start to fade away and the earth becomes rougher, the night birds started singing a different melody. This fresh song was melancholy yet sweet. The night birds encouraged my idea that I was attending a funeral of some sort. And then I was there. It was dark at first, as everything slowed down and paused around

a great sable meadow, and then the fireflies drifted leisurely into a wide uneven circle, and the image lying motionless on the ground became clear.

There lay the most magnificent lifeless buck, in a sad, twisted position. His age was evidenced by the antique white and grayness of his coat, the wear of his colossal antlers and the sag in his skin. This seemingly ancient deer, which possibly had stood a minimum of 15 feet tall, had no wounds, yet he lay in the dirt with a mourning world enclosed upon him.

My heart beat hard and slow. I was in awe. This beast of legendary proportions, of such a glorious impression, was truly the most unimaginable sight to behold. I had attended the service for the forest god after all. And then the radiance of the fireflies slowly died like a flag going half-mast, and they proceeded to return to whatever mysterious land they had come from, still drifting away long after I'd stepped back into my own world.



GRR – Silver Gelatin Print
Chau Nguyen, Senior

**To Emily Dickinson:
Spiders and Grandmothers**

I fell asleep—no one saw eyes
Closed and yet open wide—
Discovered—spider crawling
Up bedpost—so fascinating

Someone died—all eyes see
Are tiny and long feet—
Crawling spider—here up arms

She left as flowers bloomed.
All petals clean—grass fed
Beautiful was—This—garden bed.

I saw a spider—walk away
At the end—of the lady's song
As a tear—Fell—in a lap
And landed—On—the phone.

