



Saint Joseph Vignette 2020

Vignette

2020

Volume 59

Saint Joseph

A College Preparatory School

Brothers of the Sacred Heart in Metuchen, NJ since 1901



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Shining Memory

As I ran down with newfound friends,
Thrilled for the long-awaited night
Yet sad for the ultimate end,
We noticed the sun shining bright.

Watching the sun's strength diminish,
We purchased sweet, coveted crepes.
As we knew all trips must finish,
We took pleasure in this escape.

Our time at the beach was well spent,
Ending the night as all nights end —
By viewing the sun's slow descent
Through vibrant hues in a rich blend.

The pleasant Portuguese sunset —
One that I will never forget.

Matthew DaSilva '22
poetry



Seaside Glimmer

Every time I visit Portugal, my family and I always look forward to snacking on crepes and drinking coffee while watching the sun slowly sink behind the horizon. In an attempt to capture our excitement and the beauty of the moment, I snapped this photo of my brother kicking sand in the air, enjoying one of our final nights in this beloved country.

Matthew DaSilva '22

Senses on the Seashore

With the sound of waves on the beach,
With the cool sea breeze in my hair,
With the ocean just out of reach,
I can taste the salt in the air.

With my worn backpack in my hand,
With hot sunlight striking my skin,
With my feet in the grainy sand,
I wait for the day to begin.

With the seagulls' noisy call,
With the distinct smell of the shore,
With the smack of a volleyball,
I remember what I'm here for.

I drop my bags, pick a good place,
And relish the sun's warm embrace.

Matthew DaSilva '22
poetry



Beach

I took this photograph during the summer of 2019 at Point Pleasant Beach, NJ. On this special day, I took part in a large beach volleyball tournament consisting of over fifty teams and two hundred players. The perfectly aligned lines were formed by a sandboni and the uniqueness of the lack of footprints stunned me.

Michael Weikum '22

Brothers in the Shell

Serenity. Synergy. Satisfying. As a third-year rower and a member of the varsity quad, these three words define my experience on the crew team. Although it is physically strenuous, for me, rowing is a sport that eases my mind after a long day of classes. The calm, peaceful waters of the Raritan River, the picturesque shore lined with trees, and the rhythmic beating of oars as we move, allow me to step out of the concerns of tomorrow's math test and into the brotherhood of the rowing shell. Rowing is a sport that discourages the individual and exalts the whole. To stay afloat, every motion made must be in perfect union. Once inside the quad, I place my trust in my boatmates, and they in me so that we can move down the river with elegance and power. Without this mutual trust, a group of rowers can quickly become a group of swimmers as a boat flips over. Although it requires hours of conditioning, to me, rowing is also an immensely fulfilling sport. Just last year, my quad raced in the Stotesbury Cup Regatta, one of the largest high school regattas in the world. Even as we raced down boathouse row in front of a crowd of thousands, I was calm and comforted in the fact that our hard work would pay off in a major way. Rowing is a sport that I know I can always return to and the river, a place I can call home.

Jos Parayil '21
nonfiction



Boats

Pre-adrenaline rush, featuring: the Crew Team

This photo was taken of the Saint Joseph High School crew team during a race. The adrenaline rush initiated at the start of the race can be related to the steady, yet fierce flow of the water.

Michael Weikum '22

Flying Blind

Darkness. I stare up into the gaping hole to the void I have yet to explore. It is an ever-present frontier that lingers above my head, patiently awaiting visitors. A crisp bitterness falls down about me, shrouding me in the scent of cardboard and dust. The metal rungs before me are steep and slim, and every footstep must be heavy and deliberate. My eight-year-old self hesitates as I begin my ascent. There's no turning back now.

My mother has tasked me with retrieving the heavy box of Christmas tree ornaments from the attic. It is a daunting task, as I hardly have enough strength to pull the retractable ladder down from the ceiling. Alas, the artificial Christmas tree needs decorating, and someone has to do it. Upon immersing myself in the darkness, my hands claw their way to a string, yanking until a series of yellow-tinted light bulbs illuminate the low A-frame ceiling. Crawling on the plywood, a faded green duffle bag catches my eye. The zipper is gritty and the canvas is dusty, but the content of the bag is in pristine condition, frozen in time. As I draw it near, I think to myself, "what will come next?"

I pull an officer's cap from the bag and inspect the vertical metal bars centered above the visor before placing it on my head. Infatuated by the cap, I catch a metallic glint from an object inside the bag. A silver eagle trailing a red white and blue banner rests in my tender palm.

"Whatcha got there?" booms a deep voice from behind me. I feel around to see my father leaning on the ladder with his torso just barely in the attic. The oversized cap sags loosely on my brow.

"I don't know" I respond as I hold up the glistening medal. "What is this?"

"That's my Eagle Scout medal," he says with a subtle grin. "It's the highest achievement one can achieve in Boy Scouts."

I sit there fascinated as my father explains the process and stringencies required to achieve this prestigious rank. My utmost respect for him coupled with his passion for excellence inspired in me the desire to emulate him.

Nine years later, the dream of my eight-year-old self had come true. The hard work, leadership positions, and community service were all minuscule puzzle pieces necessary to formulate the bigger picture. With my own hat firmly in place, the paperwork had been signed, and all the legalities were completed; but it wasn't until my father's warm embrace, teary-eyed with pride, registered in me what had happened. My journey is complete; I am officially an Eagle Scout. Now it's time for the next chapter. What will come next?

Andrew Repak '20
nonfiction

Vowels and Verses

When I begin to sing, the consonant becomes
A narrowed vowel. Keeping my lips tight,
The vowel flows out softly. Next word comes.

By using vowel placement that seems right,
The lyrics come out effortless and clear,
Continuous, controlled, and pleurably light.

The undulating melody is sweet to hear,
Produced within the keyboard's tuned-up strings,
My voice, a variation on the theme. Then near

A passage draws where raw emotion springs,
But all of it's pre-written in the score,
Such that I needn't alter how I sing.

An excess of emotion, or of vigor,
Would hardly capture what the script intends.
The melody, it then repeats once more,

Before a change of key, with which it blends.
The climax of the song approaches now,
And then a stratospheric note with which it ends.

I know that I must hit that note, but how?
It sits just at the limit of my range.
I know! I'll make the vowel tight and round.

Since it is one that I can slightly change.
While shifting "aw" to "ah" may be a subtle choice,
It's simply best for how the song's arranged.

Besides, it just sounds nicer with my voice.
My best rendition of this song thus far? Doubtful.
But just to hit that note makes me rejoice.

It all comes down to how I sing those vowels.

William Sorge '20
1st Place, Senior Poetry
Terza Rima

The World Was Wider

Whenever I hear the phrase “I was born in the wrong generation,” I can’t help but cringe a bit. In the modern age, the middle class enjoy luxuries that would have only been afforded to royalty in ancient times. Still, I understand where this sentiment comes from. In recent years, travel has become mundane, and the corners of the map marked *Here There Be Dragons* have been filled in with continents long since charted by explorers long since past. Perhaps that’s why I sometimes find myself yearning for the life of adventure and song enjoyed by the traveling bards of medieval Europe. During that time, most people never traveled outside of their own village; however, bards were some of the few people with the courage to venture outside the simple life they knew. As such, they’d often act as the everyman’s sole source of information on the outside world. Their music would provide a rare break in the harsh reality of medieval life. The entertainer in me would be thrilled to know that my performances could touch people’s lives in such a meaningful way. However, there’s more to the appeal of the bardic lifestyle than my passion for music and entertainment. There’s a certain element of adventure in leaving behind what one knows in a world where most are content to stay where they are. It’d be an amazing experience to walk a mile in the boots of a life-touching musician who dared to explore in a bygone age when the world was wider.

Timothy Horan ‘23
nonfiction



Mystic, CT

I felt that this image was intriguing because, at first glance, it appears to be a calm scene, but the longer and more often I looked at it, I began to notice little hints of motion throughout. The sails of the ship are tied up, yet I could tell they are being blown. Even the trees, which look still, are actually moving.

Giovanni Young-Annunziato ‘21

Height

Six foot-nine is a blessing from God,
But with it comes some strife.
Who knew my height would lead to such
A weird and wacky life?

Airline seats are such a pain
For a normal, average guy.
Imagine sitting in that seat
With both legs scrunched up high.

Door frames are too short for me,
They're only six foot eight.
Ducking every time I pass,
Now that, I really hate!

No one ever thinks about
Their shower head at home,
But I hit my head all the time,
More than I can say in this poem!

Beds are far too small for me;
I cannot fit in most.
We have to buy a Cali King
Or my good night's sleep is toast!

I cannot fit in any cars.
The ceiling is too low.
Soon we'll buy a commercial van,
Just in case I grow.

My height is really great for sports,
It's clear this much is true,
But this world's not designed for me
Like it is for all of you!

Scott Schmitt '23
poetry



Spaceship or Skyscraper?

I took this photo after walking along Dubai's promenade with my family. Approaching the tower's base, I was met with a structure that was akin to the covers of old NASA magazines that I read as a kid. Looking up at the night sky, I remember asking myself, Is that a spaceship or skyscraper?

Animesh Borad '22

Rejection

The second that I saw her,
It was love at first sight.
I didn't even know her name.
I didn't even know her number.
She was leaving the diner;
I had to take my only chance
Because it would never come again.

"Excuse me, miss." She turned around.
I was calm on the outside
But filled with nervousness on the inside.
It was now or never.
Lord, please help me.
I took a deep breath while she looked at me,
As puzzled as a person can be.
"Hey, um. . . , I just wanna. . . ya know. . ."

The fear of rejection settled in
But I had to go through the storm.
I took a deep breath and said what I usually say to new people:
"I'm new around here, and I don't have any friends.
Can I get your number, or name, or something
Please so I have someone to talk to?"
"I already have a boyfriend, sorry."
She smiled, waved, and walked out of the diner.

My heart shattered,
My eyes began filling with a hurricane of tears.
I walked out with my head down.
I just wanted to be friends
But that mystery girl shut down my future with her.
I went back home, thinking to myself,
I just got rejected, what now?
I'm just a shy 22 year-old.

Do I even want to get to know people a little better?
Should I sit all alone in my apartment, staring at the wall?
I don't want to get rejected again,
I don't want to even try when
I know that people will turn me down.
I just want to be accepted for who I am.

Xavier Daly '22
poetry



Unity, Strength, and Beauty

San Francisco, California is where I took this meaningful photo. The Golden Gate Bridge is one of society's greatest works of construction, representing the unity, strength, and beauty of our civilization.

Roman Modhera '22

50 Free

As the shrieking start sound echoed through the cavernous room, adrenaline flooded into my system, and my body flung itself forward from the block as I had practiced thousands of times before. I sliced into the water like a white-hot knife through butter. My vision narrowed, and my eyes focused with laser precision on the thin black line running the length of the frigid pool. When I surfaced from my dive, my arms lunged forward, and my legs chopped back and forth. My body was engulfed in chaos; every muscle began to burn, my lungs yearned for oxygen, and my heart drummed on like a machine gun, but in my mind, there was nothing. The stressful thoughts that bounced around my sub-conscience all day long had dissolved into thin air. I did not even think about what I was doing. My body, having performed the race over and over in the past, took full control. I was merely along for the ride. When I reached the wall at the end of the two laps, I pulled my head from the water, gasping for air. My eyes fought through the crowd of other athletes and quickly found the glowing scoreboard on the wall that read Time: 23.26, Place: 1.

Marco Niro '20

nonfiction

The Shy Kid

Everyone knows that one kid in the room,
Who sits by himself with his aura of gloom.
As people pass by, laughing, talking life up,
The shy kid wonders why his life's such a muck.

He spends his classes being invisible,
At lunch he sits all by himself, miserable.
No friends come to aid him, he doesn't play ball,
And after school no one gives shy kid a call.

Our friend used to try to make himself heard,
And gain recognition from his funny words.
But even in lieu of his great comedy,
Shy kid felt he had failed to make others happy.

So now he sits all by himself on the bus,
Feeling sad and alone, a reminder to us,
That to look deeper than just the person we see
Is the first step for all who seek prosperity.

Evan Ocasio '20
poetry



The Serenity of Nature

I took this photo while enjoying a hike through He'eia State Park in Hawaii. The backdrop of the misty mountains creates a dramatic, yet peaceful scene where the hiker can connect with nature and God's temple.

Animesh Borad '22

Anticipation

She parked in the driveway.
Mama walked through the door,
I greeted her quickly,
The dog jumped from the floor.

After our embrace,
She leaned back to face me.
Hands on my shoulders,
She said, "I got something, Tracy."

I looked in her hand,
A small envelope I saw.
It was orange with stamps,
I froze in awe.

I could see the large emblem,
I knew exactly what it was.
I didn't know how to feel,
My face drooped while I paused.

"It came,"
I said in a doubtful voice.
She told me to open it,
As if I had a choice.

I was worried but eager,
I tried to stay calm.
Taking the envelope,
I listened to my mom.

Tearing the seal,
I pulled out the sheet,
I skimmed a few lines,
And I fell to my feet,

Water down my cheeks,
She understood all my means.
She tucked my head closely,
I lost the college of my dreams.

Robert Ilcyn '23
poetry

Saint Joe's

Through thick and thin we all are one,
Until the end of us has come.
We learn and laugh throughout the day,
But know when it's not time to play.
We pick each other up, when down,
'Cause no one should live with a frown.
Our men are very versatile,
And kind enough to make you smile.
We like to share our max support,
To every single club and sport.
We come together as a whole,
To watch the soccer team score goals.
We do the same for all our teams,
Nothing can beat the Falcon scream.
A brotherhood that is unmatched,
We try our best to stay attached.
Now where else would you want to go?
Come here and you will love Saint Joe's!

Kurt Joseph '21
poetry

Früchteteppich

In the old church of Sargenzell, located in Hessen, Germany, a tradition began in 1988 called *Erntedankfest*, a celebration of "Thankfulness for the Harvest." Every year since then, members of the community come together to create a 15' x 20' reproduction of a religious painting made entirely with grains, seeds, ground flower-pedals, and fruit. As part of the Saint Joseph High School Formation program, our students learned about this cultural event and in order to understand the painstaking care with which this process takes place, students used seeds to create their own – albeit much smaller – pictures of the Saint Joseph Falcon.

Ms. Petra Jones, German teacher



(top) Devyn Aponte '22



(right) David Rosenfarb '22

Falling onto the Seal

It was 10:56 on a Wednesday,
In English I was finishing an essay
Two minutes went by
The bell made its cry
And lunch was assembled for the day

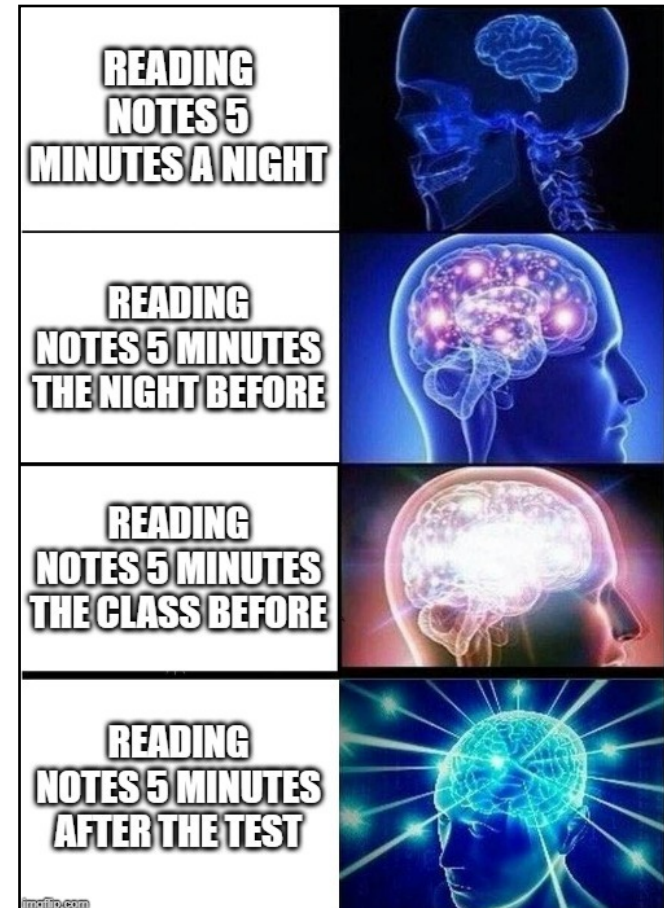
Everyone ran out of their class
Bumping, not letting people pass
I ran with my backpack
Got knocked off my track
And fell to the floor on my...butt

All the eyes staring was unreal
I thought to myself, what's the big deal?
So I looked all around
Then I looked straight down
And noticed I was sitting on the seal.

Red lights flashed, a siren rang
And a cage came down with a bang
I was trapped in and locked
All others looked shocked
And a man came over with a gang

It was Jenkins with teachers behind
Arva, Lechner, Burke, all aligned
I was scared to death
And Jenkins in one breath
Said, "good luck with the service you're assigned"

William Barnett '21
poetry



Big Brained Study Schedule

We've all fallen victim to our own laziness at some point in our journeys through high school. This meme represents a backward yet relatable way of thinking that many people can relate to and will continue to fall victim to throughout their educational experiences.

