

Paolo Fiorini

Vignette 2017



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Saint Joseph High School
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Editorial

As the school year comes to a close, many of us will pause to reflect on the last nine months of our lives. Our successes, failures, joys, sorrows, friendships, arguments, excellences, and struggles have certainly changed something about the way we will continue on from this point, and that goes for students as well as faculty and staff. Unfortunately, a lot of us may simply end our year-long journey with a brief "it's finally over!"

That kind of reaction would be a shame. While I am certainly proud of the Saint Joseph student body for working hard to achieve excellence, it seems like we rarely take a step back both to acknowledge our accomplishments, as well as to meditate on our shortcomings.

For this reason, I am particularly excited to present the 2017 edition of the *Vignette*, which I see as a fantastic opportunity to give students time for reflection. Through many months of reading and evaluating student submissions, my fellow editors and I have seen a wide array of wonderful reflections that moved us with emotion, insight, and creativity; Sometimes, I could hardly believe that all of it was produced by high school students!

These kinds of reflections on all of the good and bad in our lives are what make the *Vignette* so wonderful. Our literary and arts magazine establishes a symbiotic interaction between the artists, writers, readers, and viewers, where all emerge from the experience intellectually and emotionally stimulated. Not only are we, the editors, giving our peers an outlet for their reflection, but they, the writers, are giving the student body a stepping stone to begin their own reflection.

What I ask of you, dear reader, is that rather than skimming the pages and then tossing our humble little booklet to the side, please find one poem, story, essay, or image that really makes you think, or really packs a punch to your emotional soft spot. Then, reflect. I couldn't hope to provide you with anything more than that.

On behalf of the entire editorial staff, I would like to thank and applaud all the writers and artists listed in the "Contents" pages. They are the people who generously gave all of us so much to think and talk about through their work. We, the editors, are merely simple gatherers and sorters of the excellence gifted to us this year by our brothers.



Lens To The World

I took this photo because of the perspective. The meaning behind this photo is to show my passion for photography as a hobby. What strikes me about this photo is the light transitioning from top to bottom. It starts out very bright at the top of the camera, and gradually gets darker as you move your eyes down the photo.

Connor Walsh '20

What is a Book

What is a book?
 Is it a collection of written words,
 Or others thoughts transferred
 To people by these great tales
 Of dungeons, dragons, or white whales.
 Are books of wizards and heroes and gods
 Just made so authors can get more applauds?
 Or do these tales have deeper meaning
 For the scholars to see when convening?
 Not all books tell a tale for pleasure;
 Not all stories are just for leisure.
 The great tales of love, life, and humanity
 Are the ones that drive even the greatest into insanity.
 Find a book, novel, or text
 To read then keep reading until the next.
 For books are gifts of great intellect
 That every human on earth should learn to respect.

Kshaunish Soni '18

My Composite Parts

“Greek? Mexican? What are you?” As a multi-racial individual with no clear giveaways of my ethnicity, I’ve grown accustomed to questions like these. My standard response may elicit a look of mild surprise or confusion: “Half Indian, half Iranian.” When I was younger I used to add “full American,” but now that just sounds contrived. The inherent meaning of these outwardly innocent questions reveals an alienating nature. If solidarity and complementarity are reality, can I be defined by the sum of my parts?

Constituent parts alter and define the entire essence of my being. Who am I without Sunday dinners full of rapid-fire conversations intermixed with Farsi and English amongst Persian relatives dining on pollo and ghormeh sabzi? Who am I without my equally noisy talks about Kannada literature with my increasingly hard-of-hearing Indian grandfather? There are no tidy compartments for these parts of myself, and to atomize them feels false. These simple yet essential aspects of my everyday life have come to define who I am while taking aspects from both of my racial backgrounds and unifying them.

My father insists that I was shooting hoops on the child-size basketball rim before I could walk properly. his early love for physical activity was followed by my passion for geography when I discovered the existence of globes—in no small part because of their similar shape to basketballs. I would endlessly spin the globe in our living room, jamming my fingers in its steel bracket on countless occasions.

But am I to be defined by my love of basketball, soccer, ice hockey, baseball, football and all things related to sports? Or am I the quiet guy memorizing maps and capitals and changing

boundaries in Europe? Can you break me down into my parts?

I can hold the line under the Friday Night lights with grit and resistance to pain, or I can feel the fear and uncertainty quietly in my room as deadlines creep up and high school slides away. On any given Sunday in the fall I can be up on my feet, loyal to my Chicago Bears, or I can be immersed in *Paradise Lost* writing about the power of good over evil. The atoms shift and vie for their respective positions, but they do not define the whole.

Throughout my daily life, I find myself interacting with people of all different external makeups: science “geeks,” passionate debaters, and Division I athletes alike. To many, each of these individuals is defined by his or her primary passion. What outsiders fail to consider are the many hidden talents and layers that fail to meet the eye, demanding to be noticed.

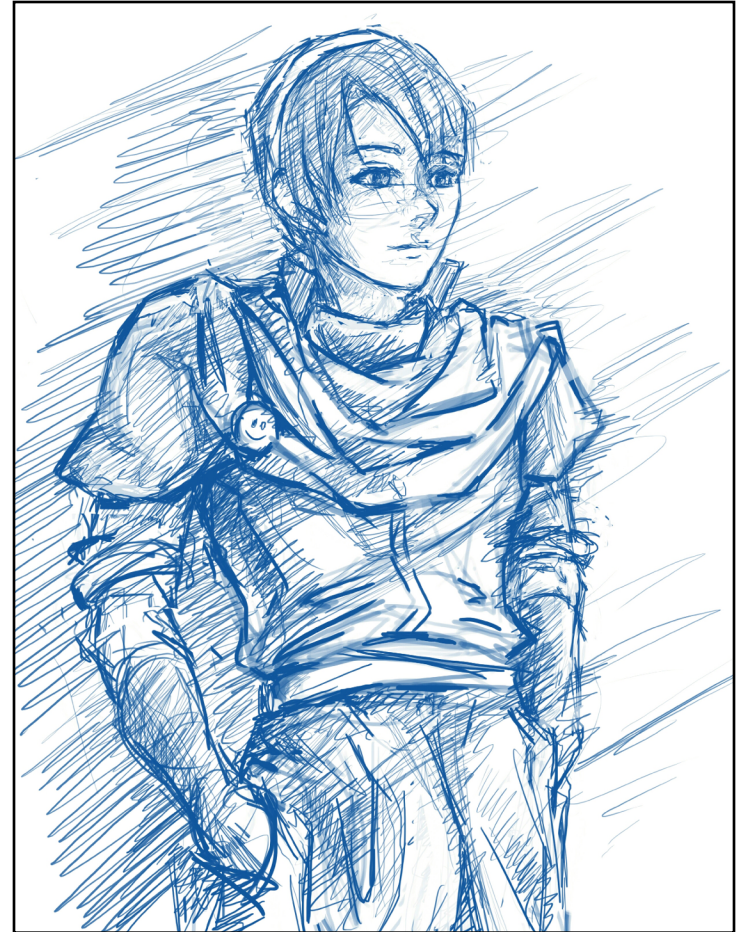
Is it fair to pigeonhole an individual based on pre-conceived stereotypes? Is a person the sum of his or her racial backgrounds, childhood interests, daily actions, and life experiences? While each aspect of me has value and can be artificially detached and examined, you cannot know who I truly am by studying these parts alone and failing to consider the external influences on my life.

