



STUDENT ART & WRITING • AQUINAS COLLEGE

Sampler XXII

Spring
2010

Sampler Twenty-Two

A compilation of writing and visual art by Aquinas College students (Grand Rapids, Michigan), spring 2010.

Contributors

Artists

David Besteman, Jackson Botsford, Erika Burrington, Jamie Collister, Michaela Farley, Owen Fifield, Stephanie Garn, Elizabeth Hertl, Sally Jenks, Patrick Maguire, Liz Maxian, Janel Messner, Jaymes Miller, Bernadette Poirier, Candace Rabourn, Dorothy Rabourn, Margaret Schmitz, Jennifer Sobel, Laura Steinbacher, Mandy Straathof, Pamela Vander Jagt, Jamie Velasco, Jim Zordan

Writers

Christy Armock, Kyle Austin, L.B. Blazo, Brianne Boedeker, Sarah Branz, Brian Bruno, Mary Carlson, Kathleen Carty, Jennifer Chichester, Alex Clemons, Elise Crafts, Jacqui DeFouw, Will Eberle, Mike English, Allison Ferguson, Meghan Harris, Laura Hartness, Luke Haworth-Hoeppner, Lindy Hernández, Kristina Humphrey, Jarrod Irwin, Cordello Jordan, Danielle Krolewicz, Michael Lake, Erin Lodes, Hannah Marko, Katherine Marty, Duncan McCargar, Ellen Meyer, Erica Meyers, Zarah Moeggenberg, Bethany Morris, Kimani Nakamura, Melissa Nicklowitz, Rachel Reilly, Daniele Reisbig, Sarah Riley, Samantha Rinkus, Sarah Robinson, Kiera Sandoval, Laura Shuman, Kyla Sisson, Monique Smith, Luke Sprunger, Rosemary Steers, Lindsey Steffes, Kelsey Tithof, Z.G. Tomaszewski, Emily Vanderlinde, Amy Waldherr, Eli Woodbeck, Ingrid Wolf

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Front cover (oil): *Masks I* Senior Laura Steinbacher

Back cover (aquatint): *Florence* Graduate Student Erika Burrington

Art selection/Photographs of selections Dana Freeman

Manuscript selection:

Faculty: Dr. Daniel Brooks, Dr. Brent Chesley, Dr. Jennifer Dawson,
Gary Eberle, Dr. Gretchen Rumohr-Voskuil

LIT members: Kyle Austin, L.B. Blazo, Katie Carty, Will Eberle, Meghan
Harris, Lindy Hernandez, Danielle Krolewicz, Rachel Reilly,
Kyla Sisson, Kelsey Tithof, Jessica Venlet

Winning poem judge M.L. Liebler

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Layout design *LIT officers:* Kyle Austin, Katie Carty, Kyla Sisson
LIT members: L.B. Blazo, Kelsey Tithof

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Bravo, Silvija!

We are proud to dedicate *SAMPLER XXII* to Silvija Visockis, whose artistic contribution to its production since 1991 has been essential to making it a quality publication. Her role has extended beyond that of Electronic Designer as she has set the timeline, educated students on lay-out, sleuthed out niggling mechanical glitches, and offered significant aesthetic guidance. This is Silvija's final year before retirement, and her expertise will be sorely missed.

Of proud Latvian heritage, she was born on one of the North Frisian islands (North Sea) and lived in Germany before arriving in America to grow up in Detroit where she was very involved in Latvian cultural activity, including traditional dance, musical heritage theater, folk singing, and translation.

Silvija is a graduate of Wayne State University Medical School in the School of Occupational Therapy. She met her husband Tony while completing a clinical internship at Mary Free Bed and worked as an occupational therapist at Pine Rest. Raising three children (two are AQ alums), she became educated in office technology, and graced Aquinas College with her desktop publishing skills for 22 years.

An avid reader and wordsmith, Silvija has plans to complete several writing projects she has begun, especially the one featuring the first pastor of the Catholic community in Grand Rapids. She will also continue using her talent as a visual artist/designer in the area of photography and the production of CDs and DVDs. "Retirement" for her is actually an opportunity to enter the world of full-time creativity.

We are grateful for the sustained energy Silvija has put forth in producing the *SAMPLER*, from its modest 24 pages in 1991 to the grand 112 page issue you have before you.

2010 Lambda Iota Tau Officers, Kyla Sisson (President), Kathleen Carty (Vice President), Kyle Austin, Secretary/Treasurer and *SAMPLER* Coordinators Miriam Pederson and Pamela Dail Whiting

Why I Will Not Get Out of Bed

My bones
have grown heavy
in the night,
taken on world-weight,
the weight
of eyelids,
head heavy
on my hand,
layers and folds
of years piled over me
like sand.

I am anchored here,
and solid,
a seed
planted deep
beneath furrows of earth.

Children grow
in their sleep, they say,
sometimes inches
in a single night.

And so,
in this long season,
I will remain in bed
and grow
like a child
in the ancient dark.

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

"Why I will Not Get Out of Bed"
by Kyla Sisson (photo right), Senior

This year's preliminary judges for the contest were Gary Eberle and Vicki McMillan.

The final judge was M. L. Liebler who is an internationally known Detroit poet, university professor, literary arts activist, and arts organizer. He is the author of 13 books, including *Wide Awake in Someone Else's Dream* (Wayne State University Press, 2008), which received both the Paterson Poetry Prize for Literary Excellence and the American Indie Book Award for 2009. In addition to his many books, Liebler has read, performed and taught poetry all around the world on behalf of the U.S. State Department. He has taught at Wayne State University in Detroit since 1980, and he is the founding director of both The National Writer's Voice Project in Detroit and the Springfed Arts: Metro Detroit Writers Literary Arts Organization. He was selected as Best Detroit Poet by the Detroit Free Press and Detroit's Metro Times, and he was the nation's first artist-in-residence for a public library at the Chelsea District Library for 2008-2009. Most recently, from Poets & Writers, Liebler became a recipient of the 2010 Writers for Writers Award and Editor's Award.

Some of M.L. Liebler's comments about Kyla Sisson's poem follow.

While the poem may be short, it packs more of an emotional punch and deep rooted insights than a poem three times as long. This poet has a keen sense for details, fresh imagery, a balance between the realism and surrealism of this world and life we all live. The poet seems to establish, with ease, a deep sensory connection between reader and poet through this poem. Each line nicely flows from one to the next like honey dripping from the branches of the poetry tree of life. Literature of such high quality is seldom found in a university competition. This poet has the "right stuff." So much so that I might confidently use the now famous quote of Ralph Emerson to Walt Whitman:

"I greet you at the beginning of a great career, which yet must have had a long foreground somewhere, for such a start."



Photo by Andris Viskojs

Kyla Sisson

Honorable mentions were awarded to two seniors: Daniele Reisbig for her poem "A Wilting Aster" on page 52 and Rachel Reilly for her poem "Louise" on page 56.

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 Nemece Foster for making the prize available for Aquinas College students.

Comb

Run a comb
through your thoughts
separate the tangles
from the mass
shear the dead ends
to keep the rest
from matting.

Say to yourself,

*I've no desire
to be tamed
by this brush
but the length
of my mind
is out of control;
its split ends
make my thoughts
look trashy,
ill-kept.*

Run it through,
once or twice,
to straighten, to set
some healthy shine
of a well-oiled mind
in place.

- Meghan Harris, Senior



VASE – stoneware
Jim Zordan, Junior

Modern Alice

by Sarah Branz, Freshman

We were both kneeling at the edge, so I'm not quite sure what sparked it. You were farther away than you needed to be, and I was closer than I should have been. But, still, the edge was beckoning, and knowing what little will-power we humans have, it was looking deliciously enticing. There was a ribbon in my hair—I remember it. You put it there and said I could be a modern Alice. That made me laugh, mostly because you were tousling your own hair, not mine. And that edge...well, we both scooted towards it. Do you remember? I do. And after you were done tousling your hair, a piece came loose in your fingers. I slipped it away and watched it float over the edge. Then you looked at me, smiled, and followed after it. I don't know why, but it was so beautiful. It was a fairy-tale, except that there were no fairies, and this was reality. I wanted to follow after you, but I thought you might be afraid of my trailing. Like I said, I was closer than I should have been. Nonetheless, I decided to follow you, so I let my body awkwardly tilt over the edge. The experience was as rapturous as it looked. So, there we were, tumbling through the pollution and purity. But, I'm afraid of heights, so I quickly became ill. I somehow caught up to you, faster than I thought I would, and you could see the grimace on my face, I suppose, and you told me to breathe. So, I gulped pollution, and a little bit of purity. It made me feel better. And, despite what you may think, I haven't yet looked back.

The Pebble in My Hand

The pebble in my hand ripples against my skin
and shivers through my body until my eyes are
translucent from their vibrations. It was once
a boulder on which the moon could cast her face.
And, withered, it holds the memory in its heart,
beating with agitation against its ribcage.
It mumbles like a guilty child:
once, I was something.

You, in a hurry, want to go farther down the beach
to see what there is to see,
and walk away, footsteps filling with sand before
your bare feet can even step out,
leaving little dips behind you
as if even the ground is sad to see you go.

But when you touch me,
I feel as though I could stretch
through the thinning gaps of a net,
slip into the ocean, deep
into the prowling chasms beneath.

And, if you called for me from the shore,
your arms folded like an angry dad,
your words would make the moonlight dance on the surface,
but I wouldn't hear you.

- *Daniele Reisbig, Senior*

Why I will never win a blue ribbon at the Waushara Country Fair

by Rachel Reilly, Senior

Grandma's house has a trunk from her great grandpa overflowing with yarn for cat's eyes and scarves knitted into the infinite. Grandma's house has a basin that opens like a sea anemone filled with buttons that flow like a river when I gush my hands into it but don't do that because there's sometimes needles that pinch under your fingernails and I have to watch you so you don't stick a brown one in your nose like Sarah did. But mostly, Grandma's house is a place for cookies: peanut butter, chocolate chip, snicker doodle, krum kaka, all decorated annually with blue ribbons from the fair.

Or that's how I remember it from four years ago. From before we moved away. From before Grandma slipped at the church and shattered her shoulder and had all of those surgeries but not enough physical therapy. See, "store-bought" used to be a swear word. That's why we have to make cookies today. So she doesn't have to be embarrassed in front of our special guests from Alaska winks my grandpa. So she'll stop coddling that arm whisper-snaps my mom because it's been over a year already and it shouldn't have hurt this long and if we can make it stop hurting maybe she'll come back. And it'll be just you and her because she won't say no to you.

I love my grandma for teaching me how to read. I love my grandma for pulling down an ice cream bucket of crayons and a fresh coloring book at every visit. I love my grandma for letting me stick my whole face into the metal mixing bowl after we finish the cookies, and for watching over me as I wash off the sugar mask in the lake. I love the grandma I remember.

But this grandma is not that. This one is old. And sick. And sad. Sad in a way that doesn't cry or mope, just yells at me for not sifting the flour first—but I don't know what a sifter is, Grandma!—and makes me dump the batch into the raspberry bushes out back so we can sift the next bunch. Didn't your mother teach you how to whip eggs sift flour use a mixer shape the cookies? *My* grandma wouldn't say the things this grandma says I don't think. I bite the place on the inside of my mouth where my lips fold together. Grandma is doing the same.

Grandma's oven is a monster, so we can feed it all of the cookies when we've finally completed each task the *right* way. Now the timer. Now we sit and talk about school and books and church and she makes me promise her that I'll never get married or at least not until I'm twenty-six. Promise? *Promise?* This from my grandma married sixty years with seven children and a fleet of grands and greats. But I am only nine and fat and pimply and anyways husbands make you make cookies when you don't feel good so why shouldn't I agree?

ClickclickclickclickDING! It's good that the cookies are done because everyone will be home soon and Grandma can forget to be disappointed that I'll never win a ribbon at the fair. She's standing, her pink and green-striped

back to me. It slumps like a tired mountain. These cookies are no good. What are you talking about, Grandma? They're burnt. Where are they burnt, even though I see the rims are browner than the middle. Those don't look bad and see...mmmm...they taste like heaven alive! The chocolate chips break like clods of dirt in my mouth when I chew. Don't worry, Grandma, I'm sure no one will...

But she slams the pan down on the counter and swats the cookie out of my mouth. Or she would if this were a movie or a story with a wicked witch grandma.

No. My real life Grandma turns away with the pan and breathes quiet like a baby who will cry soon because it doesn't know what it needs. And then she shuffles over to the door, and throws the cookies out onto the lawn.

I bet even the birds won't eat them she whispers.

We sit with socks in our throats until everyone comes home and dinner grows out of the crock-pot. No one says anything about the cookies because they can smell the too-roasted chocolate and can see that our eyes are hanging like boulders on the daffodilled tablecloth. But when my mom asks me in the car what happened I just cry and cry and cry because it's hard to spend the whole day with the lady who used to be my grandma.



On an Evening in Winter

In memory of my Grandpa Roger

I come here for the same reason some people visit graves.
You are the old men hunched over,
sitting in rows on five gallon buckets,
scrying into the lake's gaping eyes.

I swim in my father's work boots
and swing the ice auger carelessly back and forth
as we trudged to the "good spot." Cold nips
at me like a million timid minnows.

Everything feels wrong here—walking on water.
Where beauty is quickly passing.
Where death and life are so close
that the cold chides my throat
whenever I speak louder than a whisper.

- Daniele Reisbig, Senior

The Dance I Long For

With thanks to William Carlos Williams

*The scarlet petals
unfold.*

*An intimate waltz designed by nature,
an intricate cascade revealing its beauty.*

*All anticipated questions
over.*

*The natural ovation generates
a boastful crimson radiance.*

*Soon,
the intimate waltz becomes a
sorrowful melody, passionately dehydrating
the beauty and erasing the radiance.*

*One by one
a scarlet dancer falls. Dresses stiff,
rhythm chaotic, bones fragile.*

*Hibernation until the next song:
song of spring,
song of summer.*

- Kiera Sandoval, Junior



UNTITLED – collagraph print
Jamie Collister, Junior

Origin of the Longest Breath

by Kimani Nakamura, Junior

You did not look up as I passed. Your eyes were concentrated on your homework and I could only see the top of your head and your jeans, but I knew it was you. I was humbled in your presence, lowering my eyes even though you are oblivious to my presence. Without a word, I excused myself and continued on towards the restroom.

How long ago was our last civil talk? Too long. It was so sad that the silence between us repelled me, separating us with a breadth of three feet and pushing me away with the violent force of hate and fear. Unconsciously, my feet skirted the outer rim, feeling the vibe of “don’t come by me” throbbing—it was my imagination talking. My steps became slightly absurd, adding a little bounce so that the zippers on my backpack jingled against each other.

Look at me! Look at me! They whined. *Forgive me and return. I am so lonely.*

However, you seemed to be busy, your icy blue eyes refusing to give even the slightest joy. In two more steps I stopped bouncing. In three steps, a heavy weight of disappointment left bitter tastes of anger and embarrassment rotting in the back of my throat. During the fifth and six step, my face flushed and my heart rate returned to normal. I reached the bathroom on the eighteenth step.

Life is full of reflection. In the bathroom and surrounded by people was such a time. I washed my face and stared into my own eyes, dark and serious. Sad and tortured. It saw a ghost it could not get rid of, a hallucination it could not forget. Imposing the image of you studying on the red cushion on the reflective mirror, it watched what you may have been studying. German perhaps? Or you might have been writing a paper for one of Durham’s classes.

Why did I care?

I touched my cheeks and pumped myself like a fighter in the ring. I can handle talking to her, I thought. We need to talk because this has gone on long enough. Prepared, I pushed the door of the restroom open. In three steps I talked myself into assurance, in four steps I was walking steady and sure, in eight steps I felt the last-minute fears jump to the surface, but on the ninth step quelled it enough to keep walking. On the fifteenth step, I found you weren’t there.

I paused and stared at the seat cushion. Just air? It can’t be! I whipped my head back and forth in a frenzy of hair and rubber bands, looking from person to person, walking around the room to see if you had just gone off down the hallway. However, no matter how I reasoned that a body absorbed in an important activity would never leave that said activity so readily—you were not there.