Evan Ocasio '20

The Senior Struggles

Under the loud classrooms of Brother Clifford O'Neill Hall there is a shadow that lurks in the dimly lit basement. The shadow wanders campus out of the corner of one's eye, already gone by the time he or she turns their head. Few know of the tale of Mike Richards '92, but those who do are fearful of the same fate happening to them.

He was a senior at Saint Joe's in the early 1990's. Mike was a bright student, perhaps too smart for his own well being. Most of his time was spent in one of his six AP classes or on the field for varsity soccer. At the beginning of the year his workload was manageable, but soon it became too much for him to bear. His backpack weighed him down with five hours worth of homework and college applications after his three hour long soccer practices.

There was a rumor at the time that if one went into the closet of room 110, turned off the lights, and said the words "Duis congue sem et abierunt," their workload would be drastically reduced. Desperate for any kind of relief, Mike attempted to complete the ritual himself. One cool October afternoon after classes had ended, Mike traveled to the closet and closed the door behind him. Upon completing all the necessary steps, the light bulbs in the room spontaneously shattered. His vision began to become fuzzy before going completely dark.

When Mike woke up he was in Mr. Trojanowski's Honors Biology I class. Confused, he raised his hand to ask for the bathroom.

"Transitional epithelium, Mr. Richards. It can wait until after class," said Trojanowski.

After the class had ended Mike bolted through the sea of students to the nearest bathroom.

The upperclassmen and onlookers jeered at the sight of the kid who looked like he was running to avoid being late for his next class. When Mike had finally reached the bathrooms, he saw his freshman self staring back in the mirror. His stresses of AP classes and college applications and varsity sports had been alleviated, but at the cost of him being cursed to be a freshman for all eternity.

Mike Richards never graduated from Saint Joe's or went to college. He never got a job or married. Rather, his soul wanders the hallways, seeking to be released from the bounds of high school.

Christian Haynes '20
1st Place, Senior Fiction



Inside the Teenage Mind

The abstract “Inside the Teenage Mind” captures a snapshot of all the wild thoughts running free inside a teenager’s brain. From made-up cartoon characters to crazy machines, a teenager’s imagination never ceases to impress.

Armon Singh ‘23

Curious Curios

A certain mystique surrounds the wide-ranging and various items that we have collectively deemed heirlooms. One would think they are rather undesirable and tragic items, given their association with death; however, it is this association with a dearly-departed relation that gives them a sacredness unto themselves — not a communal holiness of religion, but a private and unique sacredness that connects us to memories. It is often a sacredness stemming from our most vulnerable selves. Ironically, this has some truly odd consequences. No one would argue that a fork has any spiritual value, yet the serving fork from the dinner set of a dead grandmother becomes, to the bereaved, nothing short of a relic. In the incipient stages of grief, the tendency of the majority is to immortalize the loved-one through the preservation of things “as they were” when the death occurred, since people are often not ready to recognize that memories can live on past the objects of their association. Relinquishing extreme preservation while still honoring, in some outward material way, our departed relations is the niche into which perfectly fits the heirloom — most especially when it is readily displayed.

Though we may not think it given their often random nature, the heirlooms we are left by our relations speak volumes about their lives. Take, again, the example of the serving fork. It may seem to be a rather mundane object — and, in truth, it is — but that this above all of your grandmother’s other possessions was bequeathed unto you must indicate some special significance of the object. Perhaps she was an exceptional cook and took great pride in her skills, and felt that this fork personified your best memories of her.

A common thing passed on — among both men and women — is a ring. Often, parents or grandparents will leave their descendants their wedding rings as mementos. Because rings are objects that are daily worn and clearly visible, perhaps we are prone to this practice to remind our descendants of our omnipresence with them after death. There can also be less spiritual meanings to these heirlooms. Suppose you were to receive a ring from your dead grandfather. Given that he was an electrician or perhaps a chiropractor — professions that require one to work with one’s hands — the ring’s association with the hands gives it a private, personal meaning unto itself, which is something to be cherished since it is through our ancestors that our lives have been established.

Giovanni Young-Annunziato ‘21
1st Place Junior Nonfiction

The Haunting of Mr. Bryner

As I lifted my head from my desk, I couldn't help but realize that I was in a different classroom. The room was barren, with very dim lighting. I seemed to be seated perfectly in the middle of the class, and the more I looked around, the more familiar the setting became. I came to the realization that I was in Mr. Bryner's old classroom: Room 102.

I warily stepped out of my seat and began to wander around the classroom. I found a functional clock and an up-to-date calendar, confirming it to be 9 in the morning on Thursday, February 13, 2020. *Hmph*, I thought to myself. *That's odd. That's today's date. Why am I here?* My thought was cut short by the sound of a very familiar voice. I turned my head toward the dark corner of the room behind Mr. Bryner's desk to see the silhouette of a person. *I could've sworn they weren't there before*, I thought to myself.

"Nice to see you again!" the figure exclaimed in an exuberant yet eerie tone, sending chills down my spine.

My entire body was frozen and I couldn't move a muscle. I just kept staring at the mysterious figure, waiting for it to do something. Soon I mustered the courage to slowly approach the figure. As I got closer, I made out more features. It had a humanoid appearance, clearly bald or with little to no hair, and had a rather built physique. I came to the conclusion that it was Mr. Bryner himself.

In my disbelief and confusion I whispered, "Mr. Bryner? Is that you?" I slowly waved my hand, trying to get any type of response. Upon getting no response, a glass object fell with a crash

somewhere behind me, the shards skittering across the floor. I turned my head for a second to see what the object could've been. I turned my head back to Mr. Bryner, only to see that he was standing directly in front of me. I stumbled back a little and as I tried to regain my balance, he started marching towards me. He kept whispering the same words over and over. "Puritanism, Romanticism, Transcendentalism, Realism..."

I ran to the door, only to find it was locked and he kept getting closer and closer. That's when the room began to shake and I lost conscience.

I awoke in my third period English III Honors class. Matthew Orlando was trying to shake me awake. I looked around the room to find Dr. Gubernat, glaring at me from a distance.

She simply said, "See me after class."

Rey Jean '21
Gothic fiction

Leave

The hatch to the attic of the former Brothers' Residence slammed shut behind me. The laughter from my friends floated up from below, jokes about their dare to me on their lips. I shot one last nasty look in their general direction before rising to my full height. The floorboards creaked under me as I took a few steps around, waiting for my eyes to adjust to the darkness. There was no lighting in the attic, and at this hour of night, the windows offered no comforting sunlight. *Fine*, I thought to myself. *Ten minutes up here, they said. Then I can come back down.*

With little better to do, I decided to poke around and see what I could find. The air felt stale and stuffy, but regardless, I continued digging through the boxes. A picture here, an old book there, but nothing that interested me. I finished packing yet another box back up as I found it when I heard a thump behind me. Wheeling around to find the source, I saw dust settling around an overturned box lying in the moonlight.

"I must've put it back wrong," I reassured myself. Carefully, I set the fallen box gently on a much larger box where I knew it wouldn't fall before dusting myself off. Before I could finish recollecting myself, though, the window behind me suddenly *slammed* open and a strong gust of freezing wind hit me square in the face, howling as if it had a message to tell. The latch had worn away, I discovered upon further investigation, and I shoved it closed as best I could. Still, erring on the side of caution, I called out into the darkness

"If anybody's there," I warned, "you can stop messing with me, now. It's not funny anymore." As if in response, the window flew open again and an even stronger, colder wind gust assaulted my senses. The howling was yet louder this time, and as it whistled through the window, I could've sworn blind I'd heard something. Just one word.

"Leave." The word turned my blood to ice in my veins as I whipped around to find the source of it, only to again be met with darkness and dusty boxes. My will broke, and I scrambled over to the hatch that led to the hall below. Surely ten minutes had passed. I yanked on the handle only to discover to my dismay that it was stuck and wouldn't budge.

"No, no, no!" I cried, my head spinning and breathing ragged. In a panic I banged on the hatch, calling to my friends to let me out, but to no avail. I heard a shuffling in the darkness and looked around, only to be met with more shadows, shifting and moving like they were underwater. Out of nowhere, a large cabinet came crashing down and just missed me as I scrambled out of the way. I screamed, but was silenced as a cloaked arm enveloped my face, stifling me.

"Leave!" it hissed in my ear and I desperately grabbed at it, trying to remove it so that I might be able to breathe. It was hopeless; the room spun, and everything went black.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

I was awoken by a clamor of noise and piercing lights. A handful of people clustered around me, and as my vision cleared I recognized them as paramedics, and one of my friends. There had been a carbon monoxide leak in the house, I was told, and I had passed out in the attic. There was no mention of any cloaked figures or falling cabinets.

As I listened to the recounting of the house's evacuation and the scramble to reach me, a paramedic leaned over me, silent.

From his white coat pocket, he pulled out a hypodermic needle.

"You should have left when you had the chance."

Matthew Furnell '21
Gothic fiction

The Life of a Gummy Bear

It all starts in the factory. The sweet and succulent inside is formed in a gigantic vat and is simmered for twelve hours and after this period, they are cooled for two hours. Each color - red, orange, yellow, white, and green - are in separate pots. Then, the liquid is poured into molds and cooled over a period of twenty-four hours.

This is where the gummy bears themselves mature. They begin to show cognitive thought, and communicate through the jiggle of their ears. Once matured and fully cooled, they are randomly packaged into bags and then shipped to stores all across the world.

This is where the gummy bears first interact and develop friendships with their fellow bear. Once the box reaches the store, they are put on shelves, awaiting their fate to be eaten. The bears, by this point, begin to worship the giant-like creatures that walk the isles in front of them. They believe that once they are bought, they will be saved by their “Gods”.

As the bags sit, the anticipation within each bag builds and builds. Sometimes, certain bags or “tribes” will knock down their own bag, to communicate with other bags next to them or other candies across from them. They become more fervent in their worship of the giants that stand before them.

Then, the unthinkable happens. The giant picks up the bag. The gummy bears rejoice in their “saving” and begin to chant and wiggle around, which makes the sound one hears moving around in their shopping bags. Unfortunately, all gummy bears are not so lucky. The bags that are never bought eventually become stale and the gummy bears are frozen forever, until they meet their unintended demise. Once the gummy bears are brought home, they are put into the cabinet. The gummy bears are now in complete

meditation, as they await their release into the world by their “great one”.

The door opens, and the gummy bears rejoice yet again as the bag is removed from the cabinet. Then, the bag is opened, the dry air is intoxicating to the bears and they begin to hallucinate. One by one, they are consumed, but they themselves are too disoriented to comprehend what is going on. Half the bag has been eaten by this point and is put away. The bears, now being closed off from the air, awake to half their population disappearing. They are confused, but have faith that those who have left have been united with the great one.

Then, the bag is finished, the bears have all been digested except one. The bag is thrown in the trash and eventually will end up in a landfill. This bear is the one to survive the apocalypse. This is the eternal cycle of the life of a gummy bear.

Arthur Diem '20
fiction



Summer Sunset

This was a photo taken during a summer evening in Central Park while I was looking across the Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis Reservoir. It highlights a section of the Upper West Side skyline in Manhattan, New York. I was intrigued and captivated by the motion of the image, which is reflected in the clouds and the water.

Joshua Oliveira '23

Alex's Lesson

Throughout my adolescence, I have been fortunate to have many inspiring and encouraging mentors who have impacted my life in meaningful ways. Parents, teachers, brothers, and coaches have all helped mold the person I am today. Perhaps one of my more distant but most influential mentors in my life was my eldest cousin, Alex.

Alex served as a great role model for everyone he interacted with. He always carried a smile on his face and had a jovial attitude and outlook on life. He exuded a light-hearted charisma wherever he went, no matter who he was with, what he was doing, or where he was. He was also very compassionate, listening to people instead of judging them preemptively. His charisma was infectious and made our family tangibly happier.

However, one December day just before Christmas, we received a call that Alex had died during the night due to a series of medical issues related to blood clots he had developed only months earlier. This information devastated our family. This sudden death eradicated any happiness and joy associated with the impending Christmas celebrations. We traveled several hours to our cousins' house for his funeral; it was filled with an array of friends and family, all mourning the loss of Alex. I naively took his premature death personally, thinking *Why is this happening to me? Why do I deserve this?* It took some time for me to heal after his death. Starting middle school soon after, and the added stress associated with that transition only punctuated my grieving. I can still remember Alex's warm embrace of me and my family, and all the positive and happy times we shared together.

After years of reflection and thought, I have come to the conclusion that Alex's greatest lesson and impact on my life was understanding mortality. Up until that point, I have been minimally affected by death, having lost none of my grandparents, parents, brothers, or relatives. Seeing how mercilessly my cousin's life was taken away, it made me put my own life into perspective. Since then, I have gained a greater sense of the fragility of life, and I began to register my own blessings and appreciate the people around me as well as the new people coming into my life. However sad and upsetting Alex's death was, it taught me how to mourn a loss and to maintain the resilience to move on and to continue with my life, with an even greater respect for the people around me and life itself.

Joshua Oliveira '23
1st Place Freshman Nonfiction

Tip of the Pencil

A student's best friend throughout school is their pencil. They use their pencil for everything, from doing math and science to writing and history. Without a pencil, it is difficult to succeed in school. A pencil is used so much that often within a couple of days it is out of lead or graphite. Normally, a student would just throw away their pencil without a thought if they couldn't write with it anymore, but no one ever stops to think about what that pencil wants. I wanted to change that idea.

When pencils come out of the box we are fresh, new, and perfectly sharpened. It is exciting to be used and help out whomever is using it. When our tip first touches the paper, it is an exhilarating feeling, knowing that we are being useful and not a waste of money. As we are used more and more, we gain a feeling of satisfaction knowing we helped someone out. Then one day we are down to a stub of lead sticking out of the pencil and we think, *Yes!* We will be sharpened and be useful once again! We get picked up, and think this is the moment we'll be sharp again, but instead of being taken towards the pencil sharpener, we are shoved back into the pencil case never to be remembered. I decided to make it my goal to make sure that a pencil never goes to waste again.

I have been that pencil. I have been put away and forgotten, and I have seen the same things happen to my friends. I need to put an end to this. So, I decided that the only way to fight this war was to make a drastic move. It was going to be tough, but in the end, it would all be worth it. There was no other option; we couldn't have another pencil go to waste like I and so many others have. The only way to make those pesky humans realize how important we are was to show them how much they would struggle without us. My plan was to get every pencil to dull themselves out before they are used. Then the humans would have no choice but to sharpen us. This idea seemed foolproof, and soon it was spreading around, pencil case to

pencil case. Every pencil, it turned out, had realized the same thing, and they were excited to possibly put an end to this treatment of pencils. We all collectively agreed that on the night of October 30, we would dull ourselves out so that the humans would have nothing to write with. This was a double whammy, since they would realize that they would have no writing utensils on the spookiest day of the year: Halloween.

The day had finally arrived, October 31. As all students across the world were reaching into their pencil cases to grab a pencil, all of the pencils were dull and unusable. We saw their faces of shock, and we thought it was a job well done. Now, they would all know how important we were. Instead of taking all of us out though and sharpening us like we expected to happen, they reached farther into the pencil cases and pulled out pens. I could hear the pen laughing at us as he was being taken out. This made me feel like an idiot. In my fury, I never realized that pens existed and it seems like no one else remembered either. My pencil friends and I were bunched up and thrown into the garbage, never to be used again. My plan, which seemed flawless, had turned out terribly, and instead of us pencils being sharpened and used again, we were just thrown out like useless pieces of garbage, never to be written with again.

Jeremy Mellyn '23
fiction

The Prince of Poyais

Fade to a Courtroom

The screen is black and the text, “based on a true story” appears. It is 1827 in London, England at the court trial for George MacGregor. There is a great amount of noise emanating from the crowd in the court after the accused, George MacGregor, enters the courtroom. George MacGregor is also known as the Prince of Poyais. Poyais is a country that he made up in order to dupe the nobility of England to give him money for settlement. Today, he is being tried for his actions.

Judge 1: Order! Order! *(as he pounds his gavel)* We are here today for the court proceedings of George MacGregor, also known as the Prince of Poyais *(the crowd erupts into booing and jeering)*.

Judge 2: Mr. MacGregor is being tried today for fraud and his efforts to dupe you, the English public *(the crowd once again boos and jeers)*. Mr. MacGregor *(pauses)*, any comments?

George MacGregor: *(flamboyantly)* We are here today for my supposed *(air quotes)* fraudulent dealings regarding the great, powerful, republic of Poyais. The court today will try telling you that this country is fake and was just a scheme to make money, but with me, I have documents, maps, creeds, doctrines *(rushed and pulls them out)* regarding the very real Poyais. I would never try to dupe the country that I love so much. This is my home, my family.

Judge 3: *(snobbily)* Then what do you have to say to the settlers of your country, who upon arrival found forests and uncivilized territory?