Alexander Aithal '17

Fenrir

Long have you stared with hateful eyes,
Waiting for slow infinities.
What twisted plan or wretched thought
Has stood eager for Ragnarok?
With every pull, moves the chain
Forcing all of Midgard to strain.
Do you yearn for it to break?
When your bloody revenge will take?
Loki's son, wolf that fate has famed,
Twilight has come, your victim claimed.
The blood still flowing from your maw,
Only the sky escapes your jaw.
But every slayer shall be slain;
Your life to Vidar will be lain.
Be not afraid to claim your fate;
Only its end will end your hate.

Henry Schaeffer '18



Falchion Wielder

This is a simple anime-style male standing with his hands in his pockets.

Aris Agarwala '17

The Madman

As a psychiatrist, I was assigned to interview a mentally ill murderer in an asylum. The guards kept on calling this person the “Madman” so I was sure to meet someone who was quite interesting.

Two guards walked by my sides and took me to the room, which was not so mundane despite its large amount of empty space. There was also a wall that separated me and the patient, along with a lovely window to look and talk through. I got myself comfortable and apparently had to wait a while for the insane fool to arrive. At last, he came with a devilish smile and looked tall and intimidating.

He played with his fingers as if they were scissors and examined me with a disturbing look. My immediate impression was that man should never be trusted, not in the slightest. When our eyes met, we glared for a minute and did not utter a word. Silence engulfed the room. Strikingly, the foolish man had no patience and chose to utter his first words. “Why are you here?”

I replied boldly, “I am the one who should be asking questions!” Then he said it again. I hesitated to respond to that buffoon but I decided to calmly say that I was here to investigate him. He looked at his feet as if trying to think of a response. I knew this lowly man was not going to get best of me. We paused again for a few minutes until I decided to make my move. I questioned, “What problems do you have?”

“None to speak of. Perhaps you should tell me yours.”

Petrified, I yelled, “No! You will never manipulate me. I am in control and you can never stop my righteous power!”

“What gives you that righteous power?” He asked. “Do you feel responsible for the power? Why you do such actions?”

I was enraged. How could that horrible man treat me like this? I was always a good person; there was nothing wrong with

me. This man was trying to assume my identity and personality. I knew from the beginning that he was a hapless murderer who wanted to lead me away like stray sheep. He had to be stopped.

I got up, lunged toward the window, and swung my fists at him. My head simply pounded on the glass frame because I was in a strait jacket. My body was in pain so I screamed a bloody cry, “How could this happen to me? My deeds were always so kind. In fact, I am perfection! I am God! Nobody could ever stop my true authority in this universe!” Guards surrounded me to contain my beautiful rage. If I were to lose my greatness, I might as well unleash it all on them. I screeched one more time, “I am falsely accused! I am not insane. I am the sanest creature who ever lived! I am the second coming! Go ahead and hang me for my pure actions!”

He stood up from his chair and remarked, “Serves you right, you Madman.”

Alex Wu '20



Summer Skies

I took this photo because of the sunset, and the vibrant colored sky. The meaning of this photo is to remember the Fourth of July celebration I went to at Plainfield Country Club, as well as the beautiful day. What strikes me in this photo is the colorful sunset, and the range of colors against the white clubhouse.

Connor Walsh '20

Christian Mammon

On paper I am a history teacher
 But I consider myself more than that,
 And I think my students would agree.
 I taught them about the Revolution, followed by a lesson of
 Fighting for your beliefs.
 We dissected the XYZ Affair, continued by the dissection of
 How to be a gentleman.
 I went through the Civil War, reinforced with
 The knowledge of brotherhood.
 I took them through WWI and WWII with a pit-stop on
 Knowing when to pick your fights.
 And then I taught them a lesson relatable to all history.
 I taught them the heavenly art of ...
 Love.
 Then one day I went home having only cracked several smirks and
 even fewer smiles,
 Signed the community petition I didn't agree with,
 Cursed at a lady who gave me an odd look,
 Told my friend I had no room for him at my place,
 And got in an argument with my landlord I knew I couldn't win.
 So as I sat down in my recliner and sipped my beer, I wept.
 I wept all the way into my bed where one side remained perfectly in
 order,
 And I knew,
 It would remain that way,
 Until the day I died.

Andrew Esposito '17

Governor Erwin Ervile

The bank proprietor ended the lives of his workers,
Took their life from them,
And was set free
On account of error.
He tarnished the reputation of Clarence,
Belittled his family name
While taking their jobs and livelihood
And to no consequences walked away.
Dallman took the poor to court,
Knowing their helplessness and lack of power,
And stole their wealth when they had nothing to start with,
But no money was ever returned.
The articles drafted by the editor were ill-advised and reckless
To my campaign and other people's lives.
Devilish intent was his cornerstone
Yet even his regret was no consequence compared to the damage
administered.
These men were dark in the soul
And all committed wrongs that were unforgivable.
They could not see the light.
But I chose the dark.
These men lived wrong-filled lives,
Affecting and damaging their friends
While I controlled the evildoers,
Making my choice to commit sin.
As governor, the blame of this corrupt town can fall upon no one
But me.

Owen Donnelly '17



Palace Gates

This is my picture of the Queen's palace showcasing how royal and artistically beautiful London really is.

Thomas Young '20

Dwayne Bright

I saw her once a week, around that same time,
Smiling back at me, waiting to reply.
Today she gave a chance and
I figured she was for me.
But only time can tell.
I pushed her to another;
Could it have been an
Insect, trapped by its predator
Or a collector needing to add to his collection.
I got out, and I cut that rope at my heart,
Keeping me from being led astray.
I'll never be what I once was though my heart still lingers,
but just as every Man must have a soul,
every king must have his Queen.

Nathaniel Owusu-Asumeng '18



Misty Maine

I captured this scene over the summer on Bailey's Island in Maine. It was approaching dinner time, and the thick fog had come over the land, which gave the island a mysterious feeling to it. I was walking up the hill to take my final run down my favorite road on the island on my longboard, when I saw the scene of the iconic muscle car in front of the house. This is one of my favorite pictures I've ever taken.

Grant Hollyer '19

Jiajia Village

He had gray hair, a wrinkled face, and a lower jaw that protruded slightly. Through the window glass, he bent down to stare at the exhibits inside, showing an intriguing mix of uncertainty, wonder, and confusion. As I was crouching in the shadow to arrange photos, he didn't notice my existence and perhaps would never know that his image had been instilled so deeply in my mind. Anonymous and ordinary, he was certainly a resident of Jiajia Village, where I was ambitiously transforming a closed cement factory workshop into a gallery.

The village, covering an area of four square kilometers in northern Shanxi province, is one of the few in China that still maintains a rigorous planned economic system, where several members of Communist Party of China have final say over a host of issues. Surprisingly, the village prospers on this seemingly outdated system, and gets extolled in books or news.