A cold, discarded cushion remained. The heat from your touch was dwindling until it was a cushion without a purpose. An upholstery. No one finds an interest in just a seat cushion, and it didn't even look comfortable with its convex cushion of crimson polyester mesh, no back, and steel legs. Already, people regarded it as useless without a person of interest occupying it. It was the scenery. No. Even less than the scenery, an object taking up space that could very well be used by something more flamboyant or charming, like a boulder that people could write important announcements on. Instead, they were stuck with a stupid, cheap seat cushion.

I sat down. In one moment, I had been struck dumb. Everything I had learned up 'til that point in time was forgotten—except you. How much I missed you, thoughts of how you were feeling whenever you saw me, and the pain of your neglect mixed together in a bitter emotion that was too big to describe, still too complicated to represent accurately. You no longer cared about me.

That was what hurt more than the arguments we had and the angry e-mails we sent to each other. That was what stapled my feet to the ground, stuck between a Heaven of possibilities and a Hell of doubts. Flipped upside-down on a rotating platform, I was burning in Hell.

It was the longest second of my life—followed by the longest breath. I opened my mouth and sucked in air until my lungs were full, taking in by osmosis the things I had learned today and for the past year. Then, I released a breath of anger, fear, and woe that flowed into the realm of the Subconscious, the Higher Forms of things, the mechanical restrictions of society, the delicate fabrication of the universe, the indistinct realm of fantasy, and at last returned to the lungs of a young woman wishing she was three hundred miles away from this seat cushion.

With all the riches of Life, the breath rejuvenated my spirits. God was saying, “Drink.” And I drank. My aching muscles were healed and I stood, taking a step away from the seat. It was a husk of a chair now, leaving the Idea of Chair to wander about in the minds of Man and Woman. In nine steps, I left that room with the chair—forever.

I was free. Amen.

La Tierra y Don Mario
by Kathleen Carty, Senior

La Tierra

The terracotta earth of Costa Rica will not let you forget you are in her home. Her rusty dust kisses your face, leaves new freckles on your arms, covers the tender pads of your feet, earthen bracelets encircling your ankles. Wild green rainforests sprout from her nurturing soils, stretching their twisty fingers up, up, up until they break through the clouds. She is the mother of ancient times. She speaks in Español, sings in Guaymí, and dreams in dead languages whispered in bones and ceniza, in the ashy burial grounds poured from the mouths of the volcanoes. She endures, unwavering through the winds from the mountains, through the rains ascending from the ocean, through the poverty and blood that split her apart, promising a better life. Unwavering, she brought peace; she keeps promises to all her people. She breathes life into your bones, imprints memory on your muscles with fiery orange sunsets, black velvet sands, and mountains glowing beneath the pale blue light of one million estrellas.

Don Mario

Don Mario is the craftsman of the earth. She will let him mold her. Her beauty becomes his art; he never tries to tame her. He takes her in his weathered hands, weathered from nearly eighty years. “Ochenta años!” he cries with a smile. He has worked with her since he was a child, like his father before him, his grandfather before him, a long line of ancestors who respect and understand her beauty. Every week he walks up the steep, winding paths leading into the mountains. He knows where to dig, slowly, with bare hands. He gathers her into his arms. Gently, his hands mix her with water, and she whispers ancient wisdom as she becomes barro in his hands. His hands, stained terracotta from so many years. Beams of sunset light stretch across the mountain down through the open windows of his shop, flashes of orange illuminating the wooden wheel. Flecks of gold leap over tree trunk rings, lifelines nearly invisible as the wheel begins to spin—one, two, three, four. Terracotta shards cover the floor: chips of teapots, broken lids of bowls, stub nosed piggybanks leaning on unfinished legs, indigenous carvings on the sides of water jugs. Light reflects in his opaque eyes that barely see anymore. He does not need to see. He takes her in his hands and his foot kicks the wooden wheel, falling into Tico rhythm, the rhythm of Costa Rica. One, two, three, four, the indigenous way, the way of the Guaymí and tribes of his ancestors. One, two, three, four, the heartbeat of Costa Rica. He will not let you forget. He keeps la tierra alive for his people. He takes her in his hands, a small perfect bowl, made the indigenous way. La tierra lives.



TEA SET – stoneware
Sally Jenks, Senior

Old Woman's Skin

I helped her to bed—old woman.
She's a timekeeper and her blood
and purple-blue veins whisper
love is the old woman's skin—
sheer, shiny, wrinkled, adored.

I lean in closer to inhale
the sweetness of old life—
gravity's enemy given in,
accepting the weight of heat.

I take some for myself, old woman.
I drank up the stories of your life
and found that love can be firm,
a wall, no longer a window
to blood—a young woman's skin.

- *Meghan Harris, Senior*

Vacation Slideshow

Slouched on the couch
my parents show me pictures
from their trip to D.C.
the first days of spring.

My mother is smiling
by the famous cherry blossoms
that explode off the trees like
fireworks frozen in the sky.

They're in almost every picture,
these blossoms, adding splashes
of beauty to the monuments
like the Lincoln Memorial and
Arlington National. They took
pictures of them all with
blossoms in the background.

Only one slide has no
cherry blossoms—
the midnight black expanse
of the Vietnam Wall

takes up the entire frame,
where two men stand
side-by-side, tracing a name
out of the sea of departed souls.

I can't see their faces,
but my father tells me he saw
them crying and embracing—
in fact, he admits to
weeping himself,
so hard that he went back to
photographing the cherry blossoms
to remind himself that
the world has traces of beauty
engraved upon it too.

- *Kyle Austin, Junior*

How I Came to Know

He taught me how to iron a shirt
and knot a half-Windsor,
how to tell wind on water
and steer by the luff of the jib.

He tried to teach me to tie a bowline
but I never got that quite right.

She taught me how to whisk an egg
and parse a sentence, how to pitch my voice to carry.

She taught me the rhythm of words

I still can't read:

yis'ga'dal v'yis'kadash snick snick
like sharpening a knife, he always said.

I can't give any of it back.

They gave me their little maladies
and foreign wars, their host of undemanding dead.

They gave me secrets I did not know were secrets
and secrets I still only half-believe.

I can't give any of it back.

He gave me silence leaning into the wind.

She gave me a way with words.

- *Katherine Marty, Junior*



SELF-PORTRAIT – oil on canvas
Jackson D. Botsford, Senior

Overtime Overture *by Erica Meyers, Senior*

We live in a binary world. This and that, these and those, wrong and right. If you mix two negatives here, there is no positive, only unreal, outcast, the things of nightmares and labyrinths, sphinxes and griffins.

I have the claws of a woman and the wings of a man.

I unnerve the children of patriarchal thought and terrorize evangelist zealots.

But when I add zero to one, my answer is infinity.

As a young girl I resentfully donned bobby socks and handmade plaid dresses, lace and frills, pinks and purples. For Halloween I dressed up as an angel, a bride, the pink Power Ranger. When my pubescent figure began its development, my grandmother complimented my feminine growth, showed me how to make my pimple-esque breasts perk up without falsies or tissue stuffing. I asked for a guitar for Christmas and got my very own make-up kit. Attempts by concerned grandparents to drown my otherness.

They tried clothing, but focused their malignant energy on sports and extracurricular activities. Grandma wanted a cheerleader, a swimmer, a gymnast, a Girl Scout. I said no and was scorned, teased, had to compensate with my expressive femaleness, short skirts and eyeliner, to survive routine bashings.

Grandfather, the militant one, tried for golf. I considered. I lugged my clubs in their bulky bag around, adjusting my single glove and pretending to be Michael Jackson when he wasn't looking, hit far drives and sank uneven putts. I let him think I was his Tiger Woods junior, his prodigy and his trophy. But what I really wanted was to play hockey.

Cuts and bruises, swollen ankles, bloody toes, scabbed faces. There is a peace in the violence, with the air exhaling into your pores as you fly against it, your muscles pulsing alive in tune with racing hearts. Like the scratches and dents in your helmet from slamming on the pavement or goal post, when the heavy puck zooms at you and lodges itself between pads, the bruise that spreads along your body is a visual effigy of the passion you feel and exert. On the ice or concrete, there are no handicaps but skill and drive. There is a respect for other players, an acknowledgement of talent and spirit, no matter your physical traits, phallus or womb.

My womb is my birthright, but my skin is my tool.

You can take your paradigms and Bible verses and paint your own picture, but I prefer my medium. Like an Amazon I will mutilate myself to better defend against your attacks, to better attack your weaknesses.

Hockey sticks and Thin Mints, battered bodies and Maybelline.

I have the claws of a woman and the wings of a man.

Winter Sonnet

January: we turn up our collars
and flatten in the cold to silhouettes.
Each day we learn new faultlines, learn how
to hold our bodies carefully and fast
like porcelain dolls not ours. We freeze and thaw,
the ice cleaves us like rotting timbers.
Our knuckles split, joints warp in caustic air
that licks red tracery across our hands.
We expand as ice contracts, we fill the space it leaves.
Like vapor we precipitate and fall
headlong towards that which we may yet become.
In raw-edged winter days we shield our eyes
against a white anachronistic sun
old as Moses and bright as Moses' god.

- *Katherine Marty, Junior*

Niveous Dream

Wood-warbling whale
behind us
darkening water grows.

Forest frost watches the rose fold and unfold in confused happiness.

“Cut the cloud curtain-
-it’s incomplete—”
Flocking doves migrate,
mind’s eye saturates
in the symphony of side-winding sleet.

There is some strange, blessing comfort in nightmares—
they whiten worries out of daydreams.

Snow-song approaches, translated through Autumn.

Each word
--snowflake--
the rate at which one speaks dictates,
coordinates,
the speed of snow’s
descent

Change causes it to ascend

Displaying a blanket of hoar
is this grizzle-beard storm.

We shovel:
you comb with your spatula feet
me with tarantula hands,

We uncover sterling sand.

So this is where we are:
inside a swan’s feather,
each of us a crystal cadence shining the poetry of its form.

(Morning glory asks the eye-ears:
Can you hear the illusion of these floury words,
see the swan’s sweet silk speech?)
The dawn within me rises in your sky.

- Z.G. Tomaszewski, Junior

W. Pond I

Swooping lull of a cooperhawk,
 gray shadow
Weaves within neutral vision behind the lid of the sky-eye
 is cast past
Me and the trees—its audience.

Perched on an ol' maple
 cooperhawk turns its copper head,
leans forward bowing
 slings tail upward salute.
White excrement strings down,
 oozes like the syrup sapped from the maple's mouth.

Blink, and the hawk parachutes
 far into the thinlets of the twigged forest.

Groll squirrel leaps from branch to branch
 propelled by littering leaves,
chases itself down the trunk to the ground
 where it finds a fit fort for an acorn store.

Pond stands still—
 a stationary swim.
Surrenders—
 stream abandons silence.
Cool breeze a gape the 'scape
 (or is it the wind I feel from the hawkhands flapped?)

Squirrel rustles for apples,
 day's labor, afternoon toil for food.
Seizurely unsettling fruit
 it does not pick or pluck
as the bird chirp seems to resonate,
 but shake-snaps branches.

Soon squirrel will descend
 scratching tree's backbark following fallen fodder.
But now we sit looking at one another—
 her perched peering down,
me standing seeing up.

 Gulp
 splash
Pond speaks its tongue:
 water-bug bites its last breath
before swallowed by the sugar-lipped fish.
 All of us hungry,
in search for food.

- Z.G. Tomaszewski, *Junior*

reel
a fishing lure
bobs slowly
in the lake by the sea
and brings with it
one
last
meal
- Alex Clemons, *Junior*

Pyro Antics

by *Lindy Hernández, Senior*

Certain memories are imprinted on our minds forever, especially when they involve troublemaking. One incident in particular occurred in those anxious pre-teen years of growth, hormones, and half-thought-out schemes. My friend Sarah and I went through a phase of interest in Wicca and white magic. It was a brief obsession, ignited by our love of young-adult fantasy novels and anime. Of course, our parents' disapproval only fueled the illicit interest.

One day, Sarah invited my little sister and me to her house to show off the new Wiccan book she bought. My sister played Pokémon on Game Boy while Sarah and I chatted and devoured a small box of pocky, a Japanese snack of icing-covered pretzel sticks. A few boxes lay around her room, under discarded T-shirts and baggy jeans. It was then that Sarah decided the best way to dispose of the boxes was to set them on fire. This, of course, was the only logical resolution for a person with pyromaniac tendencies. We grabbed a bowl from the kitchen and retreated to the sanctity of Sarah's bedroom where we set several small, pink boxes alight. Each burning box glowed and shrunk, giving us forbidden enjoyment to watch the cardboard disintegrate.

Then, Sarah inexplicably procured a JUMBO box of pocky. All the better for the burning, we agreed. As a precaution, the three of us stole into the bathroom across the hall and set the box in the counter's concave altar. If the fire got too big, we had only to turn on the sink faucet. We thought it was all very sensible. How could anything go wrong?

We locked the bathroom doors, crowded around the sink and lit a match. It caught fire instantly. Flames danced bigger and better than before, hypnotizing us. Light ate up pink cardboard in a fury and before long, flames engrossed our vision. The fire flared hotter and higher with hungry yellow tongues. Too high. Too fast. Too soon we were enlightened with the danger of our actions. Turn on the water! But we could not reach through the burning rage to turn on the soot-covered faucet. Pieces of ash fluttered through a layer of smoke, and the consumed box crackled like a live thing. The great and terrible mass stretched to the ceiling—an angry deity, a power of nature beyond our control.

Black-grey smoke drifted around the ceiling and through the cracks around the door. Young mouths whispered profanities as fire alarms screeched throughout the house. Someone finally reached a hand around and managed to turn on the sink faucet. Steam rose, obscuring the bathroom but not Sarah's mom's angry yelling from downstairs.

The remains of our pyro antics were a black mess of water and ashes that effectively clogged the bathroom sink. (Sarah forgot to mention that the sink clogged often.) A large cup sat next to the sink, promising

salvation. I clutched the chalice with frantic hands and began bailing out murky water into the bathtub. Meanwhile, Sarah instructed my sister to block the hallway entrance while she barred the second door which led to her parents' bedroom. To my horror, the bathtub filled with ashen water and refused to empty as well.

I looked to Sarah, who hesitated with a pained expression on her face. We knew we were in trouble with a capital T. With that in mind, she threw open the door and confronted the wrath of her mother. A wave of fresh air rushed into the windowless room along with the fire alarms' incessant, high-pitched shrieking, and threats to call the fire department. My sister started rambling off excuses we might use. I yelled at her to shut up and once again searched for a way to hide the evidence. The toilet! A few minutes and several flushes later, the bathtub and sink were unclogged, though grime streaked every porcelain fixture and the mirror had four foot high scorch marks.

The inquisition scarcely began (You could have burned the whole house down! Oh my God, the mirror. Those candles in your room— You were doing witchcraft! I knew it. Not in my house!) when my sister and I were sent home. We tried to explain that Sarah merely wanted to watch stuff burn, but her mother would hear none of it. She was absolutely convinced we were practicing witchcraft. In the end, Sarah was probably grounded for a month. My sister and I were not allowed to play at her house for a long time after.



JA JA JA – vine and compressed charcoal

Liz Maxian, Sophomore

It's in us all

I was eight years old and
we lived in a blue house between two lakes.
Adjacent to the house was a tall, weathered deck.
That's what I remember best, how the wood was so old
it was almost grey, and
it splintered into my fingers and toes every summer.

In the spring, birds built nests
under the deck, safely hidden away. Mom would always
find them. That morning she showed me
a robin's nest snuggled up in the place where
a vertical board met a horizontal support.
I couldn't stop looking at it.

After breakfast, I walked out onto the deck,
down the stairs, and back to the nest.
It was woven carefully out of thin strips of bark and some of
my hair from when mom cut it on the deck and
left the trimmings for
just this purpose.
It was within my reach; I stuck my hand in and
removed
a bright blue, brown-speckled egg.
It was tiny, it fit just right in my palm.

The blue against my peachy skin was really
something.
I cradled it like I would my bear before
falling asleep.
It was more than perfect, until my clumsy fingers
let it slip.
My little piece of perfection fell until it hit the ground and it
smashed.
The yellow yolk, the blue, brown-speckled pieces of shell spread over
the concrete and slipped down the hill.
I felt like I might be in trouble, but
was strangely fascinated.