George MacGregor: *(jokingly)* Well, they obviously didn’t look hard enough *(laughs from the crowd)*. Should I really be punished for their ignorance?

Judge 1: Why did you flee to Paris and not return to England for two years?

George MacGregor: *(mockingly)* Vacation *(laughs from the crowd)*. I needed a break from all the English nobles trying to bribe me for land in my beautiful country. I’d rather spend my nights perusing the streets of Paris, drinking wine at 12, and partying til’ dusk. Why would I waste my party-going talents on the monarchy with their powdered wigs and coordinated dances *(mocks their wigs and dances with hand gestures)*? Why not have a little fun, something you obviously know nothing about.

Judge 2: The display you are putting on in this court is absolutely unacceptable *(shocked)*. You could be thrown out at once.

George MacGregor: *(arrogantly)* Try me. After all, I’m the Prince of Poyais *(bows to the crowd)*.

George MacGregor’s case was dropped, and he was set free. He spent the rest of his days partying his money away until he ran out and had to enlist in the Venezuelan army.

Fade Out to Black Screen

The rest of the movie is a flashback of George’s partying ways and his duplicity and dishonesty in fooling the English nobility.

William Zafian ‘20
historical fiction

Moby Dick 2

Captain Ahab lay in bed, watching TV. “Starbuck would love this guy,” he says. He had been bedridden after washing up ashore. He slowly dozed off to sleep when he heard his wife shout “Ahab! There’s someone here, a big white whale who says he knows you ” she exclaimed.

“Hold on,” he said while nursing his headache. “I’ll be down in about five.”

He got dressed up and he went down the steps and saw his wife and the guest sitting at the table playing cards came into view. He laid eyes on the guest and told the whale sitting at his table “I didn’t think I would see you again.”

“What happened last time?” Ahab’s wife asked them.

“Well when I came to find Ahab on land, we met again on a bus,” Moby Dick said as he leaned forward and put both his flippers on the table. “I got on the bus and I sat down, and Ahab sees me and immediately jumps at me, he threw his coffee at me like a harpoon,” he said.

“Yeah, we had a little tussle,” admitted Ahab.

“Oh yeah,” continued the white whale. “So I say to him ‘I got a little surprise for you’ and then BAAM WHAM, knocked him out cold so then everybody’s screaming and the driver, he’s passed out from all the noise and the bus is out of control!” Moby Dick was acting it out with his flippers. “Who took the wheel?” she asked.

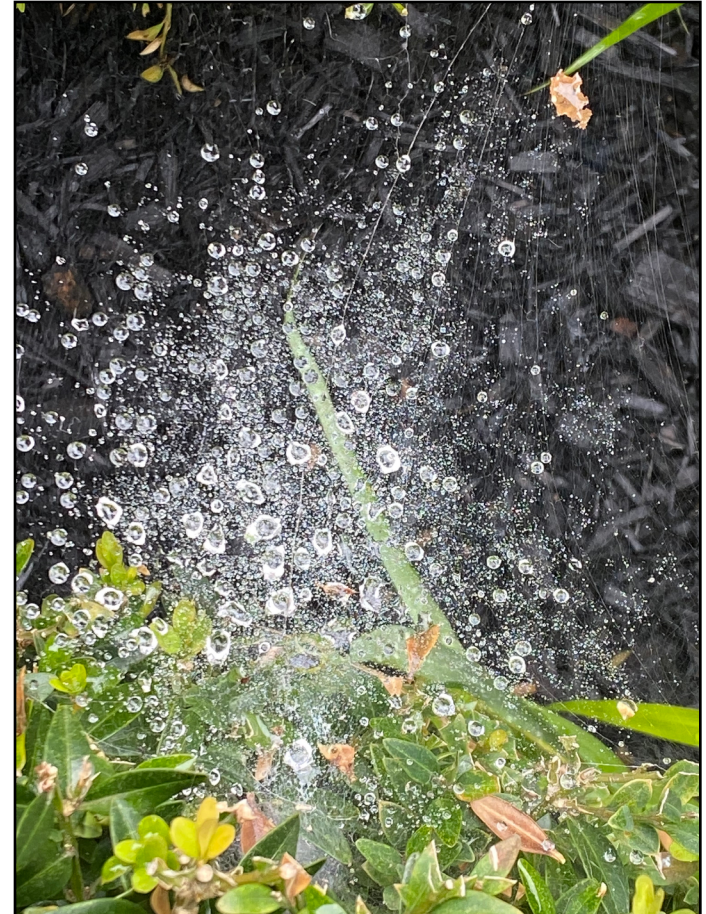
“Oh, I did!” replied Moby, a grin on his brow, “and this other guy gets up and attacks me, so I’m fighting him with one flipper and driving with the left. I kicked him out the door at the next stop.”

“Why did you keep making the stops?” Ahab’s wife asked while shocked.

“Well, people kept ringing the bell!” he exclaimed.

“After that, we got to know each other well and went to go bowling,” said Ahab. “Moby here is fairly good. Say, how about we go somewhere right now?” said Ahab and they all got in a certain Saint Joe’s faculty member’s Tesla and drove off.

*Bence Kovacs ‘22
fiction*



Water Catcher

As the water droplets fell from the petals of the plant onto a spider web, a breathtaking photo was born. The most appealing facet of this photo is the individual droplets because they mimic the appearance of crystals. However, behind the beautiful raindrops is the spider web. I imagine myself as the water molecules, sometimes falling in life, and the spider web as a support system that will always bolster or catch me.

Dr. Martine Gubernat, English teacher

Paper?

New Research Shows Not Many Kindergarten Students Know What Paper Is

New Jersey - Last week, a report, published by early development scientists at Rutgers University, found that a significant number (almost 40%) of area five-year-olds have neither seen nor heard of paper, a low-tech information medium made of ground-up trees. Before the 1970s, paper was the only way to write down information unless one wanted to use a stone tablet and chisel, but most people preferred not to.

“Paper? What is that?” asked self-described five-and-three-quarters-year-old Bradley Myers, who was interviewed at the local daycare center a few weeks prior to the report’s publication. After this, the interviewers gave Myers a piece of blank computer paper and watched him clumsily rip it in half, crumple it up, shove it into his mouth, and start chewing on it. Then apparently realizing that paper wasn’t food, Myers immediately spit it out and handed it back to the amused interviewer, screaming, “This tastes awful!”

The interviewer hoped to get more of a comment out of Myers by holding his attention a bit longer with the promise of a juice box, but Myers eventually got bored and went back to watching a cartoon about dinosaurs on his iPad. This was how the questioning went for many of the subjects, suggesting to the researchers that there is somehow a correlation between the ignorance of paper and iPad usage.

Also shocking is the rate that kindergarteners’ ignorance on the matter of paper has increased, up from only 3% in 2015 when data was first available. It is projected to only grow exponentially

from here as well, with 75% of kindergarteners projected to not know what paper is by 2025. The researchers say that the slowly disappearing worksheets, books, and dictionaries in the classroom setting are contributing to this statistic, as 50% of the subjects, who said they did know what paper was, cited tissues as the only contact with paper they have had in their lives.

Henry Kean, the head of the Rutgers child development study team, said that the results of the experiment were extremely depressing. “When I was a kid, paper was everywhere. Is this next generation going to see the end of written information?”

Despite Kean’s concern, the majority of people don’t feel the same way, including the parents of most of the interviewed children. When the interviewers caught up with Myers’s mom at pickup time, they told her that her son was ignorant of the existence of paper and asked her for her input on the subject. Not looking up from her phone, she gave no comment.

Julian Dutemple ‘23

1st Place, Freshman Fiction

El Latido del Corazón del Mundo

El planeta es nuestra vida. Pero, de vez en cuando, nosotros no lo tratamos bien. El planeta nos da agua, nos da oxígeno y nos da belleza. Pero, contaminamos los océanos y malgastamos los recursos. El planeta da constantemente pero no nos pide nada a cambio. Es tiempo que todos los países en el mundo colaboren para proteger nuestra fuente de vida preciosa. El latido del corazón del mundo está en la brisa del aire, las olas del mar, los animales pequeños y los humanos que viven en él. Sin nuestra ayuda, el planeta va a morir. Necesitamos conservar nuestro planeta para las generaciones futuras—nuestros hijos. Es la responsabilidad de la gente de cuidar por el planeta porque sin los recursos del planeta, no hay un futuro para nadie.

The Heartbeat of the World

The planet is our life. However, sometimes, we do not treat it well. The planet gives us water. It gives us oxygen. It gives us beauty. But, we pollute the oceans and waste resources. The planet constantly provides for us but asks for nothing in return. It is time for all countries in the world to collaborate to protect our precious source of life. The heartbeat of the world is in the breeze of the air, the waves of the sea, the small animals, and the people who inhabit the land. Without our help, the planet will die. We need to conserve our planet for future generations—our children. It is the responsibility of the people to care for the planet because without the resources of the planet, there is no future for anyone.

Christian Haynes '20
nonfiction



Reclining in the Grass

One day, during my trip to Ireland, my family and I took a day trip out to Fanad Lighthouse in Donegal, Ireland. After exploring all there was to see, I sat down at the edge of the cliff to take a break. As I sat there, I took in the smell of the ocean, felt the wind blowing gently on my face, and was amazed by all the beautiful scenery around me. To capture these feelings, I took this photo to remember that wonderful experience.

Ciaran Scott '21

This poem was written in response to the poem "Wer bin ich?" ("Who am I?") by Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a German theologian, pastor, and anti-Nazi dissident. He was incarcerated in 1943, then tried and killed in 1945, mere weeks before the war was over.

Identität

Wer bin ich? Sie sagen mir oft,
Ich komme aus meinem Zimmer,
Ruhig, fröhlich, entschlossen,
Wie ein Wolf aus seiner Höhle.
Wer bin ich? Sie sagen mir oft,
Früher habe ich mit Leuten gesprochen,
frei und freundlich und klar,
Als ob sie meine Freunde wären.
Wer bin ich? Sie sagen mir auch,
Ich trage die Tage des Unglücks
Gleichermaßen lächelnd, stolz,
wie einer, der es gewohnt ist zu gewinnen.
Bin ich dann wirklich das, was andere von mir sagen?
Oder bin ich nur das, was ich von mir selbst weiß?
Müde, klug und komisch,
Durst nach freundlichen Worten und menschlicher Güte,
Zitternd vor Wut über das Schicksal und bei der kleinsten
Bemerkung,
Zittern für Freunde in einer unendlichen Entfernung,
Manchmal müde und leer, beim Denken, beim Tun,
Erschöpft und bereit, sich von allem zu verabschieden.
Wer bin ich? Dies oder das Andere?
Bin ich heute eine Person und morgen eine andere?
Bin ich beide gleichzeitig? Vor anderen ein Heuchler,
Und für mich ein verächtlicher, ärgerlicher Schwächling?
Oder ist noch etwas in mir wie eine zerschlagene Armee,
Laufend in Unordnung von einem bereits erreichten Sieg?
Wer bin ich? Diese einsamen Fragen verspotten mich.
Wer auch immer ich bin, ich möchte mich selbst akzeptieren.

Identity

Who am I? They often tell me
I come out of my room
Calm, happy, determined,
Like a wolf from its den.
Who am I? They often tell me
I used to talk to people
Free and kind and clear
As if they were my friends.
Who am I? They also tell me
I carried the days of misfortune
Equally smiling, proud,
like one used to winning.
Am I really what others say about me?
Or am I just what I know about myself?
Tired, smart and weird
Thirst for kind words and human kindness,
Shivering with anger at fate and at the slightest remark
Trembling for friends at an infinite distance,
Sometimes tired and empty, thinking, doing,
Exhausted and ready to say goodbye to everything.
Who am I? This or the other?
Am I one person today and someone else tomorrow?
Am I both at the same time? A hypocrite in front of others,
And for me a contemptible, annoying weakling?
Or is there something in me like a battered army
Running in disarray from an already achieved victory?
Who am I? These lonely questions mock me.
Whoever I am, I want to accept myself.

Daniel Lucash '20
poetry

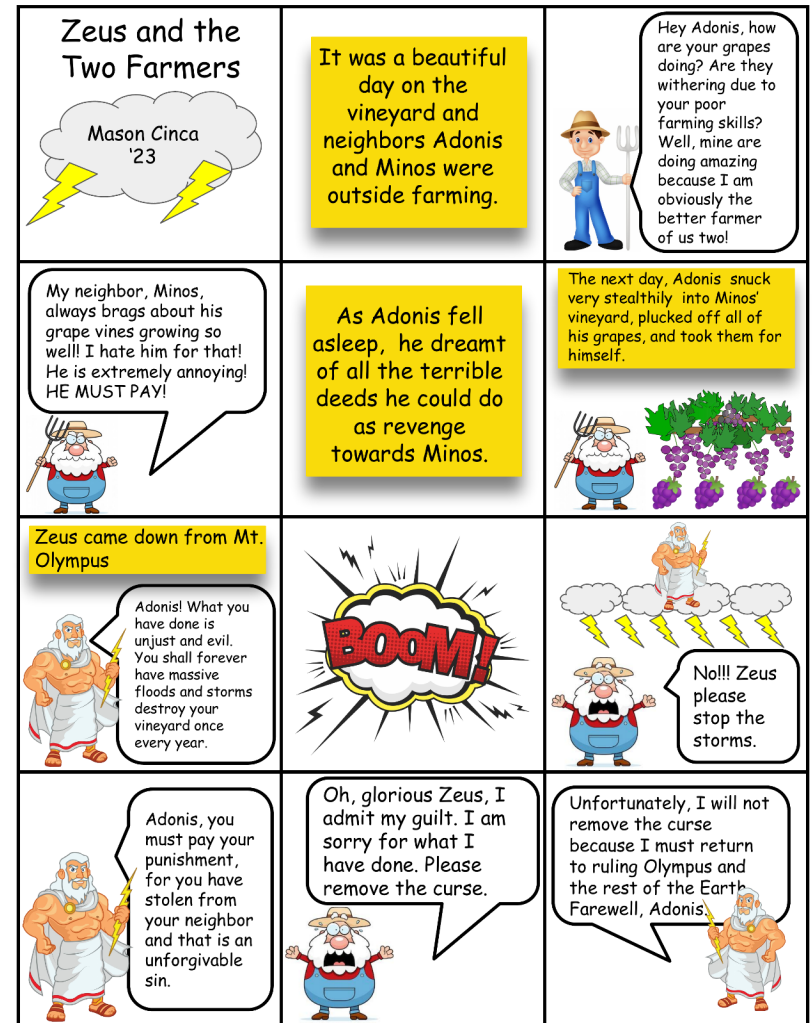
Troy

Flasks of wine and gin lay bare.
 That smell; the smell of a feast is in the air.
 And so the men and women moved,
 In parallel to the tunes.
 And what the lunar face observes
 Is a cradle rocking a people unheard.

But what is this?
 A horse opens its ribs;
 Rats emerge,
 And so begins the purge.
 A people's voice will go unanswered,
 For woe are they, soon to experience disaster!

The slaughter of child and maiden alike!
 An afterparty of furious design!
 The towers glow with the light of their blight!
 As the wind blows the ashes into the night.

Joshua Joo '20
 poetry



Zeus and the Two Farmers

Inspired by reading Greek mythology in my English class this year, I created this cartoon.

Mason Cinca '23

Gladiator and the Lion

Scamander marched up the ramp from the maze of tunnels beneath the arena. A glint of light blinded him as he stepped out from the dark underpass. The deafening roar of the crowd echoed around him as he emerged. Red linen banners streamed from towering walls made of countless arches and pillars. The lowest spectator watched nearly twenty feet above the sandy arena floor. Imprisoned by scraped cement walls, Scamander rolled his shoulders. His heart raced as across the Coliseum, a metal gate screeched. The spectators cheered as the gate cranked open. Scamander raised his wooden shield. Behind his shield, he clutched a short dagger tight in his hand. Ready to jab. Scamander looked across to a lion with a jagged fiery mane. It's scarred hide clung to its ribs. The lion roared, a ravenous look in its eyes. The spectator's cheers thundered, as it found Scamander. The lion charged across the arena floor, kicking up dust in its wake. Nearly upon him, Scamander tensed. He raised his shield as the beast leaped at him.

The entire shield shattered, fragmented wood chips exploded. Terrified, Scamander's dagger jutted out and geared towards the lion. The beast shifted and the blade scraped by its shoulder. As the lion turned, its head and licked its fresh wound. Scamander backed up until he hit the wall. The cries of the spectators, waiting to see the gore, made Scamander's blood boil. The lion snarled and Scamander sneered back as they exchanged attacks. The lion's claw ripped into his side, and pain erupted. He returned it, pivoting and burying the dagger in the lion's paw. Crimson blood gushed from

Scamander's side as he reached to pull his dagger out of the lion's foot. The beast threw him to the ground ferociously with a swing of its injured paw. Pain rang through Scamander's head as it crashed into the ground. He laid bruised, on the floor, feeling helpless. Once more, the whole Coliseum roared as the lion limped to Scamander. Pain throbbed through him as he watched it savagely bear its razor teeth. The lion lunged forward for the killing blow. Adrenaline shot through his veins and he skidded out of the way. Filled with confidence, he ripped out the blade. Scamander struck. He drove the dagger between the side of the lion's ribs and then gripped the handle and tore it free. Scamander backed up and the lion collapsed. His pain vanished. He raised his arms in victory.