Several flourishing companies, collectively owned, generate revenue enough for its 2,600 residents to live a comfortable life. Unfortunately, the glory of its sprawling cement factory faded. It was shut down because the wastewater failed the tougher standard.

As a way of growing anew and creating jobs for the laid-off, the village decided to convert the plant into an incubator for creative and cultural industries, similar to Beijing's iconic 798 Art Zone thriving in former military factory buildings. My gallery, a three-storied building, was one of the many start-ups springing up here, including film director Jia Zhangke's theme restaurant.

Far from being an artist, I'm just a big fan of Chinese and Western art, often losing track of time in museums and galleries in

the United States. The conflict – infusion and integration of cultures – motivates my progress in studies and life. Financially, it is my largest investment and an adventure indeed, but I'm still buoyed by this chance to help give a new life to the village to which I am attached. Massive urbanization has left numerous Chinese villages in difficult transitions; the young rush for cities, although lacking a sense of belonging there, while the old linger in the countryside, witnessing ruptured social connections. If a cement factory could develop into an art zone amid the booming tourism here, it could be exemplary.

However, not all locals, especially the former workers toiling in the plant, understand why so many studios appeared in their hometown. A sculpture depicting a half-naked pregnant woman attracted peeps and laughs of onlookers. The cold, heavy grinders and blenders, used to manufacture cement, were adapted into unconventional fish tanks, to the astonishment of many. More familiar with rocks, soil, dusts, and noise for tens of years, the locals appeared not ready to appreciate the new changes. It's true that they participated in the renovation and worked as cleaners or guards, but I had a distinct feeling that they were not fully included in the revitalization of the village. The old man's silence in gazing at my gallery items reflected the epitome of societal transition.

Uncertainty and doubt loom ahead, but doers overcome fear and move on. I believe that, after the shock subsides, both the locals and the outsiders like us can look back through the lens of time, agreeing that we were catching the tide of time to make change happen.

Jinpeng Chen '17



Moonlit Bamboo

This piece of artwork was created using black ink. The technique was wash, and I also used a Chinese bamboo pen for character lines. The serenity of a moonlight night in a bamboo forest inspired me to create this painting, trying to capture a calm moment in time. 12 in x 18 in on watercolor paper.

Jackson Costello '20

In Response to the Allegations Against Queen Metanoia...

'Tis not the precedent she wished to set,
A wondrous maiden deemed to be coquette.
The irony that people cannot see:
Her reign snuffed way before eternity.

'Tis not a prophecy that's gone awry
But blindness in her transcendental eye.
So much for love and those of faithful lies
Whose fallacies bring nothing but demise.

'Tis not a ploy to simply vilify
Nor make the sinner drink the poison lye;
To explicate the actions of the dark
And free the kingdom of the staining mark.

'Tis not the very essence of Above.
The radix found: a stigma of true love.
To find the queen with cruel affinity
To violate her oath of chastity.

'Tis not to doubt her family royalty
But show their daughter's infidelity.
Besmirch the Amaretta noble name,
And love taboo is that of which to blame.

'Tis not to show the gossip of the Ranked,
But show the gravity of "sacrosanct."
Her lechery began the fruitless end,
A tragic flaw that no one can amend.

Aris Agarwala '17

A PUNderstanding

The plane of my thoughts will soon be landing.
Don't worry; I think we can reach a punderstanding.
Autumn comes and colors fall from the tree.
I'll blow them away from the yard, just leaf it to me!
The crashing waves knock the surfer down to quit.
I look and ask him, "Water you gonna do about it?"
Much fun was had on the camping trip I sense.
S'mores, laughter, and stars – it was in-tents!
A delicious long fruit with yellow sealing.
This banana is great, and quite a-peel- ing!
While mixing chemicals, the laboratory plans are drawn.
I would make a chemistry joke, but all the good ones argon!
Neil Armstrong blasts into space, up in the ship with his fingers curled.
Legend says his puns were out of this world.
The car crash was bad; his leg was lost as we can see.
Now he's no longer calf the man he used to be.
I looked over and saw a billboard that said, "Opposite over hypotenuse," on a line.
I yelled out "It must be a sine!"
The transformer blew so they sent an electrician.
When he got there, what he found was a shocking revelation.
The pirate could not get into the movie featuring his favorite star.
He was only 15 and the movie was rated "Argh!"
In the cave there was a grizzly, and
his size was not comparable. I almost woke him up! The fear was un-bear- able!
I'm assuming you're reading this and don't find it funny.
I don't care, because to me it is quite punny.

Dylan Hollender '17



Snap

Usually, that's the last sound we hear before we die. That was the last sounds I heard before my brother and mother were killed. Thoughts were swirling through my head, mainly about my kids. What would happen if I never came back? I felt no pain, saw no blood, but I knew that I had been shot. I looked right into the center of the device the human was holding in his hands. I had been shot, but in a good way.

Justin Abi-Atme '18

The Power of Metanoia

Growing up in the infamous town of Newark, New Jersey, every adolescent shared a common goal – to stay off the streets and get themselves and their loved ones out of the ghetto. The struggle to survive was intense as each day proved to be as difficult as the last. It was common for the young to develop quickly and depend on themselves for all necessities. Parents dreaded each day because they were unaware if their dearest child would make it home after school hours.

Prior to my teenage years, I was blind to the dangers of Newark and unwillingly engulfed by the negative aspects of life that my parents demanded that I avoid. I was turning into a person that disregarded my parents' Christian beliefs and values. My stern father quickly noticed my unusual behavior and defiantly expressed a statement that altered my perspective on life completely: "If you continue to act the way you are, you can take your belongings and leave my household."

Alarmed by that statement, I thought about it endlessly in order to discover a resolution to my predicament. What could I do to please my father? What could serve as an asylum from the adversities of life? If I am kicked out, who will be there to care for me? These various questions circled my mind for days because there seemed to be no absolute answer. Approximately two weeks later, after long hours of deep thought, I finally discovered my gateway to preservation from the streets – basketball. From that day on, I threw away the unfavorable components of life and relied on basketball and the power of God to lift me from my trials and tribulations.

Since I started playing basketball, I have been able to understand the true meaning of life and the opportunities it presents. Basketball revealed how enjoyable life could be without violence or other temptations of evil. Before I played the game I now cherish, my mind was saturated by hostility and dubiousness, which in effect, only caused harm instead of nourishment. The benefits of basketball outweighed the thrills I was experiencing from parties.

When I think back on those days, I feel as though the

opportunity to play basketball was a message from God. Up to that point, my faith in God had been debunked by the various adversities I faced at the time. I prayed daily to God but I presumed that His blessings did not reach me for there was no sign of relief from my daily challenges. To this day, I credit the Lord with my protection from the evilness of the world. Without His grace, I would still be the unappreciative, egocentric, and baneful person that I formerly was.