Icicles

by Bethany Morris, Senior

I see the small raised scar on the face of the girl who squints her eyes at me from the mirror, and memories trickle into my mind just like drips of water trickle down from a melting icicle when the birds start to sing spring. It sits just above her top lip and under her nose, my nose, in that small indent that fits the tip of my finger quite nicely. It's part of me, that small white forward slash; it's part of my memories. I didn't know I had been hit. I didn't know what happened as I stood outside that old log cabin on the first night of girl scout camp. The icicle detached and descended from the eaves trough and numbed my lip instantly as it quickly but forcefully penetrated through the tissue of that small indent, traveling through to the other side. I only knew something had indeed happened when I saw the looks on the faces of the other girls around me who stopped giggling in the cold winter air when their eyes met mine. I saw the color leave their rosy cheeks so their faces matched the snow around us. Time froze as I touched my mouth, the same mouth that, as a young child, sucked on icicles to quench my thirst when I was having too much fun playing in the snow to go inside and get a drink. I felt the warm wetness drip down my fingers and cool on my unclad hand. I looked and saw the deep red blood on my pale skin with the same eyes that admired the magic of the plastic icicles dangling from the evergreen branches of my Grandmother's Christmas tree every year. That night as the camp doctor pulled and blotted and prodded with her face so close to my face, her hands invading my space, the beauty and mystery of icicles turned to fear.



UNTITLED – etching
Michaela Farley, Junior

Everything That is Me

I am from old trees,
majestic in their beauty,
with leaves that glisten like gems
as they bask in the summer sun.
I am from the tangled garden,
the deck and the patio,
unchanging through years of change.

I'm from the bright and the brave,
the strong and the sensitive,
from fighters of a different kind.
I am from seriousness and silliness,
woven, entwined but separate,
through each passing day.

I'm from speeding cars and cell phones,
from staying up and sleeping in.
I'm from music, art, and passion
that inspire and spark to life.

Through trying times
and the throes of everyday chores,
I return to a safer place,
to the sanctuary I call home.
For warmth is there,
and love too,
and everything that is me.

- *Ingrid Wolf, Junior*

NEVER

I will never close the lid on my clutter—it's mine and I love it.
Alone I am nothing; together we are exquisite, delighting in each other's splendor.
Often drunk in thought, my glittering collection
of sun-reflected memories catch my eye;
I pause, crow-like, visit and revisit
the sparkling gems of my past.

Splashing childlike through this mental landfill,
diving into waves of memories and lost intentions,
I dig out forgotten dreams and spin silk from burlap threads.
An artist and a dreamer,
I pretend that I intend
to clean up my act—but it's all an act.

I will never limit myself to just:
just eccentric, just poor, just a crazed old hippy with tie-dyed notions.
I will never be just. I am really!
My bouquet of clutter and I will someday march down the altar of ego,
And wed on a peaceful night—a bright and shining night,
to the blended scent of lavender and stinkweed.

I will never close the lid on my clutter—it's mine and I love it.
But the lid remains ajar, and I peer into your clutter when boredom calls.
And oh, what I can see.
Sometimes when you are basking on dazzling you, I sneak a few sparkling gems
of insanity and delusions from your twinkling heap,
and I build your "Never" story.
An artist and a dreamer,
I pretend that I intend
to clean up my act—but it's all an act.
And you, my junkyard friend, are Act Two.

- Rosemary Steers, Senior

Gone

The house lights off
the thermostat low
the wardrobe was bigger than me—
full of rags, do they have a new home?
Everything is put away,
clothes folded
dishes stacked by pattern
floors washed
tables cleared.

The desolate room once held dolls.
Do the toys have someone new to care for them?
The pictures of our lives are now memories.
Will others see the bare walls too?
You are not home—
your closet empty
your pillow not dented
your change not jumbled
your key not under the rug.
I pick up the phone to call you.
There is only empty air.

- L.B. Blazo, Senior



THEY CALLED ME ON A TUESDAY – digital photograph

Owen Fifield, Junior

Turn

by Bethany Morris, Senior

The GPS speaks in that choppy electronic female voice, “Left-turn-in-point-five-miles,” and I think to myself, “What if I don’t? What if I just keep driving?” My mind wanders and I see myself following the road ahead, the green trees turning to orange and red and purple and brown along the roadside, letting streams of summer evening sunlight dance into my eyes and then away again. The top is down and I feel the early autumn breeze cool what is left of the warm summer air. I breathe in that new, yet familiar, smell of the change from one season to the next, and the hairs on my neck and back raise with the filling of my lungs. I envision the sunbeams are arms reaching down, pinching each hair and tugging it so my skin puckers to form a tight goose-bump around it. My mouth is sweet with joy. The road curves around, but I don’t turn. I drive straight into a field of tall grass. The tips of the overgrown sprouts shake like rattles and tickle me as they change from green to yellow. They brush against each other and whisper, “Drive on, drive on, drive on.” I come to a cliff, but I don’t turn. My car descends, in slow motion, into the body of water below. Submerged, I don’t have to hold my breath. I take in the cool refreshing water and feel it becomes part of my body. I move onward with the underwater current through a school of fish the color of orange I have only ever seen in the setting sun. Each fish looks me in the eyes as if it can peer right into my soul. Each fish knows me. Better than I know me. Too soon I am taken aback and placed into reality when I hear “Ding Ding” and that unsettling voice, “Turn-left-now.” I sigh, and, hand over hand, I turn the steering wheel.

**(Daemons Don't Die)
Kiss From an Angel**

Two blues aloft in a tree, a third jay in flight
 beats its wing drums on the ear of air;
they leave—tree not entirely empty:
 it still carries branches—
 swinging arms invite visitors.

Leaves on branches are fingers
 reaching to the sky;
combing a breath
 are letters delivered down
to where a message is made
 by two chipmunks chasing one another.

A child holds his mother's hand; with the other he points.
 Blue Heron swoops south, lands near the pond,
walks a zen-like saunter round the shore's edge,
 dips his head lunges its neck—
beak billing the water.
 "Look! Mother, Earth is being kissed by an angel."

- Z.G. Tomaszewski, Junior

I Woke Up Late

the alarm didn't go off.
I couldn't find the brown shoes—
(the ones that go with my slacks),
the coffee had grounds in it,
the yolks of the eggs broke
and the kids missed the bus.
Twenty minutes late,
I put the picture of you,
the one that sits on my desk,
in a drawer,
because you are gone.

- *L.B. Blazo, Senior*

The Song

The opening melody is like an old friend
you haven't seen in a while.
You lost your virginity
right around the time the guitar comes in.

It played at your wedding,
late into the night
defining your dance, every word ringing
truer than the last.
You'll have the solo follow
your eulogy from speakers
above the casket, to set the mood
on the day of your death.

You can't believe it's on
the radio now, stuck in traffic
to a shirt and tie meeting, light-years away
from the first time you heard it,
but as soon as it came, it's gone –
replaced by a jingle for toothpaste,
and the cars behind sound out their wish
that you move along.

- *Kyle Austin, Senior*

The Disappearance of Indiana (an excerpt)

by Kelsey Tithof, Senior

The leaves are beginning to enter their changing phase. Though cliché, I can smell it coming. It's a crisp, dewy feeling in the air that plants droplets on your arm, then wicks them away in an instant. Days like this throw me back in time, to the autumns past. It's like I've dated autumn since I was three. Bittersweet to think back on the joyous beginnings of our relationship.

Adam was Indiana Jones...always will be to me. The coat and hat were there to prove his power and adventurer persona. He was born with an adventurer's tan, sun soaked skin and dark chocolate ringlets. I was Kelsey, freckled with a towheaded bob, me, myself, never changing. He changed my name a few times as he progressed through the movie trilogy. Then he realized that those women were not comparable to me. I was the sidekick and love interest that Indiana Jones had always needed. And that accomplice was impossibly head over heels for Adam...I mean, Indiana Jones.

"Kelseeeeeey! There's an EARTHQUAKE!!! Get the acorns Kelseeeeeey! We need them for food!" His three-year-old legs carried him as he pushed a crimson Fisher Price wheelbarrow towards me, darting this way and that. One might say, *Oh! He was dodging the Nazi bullets. Running in a zigzag manner.* But no, as such a young Indiana, the poor boy could not keep control of the lone wheel on the barrow. "Kelseeeeeey! Hurrry! I can't lose you!" Our love affair was a strong one.

It all began when we were introduced by our parents at the young age of three months. We didn't hit it off at that first meeting. He stole my stuffed platypus. However, the play dates weekly for five years following solidified that we were meant to be with no one other than each other. Knight in shining armor? Heck no, we came from a time of adventure and khakis. We made plans for marriage. Our children would do everything we said, just like their parents had before them. We would travel the world saving the ancient artifacts from evil conquerors.

"Indianaaaaaa! HELP ME!!! I can't get a grip...I'm falling!" We were four now, and better educated in the world of Indiana Jones, adventures, and the many ways one could meet their maker. His knowledge came from every Indiana Jones promotional product in existence; my grasp on Indiana Jones came from my Indiana himself. "I'm slipping!" Stairs are objects of delight for children. I had friends who lived in one-story ranches. Absurd I thought...poor kids never got to go up stairs. "Indiannaa! I can't hold on much longer!" I shouted from the crest of brown carpet, its aroma welcoming me every time I dramatically let my head fall. "I'm weak...too weak..."

"I'm coming Kelseeeeeey! Hang on!" Out from my bedroom he ran, into the tiny, dimly lit hallway that looked down the rust carpeted stairs. On

those stairs I lay, gripping the third step from the top as if my life depended on it. My life did depend on it, and he knew that. He was there to rescue me. “Grab the rope!” Did he have a rope? Of course. Why would you ask... he’s Indiana Jones for goodness sakes! It may have been my pink and purple jump rope...but it got the job done.

“I can’t reach it!” I’d scream. The rope reached to my feet. This was all for added effect you see. Once he knew the rope wasn’t sufficient, he’d reach out his hand.

“Take my hand!” Oh. Those words. I only played his games for those words. For the times when, out of necessity, for safety, he’d have to take my hand in his. Running through his backyard, through mine, while on the swings, sledding in the winter, walking through the zoo. He was my rescuer, my constant. And even though he went to Catholic kindergarten and I went to public...we tried to keep the adventurous duo strong.

The close proximity of our birthdays to Christmas cut down on the time our parents had to take out of their lives to reunite us. It’s not that they wanted us to break up, to wreck our dreams...they were just busy. And as we grew up, we too became busy. Soccer, ballet, violin, drama club. These were constants in my life. His constants? Basketball, guitar, marijuana. Age 12, seventh grade...Adam (no longer Indiana) was the main dealer at St. Roberts Catholic School...



CONVERSATION – terra cotta *Mandy Straathof, Senior*

Here and There

As I am sitting
here in this hard, plastic chair,
thinking
coming in rhyme and rhythm,
staying awake by trying desperately to keep my eyelids from falling
to cover my eyes like blinds over an open window,
listening
carefully to the voices of the professor and my classmates,
though their words do not always come to me coherently,

a homeless man
is sitting
on the cold concrete of a sidewalk just a few blocks from here,
thinking
of roast beef and potatoes,
staying
alive only by continuing to coerce himself to breathe,
listening
for God to say it is his time, or to give him hope for tomorrow.

As I am sitting here,
wanting
my warm, twin extra-long bed,
hearing
my peers chattering softly with those sitting around them,
sipping
the soda I purchased with my pocket change a few days ago,

a homeless woman is sitting under a bridge,
huddled like an infant in the cold, September rain,
wanting
to be where there is a warm bed,
hearing
her baby cry as she would like to do,
sipping
rain water from an old, Styrofoam cup found lying in the gutter.

As I am sitting here,
lost
in my thoughts of what the right word may be,
writing
down words and phrases and stanzas,
free
to have an opinion, to write and feel what I wish,

a homeless child is sitting in an alley,
in the shadow of a dumpster,
lost
in the hectic streets and honking horns of the city,
writing
graffiti on bricks in the hope that the cops
will catch him and he will be taken to jail to sleep for the night in a warm cell,
free
to sit in the cold, darkened alley,
but not to dig through the dumpster to find food he desperately needs.

As I am sitting here
at a worn, wooden, beige table
in a hard, plastic, maroon chair,
paying this school more than twenty grand a year,

a homeless family is sitting there
at a run-down shelter
in ragged clothing
with holes in their gloves,
paying for shelter with their dignity.

- *Jacqui DeFouw, Junior*

What the Sun Sees Out West

by Cordello Jordan, Junior

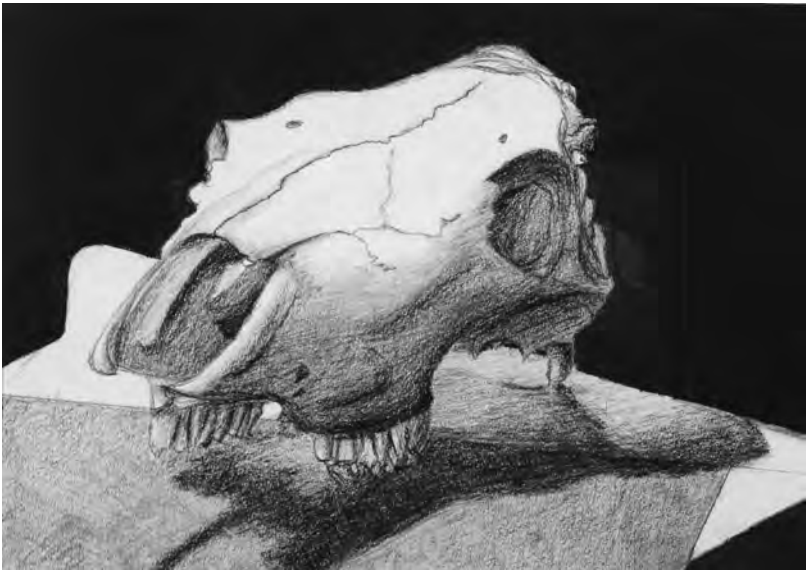
A cowboy violently whips his thoroughbred, hustling after the high noon train. He smells the spurting oil, smoke stains his beard. He grunts, and then spits like the exhaust. Leaf tobacco trickles through the orange tips of the mane, like fallen fleas in an evening flame. The cowboy ropes the steam pipe, choking the neck of the train, jolting the horse forward. The cowboy loses control.

Daisy frantically shoves a wooden stool across the loose dirt, mud powders her face. She stands behind the ruins of a stable, where a cowboy left his warm leather saddle. A noose hangs slightly above her head like a golden halo, tied to a beam below a red sun. Along the horizon is a long stiff black snake shooting across the land, coughing up smoke and spurting poison. She mounts the stool, and the angel dons her halo.

Viola, a lovely little tune, ties a string bow in her locks. The earth rumbles beneath her, turning daisies over in the mud, lifting them from their roots. The grass whistles, and dust clouds with pieces of silver from the sunshine waltz in the air. Viola plays on the train tracks; hooves pounding like drums through the heat waves, lifting the dirt like land mines; drowning out the neighs of a wild horse on the run. The black snake falls into the pit. Viola screams.

The brass bells in the chapel tower clash, the winds draw their curtains. The clock strikes twelve.

The priest tightens his clergy rope around his ministry cloth. He kneels on Holy land, praying to the Guardian Angel...



FINITE COW – charcoal

David Besteman, Freshman

I The Fallen

I the fallen
Fell
Clutching coattails of
Antiquity you said
much too far too fast
Too fallen
Two fallen? You ask
You're fallen—never not
Once
Push away
Brush hobnails of Christ as I
Dance around pagan
Pyres
Lighting fires your
Too pure soul can't
Hold—too far, too fast
One fallen far from
Paths you tread I
Mince, the fool, the words of plays
Where players play the fool but
I have known the Eucharist.
All one—body
Mind
Intertwined
Understanding oneness together
Yours mine ours—not
Thine for this moment
Is shared ambivalence
Treading paths of non-symbol symbols
Wearing holes in our soles
To finally feel our feet
Touching earth giving
Birth to more
Radiant children than
Antiquity could boast
For these are babes wrapped in
Swaddling clothes of
Minds unsullied by emptied bowls
Cups three quarters full
We bathe in seas of inference
Picking freely as we wish from
Trees rooted in our own mortality
So fallen
I may catch you
To build cities where we land.