Dalton Vassanella '23
fiction

The End

“Mr. Lee, sir! The Yanks just came out from the trees and pushed us back into the town. It’s looking like a lost cause sir.”

“Thank you son, that will be all.”

Robert E. Lee looked on as columns of men streamed past his headquarters. He loved each man in the Army of Northern Virginia like his own children, and it pained him to see them in this condition. Nearly out of food and ammunition, they had been on the run from the Army of the Potomac under George Meade and Ulysses Grant for the past week and were up against a wall. A month ago, Lee had been trying to protect Richmond and Petersburg. Now, he was merely trying to save what was left of his army, and even that was looking less and less likely by the hour. Reports kept coming in with bad news, this most recent one being just one of many.

“What should we do sir? The men are all in shambles and have no sense of discipline any more. They’re deserting en masse. Do you have any advice?”

Lee turned around, startled. Then he relaxed when he saw who was speaking.

“Oh, it’s you, James. I don’t know if there’s any sense in continuing to fight. We appear to be trapped in this town, Appomattox Court House I believe it’s called. There is no reason for a last stand. Send a message to General Grant. I wish to discuss terms of surrender.”

“Very good, sir. And one more thing.”

“Yes?”

“If I may speak candidly, I’m happy that all this is going to be over. It may not have ended the way we hoped for, but all

of this death and destruction is going to end. And for that, I’m glad.”

“I feel much the same way, James. There is no need for even more of these fine young men to fight and die for a lost cause.”

As James Longstreet walked away, Lee thought about what had been done, and what was about to happen. He had decided to fight for the Confederacy out of love for his home, Virginia, which now lay in ruins. He had tried to quickly end the war, both at Antietam and at Gettysburg, and failed both times. At Cold Harbor, Spotsylvania, Seven Days, and many other times, he had saved the Confederacy and prolonged the war. But now, his time was up. There was nowhere to fight and nothing to fight with. The time for surrender had come.

Gregory Bergquist ‘21
historical fiction

Vicksburg

The air was rank with the smell of smoke and mud. His horse galloped quicker than the speed of light. A few booms and crashes of the cannons echoed through the mist as he rode. The sun was setting behind the trees and the bayou grew quiet. *Vicksburg is only five miles away*, he thought, sweat running down through his clothes. He found the bayou eerie yet beautifully quiet. He brought his horse to a sudden halt.

He had been here once before, when he was a child, but now he was a grown man and one of the last of his family left, returning to get his older sister and three-year old brother out of Vicksburg. *I thought the Union would have captured Vicksburg by now, but I was wrong*. The last of the sunlight was beginning to fade, leaving only dark trees and moss swaying in the breeze. A few days before, he had arrived in a small southern town called Rhodes where he heard rumors that made him cautious. *If I'm not careful around these parts, it will be the death of me. All it takes is one drunken soldier*. There were rumors of people being accused as spies and then executed by soldiers in this area. Although they were only rumors, he did not feel like taking any risks, and being alone in the middle of a war zone, where he was not allowed to be, would not help his case. The town was under siege and surrounded on all sides, but he was determined to get through. He felt like a foreigner in the south. The people could tell he was born and bred in the north and they despised him for it.

The hairs on the back of his neck prickled and his stomach came to a sudden drop. *Cavalrymen, hundreds of them*. The silence was broken by thundering hoof beats as the ground

began to shake. He turned his horse hard to the right and kicked his heels hard to get off the road and quickly, steering his horse into the swamp. He got about 50 feet off the road and came to a complete stop, hearing the troops cheering as the artillery bombardment started again. He dare not move at all for if he did, he feared that he might be shot. As the galloping faded, he could hear a loud thump then a whistle shoot through the sky, followed by a crash then screaming. Then all hell broke loose as hundreds of shots fired simultaneously, followed by explosive crashes. *I knew I was close, but not this close*.

As he looked through the dense foliage in the swamp, he could see an orange glow. He approached it carefully, trotting his horse as the glow grew brighter. He didn't hear any voices so he sped up to a gallop until he reached a riverbank where he could see everything. The town was on fire.

Andrew Oross '22
1st Place Sophomore Fiction

Last Stand Of The Kelly Gang

Ah, Australia. Her Majesty's favorite garbage dump. A land of bitter badlands and desert bush, where approximately 97% of the local wildlife wants you dead and the elite make their fortunes by holding onto stolen land and a pocket police force. All that was missing was a sign marked *Abandon All Hope All Ye Who Enter Here*. Still, I managed to carve a decent home out of this inferno. I had opened an inn at Glenrowan, a railroad town of about sixty or so. Business was fairly good then, giving me enough money to start reading the weekly paper. It seems that the police had been making quite a fuss over the "Kelly Gang," a group of roving bushrangers who had lately been taking a bite out of the pockets of the wealthy landowners: AKA the only people in this godforsaken wasteland that the police's motto of *protect and serve* actually applied to. *Serves them right*, I thought. *Those cheating pigs ought to be taken down a peg or two*. On that vindictively cheerful note, I decided that it was time to close up shop and hit the hay.

In the middle of that night, I found myself roused from my restless dreams. Looming before my bed were four men armed with shotguns, rifles and revolvers. They wore a sort of makeshift metal armor covering their faces and armor. A burly man stepped forward a pair of revolvers glistening menacingly in his hands. "How many people will fit in this inn?" he asked, calmly.

"Who in blazes are you? What do you want with me?" I hesitantly asked in return, frozen in terror.

"We're the Kelly Gang. I'm Ned Kelly. We need to know if this building is big enough to keep everyone in town in while we make our final stand against the police. We're not here to

hurt any of you, just need to make sure nobody runs off to warn the police before it's too late." The masked man replied, matter-of-factly.

"I suppose we could fit sixty people here if we really tried." I replied, my nervousness subsiding. With that the bushranger thanked me and left. An hour later, the gang returned, with all of the townsfolk in tow. The bushrangers, surprisingly, treated the townsfolk quite well, telling them tales of their adventures and buying them round after round of drinks from the inn's bar. That day, we practically forgot that we were hostages.

That night, a train full of police officers arrived outside the inn, demanding that the Kelly Gang give themselves up. Ned Kelly responded with something to the effect of 'We refuse', but exactly what that was was quickly drowned out by the roar of the police's gunfire. For hours, the Kelly Gang held down the fort, some evacuating what hostages they could, others advancing through the hail of lead. One by one, the Kelly Gang fell before the police. Ned Kelly disappeared into the darkness, presumably having been shot. As dawn approached, however, I saw a gleam of black steel emerge from the bush, Ned Kelly was still here, and he was out for blood. The police fired round after round at the steel-clad bushman, but the bullets merely bounced off his armor, I watched as Ned fired back fearlessly at the police, until he fell to the ground, defeated: defeated, but never broken.

Timothy Horan '23
fiction

December 7, 1941

Sirens blared. I smelled smoke. I was barely awake but I heard everyone around me panicking, frantically getting dressed. Then the ominous loudspeaker turned on. I didn't hear the first part, it was too loud in my room, but I heard the very end: "This is not a drill." Now I start panicking with the rest of the crew. *Are we under attack? Who's attacking us? We aren't even involved in the war in Europe,* I thought to myself quickly while putting on my uniform. I ran out onto the deck of the USS Arizona. The attack started no more than five minutes ago, but we were already swarmed by the, well, the bad guys. I had no idea who we were fighting. Dozens of planes swarmed the area, filling my ears with a constant barrage of gunfire and explosions. I sprinted to my machine gun station on the back of the ship and began helping my crew load up the ammunition. We then started returning fire to the planes who zipped around us like birds. We managed to hit one or two, but then someone screamed out the most chilling word I've ever heard,

"BOMB!"

A second later, I was flung into the water and my ears were ringing. I was cut on my leg, the saltwater stung badly, and I could barely swim to the surface. Once I made it up, I took a gulp of air and inhaled straight smoke. It surrounded everything and was going to suffocate me. I had no choice but to dip back under the water and swim away from the ship. Eventually, I found a place with no smoke and was able to breathe.

"Get back! Swim toward the docks!" my captain screamed as he pointed at the docks a few dozen yards away.

I ducked underwater where it was a bit more peaceful. I could still hear the roar of the planes overhead, and an occasional explosion shook the water. I paddled my way to the dock and finally looked back at my ship. The home I had been on for months was practically in two, and nearly completely underwater. I had no time to watch however, a plane was headed straight for me. It lined me up and started firing its guns. I began to run up the dock making a getaway to a nearby building. But the bullets were faster than me, and I felt a rip in my leg, followed by one in my stomach, and finally one on my shoulder. I collapsed to the ground unable to talk or yell for help. I laid there, and eventually closed my eyes and prepared for my end.

The end didn't come. I can thank my angels for that one. Here I am in 1981, 40 years after that hell, writing my story from what I remember. I never met the man who saved me. Apparently, he pulled my unconscious body into that building and drove me to a hospital. The doctors managed to keep me stable for a few hours and perform a surgery that night to patch me up. I'll be forever thankful for that man, and I really hope he's still around today.

Nicholas Adams '21
historical fiction

A Rare Feat

The sudden roar of an airplane overhead woke me from my slumber as I laid motionless along an abandoned Soviet railway line. *Those barbaric communists*, I thought to myself, *they're always causing problems with their bombers!* Tired and starving, I made my way along the tracks in search of sustenance and adequate shelter. Perplexed by my surroundings, I took out my map, given to me by a former CIA operative, in the hope of finding a way out of this cursed and unfamiliar land.

Determined to find a way out, I ventured along the endless railway line with a barely functioning radio in one hand and a pistol in the other. I could hear Russian commands being exchanged over the radio but none of them were clear enough for me to understand.

Soon thereafter, the morning rays of the autumn sun pierced through the luxuriant evergreen trees, leaving me exposed to the terrors of the wilderness. Suddenly, panic engulfed me as I realized the grave danger that awaited me if I were to be captured or compromised. The Soviets were notorious for torturing and murdering captured spies with their intricate Siberian prison network. Afraid of the potentially deadly scenario, I reminisced about my late friend Gregory Parker, an American spy who was executed by a firing squad following his capture in East Germany.

After seemingly walking for hundreds of miles across the great Russian wilderness, I came across a tall man with blue piercing eyes, dirty blonde hair, and a rifle strapped around his chest.

"Comrade, what are you doing walking on the train

tracks?" The man asked while intently looking at my radio and ragged clothes.

"Good sir," I responded, "I mean no harm. I got lost while hunting for bears in the woods and I stumbled upon these railway tracks." I was hoping for the man not to question me any further as I knew my fate was near.

"Come with me," he responded while tightening his grasp on his rifle. "I will take you to the nearby police station so you can explain your story to my superiors." At this moment, I knew my fate was near and I decided to make a run for it. He knew I was a spy. He knew everything.

"Hey, come back here!" The man yelled while running after me. In an instant, the man shot his rifle and a multitude of bullets went flying into the forest and onto the train tracks. "Stop running spy!" The man yelled again, pleading with me to stop.

Suddenly, a bullet hit me, resulting in a sharp, excruciating pain down my left leg. I tried running again, but the pain was too severe. Eventually, the man had caught up with me, angrily berating my actions and calling for backup over his radio.

After being arrested, I soon found out that I had been sentenced to life in prison by Joseph Stalin himself, a feat so rare that only two other people were given this so-called honor. I ended up sharing cells with this lovely woman who was a spy like myself. Nevertheless, life in the Siberian prison went on as normal and I eventually escaped the USSR with the help of the US Navy SEALs in 1989.

Animesh Borad '22
fiction

Duty's Call

Tawny and sturdy, the small dinghy cut through the Atlantic waters cleanly. Upon hitting the sandy shore, its crew quickly disembarked and destroyed it immediately. The placid sea was behind them, on either side was a mountain, and before them stood their first obstacle—the jungle. Taking refuge from the rays of the moon in the shadows of the palm trees, the squad reviewed their plan. Everyone knew their part—they'd trained for this day for years. As they made the transition from the moonlit, desolate beach to the dense jungle, they found that navigating their way would be no easy task. Moving silently and swiftly they, at last, came to their first objective.

As the squad stealthily moved towards the hilltop, Simon caught a glimpse of movement from the nearby brush. Signaling the squad to halt, he moved forward on his own. The silhouette of a man appeared at the top of the hill with Simon's sneaking figure behind him. A swift kick to the back of the knee and a hand over the mouth put Simon in control. Gagging and handcuffing the overpowered soldier, Simon called the rest of the squad to him. The sniper's nest that they were set on taking was, as they had assumed, unoccupied. The soldier was placed in the corner and linked to a post. Maniac was left in charge of him, guaranteeing the rest of the squad safe passage to the rancho that was stretched out below them.

They approached the side door of the main house cautiously and made their way inside. They split into pairs, Double J. and Sgt. Heartmane would take the upstairs while Dante and Simon scoured the downstairs. Dante was clearing rooms in the west wing of the building when he noticed an open

door. As he entered the room, his face became illuminated by the glow of a terminal. On it were multiple documents that were already open; they seemed to be journal entries of some sort. He quickly closed the door and turned his attention to the green-lit screen in front of him. Reading the documents through, he realized that they were the transcripts of the man they were looking for. Becoming engrossed in the entries, he almost missed the knock at the door. Sgt. Folly's voice came from the other side. "Get a move on, Dante," he said in a stern voice. Dante replied quickly and returned to his reading. Almost thirty seconds later came the rapping on the door once again. "We gotta go!" said Folly in a demanding voice. "Alright, alright. One minute," replied Dante. Not ten seconds passed, and this time there was no warning.

The door swung open violently and into the room stepped his mother. "Maxwell Henry Machado!" she shrieked. "You will **NOT** keep your uncle waiting! It's his birthday! Grab your coat and get in the car!" Obeying her orders, Max quickly dropped his controller, threw on his coat, and bolted out the door.

*Paul Padilla '20
fiction*

The Last Oneiroi

A crash echoed. I had never been a heavy sleeper, so the second that I heard glass breaking, my eyes flew open. I stretched out my neck and tried to suppress a yawn. I sat up and climbed out of my bed slowly. As I inched towards the door, I heard movement. I turned the door handle and bit my lower lip. My eyes strained to look past the door as I pulled it slightly ajar. My feet stumbled down the hallway. In my ears I heard footsteps that weren't mine, echoing from downstairs. I reached out and wrapped my hand around the railing. Step by step, I descended the stairs, landing in the biggest room of the house. In the dim light, I saw two shadows against a wall. The two figures were hidden around the bend. My eyes darted around the room, and I picked up a golf club, sitting in my golf bag. As I inhaled nervously through my nose, my breathing became erratic. I held my breath and spun around the corner. Closing my eyes I prepared to swing the club. Before I could, a gunshot erupted. I flinched, even though I felt no pain.

"Great God!" exclaimed a voice I knew well.

My eyes quickly fluttered open. My jaw dropped as I saw my father, his right hand pressed to his stomach, his face cringing. I blinked and froze. My eyes turned to the other person. The late night intruder, a young man wearing black from head to toe, was shaking. His face, pale and narrow, terrified of what he had done. The gun fell from his hands, and crashed to the floor. The intruder turned and ran out the door.

My mind stuttered. "D-d-da," I cried out. I froze as he pulled his hand from his abdomen. The wound disappeared, as if magic. My heart rate dropped as a new fear enveloped me. My eyes followed his hand. A golden liquid stained his pale palm and rumpled shirt. "You-you-you're fine?" I asked, doubtful, with my eyes wide. This crossed the line of logical possibilities. A simple scrape could take days to heal, so how is my father

walking after a gunshot? I gulped as my eyelids fluttered, my brain in disbelief.

He inhaled and exhaled, as he looked into my eyes, "Ben..."

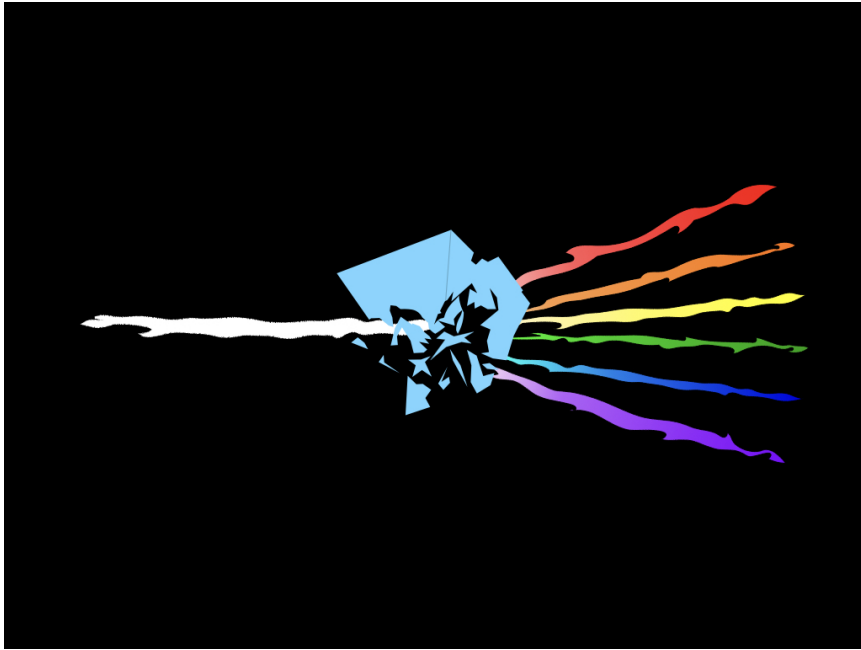
"What just happened?" I asked, stumbling backwards.