When there are moments that I begin to lose my passion for basketball, I remember who I was before my transformation and what life would have been like had not evolved. Nothing frightens me more than the thought of being disconnected from my family and friends. The fact that the Lord eventually answered my prayers and blessed me with His gracious assistance has allowed me to wake up every morning with a meaningful grin on my face. No matter how many times I reminisce about how much I enjoyed my previous life, as long as I feel the sensation of the supple leather ball making contact with my fingertips, I will continue to flourish and walk under the wing of the Lord.

Although adversity is a customary aspect of the human life cycle, it is critical to understand that through the grace of God, salvation from the depravities of the world is indeed possible. Basketball is my gateway to success and I am grateful it chose me to be its master as a sheep chooses a shepherd to be his.

Dexter Jackson '17

Rap Music

Plug in my headphones
And hit the play button.
Now I sit and kick back
With no interruptions.

My heart syncs up
With the syncopated beat.
The bass turned up,
I'm tappin' my feet.

So please leave me alone
For the next three minutes.
Let me chill by myself
And listen to these lyrics.

My favorite song's on,
The volume's on high.
I close my eyes and relax,
I'm getting good vibes.

My headphones on,
The song, it's blasting.
All I wish is for this
To be everlasting.

I don't feel rhythm,
The rhythm feels me.
Boom, snap, boom, snap;
I'm loving this beat.

Explosions of color
Just fill up my ears
With the lyrics that paint;
They paint away my cares.

I just love music.
It just makes me feel free.
I love everything about it
This is what music does to me.

Jayden Daniel '20
1st Place Freshman Poetry



An Artist's Paradise

I was able to take this photo over the summer, on a hot day only moments after an artist I saw down there had finished painting one of the murals. It was cool to learn about their life and to watch their own form of art come alive, and look so abstract, but when completed actually meant something. I commonly encountered artists coming down to the bridge to paint their murals or “tags.” By learning how these artists did their work I was able to pick up on how to read graffiti, and has forever changed how I look at graffiti.

Grant Hollyer '19

A Flower

What is love but a flower?
A masterpiece in its finest hour;
A massacre in its final hour.
Its symmetry is cause for applause
Yet each individual has flaws.
Colorful and intricate,
Nature's finest instrument.
Maintenance is a necessity;
Negligence must be temporary.
Aromatic, like perfume;
Fragrant, but sweet, too.
It can grow from as little as a seed.
Just hope it doesn't turn into a weed.

Gaurav A. Mahajan '19



Under the Sea

I made this painting using liquid colored inks, and the technique is pointillism. It took me approximately 28 hours and 15 classes at my art studio in Highland Park. I wanted to try a different way of applying the medium other than using a paint brush. I picked the starfish because they are such unique sea creatures, they are calm and they can see everything from the ocean floor. 12 in x 18 in on watercolor paper.

Jackson Costello '20

Through the Scope

I peered through the scope, searching for the target. He is a world class thief, one of the best, but this time he's met his match. I was approached for the job by a very desperate suitor, or rather his representative, to take out the criminal who wronged him.

He must have been acquainted with the inner workings of the underworld since I am known in very select circles. To some, I am a myth, a mere campfire story told by friends to galvanize fearful reactions. To others, I am a nightmare, witnessing firsthand the devastation caused by crossing someone powerful enough to know of me.

We exchanged messages through code names to maintain anonymity. The assignment seemed easy enough, just a routine vendetta mission. I know now I should never assume things, and little did I know what would happen next.

As always, I got to my vantage point three days in advance to get a feel for the scenery. By the time my target arrives, I become indistinguishable from the scenery around me. Not only do I turn near invisible, but after motionlessly viewing my surroundings for three days, I can detect the slightest movement.

I sat, breathlessly waiting for my target to arrive. I could sit waiting for months, but just minutes before the kill time the suspense builds up inside me until the very moment I feel the sweet release of pulling the trigger.

I can feel vibrations, likely a convoy of trucks. I wasn't informed of a convoy, and misinformation always concerns me. This doesn't feel right; I always insist on a full briefing. I would have left if I knew of this earlier, but I cannot now out of fear of being seen. I can see the convoy pull up, and I count an overwhelming amount of trucks. There must be enough for a small army!

Through my scope, I see the silhouettes of two men get out of the first car, and they exchange hand signals, indicating they are the leaders. One man seems to be carrying a gun, which is the only thing I can identify at this moment. They seem to be arguing. The

man with the gun seems to be pointing at the other leader. There is a glint where his pointing hand is, and I realized at that moment that he is

pointing a gun. BANG... BANG... BANG. The man without the rifle crumples to the ground, lifeless.

Fortunately, death no longer phases me. I see the man look up in my direction but I am confident he can't see me, since I have perfected the art of camouflage. He raises the rifle in my direction, making my unwavering confidence start to waver. He lines up his shot and I have only a second to react. I roll out of the way just as an explosion, or a facsimile of one, rings out, falling to the ground that is roughly two stories below, hitting my head on a rock. Darkness engulfs me, and all my senses shut off at once.

Jake Rothstein '20
1st Place Freshman Fiction

Just a Game

It's getting dark and hard to see,
Especially with this fog all around me.
This is the perfect time for her to make an attack;
I quickly turn and look behind my back.
I keep looking intensively up and down
But she is nowhere to be seen or found.
I see a shadow cross my eye,
Which sends a fearful shiver up my spine.
She has made her presence extremely clear;
I sense that she is close, closer than she appears.
My heart begins to beat out my chest.
There is no time to stop and rest.
I must move quickly before I'm next.
I'm too scared to move my feet;
It seems like they are glued to the tree.
I hear her evil laugh echoing in my ear.
It's not safe; I have to get out of here.
I take one tiny step away from the big log
But as I did so, a shadow came out of the fog.
She sprang forward and attacked me.
Her force made me fall to my knees.
I screamed out of anger because she had victory.
"Tag," she said. "You're it!"

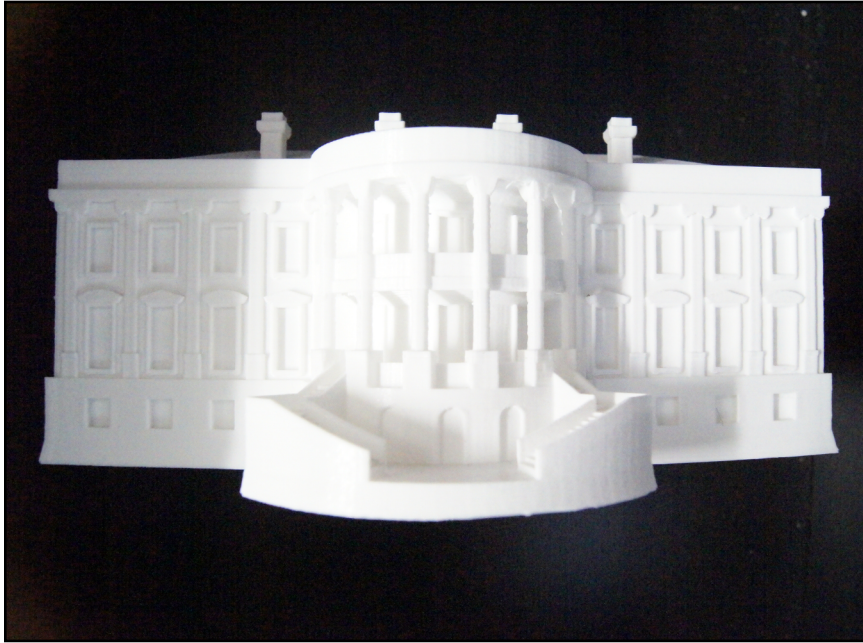
Connor Esposito'17



Nya Nya!