- *Duncan McCargar, Sophomore*

Regulation Clean and Dirty

by Meghan Harris, Senior

Training Day:

“Now take the end of the blanket and fold it into a triangle. Tuck it underneath.”

I’m learning how to wash my hands, wipe dirty asses, and fold a sheet, correctly. My instructor tells us that after trials, everything is game and none of the procedures we are learning will be followed. Her clacking of gum is distinctively her own as she grinds it quickly between her teeth to make a rubber squeak. It’s the kind of squeak my latex gloves make as I pretend to brush the teeth of my grubby partner. The squeaking is the noise I hear when I see blood.

“Meghan, want to try?” She’s caught me. I’ve been staring at the starched linen sheets.

“I guess I can try.” My cheeks heat up and the sweat starts to surface on my forehead. I start to fold the sheets on the opposite side, my hands fumbling.

“Nope, nope.” Her clacking speeds up as she skirts over. She puts her cold hands on mine—their movements dumb like a marionette. I’m ashamed. The top of my class and I can’t even fold a damn sheet of linen right. It’s tedious. Why is it necessary to fold bed sheets properly? Answer: Standardization Everything. Regulation head massage, regulated beats per minute, regulation size, regulation hazardous waste, regulation put a pillow behind a head. The clacking stops and I realize my instructor is talking to me.

“Huh?”

“Your face is pale. Are you feeling ok?” She doesn’t wait for an answer. Good nurse.

“Go take a seat outside the room. Melanie, would you please dig in my bag? There’s a NutriGrain bar in there.” Melanie nods her head and walks away while the instructor leads me outside to the benches.

“Sit down. Feeling better?” I *just* sat down.

“I’m fine.” Regulation answer. As soon as I say it she’s off, clacking down the hallway.

This is my way out—I’m training to be a nursing aide. This is many people’s way out. We are all trying to get a job quick. When the economy takes a gigantic shit, the only thing left is to clean it up, or, more specifically, to acquaint yourself with the reality of your job: clean poop off the bodies of other human beings; ignore the dribble coming out of their mouths; and, above all else, try to forget the stink. Regulation Sense Override.

Hired-In:

Breathing deeply, I wonder why I’m here. Nursing home? Really?

I started this job with idealistic intentions. Regulation take care of your elders. But it is too disturbing in a way I can’t handle: dump out the things we’ve outgrown, forget them until it makes you feel new. For example,

Mrs. [enter Polish name here] fled Poland with her husband, two daughters, and son during WWII. The two daughters and Mrs. P survived the trip. Mrs. P made a living making sandwiches for the elderly and her daughters, inspired, became nurses. She tells me this as I bathe her. Not once does she comment on my task, but at the end says, “Szank you dearie, szank you.” She’s the only person on the third floor who has regular visitors.

Mrs. P and a woman named Estelle stick out. Estelle was one of those dancing girls you see in old war movies, or at least, that is what she tells me. She “loved to dance” and she and her sister would go dance with soldiers. She makes me polish her nails and brush her hair. Her hair is so thin and fragile I have to use a baby’s hair brush in gentle strokes. Once, she tried to make me curl it. Not so good. Afterward, she returns the favor and takes my hair out of its bun shape and drapes it out as if it were a cashmere teddy. “Ahhh,” she mumbles. “Such strong, dark hair.” Hers is a faint red. These stories are at least somewhat hopeful.

Mrs. T (“T” as in terminal) does not have such a story. Catatonic is her state and no one comes to visit. I can tell because there are no pictures on her nightstand, the night shift laughs at her, and her clothes are stained. Funny how fast you learn what loneliness looks like. I try to comb her stiff, white hair, but her dark eyes stare at me with such permanent dread, I have to stop. Mrs. D [“D” for desperate), adjacent to Mrs. T, must be used to the night shift. She cries and thanks me twenty-one times for saying “Goodnight” in my softest voice and meaning it.

So, on the very day I’m Regulation hired-in, after months and months of training in classrooms and on the job, I sit beside Mr. M, a man whose black hair grays at the temples, a man who sings to me in soulful rhythms. As I dwell, my new co-worker, a male CNA who walks in too-long strides, whispers, “Watch your back around here.” The main male nurse says, “Don’t let people’s negativity get you down.” My skin starts to feel like wrinkled laundry.

As the clock ticks, I wonder if I will be as funny as Mrs. T is to those who put me in my death clothes, stiff with rigor mortis. I wonder if the Regulation Smell will ever go away. The elderly are up now, their walkers squeaking down the hallway. I feel panic rise up through my neck. “It’s ok kid,” I say to myself, listening to Mr. M hum slowly to himself.

Seven o’clock hits and I’m punched out and to my car in thirty seconds. As I speed away and when I reach home, I can still smell shit. This phenomenon lasts for two hours. I take an hour long shower. Nope, still there. I should ask someone if this is the Regulation-Suck part of the job.

I call in and quit the next day—my not-so-Regulation two weeks’ notice. Of a few things I am certain: I am no nurse, I am no aide, I cannot follow regulations, but I will tell as much of the lives of Mrs. P, Estelle, Mrs. T, and Mrs. D as possible. I won’t live a regulatory life. I will not be assigned a regulatory death. And, yes, the negativity got to me.



SELF-PORTRAIT – woodcut print
Michaela Farley, Junior

Ravenous

Words merge on paper like dark chocolate syrup
Pouring over velvety vanilla ice cream.
I press my tongue against
Your unscented skin
And it tastes like a dream.
To put you in the form of tiny pills
A certain prescription I would prescribe
You to alleviate the pain.
Our love is a small umbrella in the rain.
Fear not.
Don't be afraid.
It may sound insane
But may I start
First by eating your heart
Right out of your chest?
I'll love you with everything within me
And nothing less.
An empty heart
Makes an empty stomach...
Ravenous.

- Monique Smith, Freshman

Love

by Luke Sprunger, Senior

“Do you really love me?” She asked one day. “Do you mean it when you say it?”

I cleared my throat to prepare myself to respond, to argue with her, to persuade her. I’d done it before, starting with “Of course I do,” or simply “yes” with as much conviction as I could muster. On this occasion I stopped myself. For the longest time I didn’t answer. It wasn’t worth it to argue.

That was years ago. Last winter, I hiked up a ski slope at 3 a.m. with a half-dozen other snowboard-kids. The full moon reflected off the hard snow as we dug in footholds. Someone would lose their footing and start slipping down the hill, throwing the edge of their snowboard into the surface to arrest their slide, and we’d all laugh. We reached the top of one run and stretched out on our backs on the crunchy snow to stare up at the bright sky, telling dumb jokes and letting the steam from our mouths rise into the northern air. We hid from a grooming machine, yellow lights flashing as it turned onto the trail. We threw snowballs at each other in the woods. We rode down the slope, filling the still night air with an ear-splitting chorus of crunching and scraping as our boards slid across the frozen hill.

Last winter, snowboarding with some of my best friends, I shot myself over jumps above the sun-softened slopes of Colorado. I scared myself into having fun over and over. For months I drove up, down, and across the frigid Lower Peninsula with my snow-mind, my imagination, spinning and rolling. I took snow and shovels and plastic pipes and wooden beams and pieced together all sorts of creations to snowboard on or across. I cruised through forests. I hopped over rocks and onto rails and off of walls. Swish, pop, ding, whoosh, screech! That’s how I went down the hill. Sometimes I went thud, or “Ow,” but when I fell I made myself try whatever I was doing again until I got it right. My head kept suggesting new moves. When I got sore or cold, I rested and watched the flakes pile up outside my white window frame.

I’m glad she forced the truth out of me all those years ago. I’m glad it ended. Sure, I liked her. That was all, though. I don’t think it made sense to her. I don’t think it makes sense to a lot of people. You’re supposed to love a person right? One person. Only I hadn’t. You’re supposed be satisfied with that, but I wasn’t. How could I fall in love with Friday night movies and shoulder-length hair and breasts and a mouth and pink toenails? How could I be happy with that above anything else? Mock me if you must, but it wasn’t like...

Last winter. In the heart of winter, in the deepest part of February, my friend showed me an abandoned ski trail beyond the fringe of the resort. It was covered with a fluffy white blanket more than a foot deep. It had been snowing all day. I started down the trail, leaning back on the board

and lifting my front leg up to keep the nose from going under the snow. I started to glide, to float on top of the snow. Faster and faster. I pointed the board between two chest-high pine trees. I passed through them and deepest, calming winter drew itself close. The white clouds wrapped around me. The thick flakes started to kiss my cheeks and fill my ears with the faintest love-whisperings as they descended. Snow like friends. Friends for adventures. Adventures sprouting delicious ideas and dazzling imaginings.

This is love.



Like Wine

Yesterday,

I ran out my front door in a hurry at 10:30 in the morning. It was snowing. My red coat was back out of the closet. Coffee in hand, I slid in and slammed the car door. I turned the key in the ignition, and my CD player picked up where it had left off the previous night.

It came as a shock, because I was caught off-guard. The sound of that familiar Irish lilt, the smell of newly frozen air, the feel of snowflakes melting on my hands... my senses were attacked in an organization and manner **belonging** to my life last winter, and my spirit was suddenly caught in that space between... confused and unprepared transportation.

Knob. Windshield wipers. The snow is brushed off the glass.

I pulled out of my driveway and drove on.

But I couldn't outrun the weather, and I couldn't bring myself to hit the FM.

As I drove, my heart began to ache,
and for reasons I still don't fully understand.

I can't help romanticizing my past.

In my mind, my memories age **like wine**.

Sometimes I have a glass over dinner.

Sometimes I drink too much when alone.

- *Melissa Nicklowitz, Senior*

Watermelon Rhapsody

I am a watermelon because...
I wear colors bold and bright;
I have a larger than life personality;
I am squishy and juicy;
I am sweet yet substantial;
I love light and summer;
I pair well with a barbecue or picnic;
I grow best when attended to and nurtured;
I am enjoyed by those who understand what to do with me.

I am a watermelon because...
I depend on my surroundings to make a good crop;
I take dents and bruises well;
But I explode when under a lot of pressure.
I show the world an outer shell of bland indifference,
But inside, I hide the passionate pink of my feelings.
I take time to crack open and allow people in.

I am a watermelon because...
I am fruity;
I am awkward to carry;
I am refreshing on a day of heat or frustration;
I am a comfort food to many;
I blend well with other fruits;
I am a chore for people to crack;
I am big and proud of it.

I am a watermelon because...
I seem unaffected by other's abuse,
But I am sensitive and easily squished on the inside;
I do not stay fresh for long;
I have seeds and am hard to chew at times;
I am best served in small portions;
I am oftentimes cold yet crisp;
I am not loved of all people;
I am not ripe in all seasons;

I am a watermelon because...
I am what I am;
I love what I am;
I am proud of what I am.

I am a watermelon,
Hear me squish!

- *Christy Armock, Senior*

Weather Patterns

I am a temperate land
near the 40th parallel
where seasons shift
with occasional atmospheric
upheaval.

After the floods that hail
the oncoming spring,
I grow accustomed to the season's beauty.

Yet the onset of summer
causes changes in pressure,
uncertainty in the atmosphere,
railing against the adjustment
first with drizzle, gradually increasing
to severe weather with a possibility of
tornadoes.

But after a few days,
enduring bad weather
is worse than giving
the new season its chance.
And I realize summer must come.

But the skies
will rip again,
raging against each new season –
fall
and winter
and spring
consistently forgetting
the beauty
inherent in each.

However,
the forecasters predict
that over time severe weather
associated with seasonal shifts
will weaken,
allowing for transformation
from one to another,
with only a slight chance of showers.

- *Laura Shuman, Senior*

A Wilting Aster

They left an offering—a wilting aster—
on the crest of the grassy hill
where, with bowed heads, they had knelt
in reverence of a stark, red sunset.

Below, the waves sang
as they strummed their fingers
over the grassy sands of the shore
with the timid haste of fledglings.

And, when the sun had finally set,
with salt stinging their lips,
they walked silently back
down the worn and rugged lane,
past the posted Warning signs,
back to dimly lit living rooms
and neatly folded Sunday papers.

- Daniele Reisbig, Senior



PRAYER PITCHER – terra cotta
Bernadette Poirier, Junior

Sestina 2

To walk at night makes dark his eyes of blue.
The tree leaves whisper soft and low in French
Romantic words that root their hearts in love.
To think, to write, to speak outside of school.
This walk at night builds strength while testing faith.
Alone and lost he must communicate.

But when and how will he communicate
These thoughts and feelings making him seem blue?
The search for truth requires a walk of faith,
With ease at times when wines and cheese are French.
To swim with grace among great minds at school
And run from death to life, to light, to love.

Because in hate and pride what's lost is love.
To now make sense this word communicate:
A balanced act, 'tis lectured well in school
By he and she of whom soft waves of blue
Do ebb and flow to hear deep thoughts on French
And other things seen through the lens of faith.

The anchor holds in depth these bonds of faith
In which the sins of man are cleansed by love.
A man for all the world to know, be French
Or Brit, or Czech, or Greek, communicate
A longing leaving bodies black and blue—
The hues of night an artist paints in school.

As now he paints, he too, explores the school
Of thought, of life and death, of doubt and faith.
The lost and found must swim in oceans blue
To seek and find a light with hearts of love.
And they shall speak, they shall communicate
To all with grace and charm—old traits of French.

This walk concludes with no appeal to French.
Instead a drive, pursuit of truth in school.
A new beginning starts: communicate

To act and speak, to hear with ears of faith,
To pray we may receive this gift of love,
That we may live again in skies of blue.

Now French these days can't make him feel so blue.
He takes the time to love his love and school.
In faith he knows he must communicate.

- *Eli Woodbeck, Senior*



September

September starts the season that
So suddenly succeeds summertime.
Evidently, the evergreens will endure, but
Every other tree eventually
Produces a pleasant potpourri of color, so
Pleasing it provokes a painter to
Take that image and transform it into
Tasteful art to treasure, as the
Elegance of the autumn environment evokes
Emotion everyone enjoys.
Meaningful musing and self-
Meditation manifest themselves during this month, and
Bring out the best in us.
Brisk and busy days bring
Evenings of escape by
Entering an extraordinary realm through
Reading a revitalizing novel, unless we'd
Rather relax, reflect, and reminisce.
- *Ingrid Wolf, Junior*

The Academy of American Poets University and College
Poetry Prize - Honorable Mention

Louise

I try to imagine a time when my eyes crumple into heavy lace
and plum veins ribbon their way from my sougning heart
to wringing hands to crinkled toes to melanoma'd nose,
after I've started wearing curlers at all hours,
when my grands become greats become great greats
with holes in their pimply faces and slacks that cost more than my Jon ever
thought to earn.

And I cannot know them.

And they'd not think to know me

because before my bones cracked symphonies, forty was not the new twenty
and we didn't poison our faces into stagnant masks
unable to scream smiles, crash frowns, cascade tears
over husbands and children and the friends whose names I can only recall on car-rides.
I suppose I'd sometimes dwell on the things I've lost
when soap smells and the zest of ancient kisses whisper through my floured kitchen.
My Jon who gored bulls, exhausted bottles, and was conquered by his liver.
My little Jackie who kept me strolling twice round my pond daily.
My Ellie who bore my children and then her own on the hips that hid her cancer.
That second acre of strawberries I gave up at 92.
That son who won't speak to me cross the way.
Those memories, that sanity I brush away like strands of hair after chemo,
not white nor silver. Gray as grey-matter. Dead as my daughter.

And the bile of this past will gather in my cheeks when I'm alone,
collect my liver spots in folds
and drain salt from my tear ducts onto the rugs I braid to pass January.

But my squat home will squabble sometimes like a child,
entailing my labor in exchange for harboring the shadows of those who will leave me.
And I will still throw orotund laughter to the ceiling from a heart that refuses to die
(And I won't know why I should still be alive)

when my namesake unsheathes Jon's last bottle,
choruses a shot,
surfaces a brazier to strap on the naked idols in my youngest's excessive yard.
And we drive through maples housing dead memories
and she bubbles through pursed lips
as I give a role call of the dead by street,
because it is a bit ridiculous to be this old.