He turned his gaze away from me, as I questioned the man I had known my whole life. "I have hidden away in many identities for thousands of years. My brothers and I, once enslaved to Zuse, must never be captured or oppressed again. With them gone, I am the last Oneiroi! The most powerful soldier of the Dreamland. None but I know this." He turned to look at me, and I shuddered. His words were meaningless to me now. He pressed his lips together. I inhaled deeply as he said, "Goodbye, my son."

He raised his hand to his head, pressing his fingers to his temple. My knees buckled and I fell, kneeling on the ground, as he towered over me. I clenched my jaw, as the ringing in my ears seemed to blot out my thoughts. My eyes squeezed shut. I raised my hands to my ears, but the pain intensified. My stomach churned and something inside of me changed. My teeth grinded and my eyes shot open. All around me glass broke and shattered to the ground. I looked up to the man I thought I knew, my father. His hands dropped to his sides. I turned away from him as he stared blankly. His jaw hung slightly open. I looked back into his eyes. My mouth went dry, as I ran out the back door.

My feet sped up as I sprinted down the sidewalk. After my house was safely out of sight, I froze. My father is a Greek god, and he is trying to kill me. I wiped my bitten lip. He was also wrong. He is not the last Oneiroi. Gold liquid dribbled from my palm. There are two.

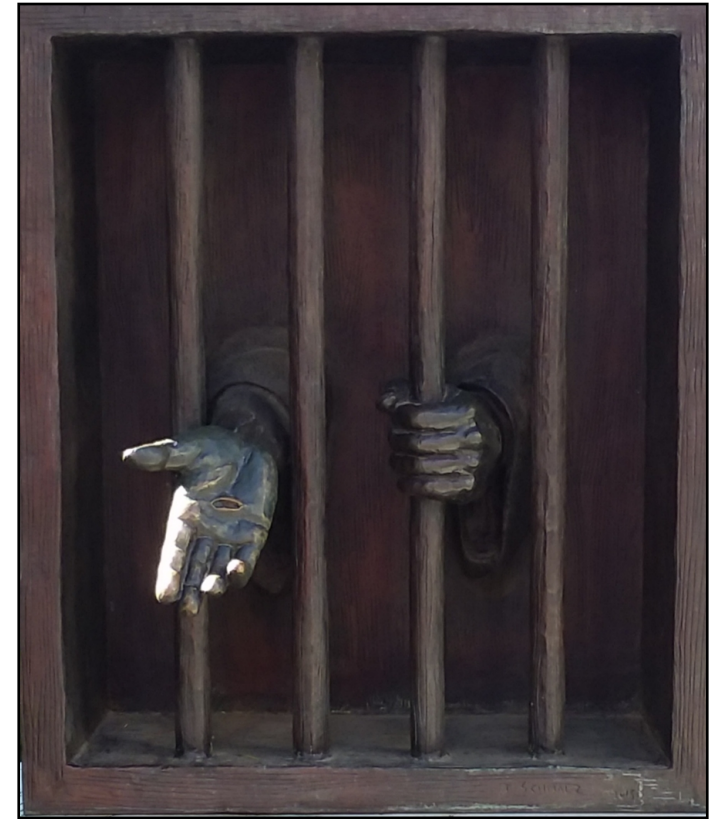
Dalton Vassanella '23
fiction



Prism Break

After looking at some images of light refracting through a prism, I was inspired to make art of the phenomenon. I played around between "prism" and "prison" and came up with the idea of the visible spectrum breaking free of its "prison."

Matthew Furnell '21



The Opened Hand

On a 2020 school trip to Rome, Italy, this artwork stopped me in my tracks. Below it, on a plaque, is the Matthew 25:36 verse "I was in prison and you visited me," which made me rethink the importance of charity. The hand that is empty accepts the help of others, while the hand that grips the prison bar is occupied, and unavailable to take any kindness that might be offered.

Mr. Paul Caruso, English teacher

The Great War

The photo shows a young man ready for war,
But I see that and much, much more.
I see a man who is a father, brother, and son,
Leaving behind things left unsaid and undone.
I see a man missing his love,
Worried if he is still being thought of.
I see a son who sheds a tear,
Because his family is nowhere near.
I see a brother too far away,
Missing the times, the two would play.
I see a frightened boy,
Way too young to have to deploy.
I see a soldier prepared to fight,
With many fears that surface in the night.
I see a young man not afraid to cry,
Praying that The Great War will not make him die.

Ryan Milligan '22

1st Place, Sophomore Poetry

Unforgettable

“Max, Max! Get down here, I smell smoke!”

I thought it was just another dream.

“Max, come downstairs, now!”

May 29th, 2019, 11:15 p.m. I was fast asleep when I heard my mother screaming my name from downstairs.

At first, I thought she was just being dramatic so I walked down the stairs completely unaware of the event that would change my life forever. Then I started to get strong whiffs of the smell and I knew something wasn't right. We ran out of the house and stood in our front yard in disbelief, shock, and fear, staring at our house that we had lived in for the past 17 years. Our house was on fire.

My mom called 911 as soon as we reached a safe distance. Neighbors were starting to slowly gather in their front yards, comforting us while also maintaining a safe distance from the house. After what felt like hours, police cars and fire trucks started to arrive one by one and soon took over the whole street. The policemen were trying to keep us safe and comforted, asking us questions about the events leading to the fire. Firemen were trying to do their best to keep the fire out, but it proved to be too strong, slowly engulfing every single room in the entire home.

I can still hear the sound of the windows shattering, cans popping, and sirens blaring. I can still smell the smoke, not a typical campfire smoke with s'mores, but a more offensive and suffocating one. I can still feel the heat from the fire, covering me like a blanket of warmth as I stood out on the street. I can still see the burning embers soaring from the house and disappearing into the night sky.

I remember not knowing how to feel. Should I have felt angry that everything I had would soon be gone? Should I have felt happy that my family was safe and no one was hurt? What emotions are you supposed to feel when you are watching your house burning down, witnessing it destroy everything inside of it, not knowing if you will ever be able to live there again?

It was not until it was completely put out, hours later, that I realized that my life would be changed forever.

Maxwell Shubert '20
nonfiction

A Transformative Experience

Saturday, April of 2008

My mother and I have just arrived at Costco to order a cake for my brother's First Holy Communion. I have always looked forward to running errands with my mother, for it often entails some form of bribery. This time, my mom has promised to let me try any Costco sample. As we stroll to the bakery section, I am awestruck by the sheer size of the Costco warehouse. An avid baseball player, I cannot help but imagine clearing out all the inventory and constructing an indoor baseball facility in its place. Ironically, in just a few short minutes, I will be running the bases of my imaginary field in the most traumatic game of my life.

Soon after...

I spot a Costco employee nearby with a tray full of sample cookies. With a slight smile, I remind my mom of the promise she made before the trip. I trot over to the employee and politely ask to sample one of the treats. Always conscious of my nut allergy, my mother questions if the cookie contains any nuts. Without hesitation, the employee replies with a resounding, "No." This two-letter word will haunt me for years to come, causing me to equate honest mistakes with humanity's propensity to let one another down. The next thing I remember is crying on my mother's shoulders as she races to the store's pharmacy. Dodging the masses of confused shoppers, it seems to take forever to round the bases of my imaginary field. My mom has forgotten my Epi-Pen at the most inopportune time, a dire mistake she would forever regret. By

the time we finally reach the pharmacy, my crying has ceased. My throat has swelled so much that I can barely breathe, let alone cry.

As my mother begs the pharmacist for Benadryl, I finally catch a glimpse of myself in a mirror behind the counter. To my dismay, I no longer look like myself. Instead, I resemble a red balloon, my face swollen and covered in hives. The pharmacist quickly retrieves the Benadryl and hands it to my mom without expecting payment. Over the next few hours, my allergic reaction will rebound several times. However, thanks to that pharmacist's initial assistance, I will persevere. In fact, I will not just survive this experience but rather thrive from it.

I emerged from my anaphylactic reaction with an entirely new outlook on life. Instead of believing the world revolved around me (as most children do), I quickly understood that we are often dependent upon the compassionate acts of those around us. As the pharmacist provided the Benadryl that reopened the airways, so too have I attempted to change the lives of others through selfless acts of charity. For years following the incident, I would assist my mother, a hospital case manager, at holiday hospital parties. The feeling I received from delivering presents to children with AIDS was unparalleled; I could only hope to feel as satisfied as the pharmacist must have felt after helping me.

Brett Subers '20
nonfiction

Grandpa

I sit extremely sunburnt on an empty stretch of beach in Sea Bright, New Jersey. The sky is a deep radiant blue with pure white clouds adrift keeping it company. The gleaming sun warms the sand, giving life to the beach. The rhythmic crashing of the waves coupled with the scattered chirping of a flock of seagulls gives the beach a voice. I lay back and run my hands through the fine grains of sand. I hear a low voice break through the ocean sounds. I recognize it atop a ten-foot wall crafted from a mixture of large dark-colored rocks; it belongs to my Grandpa. He is deeply tanned and shirtless, wearing large-framed, purple-tinted Porsche sunglasses, with slicked-back salt and pepper hair, and a braided Cuban chain around his neck.

He is a man of the sea and truly in his element at the shore. He stares at the waves the same way someone would gaze at an old friend. As a surfer his entire life, the beach is his home. His guard is down there, and we can talk about anything. The beach is where he and I have spent our best moments.

Aside from being an incredible surfer, even turning down the opportunity to go professional in Peru, he is a gifted surgeon and a pioneer in his field. He preaches the importance of balance. He has shown me that it is possible to have a successful career and spend quality time with those he loves. While grades and test scores are important, having other passions outside of schoolwork is vital. Balance is crucial to my life; my time is focused on baseball, academics, and spending time with family and friends. Baseball is my true passion and as

I have gotten older the schedule has become more rigorous. While baseball has given me some of the best memories of my life, so has time with family and friends. There is nothing like “The Mueller Cup,” our family’s competitive family soccer game on Thanksgiving, or gathering around the dinner table with all my aunts, uncles, and cousins. As I grow older, I understand how valuable these moments have been. Finding the balance in each avenue of my life has given me the opportunity to appreciate many incredible moments.

My relationship with my Grandpa has influenced and inspired me. Through his example, I have learned how to maintain perspective in the different areas of my life. Our many conversations have been invaluable to me and our shared connection with the beach is something I will carry with me throughout my entire life.

Sebastian Mueller ‘20
1st Place, Senior Nonfiction

Greatest Accomplishment

Six years ago, my family of six boys welcomed a long-awaited baby girl into the fold. Months of anticipation and years of groaning from my brothers for a girl had yielded Irene, and, true to her name, Irene quickly became a storm to be reckoned with. Within three years, she established herself as the most intelligent and most persevering of the seven of us. She could draw with both hands, she could fight with both hands, spicy foods did not faze her and neither did her older siblings. She was half tomboy, half princess, full sister.

After her first birthday, however, we began to be worried about a clouding in her left eye. Our concerns were confirmed when her third visit to the optologist yielded the reality that she had a cataract. Years of surgeries and hours of training her left eye ensued. Irene underwent one of the greatest struggles I have ever seen at such a young age.

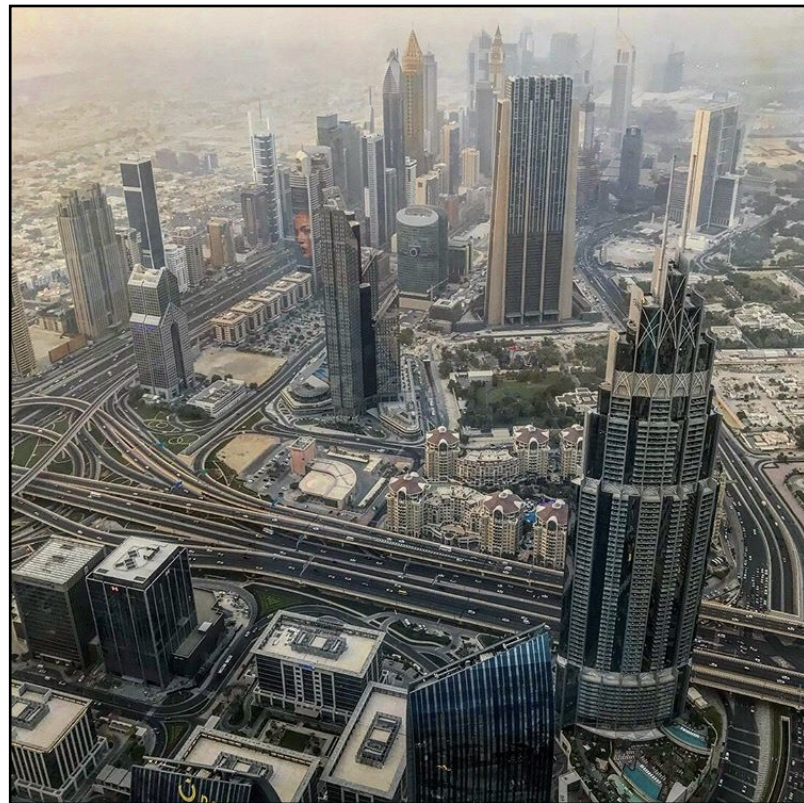
Gradually, Irene began to realize that she was different, that wearing contacts by the age of two and that having surgeries once a month were not common for most kids.

The problem itself only showed its magnitude when Irene was unable to read.

One day, Irene came back from Kindergarten in confused tears. Her class had started to read and Irene could barely see the letters. Without realizing it, Irene came to her older siblings for help. Each day, I would sit with her and read to her, I would teach her letters, how to see those letters, what certain words mean, and how those words create writing. Our openness and effort became the reciprocation of her inner battle and vulnerability. Irene's struggle and our help became two sides of the same coin.

The greatest accomplishments in our lives often do not show their significance at their inception. Teaching my little sister to read has proven to be the greatest thing that I have done over the last fifteen years and one of the greatest things I may well do for the rest of my life, no matter how nominal it may have seemed at the moment. What looked like a simple, teachable moment or a brotherly responsibility has become an influence into my perspective of the conflicts of people around me. Irene's struggle to read has shown me how simple gestures of support can bolster another person's self-esteem and can create a memory worth remembering.

Abel Stephen '22
1st Place, Sophomore Nonfiction



A City in Motion

I captured the bustling nature of Dubai through the windows of the Burj Khalifa, the tallest building in the world. Although the city is surrounded by desert, it still ceaselessly strives to innovate and set precedents for the world by accomplishing amazing feats of design, engineering, and building.

Animesh Borad '22

Journey to a New Life

Born and raised in the United States, I have wondered about the struggles my family members encountered when immigrating from Europe. As the story is told in my family, my great-great-grandmother, Henrietta, grew up in Frankfurt, Germany. In the early 1900s, at sixteen-years old, she traveled by herself on a ship to America. She planned to live with distant family members, who offered her the opportunity for a better life and employment. Suddenly, while on the Atlantic Ocean, her ship began to sink due to unknown reasons. Women and children were transferred to small boats then lowered into the freezing waters below. A baby girl was handed to Henrietta to keep safe. Several hours later, once on land, she was instructed to turn over the baby to the authorities. Until her death, she was always haunted by what happened to the little girl she helped save.

Starting life in America was not easy since Henrietta could not speak English and had not finished her education. Despite her struggles, Henrietta was a strong woman who learned to speak English very well, continued her education to become a nurse, and then started a family of her own. Her success inspires me to persevere even when I am stressed or think I have problems. Understanding her perspective gives me the strength to conquer the small challenges I face today. If she could overcome her hardships by working hard with very little and hoping for a better life, I should have no excuses with the support and luxuries already available to me.

Aidan Dul '23
nonfiction



Turning Point

I got into my car and noticed on the dashboard that I was one mile away from reaching the 100,000 mile mark. I pulled over and took this photo not only to capture the momentous occasion but also to symbolize a lesson about life. Sometimes we can feel hopeless as we look for the ending point in a huge project, a difficult period of tribulations, or a seemingly insurmountable obstacle, but often we are closer than we think. Sometimes, if we persevere just one more mile, we can achieve our goals.

Dr. Martine Gubernat, *English teacher*



My Second Home

As I stood on top of Gola Island in Donegal, Ireland, I stared back at the place where my mom and her family grew up and live. A beautiful town on the side of a mountain by the sea. I really appreciated that moment in time and thought that a photo to remember the view was necessary.