Anna Veinbergs, Senior

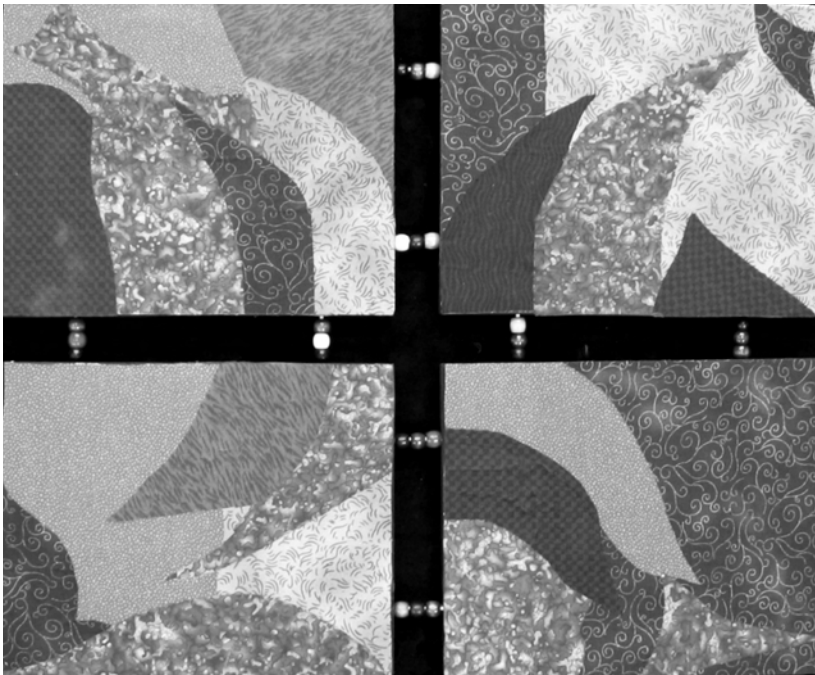


DEATH SERIES II – Woodprint
Adam Chamberlin, Senior

Cucumber Sandwiches

by Julie Bourke, Senior

Grandma and I are always connected through tea parties with cucumber sandwiches, lemonade, and rockers on her back porch. Surrounded by her garden full of pansies, lilies, and impatiens, we sit together on summer afternoons while robins eat berries off her trees. Crumbs fly everywhere as I furiously rock myself back and forth, legs kicking as if on a swing, willing the rocker faster. Grandma moves in slow motion, her heels slightly lifting off the ground, as she delicately pushes herself back and forth without a drop spilt or crumb lost. Peeking between the pages of *Anne of Green Gables*, I watch as the ants come and carry my crumbs away, knowing the whole time that Grandma watches as well. Quietly, like one of those wise old healers in movies who knows everything and moves with serene purpose, she can sip a glass of lemonade and take in the robins and flowers surrounding her without a sound, drinking in a new image with each tip of her glass, calmly assessing each idea and turning it over in her brain—slowly, looking at all angles. My legs finally touch the ground when I sit in the rocker, but I still pump my legs pushing it faster. Images come to me in flashes and ideas are so fragmented they never make sense. I still eat cucumber sandwiches and drink lemonade, and as I look at my crumb-covered shirt, I wait for the day when I can be comfortable enough in my own life to slow down and enjoy the cucumbers.



4-PANEL COLLAGE — Lindsey Steffes, Senior

Mama said

by Sarah Camblin, Senior

The church stood alone in the middle of spreading tobacco fields, alone with its neatly mown rows of granite. Wide Astroturf steps led up to a brick face with a welcome banner proclaiming, “For the wages of sin is death.” It was snack break at Vacation Bible School, so Tina and I took our sticky fingers, Chick O Sticks, and Dixie cups of Cherry Coke into the shade of the first row of headstones. We leaned back, modestly spread. Adjusting her skirt, Tina pointed. “That’s where my daddy’s buried.”

“I didn’t know that you don’t have a daddy.”

“Nuh uh, he got shot in the head, hunting last year—it was an accident. Mama said, ‘It was an accident.’”

A House on Fire

Raging tongues licking up their path,
Not caring where they singe.
It consumes.
Open mouth, full of yellow teeth,
Gnawing and ripping into the floorboards.

Burning, turning years of hardship
With its twisted hands.
It playfully rolls around the house,
Contorting and bending love
Into a burnt rug.

Furnace of memories burn;
Bricks of stories join the life of ash.
Unsteady frames falter and collapse.
The fire has won the battle;
Its foul breath remains.

- Elizabeth Leduc, Freshman

*Lily of the valley
Dangling
Droplets
Sickeningly sweet
Perfume
Dizzying
A return
To happiness
Alluring
Ringlets
An aurous crown
Trembling
Above
Green
Unsuspecting eyes
Eager
Fingers
Clutching
Our Lady's Tears
Touching
Innocent
Pink lips
Forevermore
Lily of the valley*

- Amy Sue Davidson, Senior

**Ruminations in Woodhouse Library Roundabout Midnight,
or,
God, I'm Tired**

This chair does not support me.
Every time I lean back
I become an astronaut in a launch seat,
Contemplating the ceiling
As the countdown continues,
Each descending digit laden
With the corpses of deadlines in a plague wagon,
Professor in black robes treading beside the creaking construct,
Banging a blackboard with an ancient eraser and crying,
"Bring out your dead!"
And yet, here we are again, dear Insomnia, my sometimes friend,
As I labor under the whip-sting of fluorescence
Doing penance for my sins with black coffee and white screens.
The cursor with every

blink

blink

blink

Mocks my inability to think.
But you, foe of Morpheus, stand beside me and behind me,
Back and just to the right,
For I feel your presence in the knot in my right shoulder
That digs and drills and keeps me awake,
The throbbing pain a steady beat for the slowing sink-a-pace of clicking keys,
Just out of self-massaging reach and relief
So that every time I lean back to relieve the pressure, I find
That this chair
Does not
Support
Me.

- Autumn Sabol, *Sophomore*

The Beautiful Woman

Her mind is lost
In a world of imagination and confusion.
Her map is unreadable;
Her compass, broken.
Paths and roads contort,
Twist, turn around her brain.
Everywhere calls her name;
Intelligence falls into the dust and pebbles.