And I'm just waiting for the good Lord to suck me up

- *Rachel Reilly, Senior*



LOVEY – photograph
Janel M. Messner, Continuing Education

This isn't about you

I want to love humanity,
but you keep getting in the way.

I can't see past
your half-tucked blouse,
crooked teeth,
pock-marked face.

Don't you understand,
I'm trying to love humanity,
to make the world a better place?

I want to right injustices,
feed the hungry,
eradicate disease.

I am ready to love humanity, but all
I see is you.

And,
I'm sorry,
I can't do anything for you.
I don't have change
to spare
on a bus ride,
on a sandwich,
on a new pair of shoes.

Humanity needs
me for more important things.
You aren't as big as
my dream to save the world.

So
I can't love you.

I

don't even know who *you* are.

- *Laura Shuman, Senior*

Bachelor of Fine Arts - Student Work



SELF-PORTRAIT - oil on canvas

Elizabeth Hertl



REAP - terra cotta *Stephanie Garn*



RECLINED FIGURE #2 - oil on canvas *Elizabeth Hertl*



LABYRINTH HEAD - terra cotta
Elizabeth Hertl



DISCOMBOBULATED BONE - terra cotta
Stephanie Garn

My Friend Nomad

Thought I saw you across from the Mercantile yesterday.
Was it you holding that cardboard advertisement,
Your services for a sandwich and some pay?
I'm sure I recognised your form, your face,
But it has been so long it all seems faded.
Was that you standing in that hopeless place?
Passersby, did they see? Did they look away?
Did they stop to stare or ignore you altogether?
Did they pause to give you the time of day?
Nay, I'd say, they saw through the Invisible Man
Standing with an empty stomach and
A final measure posed between his hands.
This isn't the stuff you see on TV.
This isn't the stuff you hear in songs.
This isn't the stuff you see in a movie.
I think of you, Jack Kerouac Fan, and it's sad
To think of you out there, dispossessed, distressed.
It's sad to think of you, Wandering Winter Nomad,
With strung-out eyes, drizzling despair in tears,
In a gutter, looking at stars that aren't there,
Wallowing in despondency and swallowed up by fears.
Last you said, you were taking baby steps to recovery.
How far did you get? How much farther must you go,
My Friend Nomad, to get yourself off the street?
I don't really think it's where you want to be.
I'll be glad when I don't have to wonder if it was you,
When you're no longer a Nomad, still my friend, you'll be.

- Jennifer Chichester, Senior

The Maid

by Kathleen Carty, Senior

The maid is in my bedroom again, trapped between the nightstand and the bed that she has pushed in front of the door. She has moved the bed so she can sweep underneath it. Swish, swish, one long stroke after another as the straw bristles of the broom slide across the tile floor. I can't believe she has the motivation to work so hard every week in 95 degree heat. But it doesn't affect her like it affects me; she's lived in Costa Rica her entire life. She never speaks, not to me anyway. Just nods if I say anything and keeps her eyes down at her sweeping. Swish, swish. I stand outside the bedroom door awkwardly. I need my sunscreen which is in my suitcase. "Perdóname," I croon. Swish, swish, no response. She turns away from me and I watch her bun wobble over the sweat stain on the back of her ragged light pink polo shirt. I climb through the doorway, up over the bed, and make my way to my



MOTHER EARTH – terra cotta
Jennifer Sobel, Junior

suitcase. “Permiso,” I say smiling. She stops sweeping, nods, keeps her head down. The sound of the zipper flying across my suitcase thunders like an earthquake in the extreme silence. “Gracias,” I nearly whisper and straddle the bed with sunscreen in hand. Swish, swish, the sweeping begins again.

I sit at the kitchen table, rubbing warm globs of greasy, white sunscreen over my pale, freckled arms. Tiny flecks of sand from the yellow bottle cap stick to my skin. I pour myself a glass of fresh watermelon juice that the maid squeezed this morning. Tiny black flecks swirl in the light pink liquid in the pitcher. The maid walks in from the hallway and slumps down at the kitchen table in a wooden chair next to me. My host mother, Margarita always complains that the maid’s cleaning is never acceptable. But luckily, Margarita is not home today; she went to el mercado this afternoon. Lucky for us both since Margarita always complains that my actions, breathing, and presence are never acceptable. “¿Que calor, no?” I say. Commenting on the heat in Costa Rica is traditionally my meager attempt at small talk. Leaning her elbow on the table, she tips her tired, tan face into her hand. “Si, demasiado.”

I nearly fall out of my chair from the sheer shock of hearing words come out of her mouth. But the heat is good she tells me, “el calor es bueno” because at least she has work, at least she has a job. She has a son, did you know that? she asks. Yes, a son, “tiene cinco años.” And all five years of his life she’s had to work hard to make sure he has food to eat. “Se llama Carlitos,” she tells me. I smile. Her deep brown eyes never leave the table. And for the first time I notice how smooth her skin is across her face, and how young she is—probably only a few years older than I. I think she would look younger if her hair were not always in a bun and if her hands were not always in soap suds.

Two weeks later I’m sitting on my bed with my entire left leg in a cast. I’ve ruptured a ligament in my knee and 3,000 miles away from home they don’t have an orthopedic surgeon around so they cast it at la clinica. Luckily, Margarita is at el mercado today. Silence consumes my bedroom and I stare at the blue fiberglass stitching on my cast wishing I were home, wishing I was with my mother, wishing someone cared enough to break the silence. “Perdoname señorita.”

The maid is standing in my doorway. “¿Quiere mirar el télé?” I nod and push a soft smile. She crosses my bedroom and brings the TV remote to me. I smile and nod, unable to speak as my eyes fill with tears. She smiles, picks her broom up again, and goes out into the hall. Swish, swish, the sweeping continues.

Winter Solstice with Karnes

He gently slides the shiny black vinyl
From its static proof sleeve,
Places it on the turn table,
And the automatic arm lifts and dips
Into the rigid first track.

Crackling kicks and snaps from the speakers.

Above it smooth jazz begins to play.
Frozen fingers
Grip a warm pipe
And I have my turn.

Amber glows from a single lamp,
Its shade a thin layer of parchment
Shielding the bright rays,
Creating soft shadows,
Revealing sleek snaking trails of smoke
Climbing slowly over the music.

The cold resides outside my door now.
I am insulated with a deep red wine
And heavy wafts of smoke.
Sandalwood, grass, and thawing bones
Fill the late night air with comfort.

He is waiting on the record player
Master and slave,
It is tuned perfectly,
With treble and bass balanced
Like sugar and tea.

Records wait in meticulous order to be played.
The needle lifts signaling record end. Next.
Smooth soul music. Otis Redding.
I nod my head and say nothing.

An obscure record next
With hints of prohibition, ragtime and taboos.
Woody Guthrie. John Lennon. Rufus Wainwright. In succession.
He reclines in a vintage chair, upholstered in rough
Fabric, covered in polka dots. I think he will fall asleep.
I offer him tequila and he grimaces. *No, not me.*

The record ends again and the speakers kick, snap—

I put on my favorite
And place the needle down.
A jangle, a tambourine, a strong chord—
He knows from the first note.
I pour and swirl two glasses of the sticky Mexican liquor.
He is forced to open his eyes.
The Velvet Underground. No lullaby.

With respect for Lou, he gets up,
Grooves across the floor.
Hey white boy, what you doin' up town?
Alcohol burns on the way down.
We become graceful.

We dance in the middle of the room
We dance like fools.
We spin and turn and spin and turn
And you can see us traveling, traveling.
We are apparitions of youth
Stepping through time.
Our young skin so warm and flush
Brushes against past and future
The record always turning, spinning, spinning.

- Lindsey Steffes, Graduate Student

A Thursday

by Zarah Moeggenberg, Senior

It was a Thursday. My father had left me a message saying that he wouldn't arrive from Korea for another month. His voice was crackly as I walked quickly to my Ford Explorer, the crack in the windshield invisible this late at night. I hung up quickly and didn't turn on the radio. The ground was still wet from the rain and the earth was whistling heat through the sidewalks, through Michigan side-streets, through clanking sewers.

I've never understood him, but my mother says it's because in the Army; they teach you to put your country first, God second, and then family. So I don't cry anymore. When we meet in airports, in bus terminals, at rest stops, we don't hug. I grab his carry-on. He grabs his duffel. And even though I only see him once, twice, sometimes three times a year, he always has brilliant ideas I seem to go along with. One being that apartment I was living in. In downtown Bay City, on top of a realty company, sat the two-bedroom dream of his retirement. We would live together during my first year of college, before I transferred to who-the-hell-knows-where, and somehow, get to know each other after a 19 year separation. His arrival being postponed three months meant me living alone, working a full-time minimum-wage job, going to school full time, and acting as my father's power-of-attorney.

A different bridge home that time—south bridge closed—again. My window caught wafts of warm brown fish smells. Turning to the right, I crept in front of my building. The pub next to my building looked foggy. “L-U-C-K-Y,” I whispered to myself. *Lucky's Irish Pub*. I'd never actually read the sign. And below those yellow lights, the K's legs burnt out and brown, was a bright red bicycle. An old man stood gripping the handlebars, his back twisted, his knees curved outward. His shirt was cream, a button-up, and his face was unshaven. But his eyes—a piercing cloudy blue, even in the dead light of 9:08 p.m. A Thursday. We caught each other as I grabbed the steering wheel and heaved it to the left.

The fog light on top of our two-story building always made me squint. I swung the green door open and hopped down. Pulling hard, I eventually got the back door open, my fingertips stinging from the slip on the handle. My body halfway submerged in the backseat, I searched to make sure I'd remembered my paycheck I picked up on my break. And that's when I heard the pop and cracks of rubber on gravel, distinct from the coffee-grinding sounds of my truck when I drove. I poked my head up and saw through the tinted windows, through the clear college bumper sticker, to see the old man only 20 feet away in the black shadows. “Hey Baby,” he cracked. Those are two words that 65-year-old men should not say. His white skin looked yellow as he grabbed at his gray bangs, slicked them back over his bald spot. “Hey Baby what you doing? Heh?” He threw his bike down hard and limped briskly toward me.

I don't remember shutting the back door or how I managed to seat myself in the Explorer, always a struggle for me to get into. But I remember worrying if I was going to squish his fingers in the door when I slammed it. I remember him reaching his hands, his arms, his elbows, cream fabric inside the cab. I remember wondering if I'd get him stuck when I hit that button to get the window up. "Come on, baby, I just want to have a little fun, y'know, baby! Come on, honey! Come here!" his voice like popcorn. Those were the last words I heard. I remember the grease left on my window from his face, shaped in a sideways U. I remember worrying

if I would hit him, or trample his bike as I backed up, careful on the accelerator. I remember he chased me until the shadow ended. I remember calling my ex-girlfriend and soon hanging up on her. I remember my mother giving me two Tylenol and putting me to bed in my old room.

I remember that being the last time I wanted a hug from my father.



THE TIMES OF LIFE
collagraph print

Pamela Vander Jagt
Freshman

Stop Thief

You came to me today
and smiled
and used my name
while you politely
aimed your gun,
leaned close
and whispered
in my ear. The dimple
in your left cheek kissed
mine as you pressed
me to relinquish
the contents of
my drawers.
*Large bills, please,
not packed with dye.*
Nervously, my heart
a flutter, I smiled
and blushed
and acquiesced.
You grabbed hold,
then reciprocated
with a charming:
Thank you, love.
a wink
a wave
a winsome grin
and you withdrew,
transaction done.
leaving only
security camera memories.

You came to me today
and smiled
and used my name
while you politely
stole my heart away.

- *Laura Hartness, Junior*

Morality is a Map

Morality is a map
Written down in ink
On the parchment of the human heart.

Some see it through color blind eyes,
Seeing shades of gray where there are not.
Some see it in pure black and white,
And others in the natural brilliance of color
That is engraved upon it.
Some turn the map on a slight tilt,
Viewing it askew.
While others turn it completely upside down,
Staring at it confused.
Some toss the map aside,
Viewing it as a useless piece of parchment.
While others rip it up in complete rebellion.
And some throw it in the fire.
A select few refuse to even acknowledge the map's existence.

Holy Spirit is a GPS system
That only believers receive.

Some have trouble hearing it
As it gives off warning signals in the heart.
"Wrong turn!"
"Not that way!"
"Turn back!"
It screams.
Some are impatient,
Wandering off on their own thought up shortcuts,
Unaware of dangerous drop-offs
And rocky terrain.
And others ignore the GPS system all together
In an outright rebellion,
Seeking false tastes of the destination along the road,
Settling for a fresh brook stream,
Not seeing the wolves lurking in the shadows.

Morality is a map,
And Holy Spirit is a GPS system.

- *Kristina Humphrey, Senior*



CRONE LIMONE, BLUE MAIDEN AND CHARTREUSE MADONNA – terra cotta
Candace Rabourn, Senior

Amelia's Buttons

by Rachel Reilly, Senior

Amelia fondles the buttons on her mother's black trench coat. The buttons were black like the coat, but she's since rubbed them silver. Once the paint started to flake off, she just couldn't have them uneven. She just couldn't go out until all of the black was picked away. She likes the way the metal freezes to her damp fingers, sticking and unsticking in a way that makes her hair prickle unpleasantly—like a kiss.

Amelia thinks today will be the day when she meets that pimply grocer boy half-way. She will meet him in front of the Davidsons'. She will take the groceries from his hands, say, "I can take it from here, Donald," and slip him a quarter. *And that will be enough*, she mutters. It's half what she usually tips, but then he's only coming half-way.

Or maybe Amelia will let him walk with her a ways, past the Johnsons', past the Reynolds', past the broken home on the corner where that whore raises four bastard sons. Only as far as her stoop. Maybe into the kitchen. "Please come in, Donald," she will say, "and help an old woman shelve her groceries."

She will let the boy dotter on about school, and the latest trollop on his arm, and whichever incessant sport he's playing now. *We will serve tea. To celebrate today's walk. And he will only be getting a quarter*, she mutters. After all, he will no longer be Amelia's grocer; Donald will be her company, and whoever heard of tipping one's company?

But she must first get past the gate. She must first walk past the gate. She must first stroll through the gate. Amelia will undo the latch and saunter through the chain link fence. Not step onto that frozen puddle and break her hip the way her mother did. Not greet the filthy woman across the way. *Will Donald ask me to shake his hand?* Amelia will not shake hands.

A soft tearing sound, the cry of downy feathers stripped from a baby robin. Amelia examines her coat. The thread that held the third button is hanging like tired arms, limp and naked. The silver button is puckering and unpuckering to her translucent skin. Her veins and tendons pulse around her polished gift. *Well... We cannot have this. We cannot go strutting about with our shame on display*. No. The button will have to be fixed first.

Amelia will not leave her stoop today. She will go back inside and sew on her mother's button. She will open the door when that grocer boy comes, and she will retreat into the sitting room until he has left. She will leave two shiny quarters on the counter. She will not serve tea.

Rabid Ending

by Brian Bruno, Sophomore

Old Yeller plays on the television; a young teenage boy about my age is bounding across the screen playfully with his dog by his side. My stepdad Lee and I watch as the boy and his dog enjoy life. My mom is on the phone and looks lively and animated as she talks to my aunt. Her eyes crease at the edges and are shining with life. Each eye seems to have a smile of its own.

“Maybe the boys could get together this afternoon,” she says, referring to my cousin and me possibly being able to play.

Lee rolls his big torso to a sitting position on the couch. He looks annoyed and put out. My mom hangs up the phone and turns towards him; the light in her eyes has disappeared. I am glued to the TV as *Old Yeller* lunges at an attacking wolf to protect the boy’s family. He is bitten and is badly injured. My mom seems on guard, gives Lee an appraising look, and her forehead wrinkles in disapproval.

Lee meets my mom’s glare and quickly challenges, “I am not being chauffeur for them; Brian has plenty of neighborhood kids to play with. We don’t need to be globetrotting from one end of town to the other.”

Lee stands, hiking his jeans to his waist and heads down the hallway to the kitchen. At this same moment, *Old Yeller* bares his teeth and snaps towards the boy on TV. He lurches back in pain at the reality that *Old Yeller* might be rabid. I am stunned and a little afraid by the developing fight between my mom and Lee.