This is a sketch of the face of a nekomimi (Japanese for Catgirl).

Aris Agarwala '17



The White House

I decided to 3D print the White House on the school's new 3D printer. With this year being an election year, I thought the White House would be a good model to print to show off the capability for this new technology.

James Bledsoe '17

Leader Of The Free

When times are dark and love is cold. When men become weak and tyranny takes hold. When the cynical become the feared and submission becomes easy, stand out from the rest and lead; be bold. March into that uneasy night and proclaim the truth of old; while hope still remains, tyranny diminishes. Light that darkness ablaze, rekindle the flame of liberty, and preach to the hazy. Proclaim this truth far and wide; engulf despotism in the flames of freedom. Wash away the bane of constrained existence then rally the nations, bringing forth freedom's confederation. For as long as you lead with this purpose, freedom's call will follow. Cast away those tyrannical leaders and build anew a nation of peace and welcoming. Build not this nation's values on the back of slaves, but on the forefront of its people's aspirations. Never let your people forget what they stand for; preach to them so that one day they can pass the torch to their prodigies, knowing that love and hope will always reside by their children's sides. For as long as there's love, and as long as there is hope, liberty will never die.

Sean Carlucci '18

The Federalist Capers

It was Wednesday, November 9, 2016. I had stayed up all night watching the election results and was trying to sleepwalk my way through a volleyball game in second period gym. There had been so much negative campaigning over the last year. My mind was filled with worry. Was the right person elected? Engrossed in thought, I only caught a brief second of the warning.

“Joe! Look out!”

A white blur headed toward my face. My sleep-deprived brain processed the image of a volleyball too late as it smacked me in the face. The next thing I saw was my prone body on the gym floor, surrounded by my classmates. I was floating above the gym toward a white light. The light engulfed me.

The next thing I knew, I was in a large room filled with desks. On each desk was an inkwell, quill, and parchments. A rumble of arguing occupied the room.

“We must preserve the rights of the states!” one voice boomed.

Another yelled, “A strong central government is key to our republic!”

“Hulk smash!” growled a third voice.

Hulk smash? My eyes adjusted to the scene and I scanned the room. I instantly recognized it as Independence Hall. The room was filled with historical figures that I had only read about in history books – Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Hamilton, The Hulk. Batman, Harry Potter.

I blinked my eyes in confusion when George Washington finally noticed me. He looked as solemn and presidential as he appeared in his portraits.

“Are you well?” President Washington asked.

“I’m fine,” I replied, “although I’m confused about why they are here.” I pointed to the group of superheroes and one young wizard.

Washington shrugged. “It’s your hallucination. You probably watch too much of that thing you call television.”

I nodded in agreement with the President.

George continued, “I know you are concerned about the election, but as you’ve learned in your history class, the group of distinguished gentlemen over there have created a system of checks and balances that have allowed the republic to endure for 240 years.”

I felt a wave of calmness wash over me that was quickly disturbed by more yelling.

“Hulk no like electoral college!”

“It is vital to have equal representation!” countered Alexander Hamilton.

President Washington just sighed and muttered, “That temper of his is going to get him killed one day.”

I could only nod in agreement as the white light that had engulfed me early returned. When I opened my eyes again, I was sitting up on the gym floor.

The trainer was leaning over me and asked “Are you alright?”

Before I could stop myself, I replied, “Yes, Mr. President. I think the country and I are both going to be fine.”

Joseph Smieya '19
1st Place Sophomore Fiction

Living Wisdom of the Ages

The creatures, living past all empires' deaths,
Which break, divide, yet bind all men in one
Condition. Humans bound in flaws, when gone,
Are made immortal far beyond their breadth.
Emotion penned on paper, reed, or stone.
Evoke familiar thoughts in times ahead,
Despite the canyon time creates when read.
These beasts, alive, have left no place alone.
With common traits that bring together souls
From vast domains to serfs of little means.
Conveying both stories as well as dreams
Is simple work for mortals' skilled control.
Despair alike to any man's incites
The same in all. A joy so great inspires,
Elates those men despairing. Words acquire
A meaning new from works constructed right.
All times, all places, people are renewed
When written words, once more perceived, provide
The wisdom, wit of age, of faults allied
To men of future ages. We allude
To tales of triumph, tales of woe. The tales
That break through time, the foe of men, the weak,
Allow the dead to live and breathe and speak
To us, a people lost from morals, failed.
Despite the present's knowledge, man is dull.
To wisdom of past heroes, man is numb.
Advances make the man a god, but dumb.
To man, the written creature dies to all
His power gained, but certain loss befalls
The one who slights the might of words, the sum
Of men throughout the eras; they become Mortal.

Samuel Gillespie '17
1st Place Senior Poetry



The Big Apple

I shot this photo when I was on a ferry in New York City. I looked at the beautiful skyscrapers and was inspired by their size and shape with the amazing cloud formations in the background.

Jobanpreet Saini '17

At All Cost

Gliding through the marble floor,
The queen stands, silent at the door.
Knights on both sides holding firm,
Prepared to fight as some may learn.

Servants like a chain of links,
Solemnly standing like a sphinx.
At all costs, they will defend,
Even if life is near the end.

Towers standing on four corners,
Keeping guard the castle borders.
Waiting 'til the end of battle,
Until then, they shall not rattle.

Trading blows each army fails
To destroy the other, none prevails.
Fighting hard to gain the upper hand,
The overarching strategy and plan is grand.

The priest performs his last battle rite;
Through sacrifice, he wins the fight.
His comrade steps forth to seal the fate,
His final words: Check Mate.

Benshel Bright '20



Greatness Awaits

I took this photo to remember my first freshman cross country race. The meaning behind it is that where some sports end somewhere in the year, running season is all year. It shows the deep passion I have for running, with everyone at the line having a version of the same love for running. The part of this photo that stands out to me is the rainbow of uniforms, each school a different combination.

Connor Walsh '20



The Bond of Brotherhood

My inspiration for taking this photo was looking at the team before their race, praying together and receiving a pre-race talk from coach. This really proved how much the team has each other's backs no matter what happens in their lives.

Dominick D'Esposito'18

Message to the Untalented Team Before the Big Game

Tomorrow is the game against Lights Out
And in our team you might begin to doubt.
But even if the score displays a rout,
The enemy will see what we're about.
When quarterback and wide are deemed knocked-out
And out lineman's felled by a heavy clout,
The rest will persevere and still hold-out.
As far as skill goes, I'm no talent scout
But quantity – no team has our amount.
So who's our enemy this game? Lights Out?
We might as well be playing the Girl Scouts!