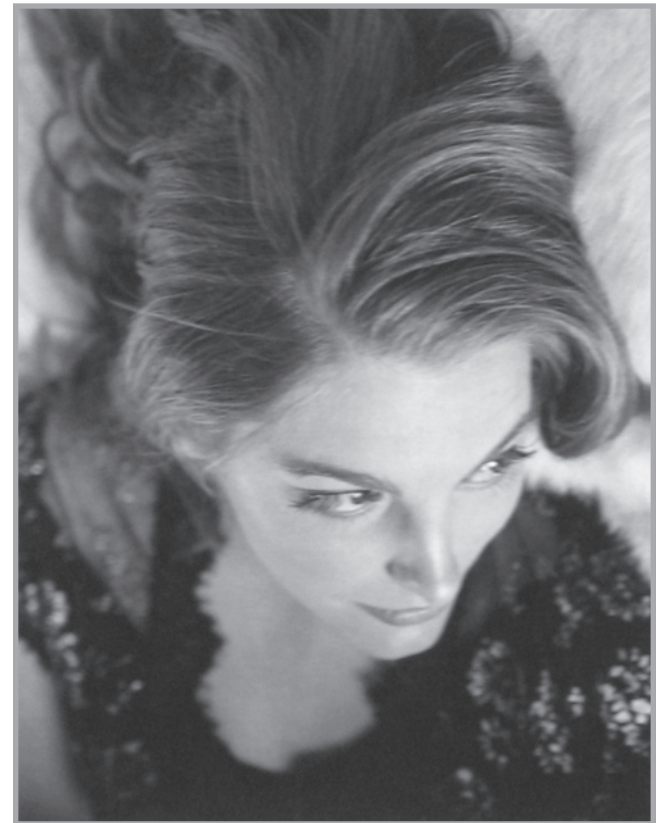
Grey strands of wind-blown hair
Crazily reaching out for heaven's light.
Waves erode skin on a sea-worn face;
Pools of blue engulf a hidden/locked soul.
Seashells line her mouth,
Broken and missing.
The lips part.
The perfect smile.

Pink pearls grace her swan neck,
Tall, lean, proud.
Her bathrobe, the finest silk;
Her slippers, heels of no control.
Veins of purple
Peek out of arms, hands
Bony and fragile,
Bleed dry.

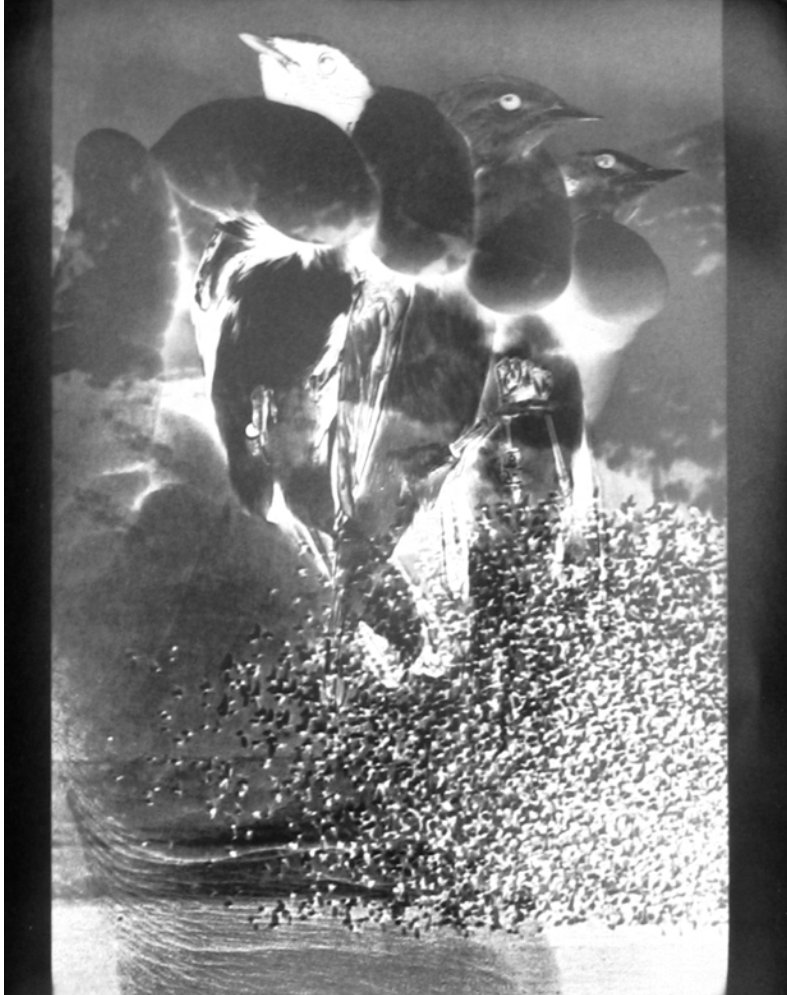
Her thin frame,
Weak and bold,
Sitting upon a La-Z-boy,
Her throne.
The beautiful woman,
The proud swan queen.
Slowly her mind fades
Into a perfect world of memories...lost.