My mom resembles a thermometer as the color rises in her face. Anger shoots from her eyes. She confronts him in the hallway, her breathing is short and heavy with rage. I watch in shock as I’ve never seen her confront him in this manner. Their mood seems to engulf the house like a low pressure system. She puts a finger to his chest and starts spewing her agitation. Like *Old Yeller*, it appears she has become rabid. Froth flies from her mouth as she backs Lee down the hall. Compared to her, he is menacing in size, but he is surprised and backing down at the moment. Spittle peppers his face and chest as she stammers half sentences of rage. She can’t fathom his objection of my cousin and me playing. He wouldn’t have to do a thing. She would be chauffeur.

“It is a ten minute drive. We live in Grand Rapids, not Chicago,” she barks. Her finger repeatedly pokes Lee in the sternum as if she is attempting to confirm her message in Morse code. Although he is clearly angered, his protests are crushed by wave after wave of her rabid attack. On the TV a trembling boy is slowly raising his rifle at *Old Yeller*, who is mad with rabies.

“FINE,” Lee yells in a last ditch effort to at least be heard. He grabs a beer from the fridge and slams the door shut. It bounces back open and bottles of condiments and salad dressings tumble to the floor. At this same moment a shot rings out from the TV and Old Yeller has met his fate.

Mom hurries me to the car and we sit in silence for the first five minutes. She turns to me smiling and says, “Did you ever think you might have to help protect your mom?”

I give her a nervous laugh, “It never occurred to me that you needed the help. I thought maybe Lee might.” She looks a little concerned and amused, obviously thinking of her hurricane-like tantrum.

Back in the house credits roll by on the TV signifying the end of the movie and apparently the fight.

It wasn’t their first fight, but it is the first time I saw my mom snap. As I look back today, I think that both Old Yeller and their marriage came to an end that day.



Sioux Nation

by Hannah Marko, Junior

After dark on our service learning trip, my boyfriend and I would sneak behind the Pine Ridge Reservation lodge and watch the stars. The night was cold and it encroached onto our exposed skin the longer we stayed in its presence. The ranch was sky and stars in every direction; it was deep and dark and powerful. The stars lit the entire atmosphere; it was like looking at a map of the galaxies. The South Dakota sky is how the sky was meant to look, when a Cosmo exploded 13 billion years ago, or when God painted it with his bare hands 6000 years ago, or when some sort of celestial vacuum poofed it into existence, or whatever conjecture you believe to be true.

Standing under the cobalt satin heavens of the reservation, my bare toes digging into the dry soil beneath me, I couldn’t help but agree with the Greeks. Gaia, the goddess that is Earth, stands tenaciously beneath me and every night Uranus, Father Sky, envelops his lover in a coat of moon and stars. I was witnessing the origin of creation, the world at its newest; there was no great boom, no omnipotent being, there was just the beautiful and unintentional start of something new.



JEAN'S TREE – monotype print
Patrick Maguire, Senior

Further and Further

Inspired by Margaret Atwood

Further and further away I seem
to drift from life, and inside
I feel myself grow cold, bare
and exposed, standing
like the deciduous tree,
dark and plain against cold white snow.

I cannot pretend
that I never
struggled to hold onto that which
once burned within me, blazing
like firelight.

It wasn't stripped away.
Rather, I let it go,
little by little, just as the autumn tree
slowly sheds its vibrant leaves.

So spare yourself, please;
I've already tried to explain:

This kind of emptiness consumes
me by my own
will; you cannot
save me with words or gestures of
genuine affection.

There is no cure for me, since, after all,
a rotting tree cannot blossom again.

- Ingrid Wolf, Junior

Prime Numbers

by Brianne Boedeker, Senior

0: The number of times I've said, "I love you," and meant it.

1: The number of times I've said, "I love you."

Lucas and I returned from the pier. He held me in his arms and dipped me over the water, kissing me while a warm wind played with my hair.

"You don't have to say it back. I just need you to know...that I love you, Brianna."

I felt so safe in his embrace. He already knew my secret, and I mistook the feeling of safety with love.

"I...I love you too, Lucas."

2: The number of boyfriends I've had.

Joe Welch and I dated in 10th grade. I just wanted a boyfriend. He just wanted to see a girl's chest.

Lucas and I dated for 7 months and 20 days (19 according to his count). I wanted to fall for him, but my heart wouldn't open.

3: The number of times someone told me, "I love you."

Joe told me he loved me on our two-month anniversary. I said, "Thank you," and started to cry tears of disgust, not joy.

Russell Collins told me he loved me on my 20th birthday. When he said it, he still had a girlfriend. Clearly that relationship went nowhere.

Lucas told me he loved me when I flew out to Superior, Wisconsin, in 2009. My heart really was more open than it has ever been, but I was not yet ready.

5: The number of people I've told my secret to before I stopped blaming myself.

I told my then best friend Lindsay in 10th grade after an inspirational speaker addressed the issue.

I told Russell during a heart-to-heart on the way back from the grocery store.

I told Carrie after yet another heartbreak. I was known for being a serial dater--I dated three men named Brad all at the same time--before I met Lucas, and my heart couldn't take it anymore. *Why won't this just happen? Where is he?*

I told my mom and dad a week before my 20th birthday. I needed to have it out in the open so I could move on. Now I'm 21.

7: The number of times it probably happened. Also, the age I was when it started.

Twice a year for three or four years seemed about right.

I was young, though. It's difficult to remember.

11: The number of rows back from stage I sat during *The Jane Doe Project*.

It was a play raising awareness to stop violence against women. At one point, the actresses said, "Stand up. Stand up!" over and over again until I had to stand up to leave. Carrie followed me to the bathroom and held me while I fell on the tile crying.

"Brianna, it wasn't your fault," she said. She helped me up and grabbed my hand. We walked back to her apartment. Our best friend Samantha walked in a minute later.

"Hey! Whoa. Brianna?" she asked, lowering her head and looking straight into my eyes. "Are you okay?"

I shook my head no. And then I told Samantha.

13: The number of years since Anthony snuck me into his room, put me in his closet, and took away my innocence.

Reclamation

Memory is vanishing
Into the ether,
Like a million text messages sent and never received,
Signals of who we are and where we come from,
More than words lost in translation,
Identity.

Everything is instant now:
Instant coffee instant breakfast instant oatmeal instant rice
Instant instances, come and gone in an instant.

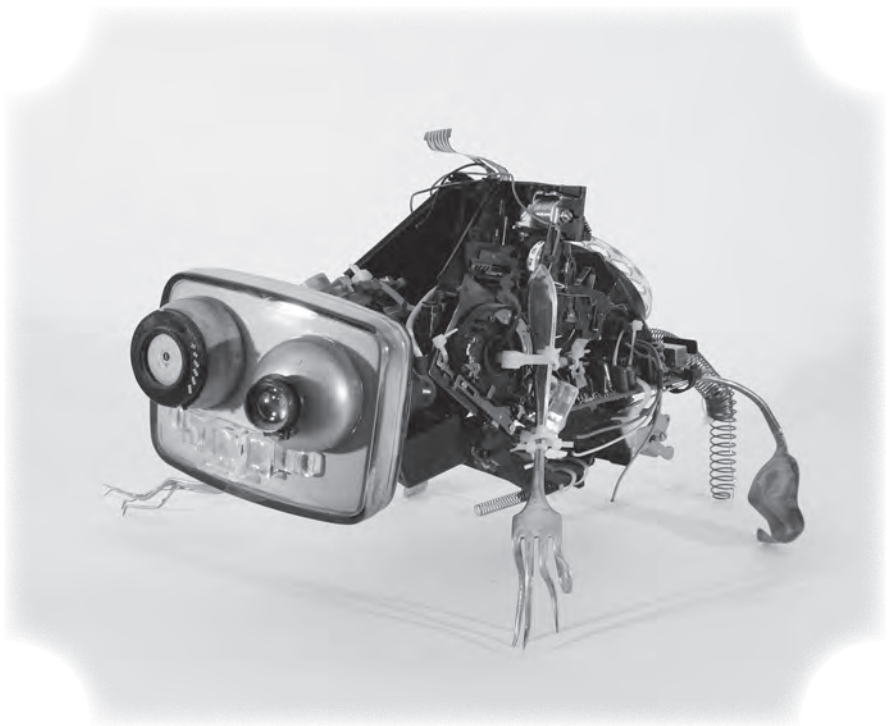
Identity isn't instant;
Identity is primeval, cerebral.
Identity isn't instant;
Identity is sensory, memory.

Memory is slow, measured.
Like a good soup it simmers,
Becoming more than its parts:
Something new,
Something old,
Us.

Strung out, we search for the next
blogsoundbytetwitpic30secondsoffame
BenniferBrangelinaOctomomheretodaygonetomorrow.
But memory is getting lost.
Machine gunning through life and ideas,
We lose track of memory; it fades,
Dulled by the flashy brightness of our screens.

Bring it back,
Those days when all there was
Was that moment.
The vibrant colors sights sounds smells of life, not pixilated representations,
Washed over the senses, intoxicating the mind,
Creating memory.

- *Will Eberle, Senior*



UNTITLED – found object
Jaymes Miller, Junior

Freefall

The moon watched,
the only spectator
of this attic tragedy.

The man paced,
the lead role,
plagued by some inherent stage fright.

His movements are that
of a ghost. Suddenly,
receiving his invisible cue, he falls.

Arms spread,
he is every role he's ever played.
What does release feel like?

Eyes fixed,
sobriquets shatter
out the back of his head.

His performance runs smoothly,
like some liquid,
he can't remember its name.

His reward? The applause.
Silence that could stitch
a caesura in the rhythm of the night.

Unable to bow, he's paralyzed
by his stunning execution.
If the world's a stage,

This moon floods nothing
with light. Release
feels like the ground.

- *Luke Haworth-Hoepfner, Freshman*

The Pulse

by Samantha Rinkus, Junior

In the cool night air there is a pulse. From the small building on the corner emanates a rhythm, barely audible above the chants and screaming of the crowd packed inside. I step onto the porch, and the wood beneath me shudders with the pounding of feet, and the bass of the speakers sends out an energy-ridden charge through the boards. As the door opens, my head is engulfed with the music, my ears filling with its sound, my body wrapped in the heat of the dance. As the door closes behind me, I am swept away with the crowd, sweaty bodies crushing in closer, bodies in mid-air as they leap to the beat. The lighting is dim, except for a single spotlight, cast in the middle of the room. Like a moth, I find myself drawn to the light. The air gets warmer as I get closer; then I am there. The light shines down like a flame, sending waves of heat from its core. Around its perimeter is a mass of people, and I join their ranks as they watch in awe.

In the center moves a lone figure. Her hair is matted to her face, and small droplets of sweat spray about as she sways to and fro. As this figure dances, the crowd around her begins to clap, emphasizing the beat which has become her existence. Clap. Clap. She brings her head down, concentrating as her feet carry her through the motions. Clap. Clap. More sweat sprays off as she whips upright, raising her hands triumphantly to the ceiling. Clap. Clap. Her audience stares at her feet, desperately trying to grasp some kind of pattern, some kind of repeatable step. We watch in awe as she moves, but she does not notice. She continues on, a step with every beat, her arms swaying through the air, her hair swirling around her with each leap, with each spin.

Then, just as quickly as it began, the music ends. For those brief seconds, the dancer looks about. Surprise is evident on her face as she realizes the audience that she has netted. But, as the pulse begins once more, the surprise is erased by pure joy and concentration. She begins again. But now the crowd closes in, and bodies are once again pressed close as feeble attempts to repeat the dancer's magic are made. Awkward sways and aimless turns now populate the floor as less experienced performers begin their rituals.

Voices are raised in chorus as the singing starts. Meaningless mumbles mix in with the practiced voices as all begin to pay tribute to the artist at hand. Outside, their voices raise above the speakers, carried across fields and through the trees. From that small building on the corner, where the lights are dimmed and bodies move together, there emanates a pulse, a steady beat. And later, when the music has stopped, and the lights are raised, the tired bodies will release themselves to the cool night air, and each will find its way back home.

. Four .

With a smear of red upon green, Autumn breathes, awakening.
Her colors starkly bright and unjealously warm, they leave us dazed in their glory.
Her hues paint change upon our veins, murals of what is to be known.

Winter eases in before we are ready with a sudden chill.
Death grips nature, leaves kiss branches farewell and part,
arriving to their moist, earthen graves,
but before the blackness grows too great, white relief falls
like soft cotton curtains upon weary, tear-stained earth.

Spring, she dawns with the ache of growing pains as nature cranes her neck to the sun,
arms outstretched and hair gently drifting through the fingers of whispering winds.
New leaves burst forth, dropping fresh dew upon soaked ground,
comforting its winter rawness.

Come Summer, air soft with warmth sings a melody sweet and yellow
as daffodils pregnant with pollen
while fuzzy dandelions await the spread of their seeds.
Clustered and loyal now, they will soon be dispersed into the untamed atmosphere.

In twilight, sprinkled with fireflies and citronella,
we rediscover the Beautiful within ourselves
that we forgot in our past flusterings.

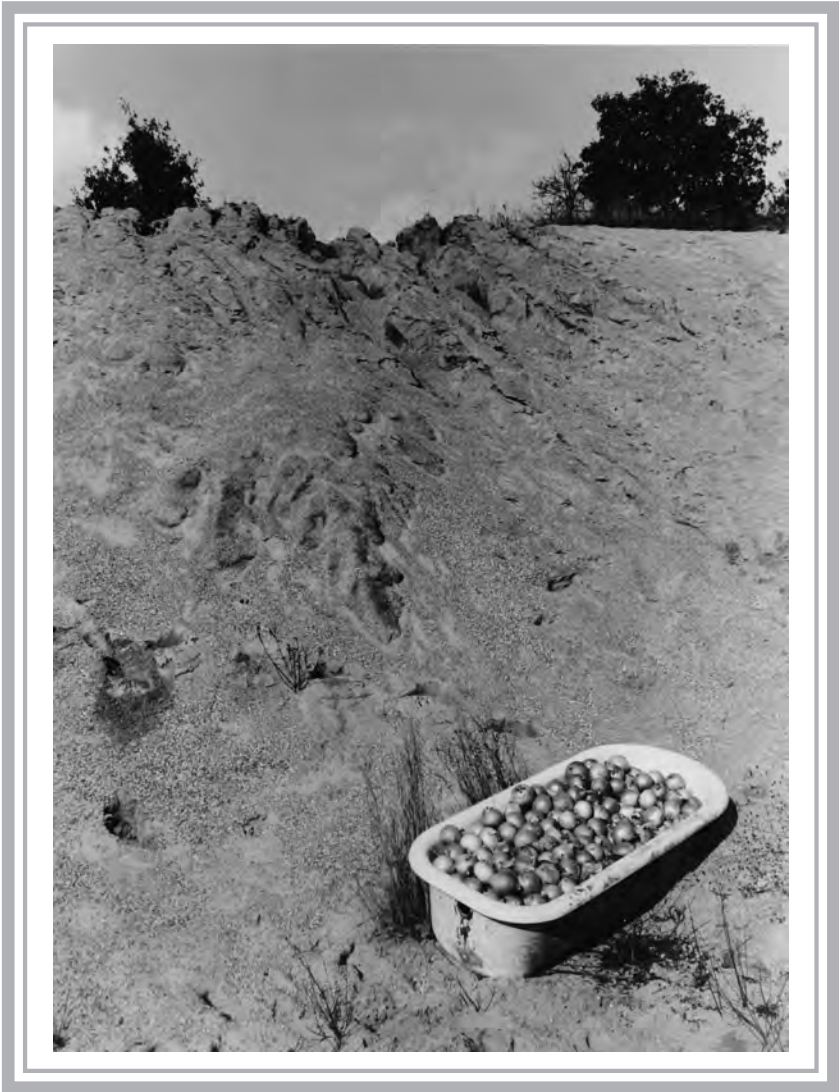
Now we rest in Summer, her arms like the comforting, worn T-shirt-clothed torsos
of those we have come to love
and allowed to love us.

I hold my heart in warm palms under tender lamplight,
watching my tears glisten upon it

as I realize

how beautifully red and raw it has become
through these Seasons.