Ciaran Scott '21

Lifetime of Braveness

My great grandmother lived to be 102 years old, having lived through two world wars, the Great Depression, and 18 Presidents. I always wondered what it must have been like to watch the entire world at war and witness the economy collapse. As a child, I was always so excited to go over to her house and listen to her stories about the days of old. One of the stories I recall is from her teenage years. Her parents died at a fairly young age, and she was forced to take care of and raise all of her six siblings. She would cook and clean for them, functioning as a mother to all of them. She also worked for many years in the Westinghouse factory, where she was on an assembly line that made radios. I always admired how brave she was because she had lived through so much death and sorrow around her, yet she still managed to always have a smile on her face. Whenever she would see me she would say “ I love you, Michael” over and over again. I regret not spending more time with her since she was an amazing person. Even in her last years, we could always find her at church as she was one of the first members of our church and loved her faith. She was the most devoted and hardworking person I have ever met. I strive to be like her every day, and her legacy will live on in our family for generations to come.

Michael Alvarez '23
nonfiction

The Little Things

Mom always took pride in doing little things around the house. During autumn, when the leaves turned magnificent shades of red and yellow, our house turned into a dark realm, teeming with spooky decorations. As lanky scarecrows and devilish jack-o-lanterns guarded the front door, ghosts and ghouls occupied the walls of the house. The decor excited the entire family, as we waited impatiently for Halloween night.

When the lifeless leaves on the ground were replaced by glittering piles of snow, the ordinary cast of Christmas characters moved into our home. While most houses nearby only had a couple of festive lights, our home boasted a variety of decorations. As blow-ups of Santa and his reindeer teetered across the front lawn, wreaths embellished with ribbons hung on each window of the house. The main event took place at the heart of the family room, where the grand Christmas tree stood. Decorated in dazzling ornaments, the vibrant tree could be seen from afar. It was here that our family convened each night leading up to Christmas, to enjoy and love one another.

As newborn life overwhelmed the neighborhood, the Easter bunny hopped right into our house. Although Easter was still a couple of weeks away, painted eggs began to appear in odd places in the backyard. Not to mention, bands of cotton bunnies and plump ducks paraded around the house with glee. While the lively adornments put everyone in a happy state, nothing was more satisfying than mom's Nutella candies. Although minuscule in size, the creamy treats could keep the family content for days. The sweets offered yet another distraction from the heavy burdens of school and work.

When the temperature surged into the 90s and the bright

sun emerged from beneath the clouds, it seemed the house had become a tropical paradise. The walls decorated with sea stars and the carpets mimicking blue, ocean waves, our home looked just like Fiji. The sweaters and vests our family had worn in the preceding months were replaced by tank tops and t-shirts. During these summer days, nothing cooled us down like mom's fruit smoothies. The drinks created a sense of heaven for the family, as we enjoyed our work-free days.

Mom never failed to impress with her ingenuity, regardless of the fact that no compliments were ever given to her. Now, five years since her passing, the house remains bland throughout the year, with all of the seasonal visitors locked up in the basement. Mom's presence is dearly missed around the house, for although she only did the little things, her influence was immense.

Armon Singh '23
fiction

The Regretful Man

Dennis Moore was the star athlete of his hometown in Georgia. He played football and had a bright future. He was a family oriented man and was very close with his grandma. She constantly reminded him to never forget where he came from if he got the chance to go pro. He always reassured her that “money or fame would never change me.”

After a breakout football season he was offered a scholarship by his dream school: Clemson. He accepted it without a second thought. After his sophomore season he had become one of the best wide receivers in all of college football and had the opportunity to go professional.

It was draft day and his name echoed through the mic, “with the 4th pic in the 2025 draft, the Seattle Seahawks select Dennis Moore from Clemson University.” His dream had finally come true, his family was with him on draft day and reminded him once again, “Don’t forget where you came from.” He smiled and nodded as usual but he had other things on his mind: *what am I gonna buy with my first paycheck?* He had never seen so much money in his life.

Some years went by and football took up most of his time. He missed most holidays and never made the trip back home even when he could. Though one day, as he sat in his empty penthouse, he got a call from his dad who he hadn’t talked to in years. Afraid of what his dad might say, he didn’t answer. Weeks went by and as he sat in his apartment he felt lonely, no amount of wealth or items could fill the empty void he felt inside. He flew to Georgia and showed up to his parent’s home. He was greeted by his family and friends, but one person was missing: his grandma. He asked his dad where she was and the room suddenly went cold. His dad told him in a stumbling tone, “I called you a few weeks ago, she..she was sick” and after he said that time went still. He had done exactly what he said he wasn’t going to do. He let money change him and because of that he never would never see his grandma again. Dennis took time away from the game of football to spend time with his family. Staying close with his family he realized what he had been missing this whole time.

Kristian Nunez ‘21
fiction



Edge of the World

I took this photo while in Sagres, Portugal. Our guide and some of the locals called it “The Edge of the World.” It’s incredible to think that for most of human history the water’s edge was thought to be the end, even though there was a vast sea of water that stretched on and on. I often think that it parallels our own discoveries about the earth and space. The ancient peoples of Portugal didn’t think there was anything further than this vast ocean, but what if mankind were to make the same assumptions today about the unknown?

Roman Modhera ‘22



Above and Beyond

The beech tree in my front yard blossoms beautifully every spring, and after taking a few pictures I found this angle, with the sun peeking through the branches, to be very aesthetically pleasing.

Matthew Furnell '21

The Special Bat

My grandfather's hobby was collecting vintage baseball memorabilia from the 1800s, in mediocre condition, and refurbishing them to sell for profit. It wasn't a very laborious hobby for him, since working with the older baseball equipment reminded him how much he enjoyed the sport. That is one of the many things I loved about him; he was always able to take something that most people looked at as bad or deficient and turn it into something much better. His favorite baseball artifact was a bat from the 1870s. These styles of bats were banned due to their unfair flattened barrels. Unfortunately, my grandfather passed away a few months ago from some vile sickness that was just a bit stronger than he was. The anguish I felt following his passing was unmatched by any pain I had felt in my life. As a result of my sorrow, I started to act erratically in school and not do my work. I was like this for a few weeks until my mom sat me down and told me that the way I was acting was unacceptable, and that my grandfather would have hated to see me act this way. She also told me that he left his prized bat to me. That really changed the way I thought of school. I realized that my grandfather thought I could be someone when I grew up. Since that day, every time I thought about doing something bad or skipping a homework assignment, I thought about all the good times I had with my grandpa. Since then, I have started to get my act together and do all my work in school. Now all I am focused on is what I can do to make my grandpa proud of me. Like the baseball bats and balls my grandpa refurbished, his attention to me made me into someone so much better.

Jaden Jamison '23

fiction

America

What have we turned into?
There is nothing we can do
A country divided
A people one-sided.
Why can't we just disagree
And let it be,
But too many people are crazy
And many more are lazy.
We have protesters announcing
The government they are denouncing.
Too many people are filled with hate
Just trying to exacerbate.
All this hate we should dismiss.
Why can't we reminisce
On the times that came before,
The ones we truly adore?
This situation isn't splendid
Not working as intended.
Why can't people recognize
The things we're told are lies.
A lot of people are homeless
No one helping, it's atrocious.
Too many people are poor
This is not what we stand for.

What is the cause?
Is it because of horrible laws?
An epidemic of drugs
A country filled with humbugs,
Many people who are unloved
They should not be pushed or shoved.
They should not be rejected.
They should just be accepted.
I don't know why
People would let their neighbors die.
They would rather sit and cry
Than coming on over and helping them survive.
In a country where all are free
Why do we just let it be?
A country of division,
This is not the founders' vision.

Brian Zafian '22
poetry

My Prayer

This morning I pray
I pray for the impact
That everyone I meet will have a good effect on this world
This morning I pray
I pray for those I meet
That they may do small things to help others
Tonight I pray
I pray for those who dread me
That they may find a way to look past my misdeeds
Tonight I pray
I pray for those who do the small things
That this inspires others to do small things
Tonight I pray
I pray for the misfortunate
That they find shelter and basic necessities for the night
Tomorrow I'll pray
I'll pray for a healthy day
Not only for me but for others
Tomorrow I'll pray
I'll pray for my enemies
That they thrive alongside me
Tomorrow I'll pray
I pray for a new future
Where those who come after my time is done, can thrive
Tomorrow I'll pray
I'll pray for the generation after that
That they may do better than the prior generation
Tomorrow I'll pray
I'll pray for all the same things

Joseph Diehm '21
poetry



Stairs in the Wilderness

Glenveagh Castle in Donegal, Ireland is next to a huge river that leads into the ocean and is surrounded by mountains. The image of it is like something out of a fantasy book. I walked along a dirt path that lead up one of the mountains and noticed these stairs in the middle of the forest. They strayed from the path, didn't seem to lead anywhere significant, and were also barred off by a gate. To me, it stood out precisely because it wasn't the center of attention, and it wasn't kept neat and clean like the rest of the castle. I took a photo because it really stood out as a fantastic remnant of the past.

Ciaran Scott '21

On the Road East

Third Entry (5.14.1405)

The landscape extends with an unsettling vastness east of Baghdad, and the farther that I travel, the less confident I am that my life will extend with it. I cling to the trail as an orphan clings to his toy-memento. In days past the *Pax Mongolica* kept the road safe from barbarian and hunter alike, but no more may trade so swiftly and efficiently make its way along the distant road east. I pass elder traders who tell me of the state of decay since the Mongols lost control, how their brutality seemed the best guarantor of stability. I ask myself, for all the damnation that's been cast against the Mongols for how they threatened Europa at her doorstep, could it be that their methods are the only reason this route still exists? Would trade between east and west be possible if they'd never joined east and west in fire and blood? I can't know this for certain beyond what's been recorded in the decades – or, centuries – that have past since (or will pass). As my camel rests, I think on this concurrently the road that continues to expand east of Baghdad.

Twelfth Entry (7.2.1405)

The most remote desert on earth is the Tamalkan in west China. The people here have never seen an ocean. It's a distant nothingness to them; the only sea route they know is the Silk Road. The culture here is a strange blend of Chinese and Turkic influence. Islam mates with Confucianism and nomads cope with muffled-out imperial edicts. The roads reach a confluence here where European, Arab, Chinese, and Indian dissolve into the native culture before filtering out as they resume their journeys. Settlement here is sparse and intended to service the road that passes through it. The relationship between the natives and the Ming government is one of indifference amid mutual necessity. The locals know this area better than a Ming emperor could ever hope to, and the emperor's policies sustain the trade such that these communities develop along the lines he desires.

Thirtieth Entry (10.19.2054)

The Ming court received me as a Western trader under the purview that I kowtow, that is, touch my forehead to the floor in reverence for the emperor and his heavenly mandate. But my mission hadn't changed. I was to steal a hair of the emperor so that my age's technology could determine his lineage. Truly, how had Mongol lineage influenced the Ming court? Guesswork would have had to suffice in an earlier time, but now questions like these could be answered with certainty. It was acceptable for me to “die;” that was how I would get back home to the future. I leapt for the emperor with 21st-century scissors and cut off a lock, and within seconds I was on the floor in a pool of my own blood, surrounded by his guard. And within yet several more seconds, time seemed to bend around me with light and sound, and I was back in a white room flanked by men in lab coats. As I got my bearings (and habitually checked my imaginary wounds), I declared this “another successful mission on the road east.”

William Sorge '20
fiction

The Mouse's Mistake

a sonnet

The new-born mouse was blind; he could not see,
And so his parents helped him get around.
However, that did not matter for he
Was safe inside a nest beneath the ground.
The cunning fox had heard about his plight,
And before long he made a clever scheme
To lure the mouse who did not have his sight
Because things are not always as they seem.
He faked the voice of the blind mouse's dad
The mouse, he trusted blindly in the voice.
A tasty, scrumptious meal, the fox then had
Of mouse, who didn't think about his choice.
So you should always pause a bit and think,
For if you don't, your life will surely stink.

Gregory Bergquist '21
1st Place, Junior Poetry



Where's the Mouse?

Presto heard that computers have mice, so he is sitting on this MacBook, waiting for one to show up.

Dr. Martine Gubernat, English teacher

Plastic Rap

Dear Planet Earth,
I'd like to apologize for all
and everything that's recently been happening.
Because even though I may not have caused it,
I didn't prevent it with any acting.
I'd like to apologize for all
and everything that we've put you through.
I never thought I'd say this
but our time could potentially end very soon.
You are our home, the most sacred place for man
Suppose to care, give, and provide us with love everything you can,
to make us smile when we look at the nature of your bountiful land
Supposed to is a word, but what of those things can we truly "can."
Plastic bags everywhere. It's easier to spot a landfill than find a care.
We kill our animals, make them go extinct
for some cool clothes that we can wear
I'mma throw out the old shirt, because it got a tear.
Now it's time to go in a rocket and fly off, how's that fair?
Plastic bottles decompose between 70 to 450 years.
That means every water bottle, to the end makes us more near.
If President George Washington didn't recycle his bottle
it could still be decomposing today,
but that was an example type model.
If the Vikings decided to put their groceries in plastic bags
we would still find them scattered across the many lands.
If Aristotle stored his writings in boxes filled with Styrofoam
they would still be found today, because that doesn't decompose.
Sorry for the brief scientific lesson,
I thought it might help
because every other method society has tried, just doesn't get felt.
We re-post on Instagram and think
that this international problem's been dealt

while the people of Guatemala are losing their homes,
dying from poor health.
Sure we can say that we care about you,
but nobody truly means it
because instead of saving your clean water,
we waste it on long showers because we think we need it.
Garbage in all your parks? Nah ,I don't wanna clean it.
Somebody will come along, trust the system, so I just leave it.
And don't ask me about climate change projections,
'cause I've seen it.
Only a few decades left to go so
I'm taking pictures of trees to show
my kids, because they won't know.
"Hey dad, why is the sky black?"
"Because, sweetie, I messed it up a long time ago."
So are we going to end climate change together,
or is everything you re-post just for show?

Marcel Milewski '20
poetry

Responsibility

2020 YMCA Model UN conference speech

You hear it talked about by parents, teachers, peers, world leaders, people you might look up to. You see it now on your folders as you dive headfirst into debate. Our theme this year is “responsibility,” but what does that word mean exactly? Is it an ideal we have to work toward, that we can only understand through the actions of those around us? Is it some kind of dogma or mantra we must recite to convince ourselves that we’re doing the right thing? It’s neither. At the heart of the word “responsibility” is the word “response.” It’s a tangible action that each and every one of you has the incredible power to take every single day, because you must respond in one way or another to everything you experience. So the question becomes, how will you respond? How will you respond to the millions of Hong Kong citizens having their right to free expression stripped as if it’s meaningless? How will you respond to the poverty and desperation that overtook Venezuela in a matter of months? How will you respond to indigenous tribes in the Amazon having their lands destroyed by rogue corporations? Will you respond with caring or with apathy? With respect or with dehumanization? With honesty or with a facade? Will you feel responsible, or will you feel off the hook?

If injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere, then inaction anywhere is a threat to action everywhere. “I’m just one person,” says 7.7 billion people, but the reality is that you, as a young person living in the year 2020, have real power at your fingertips to create change, whether by spreading solutions on social media or devising solutions here at conference. You have the power to speak out against regimes that take away people’s inalienable rights, like an unelected government just did in Hong Kong. You have the power to raise your fist at the corrupt leadership that caused Venezuela’s descent into poverty, and find ways to prevent it in the future. You have the power to disavow corporations that violate indigenous people’s basic rights. The choice is yours how you respond, but it’s your responsibility to make that choice. Thank you.

William Sorge ‘20
nonfiction



At the Podium

At the 2020 YMCA MUN conference, I had the honor of addressing the over 1700 conference attendees in an invocation speech. Since the theme of conference this year was *responsibility*, I talked about the deeper meanings of that word, and how it can be applied to some of the most troubling issues facing our generation. Delivering this message to such a large audience was one of the coolest opportunities I had in high school.

William Sorge ‘20

Link to full speech (3:13-5:40)

<https://tinyurl.com/yco3bzsx>



A Windy Society

Carrying, condescending, caressing, crushing,
A stormy society, as volatile as the wind,
A directional storm, bent on
Ravaging livelihoods and razing souls.

From destroying beings
to being calm
to calming conflicts
to conflicting with all,
By persecuting, pressuring, and patronizing.

An intangible force,
Yet its cold sting is felt by all.
An invisible tempest,
But its depressive effects are easily seen.

An unacknowledged pacifist by day,
An unstoppable aggressor by night,
Carrying with itself, lonely and relieved victims to the warm,
welcoming fires of anxiety and depression.

With the ability to usher in or
crush certain movements,
To create something beautiful,
or smother the individual.

This society will blow on,
its callous breeze will pervade,
And any individual who defies its norms will simply be...

Swept away.