A vision of the ancient mermaid goddess:
Grey wavy hair flowing in the breeze
Sitting upon a throne of seashells
With pink pearls circling a swan neck.
Drifting, sifting through the sand
To the world where dreams are made,
In the turquoise ocean waves,
Where memories are forgotten.

- Elizabeth Leduc, Freshman



MALLORY – Silver Gelatin Print
Chau Nguyen, Senior



HAND/BIRDS – Silver Gelatin Print
Jen Avery, Senior

The Perfect Place to Retire

is close enough to chaos
and far enough from comfort
Ruby Jacobs said.

So she unearthed her black silk stocking
swollen with savings from 61 years spent
stenciling red tulips
on pinball machines and
bought a meadow
with a moss-covered manor
as old as she was.

The girls from Knitting Club
called her loopy.

You spent all your money, Ruby.
Now what will you do without
a marble cherub to watch over you
when you are dead?

She didn't need the watching,
Ruby Jacobs said.

A cherub was something she could do without.
Besides, Melba, I'm sure your cherub is big enough
to watch over the both of us.

And who needs a marble cherub
when you've retired to a place
six orchards east of Selma
and two hills over from the Piggly Wiggly?

- Amanda Geerts, Graduate

ENCAPSULATED BEAUTY

by Erik Colon, Junior

When I was younger, I was in love with insects. Their functionality and strength in numbers amazed me. I studied them in between the cracks in the driveway and hollowed out trees. I read scientific books extolling their virtues and asserting their important role in nature. It wasn't long before I had to get a closer look, to scrutinize them from every angle. I set out to build an insect collection. I found a piece of styrofoam in the basement and pins in my mother's sewing kit. I read about the preservation of insects, how you had to insert the pin while they were still alive to keep from damaging the specimen. It was best to freeze them, maintaining their integrity. I studied them under magnifying glasses; their bright colors and outlandish bodies fascinated me. I amassed a sizable

collection: butterflies, grasshoppers, spiders, ants. One day I came home from school and looked in the fridge. My collection was gone. I didn't ask my mom why she threw it away; in the back of my mind I knew why.

Years later, I became interested in a young girl named Kelly. I was twenty-one and she was seventeen. She had the richest long brown hair I had ever seen, and green-grey eyes that returned one's gaze with surprising confidence and uninhibitedness for her age. She was lively and affectionate, occasionally funny and always well-spoken. I decided that I had to have her.

One night she told me as we talked about the latest in her senior year of high school that she wasn't "as innocent" as I thought she was. I held back a chuckle and wondered how to reply, but didn't. Anything I said would have evidenced my true fascination with her.

It was something of a morbid fascination; she was just a hollow shell to me. Not because there wasn't anything to her existence, or that she was unintelligent, but because I didn't care to know. Not because I wanted to possess her in every way, but because I wasn't sure what I *did* want with her. Not because I was just a jerk who needed to date younger girls, but because there was something



UNTITLED FIGURE DRAWING
Conte Crayon/Charcoal
Jean Boot, Senior

about her I couldn't quite grasp but desired all the same. Maybe it was the way she entered a room like she owned the place, or the way she made "kiddie" voices that would have been irritatingly immature had they come out of anyone else's mouth. Maybe it was the fact that I never had one of the pretty girls for myself in high school. Perhaps it had more to do with me than her.

We went on a few dates. I mostly listened as she explained some of her fears, her doubts, and her aspirations. I offered advice as if I was some kind of psychologist. I listened as she explained her days at school, that jealous friend of hers, the ridiculous behavior of one of her guy-friends at a party, or her parents' refusal to extend her the freedom she felt she deserved. I listened without saying much, I liked to watch her lips move and observe her facial expressions. Maybe I liked the feeling of being an older brother or a father figure.