Stephen Kenny '17

The Race

The sweet smell of gasoline wafted through the warm Florida air and poured through the vents of my helmet. The engine sent massaging vibrations through my body. It was a hot day, and the fact that I was wearing a full racing jumpsuit didn't help. I gripped the wheel and watched as the green flag dropped. Everything slipped into slow motion. I looked at the racers around me. They were seasoned kart racers yet this was my first race at Homestead Speedway. I focused on the flag as it flew through the slight breeze. Looking straight ahead, I positioned my feet. As the flag gently landed on the ground, the air was flooded with the sound of roaring engines.

This was the fastest kart I had ever driven, reaching a top speed of fifty-five miles per hour. I slammed on the gas and took off. We roared down the first strip, hugging the right barrier. Everyone moved into formation so that each kart was in a single-file line. The first turn was almost ninety degrees. I remembered the apex turning maneuver that I learned in a racing camp so I steered through the inside of the turn and, upon exiting the turn, moved to the outer right barrier. Around the turn was another thirty-yard stretch. I remembered another technique we learned in the racing camp – slip-streaming. The car in front of me scattered the air particles. Remaining behind the driver ahead of me would reduce the resistance and allow me to gain more speed. I steered behind him and gained a substantial amount of speed. I glided easily into fifth place.

Barreling down the speedway, I entered a hairpin turn. Pumping the breaks, I executed the turn perfectly, which chopped off a couple of milliseconds between me and the fourth place driver, who was about a second ahead of me, a large amount of space considering the speed we were traveling. I noticed that every turn we hit, I would get slightly closer to him. Another right turn came up. I let off the gas and coasted into the bend. In the center of the turn, I hit the accelerator and steered around the fourth place driver. The lap finished and the race continued.

By the time of the final lap, I had moved to second place. I had learned the layout of the track and at this point it was a test of skill to determine the winner. The first place driver flew down the track at breakneck speeds while I trailed closely behind. I focused on the driver's hand movements on the wheel. He was very precise with his motions. The final turn was in the distance. It was an acute left turn, hard to control. The first place driver passed through with ease. I mirrored his motion but hit the accelerator slightly earlier than he. It gave me just enough speed to position myself next to him. We were side by side. To the right of the track, the crowd stood up and watched with exhilaration. The man holding the checkered flag stood up and began to wave it. The finish was in sight.

I was neck and neck with one of the best racers of the Homestead Speedway community. People were waving their hands in the crowd, tiny pebbles kicked up and hit my helmet's visor, the smell of burning rubber lingered in the air, and the other driver scrutinized me. I could see only his eyes through the helmet. He gave me an unforgettable look. His eyes were filled with shock, fear, and anger. He was shocked to find that a newcomer to Homestead was tied with him. He was fearful of losing his first place title to an out-of-state kid with a rented kart. He steered away from me.

The finish line was quickly approaching. I looked over my shoulder and saw him fiercely steering towards me. Without even thinking, I slammed the breaks and the Homestead Speedway Karting Champion collided with the divider. I crossed the finish line. The checkered flag waved above me as the crowd cheered and applauded. The previous champion bitterly had to accept the fact that everybody loses somewhere down the road.

Anthony Caicedo '19
1st Place Sophomore Nonfiction



Getting Off The Line

I had this photo taken to remember my last freshman cross country race. This photo's meaning is to show the dedication of all the runners, and how we stop at nothing to achieve greatness. What strikes me about this photo is the variety of uniform colors, each uniform representing a different school. It truly is a palette full of colors.

Connor Walsh '20

200m

A split second reaction
is required to remain
in the required space.
All rationality is replaced by
the rapid fire rate at which
red rubber is roasted
by racing running athletes,
raging off the round
and on to the red runway.
Reality begins to return,
right as the ribbon is torn.

Christopher Brooks '19

The Final Battle

His ears ring as if cannons on either side of him have just rattled off a volley. He hears the thud-thud-thud of the blood rushing to his ears, but all other noises around him are inaudible; time slows down around him.

He sees all his fellow comrades hooting and hollering, hyping themselves up, but he remains quiet. He feels fear, afraid of what the outcome may be if he should fail. His muscles and bones vibrate within him, shaking in anticipation. A fire burns within his stomach, partially passion and partially anxiety. No amount of antacids can douse this fire, and the embers within him burn uncontrollably.

His mind races. Thoughts bounce around his head, creating doubt and fear. What if I fail? What if I let my brothers down? These are just a few of his thoughts. All others elude him; he is not thinking about his workload or his loved ones. The only thoughts he has are related to his mission. He knows what he has to do but it must be executed correctly. His heart beats against his chest rapidly. He is scared to go on.

Yet, on the surface he is calm and collected. He is ready to pounce upon his opponent like a lion on a wounded gazelle. Although his bones are shaking he sits motionless, not even conceding time to blink.

His stomach finally quits its churning. It's time. He stands up and places his helmet atop his head. Hopefully, this piece of heavy plastic will be enough to protect him from the shots he will endure. One final thought of doubt washes over him like a tidal wave, making his legs give out. He almost falls, but he is able to catch himself before he does. He wants to give up but then he remembers why he does what he does. He loves what he does too much just to quit. He thinks of all the people rooting for him and all the kids looking up to him. He cannot stop now. His sacrifices will not be in vain.

The fire returns to his stomach but this time it is under his complete control. He walks out of the building with his squad hollering at the top of their lungs. His eyes grow wide yet maintain their focus. As he walks out onto the battlefield; he knows that it will be his last time. There is no turning back now.

He looks toward the crowd and sees his fans. He looks on the opposite end of the field and sees his opponents. He looks up to the sky and thinks how blessed he is to have the opportunity to play the game he loves. He sheds a tear, knowing that this will be the last time he will play football. He will not fail his team.

Luke Yakely '17



Monumental Sunsets

I took this photo because of the Louvre Museum in Paris, being surrounded by a setting sun. The meaning of this photo is to capture the beauty of the Louvre's construction, and of course the sunset. What strikes me the most about this photo is how the sunset goes in between the arc.

Connor Walsh '20

Reliquiae

I.e.? Id est "id est."
 Id est exemplum reliquiae linguae
 (E.g. exempli grātiā).
 Multa verba in linguā Anglicā
 de linguā Latīnā relictā sunt.
 Sed amōrem nōn accipit, etc.
 (Et cētera).
 P.S.: (post scriptum)
 Nōn sequitur.

Relics

I.e.? That is "that is."
 It is an example of a relic of language
 (E.g. for example).
 Many words in the English language
 Have been left from the Latin language.
 But it receives no love, etc.
 (And so on).
 P.S.: (After written)
 This does not follow.

Samuel Gillespie '17

L'Amour Dans Le Coeur

L'amour dans le cœur est son meilleur trait
Mais pour cette fille, il y a des problèmes.
Pendant que son amant la laisse distrair,
Sa grande timidité est son dilemme.
Dans tout la ville, elle cherche son amant
Mais quand elle le trouve, elle se cache toujours.
Elle l'attire secrètement et brillamment,
Mais elle se cache ; Le cœur bat comme un tambour.
Mais un jour, elle a gagné le pouvoir
De rencontrer son amant en personne.
Elle a finalement quitté le nichoir
Et le cœur battait comme un papillon.