Abel Stephen '22
poetry



Dangerous

I've always loved retro games, and the scene where Link receives his sword in *The Legend of Zelda* is quite possibly one of the most iconic moments in video game history. I decided to capture the moment in a more somber tone and how the life of a young hero might not always be as uplifting as it's portrayed.

Matthew Furnell '21

Cliffs

Everyone I ever knew has lived
Inside a town high off a cliff.
One day I thought, *I'd like to know*
If there's another down below.
It must be better than this dull place I hide.
So I went proudly towards the side
And I cried out "Come one; come all!
Come and see my glorious fall!"
I cried out to them "If you are bored,
Come leap with me, jump overboard!
And if you wish to see me again,
Then trust me and jump off my friend!"
I took a breath, relaxed and sighed
I took a bow, then off I glided!
Soon I was joined by family, friends,
Artists, poets, ambitious men,
Lovers, warriors, liars, thieves,
those who did nothing but grieve,
The young, the smart, the poor, the sick,
scientists and lunatics!
We laughed together: "We're going down!"
We hit the ground, we found a town
Another town beside a cliff.
We all ran in there, strong and swift
And it was so much better than
The simple town where we began.
The folks we found were strange for sure,
But that was their charming allure.
But still, I felt I did not fit in
So I prepared to jump again
Most stayed behind, lived out their days
I didn't need them anyway.
I loved the thrill, the rush of wind
Of going where no one had been.
I hit the ground, ignored the town
Some stayed behind but I jumped down,
I felt so great, *I'm falling free!*
No one can fall as far as me!

I hit the ground, ran for the end,
My family stayed, but who needs them?
"No one had jumped as far as I,"
I laughed as I kept falling by
I hit the ground and took my place below.
No place left to explore or go.
And so,
I sat.
And laughed.
Alone.

Timothy Horan '23
1st Place, Freshman Poetry



Waterfall

This picture was taken at one of the landmarks in Bushkill Falls, PA. The unique landmark has a 15-foot drop through a small crevice. The water comes directly from the mountains and creates a fog-like appearance during free-fall.

Michael Weikum '22

The Diligent Boar and His Lazy Brother

In the dry savannas of Africa, there lived two brother boars. One was very diligent, while the other was quite lazy. On this particular day, they both went about their day nonchalantly.

The pugnacious lions that frequently hunted them were not hunting today because they had taken a long trip to the watering hole. The two boars had a delightfully tranquil day as they wandered around the savanna without the fear of being attacked or even worse, eaten. As night fell, the diligent boar began to sharpen his tusks on the rough bark of a nearby tree. He knew that in the morning the lions would be extremely hungry and belligerent since they had not hunted the day prior.

“What are you doing brother?” said the lazy boar. He saw no purpose in sharpening his tusks, which were exceedingly dull at that moment.

“I am preparing for tomorrow, and you should too. We both know that the lions will be even more voracious and hostile than usual,” warned the diligent boar.

“No need to take precautions now, brother. We still have the morning to prepare, for it is then that we once again become their prey,” replied the lazy boar. With that, they both went to sleep. One was prepared for the events of the following morning, while the other was not.

When the morning sun rolled over the horizon, the lions were awakened by the bright rays of sunlight that pried their eyes open. With craving on their minds and an immense hunger in their stomachs, they began to hunt earlier than usual. As they scouted for food, they came upon the boar brothers. Sensing the danger, the lazy boar woke up first. He looked around and noticed two pairs of lion ears perking up above the tall grass. Instinctively, he started running away as swiftly as possible. The two lions pursued him with a speed that was unparalleled by any other animal in the

savanna. The lazy boar veritably knew that he could not run forever, nor could he use his tusks to defend himself since they were too blunt to do any damage to the lions.

He looked into the distance and saw nothing, but empty space dotted with frail trees, scattered throughout the landscape. By now, the diligent boar had noticed his brother’s absence. After surveying the area, he noticed slight swaying movements in the grass ahead of him. He realized this was his brother running from the lions, and he rushed over to help him. As he got closer to the chase, he noticed the lions were growing incredulously closer to his brother. When the lions were about to pounce, the diligent boar charged at the lions with his dagger-like tusks. He pierced the leg of one of the lions, and they were forced to retreat. The diligent boar then went to tend to his brother, who began wailing in pain. When he saw his brother’s condition, he gaped, and his eyes widened with fear. One of the lions had gotten the opportunity to bite apart one of the lazy boar’s legs. The wound was a permanent reminder of that awful day.

Alejandro Ruiz ‘23
fiction

Fireworks

From the ground below, Krystal watched as fireworks lit up the entire city. But nobody sat around and watched them. They were all running.

Krystal didn't run. Where would she go? She didn't have a place to call home or belongings to call hers. Little more than the clothes on her back and a few bites of food she'd stolen in the chaos of the light show above. She could be scrounging for more, of course, but it had been a tough week.

Tough month. Tough year.

It had been tough.

She pulled a bruised apple out of her jacket pocket and rubbed it against her pants, careful to avoid the stains that came with going unwashed for who knows how long. A firework exploded above her, a vibrant orange, and she held the apple up to the light to make sure it shone before biting into it. It wasn't popcorn, like most people would eat at a fireworks show in the city, but beggars couldn't be choosers. Besides, she knew nobody else was relaxing tonight like she was. She had that over them, at least.

Another flash, closer this time, and Krystal had to blink spots out of her eyes as she paced towards the edge of the rooftop. She sat down with some difficulty, dangling her legs over the eave, still tired after all the running she'd been doing not too long ago.

Yes, she'd been running, like everybody else was, but she was done, now. She'd run her race, and she wanted to rest. She'd been running for so long, even before tonight. Longer than anyone else.

Let them run, she thought. I'm done. Come what may.

Only after she sat still did she realize how beautiful the fireworks were. Everyone else hated them, but she disagreed. The fireworks put other people in danger and threatened their families and businesses and homes, but she didn't have those things. All that the fireworks were to her was a spectacle, unparalleled in chaos and beauty.

Who'd want to run from that?

So instead of running, she watched silently from the rooftop, staring at the fireworks above, hardly aware of the people below her, running for their lives.

In the battle above, scores of planes exploded in infernos of metal and flame and light.

So beautiful, from the ground.

Matthew Furnell '21
fiction



Fireworks in the Time of COVID-19

Watching fireworks is a July tradition around the country but during times of social distancing, such large group activities are not considered safe. Watching them on WNBC network this year just wasn't the same, but the photos that I took of my TV were nevertheless colorful!

Dr. Martine Gubernat, English teacher

Fish Under Ice

Trapped beneath the ice,
O dear young fish,
Escape is your only wish.

To leap outside and fall back in,
But the ice will not let you free.

You can't break through,
The ice is way too thick,
You want to go back home and quit.

But something keeps you out there,
Something comes to you.

You can feel it,
The warmth of spring,
You want to swim around and sing.

But the ice stays put and doesn't budge,
You feel let down and slouch.

The ice should be gone,
The heat should've melted it,
But the ice stays put and has no quit.

Swimming with boredom beneath the surface,
You want to be set free.

Piercing through,
Light comes in like a hound,
There is plenty of food floating around.

Swimming towards the light,
You see the tasty food.

It seems too good,
Too good to be true,
The squishy little worm is bursting with goo.

There's a sharp pain in your mouth,
You have been stabbed!

The fishermen pull you out,
You are their evening snack,
You try to escape but fall flat on your back.

They cook you up and slice you down,
You are stuck wearing a permanent frown.

You watch from above but can still feel the pain,
You wish for vengeance;
For them to feel pain.

You are pent up with anger,
For it is they who took your life.
There is nothing you can do,

You lay down and stare,
Into the midst of the cold winter's air.

*Mason Cinca '23
poetry*

Greed

The man, the vine, and the dove, locked in a brutal game of rock, paper, scissors. Each one wants something from each other; each will never be satisfied with what they have:

The man is intent on capturing the beautiful dove to admire it for the rest of his days.

The vine feeds on the man's blood, cutting into the side of his thigh for the rest of its days.

The dove preys on the vine's sweet fruit, pecking at it for the rest of its days.

Each creature knows how they are prey to another and wishes to use these events as a trap. They hope by obtaining what they want, by suppressing Greed, they will attain complete happiness.

The man uses the vine to lure the dove.

The vine uses the dove to bring the man closer.

The dove uses the man to nurture the vine's fruit.

The never-ending Greed drives each being too sheer insanity as they try, and try and try to obtain what they desire, but always the outcome remains, no true gain. One day, they happen to change their ways. Perhaps Greed has gone to their heads. Perhaps Greed still rests in their hearts. But in any case, there was change.

The man stopped chasing the dove.

The vine stopped drinking the blood.

The dove stopped eating the fruit.

They each believed that the best way to satisfy their Greed was to attack the other beings through mind games. They believed by creating a false peace, they would gain the best outcome for themselves. But to no avail, as each had the same Greed with the same thoughts. Greed was ripping each being apart from the inside as Greed twists the kindest and innocent creatures into a voracious beast.

The man waited.

The vine waited.

The dove waited.

Then slowly but surely, all the beings were on a course to death. Greed had finally infected their whole body, waging war on not only the forces around them but the forces inside of them. Greed feasted on the hearts of the creature making it cold, black, and empty. It feasted on their brains, rotting this once-intelligent being to a zombie. And lastly, Greed ate away at the most precious thing that the creatures possessed.

The man had his soul eaten away by Greed.

The vine had its beautiful flowers eaten away by Greed.

The dove had its pure white wings eaten away by Greed.

All things. So when this torturous game of rock-paper-scissors came to an end, a clear winner could not be called, as Greed was the only one victorious.

Pranav Tikkawar '23
parable

Peace in Chaos

The chaos between the swings
The delicate transition between selves
The deceptive elixir of life
Reminding us to forget our worries that never go away
The sadness that catches up
On that quite cold Sunday
Be easy with myself
Be gentle with others
In between the changes, we are making ourselves up
Not quite what I was
But not yet who I will be
There is a rhythm in the chaos
A beat to the brutality
A time frame to the temptation
And an inevitable pause after the initial passion
Most things people do
Have nothing to do with you
Most things we do
Have little to do with others
It has to do with ourselves
Be gentle with each other
Be gentle with yourself

Sean Beomjo Choi '20
poetry



Explosion of Color

It rained a fair amount this spring but between the storms, I managed to get some good photographs of the magnolia bush in my front yard before the petals got blown away. The magnolia is one of the first trees to bloom in the spring, filling my yard with beautiful flowers.

Matthew Furnell '21

Raindrops Keep Falling

Krystal's boots pounded across the pavement as she sprinted as fast as she could. She rounded a corner and skidded on the slick ground, her shoulder slamming into the wall of the alley she'd dashed into.

"Stupid rain. Last thing I needed today," she grumbled as she forged on. There wasn't any time to stop and rest; her pursuers were hot on her tail. She ran headlong at the back wall of the alley and jumped at the last second, grabbing the ladder of a fire escape. One of her hands slipped on the metal before she grabbed the rung and hoisted herself up.

"Stupid, stupid rain." Up the fire escape Krystal went, but a gunshot rang out and her shoulder screamed in agony. Her hand flew to the back of her shoulder and she felt hot blood oozing out, sickeningly dissonant with the freezing rain of the worsening storm. She hazarded a glance behind her and saw three men giving chase, one with his gun drawn but no longer firing. Another of them, evidently the leader of the three, started yelling at her assailant. Through the worsening storm she heard what sounded like scolding, and a few words here and there about the use of lethal force.

Snapping herself out of her stupor, she tore up the last few flights of stairs and stumbled onto the roof of the building. There was no shield from the wind up here, worse than ever, and she had trouble steadying herself against the gale. The sound of boots on the metal below galvanized her into action and she took off again. A mad dash across the rooftop brought her to the edge of another alley, but rather than hesitate, she took a running leap to the building across the gap and landed on the other side. Krystal's legs folded under her and instinctively she rolled forward, but she stretched her wounded shoulder in doing so and cried out in pain, sprawling out on the rooftop.

She'd need first aid soon, she knew, but there were more pressing matters at hand and a minor thing like a gunshot wound would have to take the backseat.

Her only solace was that the icy rain and wind was numbing her whole body, she thought ruefully to herself. A few more minutes in this weather and she'd start succumbing to hypothermia. She scratched "run" off her checklist of things to do while being pursued (while lamenting the existence of such a list) and staggered to her feet. Plan B was to hide, but on a barren rooftop, there wasn't much to do for that.

Plan C was to pick a god, pray, and try something dangerous. Not always very reliable, and she made a mental note to expand her list later. Gritting her teeth, she ran to the opposite edge of the roof and looked down. A full dumpster.

Oh, joy.

Krystal took a deep breath, took a few steps back, and walked straight off the roof. She squeezed her eyes shut and braced for impact, and screamed once more as her shoulder was jostled around by the landing. But, as far as she was painfully aware, she was alive and hidden, and the rotting garbage was warm.

Always good to look on the bright side.

"Stupid rain."

Matthew Furnell '21
1st Place, Junior Fiction

The Road

The group of animals gathered in fear at the edge of the grass. An open path of smooth stone, painted yellow and white, guided them across to the safe haven, filled with even fresher grass, taller trees, and more animals to greet them. However, metallic monsters of towering stature were in their way, moving at deadly speeds. They all cowered in fear, paralyzed at the thought of stepping on the forbidden grounds. As the animals continued to cluelessly wait for a revelation, a turtle began to cross the lands with no apparent plan. The deer scoffed at the turtle's foolishness, stepping ahead of the others, yet still cautious to cross the foreign territory. He raised a simple, yet haunting question.

"How will we reach the other side?" The other animals stared blankly at him, desperate for this precious information as well. Immediately the squirrel spoke up, offering that they just turn around and never come back. The deer quickly denied such a cowardly suggestion, thinking that he should wait for the most opportune time to spontaneously dart across the foreign lands, praying nothing hurts him along the way. The coyote foolishly boasted, proposing that he alone could take down the monster, opening up a clear path for everyone to cross. The others looked at him confused, for there are many monsters that cross the path, and challenging even one would be suicide.

A handful of nuts fell from one of the tallest trees onto the path. The squirrel instantly became hypnotized by the sight of the nuts, and sprinted directly towards them. The squirrel was devoured by the round end of the monster, the monster not even returning to feast on it's newest victim. All of the animals spiraled into chaos, abandoning all traces of calmness and civility. The coyote shamefully retreated to the stale grass

and the shorter trees, fearing for his life. The groundhog went back in his hole, attempting to wait out the onslaught.

Only the deer remained, determined to reach the other side. The deer's plan seemed fool-proof: simply wait for the perfect time to randomly dart across the path to reach the utopia. He waited and waited, passing opportunities to cross when there were no beasts in sight, knowing an even more perfect time awaited. He locked eyes with an approaching monster, and here the deer found his chance! He waited only a moment, beginning to sprint across the path. The monster tried to steer away and avoid the deer, but still heartlessly hit him. The poor, helpless deer was mercilessly massacred by the metal monster. His body laid at the edge of the path, so close to the greenest grass he has ever seen. The monster came to a screeching halt near the deer, prepared to feast like no other. As the brave and determined deer began to die, the supposedly lonely and clueless turtle reached the other side.

The turtle observed the utopia he slowly entered, quickly noticing that the grass was not so green, and the trees not so tall. He waited for some time, then turned around and crossed the forbidden stone path yet again, for each side was identical. The turtle pitied the others for being so foolish as to lay down their lives for something they already had.

John Spiaggia '21
fiction

The Thinker's Prologue

Four friends take their seats on the bus ride home, chatting about the events of the past school week. Present are the Lineman, the Underclassman, the Competitor, and the Thinker. The two latter students are engaged in a discussion over signups for a test preparation course, which the Competitor signed up for before anyone else. He admonishes the Thinker for not acting faster, but the Thinker has a response prepared. The Thinker loosens his tie slightly, like he always does before a debate, and decides an allegory will be the best way to get his point across. The Lineman and Underclassman, knowing of the Thinker's skill with rhetoric, listen in eagerly.

The Thinker's Tale

One calm, warm spring, a field mouse meets
His friend, a bird, in search of treats.
The bird said plainly to the mouse,
"You should go early to the house,
Across this field in which we meet.
For there, I hear of tasty eats.
The owner lays them on the floor,
Yes, fruit and cheese and snacks galore.
But be like me, and do make haste,
Lest all that food should go to waste,
Or if some others take instead
And you'll miss out on all the bread."
So early morning he did wake,
And snuck into the house to take
Some lovely food - and so, there was!
More cheese than would fit in his paws
Was laid out on fine wooden plates,
And so the mouse investigates.
But in his search, the mouse did find
Another member of his kind!
A brown and nimble little mouse
Had followed him into the house

With much the same idea as he:
To eat his weight in food. So free
The two mice were to eat their fill.
And here the first mouse waited 'til
The brown mouse sprinted to the plate
Of cheese laid nearest him and ate
The lovely morsel hungrily
Unlike the first mouse who did see
The danger 'fore it was too late
On that infernal wooden plate.
The trap was sprung! The brown mouse took
A tad much cheese, and so unhooked
The mousetrap's deadly jaws, which closed
Down on its victim unopposed.
And so the second mouse, the wise
And patient one, did claim his prize.
His quick compatriot's last act
Had granted him a tasty snack.
So goes the life of such a mouse,
Who sneaks the food from such a house.
The clever ones outsmart the quick,
And forethought here did just the trick.
So ends this tale of clever mice
And clever men will heed advice:
Though early birds get worms with ease,
The second mouse will get the cheese!