One night she was in my bedroom. She had told her parents she was going to spend the night at a friend's, she said with a laugh. She told me she liked to be with me, and I was a good listener (so much more mature than the boys at her school), but at times I

made her feel strange. She felt like I was examining her under a microscope. As she talked, I imagined myself peeling her clothes off. I kissed her...

It wasn't just that she was beautiful. It wasn't that I needed to prove anything to myself. It wasn't that I felt I was owed anything. It wasn't even simply that I was just a man. But maybe it was some of those things.

"No," she said softly. "Erik..." she began to explain but I wasn't interested. I told her I could take her home, or she could stay and I would sleep on the couch. It was up to her. She asked to be taken home. I drove her home in silence. She exited my car with a half-hearted "See'ya later." I watched as she gracefully walked up the driveway and into her house. We didn't speak much after that, and her attention quickly settled on another young man.

I suppose I wanted to encapsulate her beauty somehow. I wanted to sustain it unnaturally and gaze upon it whenever I needed to. I wanted to interact with her sometimes, but mostly I just wanted to keep her in my pocket like a kid keeps a jackknife he's interested in but doesn't really use. I guess I still don't know

exactly what I wanted with her. Maybe I'm just lying to myself, suppose I was only after the strangulation of something beautiful? Or maybe, I'm just a man.



MALLORY 2
Silver Gelatin Print
Chau Nguyen, Senior

The Stone

The perfect skipping stone
playfully bounces
three steps—no four
across the glassy plane
then slowly descends
surrounded by a fuzzy haze of gray-blue
less blue, more gray.

Emptiness, an abyss
filters squeals of delight from shore
sounds once so inviting, so sharp
now muffled and far away.

Sinking, sinking, sinking

but no anxiety
no panic—just resignation
resigned to the heavy pull
yet feeling weightless—
no urge to fight, no struggle, no awakening
as the sliver of filtered light shrinks slowly,
becomes more thin, more pale
swallowed by emptiness
while the jagged edges
are slowly smoothed
rounded and dulled
into a non-descript gray.

Christina Toppen, Graduate

Self Discovery

by Rickie-Ann Legleitner, Senior

I plop down on the couch with my boxes of fruit snacks and Dunkaroos. I ease into a day spent in front of the television being as docile as possible. I eat. I lounge. I enjoy my summer vacation as many eleven-year-olds do. Yet somewhere in the back of my mind there is a lingering thought. I know this summer is going to make me fat. A fear of big thighs resonates from the memory of Mrs. As, a pale, overweight third grade teacher who wore one too many short skirts. Yet this fear is only in the back of my mind, so I continue to munch and laze about without worry. After a few hours of this, my mom returns from work ready for an afternoon at the beach. I jump up to get ready, excited at a chance for water and sun after one too many soap operas.

After I throw on my suit, belly shirt and shorts, I go into the bathroom for some sun screen. My dad comes in to retrieve his coffee cup, and looks at my exposed midriff.

“You know, you may like how you look, but that doesn’t mean the whole world wants to see it,” he said.

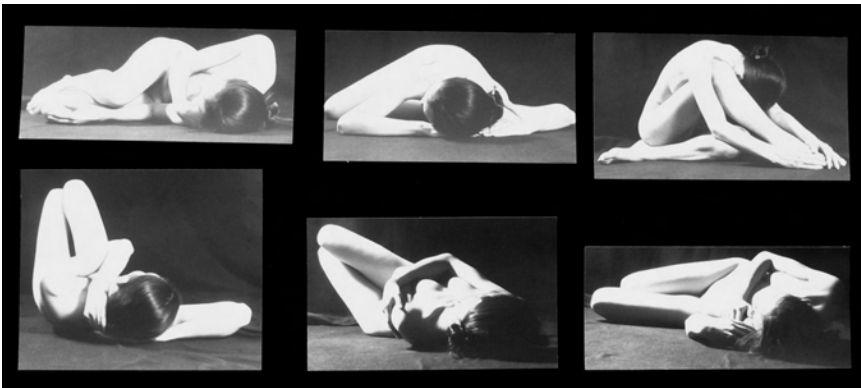
My eleven-year-old eyes see my body for the first time. My pole skinny limbs have started to fill out into womanly curves that are unfamiliar to me; all I know is I don’t look skinny anymore. This moment and those words will never escape my mind.