The Love in Her Heart

The love in her heart is her best quality
But for this girl, there are some problems.
While her lover leaves her distracted,
Her great shyness is her dilemma.
Throughout the city, she searches for her love
But when she finds him, she always hides.
She attracts him secretly and brilliantly,
But she hides herself; her heart beats like a drum.
But one day, she gained the power
To meet her lover in person.
She finally left the nest
And her heart fluttered like a butterfly.

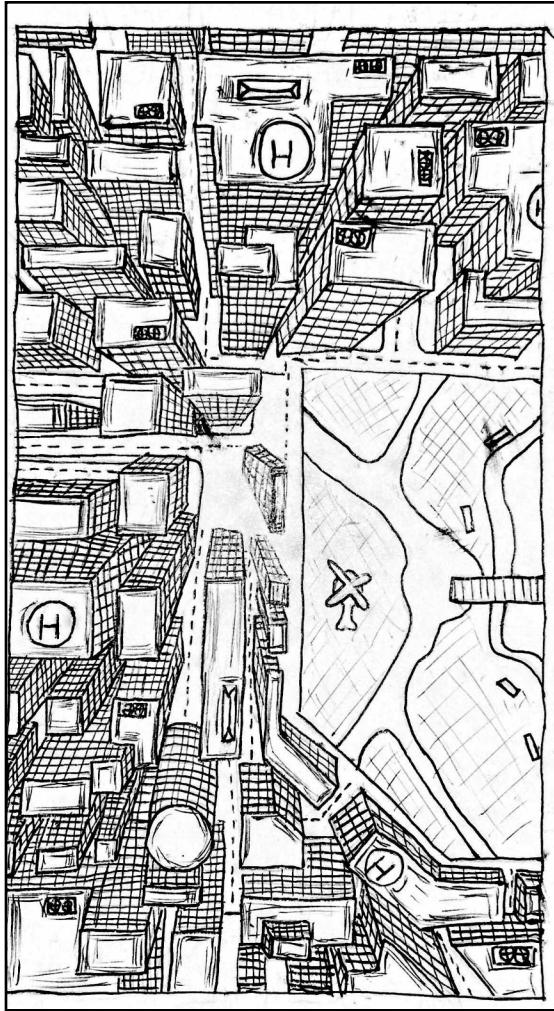
John Reggio '18



Towering Into The Sky

I took this photo because of the angle I could achieve, and to remember my trip to Paris, France. The meaning of this photo is to show the taper of the Eiffel Tower, and how high it goes into the sky. What strikes me about this photo is how the clouds practically part around the tower.

Connor Walsh '20



A Falcon's View

This project was utilized to practice and put my skills to use in depth perception. I found it interesting to be able to freely design my own city landscape. Being able to draw whatever comes to mind enabled me to get my creative juices flowing, and depict my thoughts and ideas on paper.

Brendan Shank '17

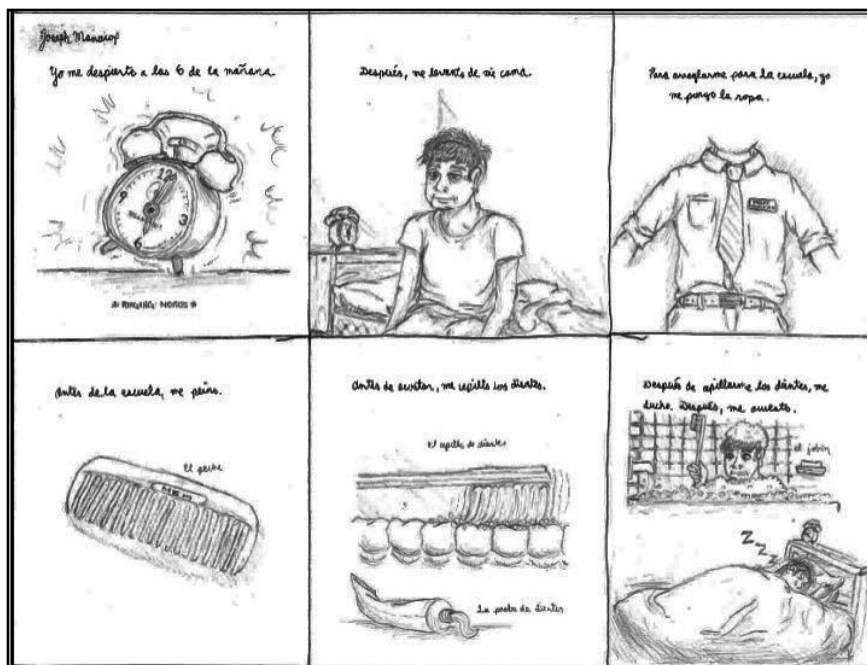
Meine Reise

Die Dunkelheit der Nacht bricht herein.
 Ich reise auf den Straßen,
 Um zu meinem Ziel zu gelangen.
 Die Straßenlaternen flackern,
 Während ich auf kurvenreichen
 Und holprigen Nebenstraßen fahre.
 Ich biege auf die Hauptstraße ein,
 Meine Scheinwerfer zeigen mir den Weg.
 Mein Rückspiegel zeigt
 Die Stelle,
 Von der ich schon so weit gekommen bin.
 Die Lichter der Autos reflektieren
 Einander und verursachen,
 Dass verschiedene Farben
 Verschmelzen.
 Endlich erreiche ich die Autobahn
 Und mein Ziel kommt immer näher.
 Ich habe es geschafft.

My Journey

The dark of night descends.
 I travel the streets
 To get to my destination.
 The streetlights flicker
 As I drive on winding
 And bumpy side roads.
 As I turn onto the main roads,
 My headlights guide me.
 My rearview mirror shows
 The place
 I have come so far from.
 The lights from cars
 Shine off of each other
 And cause different colors
 To melt into each other.
 I finally reach the highway,
 And my destination is now approaching fast.
 I'm home free.

William DeJianne '17



Mi Diaria Rutina

This was an assignment given by Sra. Bonelli, my Spanish teacher, to help us learn Spanish vocabulary. The illustrations were done using a mechanical pencil and the writing was done using a ballpoint pen.

Joseph Manacop '19

Oda Al Ajedrez

El ajedrez
Es una deporte de la
Mente y
De estrategia.
El tablero se convierte en una
guerra:
Las piezas, los soldados
valientes,
Asaltan las defensas
Del rival.
Se puede sentir el miedo
De su rival cuando
Se apoderan de
Sus soldados
De plástico.
Mientras la
Batalla continúa,
Se puede probar la victoria.
En un acto final, tú dices,
“¡Mate!”
Y tu oponente acepta la derrota.

Ode To Chess

Chess
Is a sport of the
Mind and
Of strategy.
The board is converted into a
war:
The pieces, the valiant soldiers,
Assault the defenses
Of the rival.
You can sense the fear
Of your rival when
You capture
Their soldiers
Of plastic.
As the
Battle continues,
You can taste the victory.
In a final act, you say,
“Checkmate!”
And your opponent accepts
defeat.