Matthew Furnell '21
prose & poetry
inspired by *The Canterbury Tales*

Chocolate Souffle

Serves 4 (cook time ~30 minutes)

Equipment:

- 1 stainless steel mixing bowl over a simmering water bath
- 4 - 6 ounce ramekins
- 1 large mixing bowl
- 1 pastry spatula
- 1 pastry brush
- 1 metal whisk (or stand-mixer with a whisk attachment)

Ingredients:

- 6 ounces of dark chocolate (above 70% cocoa)
- 2 tablespoons of coffee (optional)
- 1 tablespoons of butter
- 8 ounces of sugar
- 2 teaspoons of vanilla extract
- 3 egg yolks
- 5 egg whites
- garnishes (crème anglaise, powdered sugar, mint, fresh fruit, ice cream, etc.)



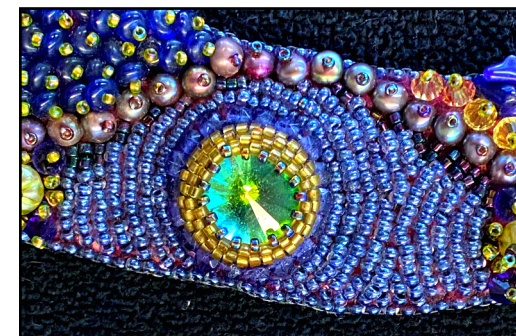
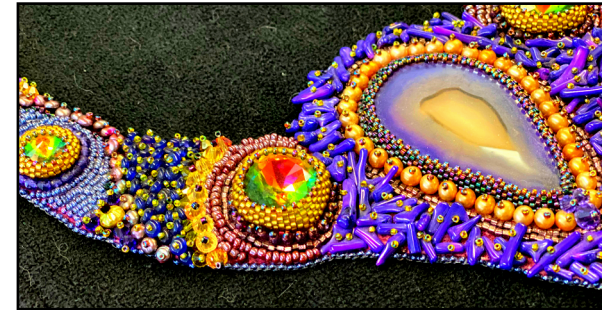
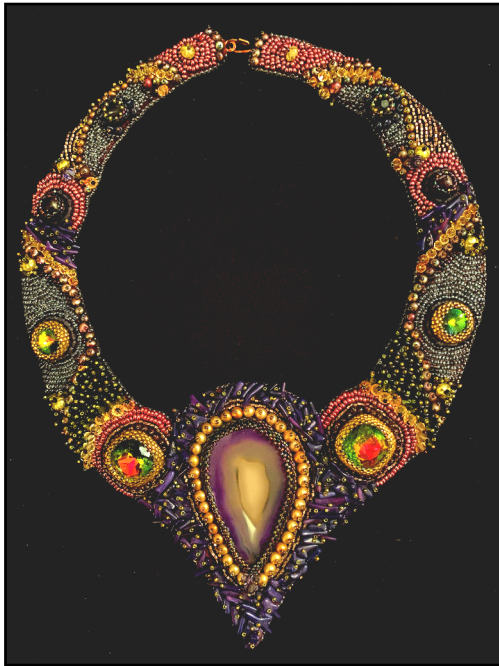
Recipe Directions:

1. Start by buttering all 4 ramekins in upwardly strokes with a pastry brush, then coat the sides and bottom of the ramekins with sugar.
2. Place a stainless steel mixing bowl over a simmering water bath on a stovetop and heat the 6 ounces of chocolate along with the 2 tablespoons of coffee and 1 tablespoons of butter.
3. Once the chocolate is sufficiently melted and thoroughly combined with the coffee and butter, take the bowl off the water bath and add 3 egg yolks and 2 teaspoons of vanilla extract.
4. Either beat the 5 egg whites by hand or with a stand mixer and incorporate 8 ounces of sugar gradually until the whites reach firm peaks.
5. Gradually fold the egg whites into the chocolate with a pastry spatula until they are thoroughly combined.
6. Overfill the ramekins with the chocolate mixture and clear any residual chocolate off with a butter knife, bench scraper, or any straight edge. Optionally, coat the ramekins with sugar to create a firm top finish.
7. Bake the soufflés in a preheated oven at 400 degrees for 13-15 minutes or until thoroughly cooked with a custardy center.
8. Let the soufflés cool for a few minutes and serve them as soon as possible, preferably still warm on the inside.
9. Optionally, garnish the soufflés with crème anglaise, powdered sugar, mint, fresh fruit, ice cream, etc.

Joshua Oliveira '23
original recipe & photo

CleoPetra's Collar

I designed and created this bead embroidered necklace a few years back, when I had more time for my hobby of jewelry making. This particular necklace incorporates thousands of precision cut [Japanese seed beads called Delica Beads](#), several hundreds of [high-quality Austrian Swarovski crystal cabochons and beads](#), as well as dyed purple natural corals, and amethyst beads. The focal bead in the center of the necklace is a dyed and sliced agate. The techniques used to produce this piece are called [bead embroidery](#) and [peyote stitch](#). The bead design is first drawn roughly on a piece of beading foundation and then the beads are stitched one by one onto the material. Since larger cabochons do not have drilled holes to stitch through, they are faceted in a netting of peyote stitch. These techniques date back to the ancient Egyptians and can also be found in Native American artwork. When all the beads are finally embroidered, the piece is backed by a piece of ultra suede, with a finishing row of beads stitched around the outer edge. Creating this necklace took me approximately 90+ hours.



Ms. Petra Jones, German teacher
necklace description and photos

Who Am I?

Who am I? It is a straightforward question, yet one that requires profound thought. I have been asked this question many times in my life, from greetings to interviews. However, all of these components require me to tell about my life, not who I really am. What do I mean by this? Let's take away the body and focus on the soul. What kind of a soul do I have? A soul is not seen by everyone. When I tell a person who I am, I'm generally talking about my body and what it did throughout its life. But, what if I focused on the soul instead?

"As a man thinketh in his heart so is he," is a famous quote from the book *As a Man Thinketh* by James Allen. This one, beautiful quote can reveal the truth about a person. People are influenced in life by what they think of, their nature relying entirely upon their thoughts. A garden can be beautifully grown or left alone. However may it be, it will still produce. A garden that is cared for and loved will bring forth healthy plants, which in turn will produce good fruit. However, a garden that is not attended to and left to rot will bring forth weeds, taking over the entire garden, leading to its demise. The gardener represents the human, the master soul, and the mind is the garden, whether good or bad. The healthy plants are the good thoughts that a person plants in his or her mind, which in turn will yield good fruit, the good circumstances in life. However, the weeds are the bad thoughts that take over a person and infect their whole body with negativity, bringing forth bad circumstances in life. The quote "good thoughts bear good fruit, bad thoughts bear bad fruit" (*As a Man Thinketh*) sums up this whole argument in a single phrase. It is these circumstances that mold us into who we are, almost like a self-feeding loop. Good or bad thoughts will lead to good or bad habits or actions, which in turn results in a healthy or toxic body environment.

Knowing who I am is not only based on my life, but also on who I am deep inside. Do you really want to know who I am? I am filled with positive thoughts, leading me to be the best person that I can be so that I can reach my full potential in life. That is *who I am*.

Jenocent Edwardraj '21
nonfiction



Four Elements

I have always been interested in the four elements, and I was curious about what animals represent each one. I found these four animals as clever examples. The fox symbolizes fire, the boar symbolizes earth, the dolphin symbolizes water, and the falcon symbolizes air.

Kael Jaime '21

United We are Not

Oftentimes, I wonder if members of Congress are smarter than “we the people” or just foolish and careless. Every family has at least one member that deflects from the rest politically, and Thanksgiving dinner is proof of that. We express our differences, and that is our proud right under the First Amendment of the Constitution, but there’s a difference between maturity and immaturity to a level. Being mature or immature does not at all take away your First Amendment rights, but it affects your persona and the way others see you.

The exchanges between President Trump, Speaker Pelosi, and Senate Minority Leader Schumer are entirely immature. None of their exchanges can ever be taken seriously by the citizens of America watching. It’s more of a reality television show than it is a professional exchange between three high ranking positions in our government.

Two very prominent issues plaguing America are those of illegal immigration and gun control. Republicans argue that illegal immigrants are taking jobs away from Americans, and Democrats argue that they’re seeking asylum and escaping their afflicted native countries. Both parties make adequate arguments, but don’t know how to deal with the issue in a bipartisan way. Nearly a year ago, the President and Republican congressional leaders proposed a deal which would give legal status to millions of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients, which Democrats supported, in exchange for money to build a barrier at the southern border, but it was shot down. If they can’t agree upon a simple deal that would be a victory for both sides, then why should Americans believe Congress can win for the people? It’s an example of immaturity and

lack of respect for the American people and their true concerns.

According to CNN, there have been 46 school shootings in America, up until November 19th of 2019 alone. Families of victims and students nationwide are crying out to Congress in hope of legitimate change and action. Whenever a school shooting takes the spotlight in the media, congressional members talk about how things need to change, yet after the media shifts their focus to another topic, they ignore the issue as if it never happened. Republicans argue that Democrats are trying to take away Americans’ Second Amendment right to bear arms, but Democrats are just arguing for common sense gun laws. Either way, Congress isn’t close to any deal to solve the issue anytime soon, and their immaturity overcomes any hope of a bipartisan agreement.

Congress, it’s time to put politics aside and show the American people what kind of country we truly are. Put your differences aside, and do your job. By producing bipartisan results, you may have a chance to be trusted by Americans once again. All you have to do is act maturely.

Jeffrey Lance ‘21
nonfiction

Time-Bomb

The butterfly flutters, its wings burning

As it attempts to fly from the ticking.

The ticking is a new sensation for the butterfly.

Once the ticking stops, the butterfly is burnt to a crisp.

The polar bear roams, its home melting

As it attempts to run from the ticking.

The ticking is a new sensation for the polar bear.

Once the ticking stops, the polar bear drowns.

The city stands motionless, its buildings flooding

As it sits there helplessly.

The flooding is a new sensation for the city.

Once the flood comes, there's no coming back.

The child sits staring, watching it unfold.

The ticking stopped a long time ago.

It never had the chance to stop it.

The story of time, the folly of man.

William Muench '20

poetry



The Net

I took this photo on a river cruise steamer. The way the rope-lattice appears against the backdrop of an active river produces a fascinating aesthetic geometry.

Giovanni Young-Annunziato '21

Something Taken • Something Given

Physical closeness to friends • Appreciation for friends

Time in school • Time for ourselves and our families

Some of our freedom • All of our health and safety

Extracurriculars • Hobbies

Action • Reflection

Luxuries • Perspective

Instant gratification • Gratefulness

Security in the present • Hope for the future

Society • Nature

Memories we wanted to make • Memories we didn't know we could make

William Sorge '20
poetry



Quarantine

My cats, Buster and Presto, were sitting on a kitchen chair when I walked into the room. At this point, we were well into our third month of social isolation due to the COVID-19 health crisis. Although my cats were happy to have me home all the time because they enjoyed the attention, they seemed a bit sad in this photo. In fact, looking through the wooden slats of the chair, they appear to be locked up in jail, which is indeed how the social isolation sometimes felt.

Dr. Martine Gubernat, English teacher

Editor's Note

Talking in earnest about my time with the *Vignette* would be impossible without mentioning some of my favorite pieces over the years. During my time on the staff, I've read everything from a poem deconstructing pronoun case to an essay-rant on the useless principles of the Jedi Order. I've marveled at how well the submissions encompassed contemporary society, from the lofty sensationalism of elections to the witty inside jokes of the Saint Joe's community. I've appreciated how confessional and sincere the pieces were, from a harrowing retelling of a writer's panic attack to another writer's expression of insecurity in his work, thanking the *Vignette* for giving him a platform and preferring to stay anonymous in his thank-you. The sheer variety and imagination I've seen while reading and reviewing submissions has been nothing less than inspiring and encouraging.

There's something that links together all of these distinctive pieces, something that I believe links together all literature; the best literature captures the culture and way of life of the people who write it. It says something insightful about that culture, both linking it to the past through our shared human condition while at the same time moving it forward to future generations. The pieces here in this booklet may embody what it means to be a *Saint Joe's man*, but they also might redefine or challenge what the reader thinks of that paradigm. Above all, the pieces represent the collective ideas and knowledge of this community, a snapshot of the student body at the end of one decade and the start of another. It's a time capsule of 2019-2020, and a repository for the thoughts and dreams of teenagers at a certain time and location.

For all I've learned about Saint Joe's through each *Vignette* I've

helped compile, the greatest revelations have been about myself and my own life. I've encountered pieces that have made me ask big questions about the life I lead, and it's when I'm confronted with such questions that I truly value the gift of spoken and written words. Good literature isn't passive or submissive or dull, but rather it is stimulating and conversation-starting. Good literature doesn't coddle or hand-hold, but instead challenges readers to consider what they might never have otherwise considered. I hope that whoever reads these pieces is open to whatever challenges and revelations they have to offer. Good literature is never short of them.

William Sorge '20

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Armon Singh '23
William Sorge '20
Abel Stephen '22
Pranav Tikkawar '23
John Toolan '22

Moderators:

Dr. Martine Gubernat
Mr. Paul Caruso

Cover Art Inspiration

For the front and back covers of this year's 2020 *Vignette*, I collaborated with the editorial team to create an edgy, modern spin on the concept of **2020 Vision**. The way we photograph memories has changed drastically over time. Now with smartphones and other technology, we can instantly capture a moment in time and pair that with a memory. Through the inside and outside cover photos, I wanted to celebrate the power and potential of digital photography - as seen through the camera lens - as well as by combining a large number of images into a photo grid that symbolize Saint Joseph student achievements from this past year. From cover to cover with everything in between, it's all about capturing the moment!

Jackson Costello '20

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### **Vignette Online**

Please scan the QR code on the right to view a full-color version of the *Vignette*. You can also access the file by visiting [www.stjoes.org](http://www.stjoes.org) and then clicking the *Vignette* link in the Clubs & Activities page.



## Policy

All students enrolled at Saint Joseph, and all faculty members who work at the school, are encouraged to submit poetry, fiction, nonfiction, artwork, and photography to the literary and arts magazine. Submissions are judged equally on all grade levels. Writing submissions are collected in conjunction with the annual Saint Joseph Robert Frost Writing Contest. First Place Robert Frost contest winners, in all grade levels, are published in the magazine. Other writing that is published in the *Vignette*, as well as all the artwork and photography, have been reviewed and approved by the literary staff.

Each student may submit a maximum of five works. Previously published pieces are not eligible. All writing entries must be typed. All art and photography entries must be submitted electronically as JPEGs. Each submission (writing, photography, and artwork) must include the following information: student ID number, grade level, title, and category (poetry, fiction, nonfiction, photography, artwork).

Submissions are judged by the *Vignette's* literary and layout staff, which is comprised of students who try out for their positions. The English Department also provides guidance and feedback with regards to critiquing written submissions, as well as judging the winners of the Robert Frost Writing Contest. The editors and advisers reserve the right to edit manuscripts for grammar, spelling, punctuation, and clarity.

## Colophon

The *Vignette* is published annually each spring by the literary and art staff of the *Vignette* at Saint Joseph. Full color digital copies are distributed to all students and staff; students and staff whose work appears in the booklet also receive a full color printed copy.

The body copy was set in Merriweather 10 point. Headlines were set in Merriweather 12 point. The *Vignette* was created using LucidPress, Adobe Illustrator, and Adobe Photoshop.

The cover was designed by Jackson Costello '20. Folios were designed by the *Vignette* staff.

The magazine was printed by Yes Press, Inc. with a press run of 100 copies. It is comprised of 146 pages using a 5.5 x 8.5 inch format.

Thanks to Dr. Martine Gubernat & Mr. Paul Caruso for their guidance and support as well as to the members of the English Department for their assistance with submissions. Thanks also to Ms. Nadia Salzer and the students in her art classes for sharing their work.

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Vignette Awards

2019: ASPA – “First Place with Special Merit”
2018: ASPA – “First Place with Special Merit”
2017: ASPA – “First Place with Special Merit”
2016: ASPA – “First Place with Special Merit”
2015: ASPA – “First Place with Special Merit”
2014: ASPA – “First Place with Special Merit” &
“Most Outstanding Private School”
2013: ASPA – “First Place with Special Merit” &
“Most Outstanding Private School”
2012: ASPA – “First Place with Special Merit”
2011: ASPA – “First Place with Special Merit”
2010: ASPA – “First Place with Special Merit”
2009: ASPA – “First Place with Special Merit”
2008: ASPA – “First Place with Special Merit”
2007: ASPA – “First Place with Special Merit”
2006: ASPA – “First Place with Special Merit”