Falling From Grace

Rough-edged beauty hangs
lightly in the air,
crisp edges, drier than burnt paper,
tough, stiff,
fragile to the touch.
Discolored veins like palm prints
s t r e t c h out
the way the horizon hugs the coast.

They fall gracefully from a tree
the way a ballerina moves,
floating
through the vast space,
carried by the unseen force,
crossing the great green acre
the way I did when I crossed the ocean,
an unknown journey with no end.

- Amy Zapton, Senior



NUDE – Silver Gelatin Print
Chau Nguyen, Senior

Folding Sheets

First you pull the sheets from the dryer
Feel the heat
They overflow the basket
I grab an end
So do you
We back away from each other
Arms out straight
Shake, shake, shake
No wrinkles
I fold one corner over to the other
So do you
Walking towards each other
We meet
The ends meet
You take the sheet
Fold it once more
Set it aside
I reach into the basket
Another sheet
Feel the heat
We begin again
Finish
Repeat

- Amy Sue Davidson, Senior

4-L

for MLK
(1894-1982)

When home got so crazy I feared I would die,
into the darkness I bolted to trudge the five miles
to the Oakwood Manor, to Oakwood 4-L
where you, solitary soul, my darling, my great-aunt
resided in your quietness so soothing to my upset.
To be admitted required intercession
by the lady with hard hair who,
moving switchboard fabric cords like lariats
reached you, and with a wink at me, her voice low,
“Good evening, Miss Keller, there is a young man to see you.”
And without having to ask me, “Rob.”
You were always there.
You never denied my petition to ascend.
Waiting for the elevator, my head dizzy
in the safety of this place,
the place of the older ones,
air heavy with pot roast and paint,
and then I am clunking towards heaven,
clattering door slides open,
now cabbage and sauerbraten, potatoes and beef.
Turn left.

Down the narrow hallway, silent bronze gas jets,
creamy plaster smoothly bumped and cool.

You hear me coming.

I hear your lock unbolted.

Turn right.

And there, way down,

down that empty hallway,

almost off the earth,

you stand halfway out your door.

“Robbie.”

Yes.

It is I, again,

coming to you, dear aunt,

coming to your sofa,

coming to your refreshing touch,

to the softness of your voice,

to the stillness of the night

nudging your windows four stories above the world,

to know for a little while, some are not crazy,

to know peace and iced tea, Lady Fingers and love.

- Rob Alt, Guest Student, Emeritus College

The Junkyard Jig

 painted feet two-stepping
 through the vile briars
 the seething soda cans
 the unforgiving underbrush

oblivious to the dancing dandelions
and the chickadee's chant,
bold hips cha-cha right up to that chain link fence.

(Act One of her Junkyard Jig)

her sandpaper soles waltz in
 out
 around
 about

piles pounds packs and plethoras of
 treasured junk.

She tangos with tires and shimmies for sofas.

(Act Two of her Junkyard Jig)

hulas with hubcaps, ribbon dances with grease ridden rags.
Miles mound mountains and molehills of
 treasured junk.

(Grand Finale of her Junkyard Jig)

prancing dancing twirling and swirling to the dunes of
pavement flooded with color.
A splash of murky purple, a tint of green, a dash of stale coffee.
She teeters on the trunk of her own little timeshare
amidst the shores of a
 thick beautiful slimy exquisitely oily rainbow.