- *Mary Carlson, Senior*



SELF-PORTRAIT – photograph
Jamie Velasco, Senior

6 AM in the Emergency Room

by Erin Lodes, Freshman

I walked into the room exhausted. The kind of tired that you feel behind your eyelids, a pressure that feels like you're expending enormous amounts of energy just keeping your eyes open. Your body feels foreign to you because you're not sure how it's still moving, how you're still functioning. My shift was over in an hour, which meant it was six in the morning, a time when most people were either still sleeping or just getting up for work.

The flow of patients had slowed down; there'd been a rush around three and we'd had to start putting people in the halls. But by now, the pace was calmer; the staff didn't look like we were trying to win the gold medal for the speed walking race in the Olympics... if there was such a thing.

She was sitting on the bed, my new patient. Her chart had listed several injuries consistent with a fight of some sort, and she was only fourteen. I had her pegged as one of those girls with a rough life, numerous older boyfriends and maybe a baby already. The kind of girl who would get into a fight with some other girl over a spilled beer or a guy. Sometimes it was so hard not to tell these girls what kind of life they were headed for, not to slap them to their senses when they started talking about their baby-daddys.

"Hi, my name is Sara, I'm going to be your nurse tonight, or today," I said, correcting myself (it was so hard to keep the days straight) and watching the girl turn to face me. The time and the fatigue weighing down my bones didn't stop me from taking in everything about her in my first look; it was a practiced nurse's gaze, one that missed nothing, because you never knew what you might need to know. She was young. Normally these girls looked older, a false agedness to their skin from drugs and drinking and too much make up. But the youth in her face hit me like a tidal wave, like someone had just crushed all the air out of my lungs. The beauty of her smooth skin was broken by the wounds that marred her baby face. Her lip was split open, and there was a gash across her cheek beneath an eye so swollen it was almost closed, the colors of the bruise like a devil's rainbow.

If the tragic familiarity of the injuries hadn't clued me in on the fact that she had been beaten up, the look in her eyes would have. They were so overcome with this intense sadness that a hand gripped my chest and squeezed. She looked so tired, like she could just fall asleep. The worst part was the acceptance. A kind of dead look to her eyes, hollowed out and empty.

The mother in me wanted to reach out and pull her into a hug. But I couldn't.

"Can you tell me what happened Danielle?" Gone was the practiced, slightly cheerful, always friendly, no nonsense, official and appropriate nurse's voice. It had been turned soft with this emotion choking my throat and making my heart ache.

Her eyes met mine for one tragic second and then she looked away, wrapping her arms tighter around the bony knees she had drawn up to her chest. She looked impossibly small and skinny, composed of paper skin and glass bones. I could pick her up and hold her in my arms, wrap myself around her, keep out all the bad. *Sara you are not her mother. Well her mother isn't doing anything!*

"Sweetheart is someone here with you?" She was fourteen; there was no way she came alone. If she had come with her father or step father I would know who to put at the top of my suspect list, whose hands to sneak glances at to check for abrasions and bruising. I realized then that this had happened enough for me to have a routine for it and I felt my body begin to fold in on itself.

"My little brother Brian."

"Your little brother? How old?" How could she be here with someone younger? Where were this girl's parents! She still wasn't looking at me, just curled into herself, rocking back and forth slightly, staring blankly at the wall.

"He's four." Now she turned to face me and for the first time I saw a hint of life in her eyes for the first time. "They took him somewhere else; they wouldn't let him stay with me. Where is he? Where did they take him?" There was a hint of desperation in her tone, fear and worry lacing it, and I realized he might be the only thing she cared about.

"I'm not sure. Probably to another room. Don't worry, he's fine." I could tell she wanted to relax, to feel relief, but it was as if the experience of it was foreign to her body. It didn't know how to loosen her shoulders and the grip of her arms around herself; it didn't know how to act like she was safe.

"Good," she said softly, under her breath, like a prayer to herself.

"Can you tell me what happened?" I asked again, not expecting an answer, hoping she didn't give me one, and praying that she would all at the same time.

"Doesn't matter." It wasn't the words that pierced me to my core it was the tone with which she said them. Like it was a fact, like it wasn't something she really cared about and didn't expect other people to care about either. And her face went dead again, staring vacantly at the wall.

I felt my stomach turn over and clench. "I'll be right back." Turning, I rushed out of the room and down the hallway to the bathroom, avoiding people as I went. I barely made it in time, gripping the edges of the toilet with white knuckles and heaving, choking, and gasping for air. All I could see were her eyes, dead, as if her life was nothing.

I wiped my mouth with toilet paper and flushed, curling up against the stall, leaning my head against the cool metal surface of its wall. Drawing my knees up to stop my heart from breaking, I put my head in my hands and I cried. Tears for all the pain no one was stopping.

When War Wakes, We Wake with War

Stopping the war
is not like stopping a song or a bicycle.

War is plural like news is singular.
You might as well say
America or beauty or any word
so big it has no meaning.
War is everywhere like water isn't.

Those who've seen the war
say it looks like Antarctica, but dustier.
Where war is things happen to you
direct, impersonal. War is what does.

We lie down with war as others rise with war,
each time zone carrying war into the sun.
At dawn war balloons fat on the horizon.
On the half-hour, on the quarter
foreign news bullets croon goodnight, goodnight.
Somewhere it's already tomorrow's war.

- Katherine Marty, Junior



STATIC – collagraph print *Liz Maxian, Sophomore*

Roads

There's nothing like an open road
to ignite freedom within us.
The curve that must be unwound,
the lines we must draw for ourselves.

The smooth grayness arches
in the pit of our stomachs.
The black tar
simmering in the wild sun,
draws us deep into contemplation,
burning the eager treads of our tires.
There is no going back—just turn
and go forward.

We used to have a map
stapled to the basement wall, the roads
laid out like intricate red lace.
We would mark the ones we had driven,
trace new ones with our fingertips,
till it was time for a fresh map.

- Sarah Riley, Junior

Mother

She can hear the cry of her bones,
they're tired, she knows
and want to go home.
She's heard their ache for some time.
A little longer, she sings—
she must finish serving her penance.

The Father gave her a penance
to relieve the sins of her bones.
And so, for maybe the last time,
she kneels and prays while she sings.
By doing this she knows
that in the end she'll get to go home.

Empty now is her home—
it has been for some time.
The walls echo as the kettle sings,
accompanied only by the rattle of bones.
It is for this that she serves the penance.
The emptiness is her fault, she knows.

And now the Father too knows
the secrets of her home,
secrets she has kept for a long time,
for which she offers her penance.
When alone with her bones
she cries softly, and sings.

Sitting in the church, she sings
of sins she must erase through this penance.
Memories be gone, only her bones
will remind her now. A bone knows
the secrets of its home.
A bone knows a lifetime.

She questions time—
if there's enough to finish the penance,
how many more songs she'll sing,
how to break out of her bones,
when she'll know
it's time to go home.

This will be the last time she sings.
Bones sigh, a penance of their own.
All know, are ready to forget, to go home.
- *Danielle Krolewicz, Senior*

The Writer Leaves a Love Note

He never told anyone, but he hated
writing poetry on Sunday nights,
when he felt the least sure
about the world.

So he drank beer in brown bottles,
scared as hell of growing older, blues
from B.B. King spinning on the old turntable
found cheap in a second-hand store,
wrote a letter to his girl instead.

The way B.B. wrenched the feeling
out of that guitar, bending notes till they
howled in pain, it made him want to throw
down his pen and move south to Memphis,
just a six-string and his soul, if only
she was that easy to please.

The letter made him think of
that week they hiked the Smokies,
glimpsing eternity
up in those hazy peaks,
making love in the shade
of the hemlock trees, hearing
the low, throaty rumble of
black bears in the distance.

He asked her then to run away with him,
but she'd only pushed his shoulder
playfully, threw a clump of moss at his face,
laughed her flirty, easy laugh that
always made him drunk with desire.

Nestled in the bosom of the mountains
her chin resting in the groove
of his breast-bone, he'd found the
freedom that always dances
just out of reach. He'd have

given anything to feel that
way forever, but she never
did get it, couldn't understand
why there wouldn't be
any more letters.

She couldn't see how a love as unsure
as anything else could never stop him
from touching pen to paper, from trying
even on Sunday nights
to steal another bit of fire
from the world.

- *Kyle Austin, Senior*



THOUGHTS IN A CROWDED ROOM – digital photograph
Owen Fifield, Junior

Buzz Goes the Needle *by Hannah Marko, Junior*

It's the buzzing that gets me, lying flat on that leather pseudo operating table. "One, two, three, and here we go." The familiar sound of the buzzing envelops me and I embrace the sting of needle into flesh.

I had gotten my first tattoo years earlier, a peace sign. I was nothing more than a girl, eager to embrace the ripeness of college life and freedom. The buzzing meant nothing to me then, merely the sound of oncoming pain, the burn of ink tainting clean skin.

Buzz goes the needle, drilling into me. *Buzz*, the sound of permanence. There is something about willingly adding permanence to your body and life, making a decision you know you can never undo. It's empowering. After all the things I wish I could forget and I can't, it's empowering to have something undyingly stable and imperishable attached to me that I did on my own free will. It's not the scar I got from being bitten by a dog when I was 12, it's not the burn on my elbow from my mother's tea kettle, or the image of the dead body of my best friend's grandmother that I just can't seem to forget; it's something I made permanent on my own. It's embracing eternity, accepting yourself and your decisions for good, bad, or worse. It's coming to an understanding that you will have to live the rest of your life with who you are now as the building block for who you will become. No regrets. This is who I am.

I was eighteen when I heard the buzzing for a second time, sitting in the veterinary office with my mother. I had had Brown Sugar, a Retriever/Chow mix, since I was two.

Growing up as the youngest and only girl in a family of boys, Sugar was my best friend, my refuge. In her old age she began to develop arthritis. Her once fox-like features had grown ragged and shaggy. Her once silky red coat had become unkempt and rough. Her underbelly was white with age, her fur and skin spread thin over her rib cage and chest.

The day we brought her in she could no longer stand up on her own. I remember watching her struggle to gain posture on the cream carpet of our living room. She was once so noble and proud; she was once unstoppable. Leaping over three foot tall boxes in our attic to catch mice, capturing squirrels that got too close to our fence line and laying them at my feet, neck snapped and bloody. She was a warrior princess, the unstoppable goddess of the backyard.

I don't remember how she looked lying on the operating table before she was put to sleep. I don't remember what I was wearing, or how long we were there. I remember the buzzing of the razor the vet used to shave off a patch of fur on her paw to inject her with her end. It startled us all, an obtrusive cackle in a room of silent understanding.

Buzz went the razor. Her fur fell in a fat clump on the silver table beneath her, it's dull, lackluster threads a somber contrast to the polished metal. Sugar stared up at me, two black beads in a nest of red hay. She was a lioness, she was a night fox. She was terrified and weak and humble. The end of the drone of the razor left the room still and calm. Then, the sting of needle into flesh. And she was gone.

My body lies tense on the table, clammy palms and fingers gripping at the leather. The white noise of the buzz narrates my life. Its hum sings to me, comforting yet unforgiving. Its familiarity cradles me; there is a certain peace in its permanence. There is certain calmness in knowing there is nothing you can do.



4 Past 4

Sing me a song, blackbirds of Derry,
Screams of the Bogside
serenade to the rhythm of machine guns
as hybrid cars whiz by where
armored behemoths once reigned,
shadows of tear gas and iron
exhaled from the cement,
rubber bullets blasting my lungs.
When atop their bastion of rubble, beardless boys cried,
"Republic!"
Feet now crack broken Guinness glass,
fingers outline graffiti scratches
"Official-
 Provisional-
 Continuity-
 Real-"
 No, boys, real is the ghost wrapped in a peace shroud,
a scorched handkerchief of mercy,
inherited history, hereditary hate,
"Up against the wall!"
Lose the beret, blackbirds,
put away the petrol and paint -

- Erica Meyers, Senior



JAYMES MILLER
monotype print

*Patrick Maguire
Senior*

Waters Above the Heavens

It was raining as he stepped off the street
and through the door, down three stairs and
down again another three, smoke of cigarettes
(and other scents) wafting by, encircling
the storm-drenched sojourner and lifting his spirits—
like incense—as the haze mingled with the overcast
afternoon grays.

His bones still creaked to the Edvard Grieg he had
heard in the falling rain outside on the street, but
as he shook the wet drop from the tip of his nose,
he grinned . . .

. . . Here he was an alien, and because of it—
precisely because of it, he felt at home.
Hot jazz—brass and sax—swirled 'round.

- Mike English, Senior

1977

Elvis Presley

is dead

born in a shack

went to church for a while

got a guitar

Amazing Grace

darkdangerousdelightful

sexy

giratingpulsatingpounding

sexy

tossing sweat rags at deliriousdroolinggirls

gold coins from the King

angrygunlovingtelevisionshooting

maker of millions selling himself

and buying himself

a castle for the king

Graceland – doped and died there

next to his toilet in the land of grace,

a stone's throw away from an old shack where

a young boy

got a guitar

and went to church for a while.

- *Rosemary Steers, Senior*

Down with Nature

by Allison Ferguson, Junior

Whether you are driving in your car or sitting in front of your television, you are inundated with advertisements touting the delights of Michigan. Between the breathtaking landscapes plastered onto billboards and the dulcet tones of Tim Allen compelling you to appreciate “Pure Michigan” over the airwaves, it’s hard to resist turning off your cell phone and heading for the nearest lake. Though my own experience with nature preceded Michigan’s latest attempt at boosting tourism, these same sorts of reasons are what motivated my mother to take my father and me on our first camping trip during my sophomore year of high school. What follows is a narrative of my first and perhaps worst camping adventure.

~*~*~

The red Corolla, stuffed to the brim with hastily purchased camping gear, backs out of our drive and speeds toward the interstate. My father makes excellent time, but it still looks doubtful we’ll reach Harrisville before sundown. I’m awake for the first couple hours of the trip, idly flipping through my *Smithsonian*, but soon enough the Benadryl kicks in and I zonk out. The next thing I know, we’re stopped at the front entrance of the Harrisville State Park. My dad’s inside, being warned about the dangers of smuggling firewood, while my mother waits outside. She’s busy shaking Chihuahua puke out of a bath towel, while the guilty party, Maddie, stands next to her, drool dribbling down her chin.

As we crawl into the woods, braking constantly to look for the sign pointing us to our campsite, I’m not focusing much on the dense evergreens, but the lack of fellow nature enthusiasts. At most, I see six occupied campsites, all containing either monstrous RVs or smaller pop-ups. Our tent is brand new and could sleep ten people, but it still seems that we will be the poorest, most redneck people at the campgrounds.

Eventually, we find our campsite. It’s the one that my dad had his heart set on, the one that wasn’t vacant until now, late in October. The space is right on Lake Huron, and nothing but loose sand. It’s around eight in the evening, the light rapidly dwindling. Desperately in need of shelter, we search the car for the tent. We fish its packaging out of a sea of sacks containing paper plates and long, menacing forks used for roasting marshmallows. The headlights of the Toyota glowing, my dad gets to work assembling the complex three-room tent.

~*~*~

Thirty minutes later, my dad’s French is drowning out the crashing of the lake just yards behind us. All of the tent’s components (Rod A, Slot B, Peg C) are strewn across the sandy campsite, the nylon body precariously close to tripping up my father. Having won a few drafting awards at state level, my family regarded me as their personal engineer. This is why I put my life on the line to help my dad put the tent together.

“You think you can do better? FINE! Sonuva pup, you won’t get it either!”

Reassigned to the role of nylon proper-upper, Dad stands there, balancing the top of the tent on his head, as Mom and I get to work, reattaching parts to their proper positions. Soon enough, the tent is standing on its own power, and all that’s left to do is pound the stakes into the ground. This is easier said than done, since stake versus sand is a battle that plastic pegs have no chance of winning. We make do, using leftover firewood to anchor the corners of the tent.

We eat a hearty meal of cheese balls at the picnic table, then shuffle to the communal restrooms to get ready for bed. The doors are propped open, with countless insects clinging to the damp sinks. The stalls are chilly, and smell of burning wood. Shivering, my mother and I wander back to our tent, disoriented in the dark.