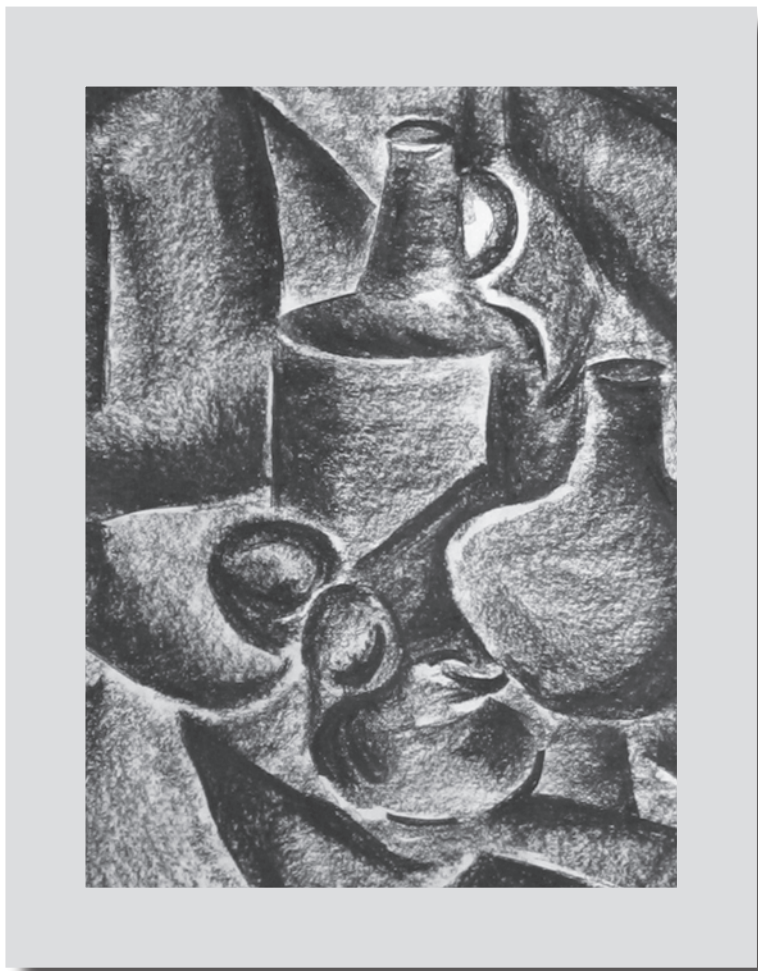
(Encore)

Abandoning her perch on the leaky Ford,
she carves figure eights through the depths of her
 treasured oil spill.

- *Elise Wisnieski, Freshman*



PAPER BAGS – Charcoal Drawing
Emily Ferstle, Freshman



CHARCOAL DRAWING
Caroline Hulsey, Junior

Recess

Recess bell rang.
They ran to the brown mess tables,
Long and open
Like scars
Hung back from healing.
I remember a dream
(My feet floated neath my length
Suspended in air
Soaring, an angel)
Only a dream.
Reinforced weighted doors
Small pebbles in the lot
Hard to run,
So I walk
Unaccompanied.
Monkey bars frosted
Breath vaporized
And I swung
Suspended, alone
An angel.
Hear them scream tag.
I,
There on the bars
Swung one
Two
Three
Four
Five
Years
Alone

- *Marie Snyder, Sophomore*

Accusation

worn teeth
like leather working tools
throw splintered
off-white reflections
into the eyes
of those gathered

the pyre was constructed
of elder
the unholy scent
of the lady's tree
dripped from
languid, accusing tongues

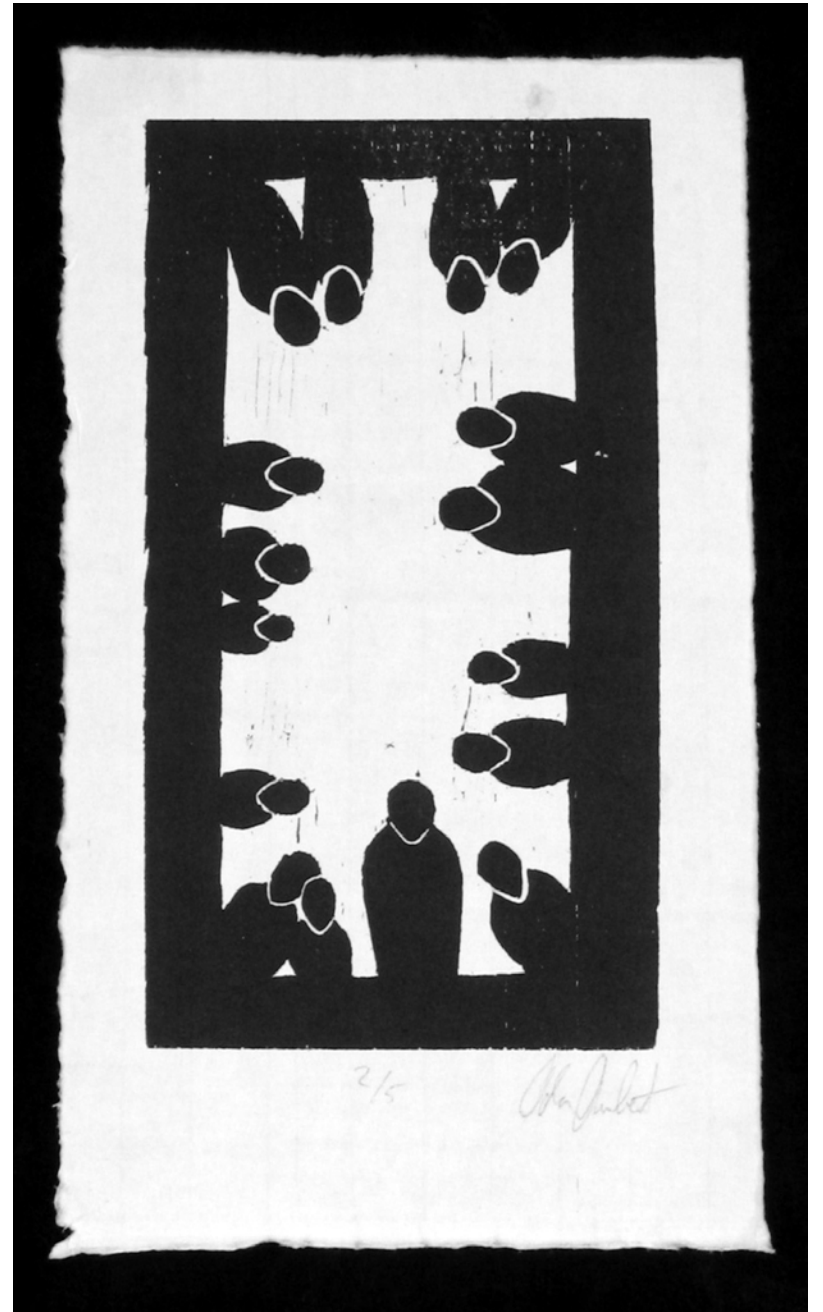
her mouth, closed around her
admission of innocence,
fingers around queen anne's lace
a midwife
a murderess

barren women everywhere
dreamt of such passion:
heat and hatred
resignation

flames reaching toxic plastic purple
poisonous

empty casket
open lips

- *Meg Bolich, Senior*



DEATH SERIES I – Woodprint
Adam Chamberlin, Senior

Index

Artists:

Avery, Jen, 38
Boot, Jean, 40
Brines, Katherine, 12
Chamberlin, Adam, 31, 53
Chamberlin, Evan, 24
Ferstle, Emily, 8, 49
Heibel, Terri, 14
Hulsey, Caroline, 50
Kaiser, Peter, 18
Legleitner, Rickie-Ann, front cover,
back inside cover
Lund, Benjamin, back cover, 17
Nguyen, Chau, 29, 37, 41, 44
Steffes, Lindsey, 32
VanderLende, Kim Harris, 11, 27
Zander, Carol, 3

Writers:

Alt, Rob, 46
Bolich, Meg, 13, 52
Bourke, Julie, 32
Camblin, Sarah, 19, 33
Colon, Erik, 40
Coyne, Julie, 4
Daum, Rose, 23
Davidson, Amy Sue, 34, 45
Dernocoeur, Kate, 15
Ferstle, Julie, 8
Foster, Chelsea, 20
Gage, Neill, 16
Geerts, Amanda, 25, 39
Leduc, Elizabeth, 33, 36
Legleitner, Rickie-Ann, 6, 43
McKenzie, Maureen, 26
Rose, Marnie, 9
Sabol, Autumn, 10, 35
Sills, Cristina, 28
Snyder, Marie, 22, 51
Toppen, Christina, 42
Veinbergs, Anna, 14, 30
Wisnieski, Elise, 48
Zapton, Amy, 44



HIEROGLYPH – Silver Gelatin Print
Rickie-Ann Legleitner, Senior