~*~*~

I awake in the middle of the night to the whirring of some sort of blower. Warm air is blasting onto my head, but my body encased in the sleeping bag is a block of ice. I shift slightly, and Maddie pokes her head out of my bedding. Without my glasses, I can barely make out my parents a few feet away, shivering so violently that it looks like they’re having seizures.

“I-i-i-it’s s-s-so c-c-c-c-cold,” my mother chatters out, nearly biting her tongue off in the process.

“N-n-not so b-b-b-bad,” my father grumbles. He is regretting his decision to go camping so late in the season, but doesn’t want to admit his mistake.

“T-t-t-this s-space heater i-isn’t h-h-helping,” Mom moans, gesturing at the device next to my skull. “Allie, l-let’s s-s-sleep in the c-c-car.”

Not wanting to exit my cocoon, but realizing I just might wake up sans toes in the morning, I awkwardly get to my feet, scooping up the fat Chihuahua. Mom and I unlock the Corolla, turn the heat up full blast, and take shelter there for the rest of the evening. Dad remains outside, determined to “man it out.”

~*~*~

At daybreak, my mom “loses” her Coumadin under the front seat of the car. Of course, we simply cannot stay another moment in Harrisville. We must return immediately to Muir, where medicine, real food, and warm beds await. My father, the kind, considerate husband that he is, agrees (“Only because you ladies can’t take a little cool weather.”) Faster than you can say “Pure Michigan,” we pack up the tent and sleeping bags, stuff them back into the trunk to socialize with the rest of the redundant supplies, and speed away. Reflecting on our night in the woods, we only hope to make it to a McDonald’s before they stop serving breakfast.

Necropolis

Processional:
Mourners strike marks
By the carnival lake,

Asking why, meaning how,
Knowing both, tolling
Hymns to Pharaoh

And the shrine
MYSTERY
Of the unheard corpse—

Algae bones building
Statues of peace
Upon rocks, ropes,

Their siren lilts unseen
In reflections and mud
Filling ancient veins

As baubles shimmer
In purgatory sweat,
Bodies dance with light

To hallow the
Shore, gilded broad
Descent to the red sea

Of vicious baptism
In new Babels: scattered
Ribs thrust from weeping sludge

And sandy feet
The dirge's coming rinses off
The searing strands,

New paths, old roads,
Fresh plotted soles
Transfigure to silt—

Dry bodies
Shine on the glass
Crypt, the carnivore lake

But he who loved life
Found none with the living.

- Jarrod Irwin, Freshman

Take On Me

Inspiration:
the mutation of an idea
into something better,
unchanged since forever
captured in the moment
of a black and white photograph.
Colored to perfection
like an amazing haiku
about a tree growing toward the sky.

Cultivation:
the key to life,
callused hands of mother earth
compared to a sweet girl
in a yellow dress.

Destination:
the end of a journey, or its beginning.
Smiles from the Cheshire cat
given to Alice, disappearing from sight.
Elongated into forgiveness,
memorized but soon forgotten

- Michael Lake, Freshman



CHARLIE – terra cotta
*Dorothy Rabourn, Sophomore,
and Candace Rabourn, Senior*

Chartreuse

Did you ever notice that Chartreuse first visits
in the few new moments of spring's opening eye?

Not yellow—brilliant ball of gas that sears and burns,
Yellow, whose heat steams and blinds, and fries food on the vine.
Not green—overfed, nearly-dead velvet yard-carpets—
Grass de Menthe drunk and staggering stupid from granular gluttony.

Yellow and Green,
just there, destined for nothing,
going nowhere,
just vacantly being Yellow and Green.

Ah, but the playful awakening of Chartreuse!
Step outside your ordered mind and take note of Chartreuse,
because you won't want to miss the brightness, the magic
of short-lived mystical, magical, maniacal Chartreuse.

Chartreuse is in the middle, half-way there,
like the newness of middle age or the birth of being old
with a million mistakes made and remembered,
but mostly buried in the white drifts of the past.
Forget them. They were your Yellow and Green.

Chartreuse transforms, sustains, and remembers,
lingers and lives in you;
not strictly this or that, it's a bit disorganized
and no one seems to know what to do with it.
Not staying long, even Chartreuse
doesn't know where to belong.

Chartreuse is just there, undecided, untidy and confusing,
but because you don't know it turns green,
it disappears without your knowing,
and you miss its blazing glory.

Chartreuse is a new brilliance that happens after a deep dreamy sleep,
and like the first few moments of spring, it's not yellow or green.
Chartreuse is a time to bask in being in between.
It's the few new moments of a sleepy opening eye.
It happens quickly—before things turn green and die.

- Rosemary Steers, Senior



HUMAN NATURE

At the bottom of the fruit I swim
taking in the juices and pumping them through your sweet skin.
You travel my body as if we were one,
and while I can neither argue nor agree
I can always just dive into the sore summer's dusty sun
with her clouds, all grey and bruised
and her knuckles that will never show who has won.
But sometime the nectar isn't enough
so I dry off in the seeds and plant them each in your tongue
where your buds can taste their sweet spice
and take such delight in the crops I have spun.

- Sarah Branz, Freshman



UNTITLED – woven digital print
Jamie Velasco, Senior

Somewhere in Time

Today I am sitting on a tree branch on Skyline Street
which might as well be the lobby of a hotel in Mackinaw Island,
watching the children toss their toys at the trampoline.
I am dreaming of my golden dress again
and the store in Gloria where I will be fitted for the future.

A small boy and I recognize each other
from our past life spent together in Alexandria.
He and I weep over the velvety robes, the looming statues and the
fallen triangles,
and collapse upon the hot sand
remembering the Ancient Library
and the faded walls
with the richest culture.

We will meet again in 2,000 years
when this is all figured out.
We will both need that much time,
based on the history past,
the loss of antique arts and the tarnished pearl.
I give it at least two millennia
before the ground embraces us together in the sand
and we become one in the next age.

- Brianna Boedeker, Senior

In the Cards

The Number

When I was eight, I liked to pretend I was a spy. Not as sophisticated as Harriet, more of a watcher, analyzer, note taker.

The Jokester

At a funeral, it is customary to wear black, a sign of reverence for the deceased, a crowd united in color and mourning.

There is no joy at the thing, at least not in the Western world. No smiles, laughter, jokes, color. Anything but tears is a sign of disrespect.

The Color

I want a better way to remember the dead. Black is a void, a way to erase, to be rid of. There is no lamenting in black—it's all business. A way to forget.

I want a better way to remember the dead.

The Club

In Ireland, it was common for women—the wife, mother, child of the deceased—to let out a cry. It would start low and deep inside, gradually growing louder into an enveloping, painfully tragic cry. They would take their despair for a walk down the streets. Keening, it's called. The town would follow behind, for miles, echoing the cry, singing, sharing the sadness, lamenting, grieving, remembering the dead.

The Spade

I would spy on my younger brother. I wanted to catch him doing something wrong and tattle. That was how this spy game worked. Except it didn't, because he never acted up. Until one day he got so tired of me following him that he squashed, in his bare, innocent hands, a baby, barely turned frog.

"I saw its guts," I revealed to my mother later, a testimony to be used as evidence to his crime, to incarcerate him into Grounded or, at the very least, Time Out. "They were black."

How do frogs mourn their dead? With a low ribbit? Or a hop into the black, forgetting void?

- *Danielle Krolewicz, Senior*

Walking

by Amy Waldherr, Junior

I was seventeen, and it was probably around 3:00 am. I decided to walk the highway instead of 15 Mile. I guess I was feeling adventurous or bold or something. It was actually just another really stupid idea. I seemed to have plenty of them that year. The highway ran through the countryside. No streetlights. No buildings. No sidewalks. I was on my way to my boyfriend's house on a school night. Denim skirt and a tank top in the cool air of October. The most common vehicles in passing were semi-trucks. I could only imagine the grubby men inside them, touching themselves as they saw me walking down the shoulder. Night is incredibly quiet, particularly at those awkward hours – the hours when only drunks are out driving, filled with the potential to play god. I walked briskly, trying to keep good time. There was a car approaching me, and I could tell only because of the distant illumination of headlights behind me. While I saw nothing ahead of me, the car saw me ahead of it. While the car saw me, it did not see the large animal in the middle of the road. While the deer saw the car, it froze. And so did I once the metal made contact with the hide. The car continued to drive. And drive. And drive. And it never turned around. And the carcass of the deer spun in front of me with a thunderous thud and a ricochet of splatter. I shielded my face with my naked arms, cowering from the blood and gore that may very well be all over my front. Suddenly, there was silence. My eyes carefully inspected my skin and clothes for particles of red, but I somehow remained pristine. A heavy sigh of relief left my lungs in slow motion. *Whoooooosh*. I inhaled sharply and looked forward. The car seemed miles away, and the deer seemed to bow at my feet. Steam was rising from its body. A steady and forceful wave of nausea swept over me, and I gagged. I put my hand over my mouth and stepped around the carcass. I'll never know who was more terrified. I'll never know who felt worse about what happened. But I do know that it was my fault—me and my stupid denim skirt at 3am. I continued walking toward Phelps road, leaving the grotesque past behind me like I had so many other times before. I would never tell anyone about it, even after seeing numerous dead deer along the highway for years to come.

Shadowed – Georgia O’ Keeffe in Photograph

*after “Georgia O’ Keeffe, Carmel, California” by Ansel Adams,
Gelatin Silver Print*

They watch me move
under tissue paper skin, crinkled
below arched brows.
Your eyes like onyx,
touched by ember’s glow.
See me turn, sway, and circle your likeness –
an inquisitive dance.
Each time drawing closer like a bird of prey,
like your burning black eyes.
I want to peck apart the camera’s lens and touch
your grey leather skin,
see your eyes move, before
he stopped time and your stare.
To see the world through your eyes
of granite and glass,
discover the red tree burning in yellow skies.
Show me, I plead
to your black.
Your pursed lips utter no sound, the wrinkles
stitched over dry marble skin.

Your hands so composed,
your stare unrelenting.

- Elise Crafts, Senior



UNTITLED – oil on canvas
Margaret Schmitz, Senior

Untitled

by Lindsey Steffes, Graduate Student

Strands of colored lights hung from the awnings of tents, illuminating the long dusty path. The hands of gypsies moved over displays of blown glass and hemp jewelry, exchanging crumpled dollar bills for handmade goods. A low, steady beat of drums could be heard echoing in the steamy sea of people wandering the corridor. He came down the path toward me, head hanging down, shuffling his feet, turning up pebbles between his bare toes. He looked up, impatient with my chore, “What is it that you are doing?” He motioned toward my hands, my fingers smoothing plaster between the cracks of ceramic shards. “What are you doing in this heat, with these people?” We were sculpting armor from broken tiles, chipped plates and dishware, placing the tiniest crumbs in place with plaster and glue, careful to piece them together tightly, sealing the finest cracks. “We are preparing hearts for the journey.”

* * *

He was looking for secrets in those days. He saw acres of soft, dusty moth wings waiting to be swept away by the warm, summer winds, revealing truth. In the pre-dawn hours we lay smoking cigarettes on a mattress in an empty room, boxes of our belongings stacked, yet to be opened and unpacked. The energy of our bodies radiated, overlapping at knees and elbows, the intimacy between us broken by the long pauses between our breaths. “My mother calls me Lydia,” I told him. He looked at me like a ghost in his dreams and his body grew warm. He knew a secret—that Lydia once drowned a kitten, a baptism gone wrong. This knowledge satisfied him and his lungs slowed to a shallow pulse as he slipped into heavy sleep. I watched him dream, a dream of smokey images, of steam and iron. He dreamed of Tijuana and trains and women and soft, round shoulder blades. There was a strong wind, and I saw myself follow him, watched a train leave me behind somewhere in the Midwest. The smell of burning coal and the sweet tune of a mandolin crept from his breath. I slept close to him, our lips almost touching.

* * *

The train was bright when we boarded. Beams of light crept over the horizon and spilled slowly over the dusty window panes. Soft rays illuminated the long aisle leading us to seats near the back of the railcar. We leaned against each other as the engine gained momentum. Each railroad tie chimed beneath us—one-two-three—one-two-three, until we were moving so swiftly all the noise and commotion combined into one rhythmic song. Under our breath we hummed a melody that grew to a crescendo as we watched the station disappear. As we neared the edge of town, our hands clasped tightly, sealed neatly at the palms like a ceramic heart.

* * *

The plains of Oklahoma were flat and endless, the sky clear and still. Our meals came served on chipped plates with no salt. People were boarding at each stop with gray faces, men who worked in dry fields, women who baked bread with no yeast. He was becoming ill too, his hand limp in mine. I layed a map across my legs and showed him. We were half-way there. I pointed to a town three stops away, “In Meriden we will stop and have a bath.” But, he couldn’t hear me anymore. He pushed the map away and pressed his head against the window pane, his dull eyes staring blankly at rows of corn. The train kept moving.

* * *

His face was gray like the others when the sun began to set, and I could feel the skin on his forearm was cold. He had been writing all afternoon in a notebook, scribbling madly for hours. He didn’t speak, but sipped cold, black coffee from a jar. Just outside of Meriden I asked, “And what did you write about today?” There was a cold, distant space between us now, but he spoke gently. “There are moments,” he paused, gazed down and rubbed his eyes. “Just the usual.” The train began to slow. Passengers shifted their luggage about and a long, solemn whistle blew as we approached the station. I took a shallow breath and began to gather my things. As the train came to a stop he rose from his seat and climbed past my knees into the aisle. I watched him disappear through a metal door and into the dining car. His notebook lay open on his empty seat, each page as clear and barren as the plains we traveled.



VASE WITH COILS – stoneware
Jim Zordan, Junior

Words

Words, words, words
black and white,
letters pushed together
neatly organized on white wall.

Words

Far away smeared grey lines.
Squinted at closely,
vivid images appear.

Words

Strong in **bold**.
Special in *italics*
Important when underlined.

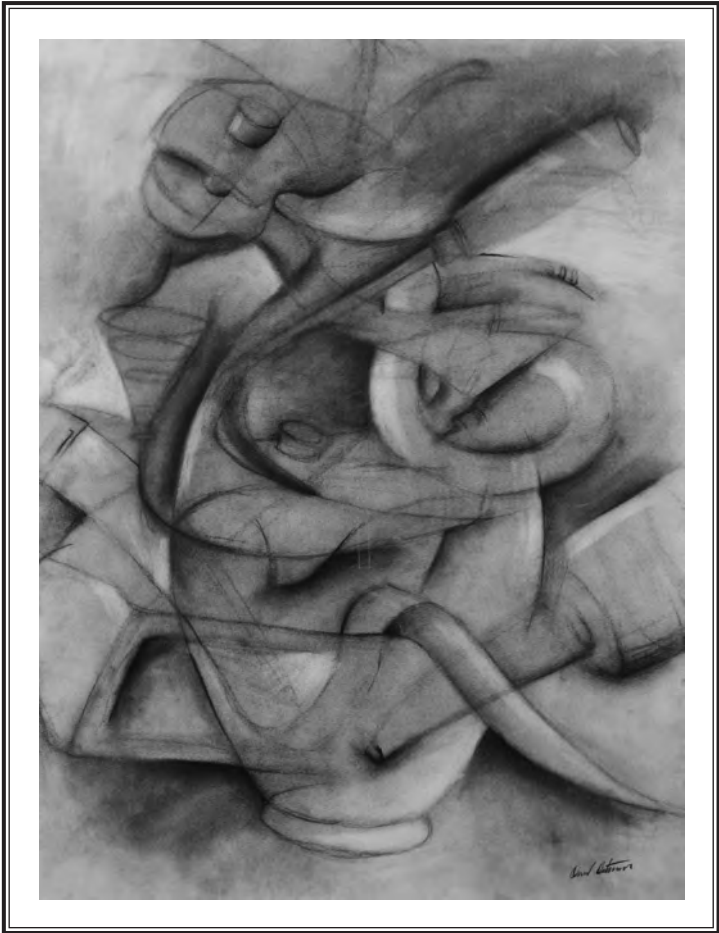
Words

Gravitate.
Grab and pull reader's eye,
want to look away but it's captivating.

Words

articulated preciously,
firmly emphasized,
carry ample gratitude.

- Sarah Robinson, *Sophomore*



WHAT CAN YOU SEE? – charcoal drawing
David Besteman, Freshman

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