Scott Aravena '17

Voice

When I left the podium and took a seat, I would have never believed that talking in front of over 2000 people at a Model United Nations conference would change my life so dramatically. I would have never realized that the words I spoke were not merely background noise, but catalysts for change.

When my older brother forced me into this program during my freshman year, I merely thought it was something to boost my resume. When I entered the three-day Hershey Model United Nations Conference in January 2013, I was so apprehensive that I would not even talk to my fellow classmates. I was stranded in a sea of unfamiliar faces who judged my every move. I was frozen in my seat and the only name engraved in my mind was my country name, Seychelles. I simply sat in the back as a bystander who had no say nor influence on the matter at hand, yet I kept thinking “Next year I’ll do better...next year...”

During my sophomore year, I finally learned how to speak in front of outsiders with some proficiency, and for the first time in my MUN career, I talked to a delegate from a different school! I shifted my mindset from a narrow-minded attitude to one of outward expression, and wanted to carry that into my junior year through an unlikely avenue – running for Secretary General.

A Secretary General is elected by all the delegates, and is usually an officer or a leader. My opponents embodied that aspect, whereas I lacked it. I was the black sheep who lacked recognition and status. My chances of winning were slim to none, yet I still applied. I practiced hundreds of speeches day and night before the conference to perfect my skills, but when the night before the conference arrived, I simply relaxed before the impending storm.

The next day, I woke up anxious and dressed in my best suit and tie, checking myself excessively. When I was called up, I slowly walked towards the stage, where we, the candidates, were to speak.

When I was called, I scanned the 2000 delegates, took a deep breath, and delivered the best speech I could. Once finished, all I heard was an unnerving silence. What did I mess up? Did I fail?

As I turned to sit back down, I was bombarded by deafening applause and smiled the widest I ever had. I did finally it! I showed the power of my voice. In the end, I lost the primary election by 12 votes, but this failure ignited a fire in me that has yet to be extinguished. I finally understood how to reach others through the oldest and strongest way of persuasion – my voice.

Jaiveer Johal '17



Dare To Stand Apart

This photo was taken in the parking lot of a Gurdwara (Sikh Temple), when I looked to the side and saw a beautiful lake, and thought to myself “This would be an awesome picture for the Vignette.” My uncle just happened to be standing there.

Jobanpreet Saini '17

Life of an AP Lit Scholar

Ah, school is over! I'll rest until night.
What's that? We have a paper to write?
Just let me play another game and then I'll start;
Right now I really don't have the heart.

Ooh, I have a new video to watch!
Later I can take my work up a notch.
Trust me, this is clearly just a test;
If I can do it now, on the exam I'll be the best!

Wait, we have some reading to do, too?
But you don't think she'd quiz us, do you?
I'm sure I can skim it when I get to school;
Reading quickly is an excellent tool.

It's midnight now, no better time to begin!
Hmm, seems like my claim is a little thin
But it's good enough to get a “B”
So it's good enough for me.

I deserve a break for all my dedication.
Maybe another video, and a small celebration?
I've got no more homework tonight;
I even finished before morning light!

I walk into class, ready with paper and pen,
Until the chilling sound, “Clear your desks, gentlemen”
For I had forgotten to read my Xerox
And I failed to knock off her socks.

Michael McGillicuddy '17

We Best Class

A parody of “We Real Cool”

We best class. We
Top brass. We

Stay late. We
Procrastinate. We

Have fun. We
Sleep none. We

Oft’ strain. We
Do complain. We

Done May. We
Go away.

Evan Formisano ‘17



Game to 1, Win by 2

Two of my hobbies are playing with my dog Annie and playing volleyball. I thought to myself one day, *How could I combine my two passions?* I ran into my yard with Annie and my volleyball; we were both excited. As I threw the volleyball up in front of her, she hit it back up with her snout. An image came to me right away – Annie sitting in grass with her paw on the volleyball. Before I knew it, my painting was complete.

Conor Quigley ‘18

An Oxymoron

I grip the picture with frustration, but not much force, not enough for my thumb to pierce through it; I don't have the heart just to tear the memory into pieces. It's a picture of me with all of my old high school friends. As if I had it for decades, the picture is worn with creases and tiny rips here and there. Let's see... there's Devon, making a face so ridiculous that the chuckle it evokes from me causes a slight pain in my throat, which quickly turns into a nasty sounding cough. There's also Alex, who was always so supportive and humble; I always felt so inferior and worthless around him. He's so much taller and more handsome than... You know what? I'm going to stop thinking about Alex. Finally there's Veronica, who amazes me so much that my subpar poetic skills can't help me describe her. I'm no Shakespeare, so I can't make her last forever, but she certainly looked a lot livelier a year ago than I do right now.

I'm sitting here on break from work in order to keep work from breaking me. My father manages this supermarket, so my family had to move to the middle of nowhere for him to work here. I could go somewhere else, but none of the local shops will hire me since the only thing I have on my résumé is "heir to the tyrant market that's driving you people out of business." My parents keep telling me about how I'm a young adult now, and that I need to take responsibility. Young adult? It's an oxymoron, but it describes my situation perfectly. I'm old enough to be put to work but I'm too young to have any agency in my life.

"Take out the 'oxy-' and that pretty much describes you as well" is a pretty clever joke I hear from above me. Oh, it's Alva, another employee here. Her comment actually puts a bit of a smile of my face; fancy that. Wait, was I talking to myself out loud?

"Yeah, you were. You seem a little down. What is it? Are you indulging in your teen angst?" Her question is so blunt that it takes

me a second to realize it's another joke.

"Oh! No, just, looking at some memories."

"Cool... do you want to make some new memories? I've got two tickets to the theatre for this weekend."

She flashes two pieces of cardstock, each labeled "admit one."

"Do you really want to hang out with the guy who's sort of destroying your home town?"

"Well, everyone needs friends, even evil monopoly owners." She answered with an exaggerated inflection on "evil," hopefully indicating that I don't actually seem like a super villain.

"You know what? I'll take you up on that."

I slide the photo into my back pocket, almost forgetting that I was holding it.

*Nolan Jacobs '17
1st Place Senior Fiction*

Want to Know Something Funny?

We're students.
We're 15-18 years old.
We're supposed to be young.

We do our homework.
We study for tests.

We memorize answers.

We take all Honors.
We play three sports.
We're in four clubs.
We're in NHS.

We take SAT prep courses.
We compete against each other.
We apply to Ivy Leagues.

We're tired.
We're exhausted.

It's been fifty hours a week.
It's been long days.
It's been sleepless nights.

We've memorized every
formula.
We've applied to every college.
We've done all we can.

And it all paid off, right?

But...

Ask us how we're doing.
Ask us if we're okay.
Ask us about ourselves.

And we'll freeze.
We don't know.

Because there wasn't an
answer.
There wasn't a formula.
We didn't learn this.

All that prep work.
All those fifty-hour weeks.
All those sleepless nights.

All of it.

It didn't work.
It didn't mean anything.
It didn't teach us how to think.

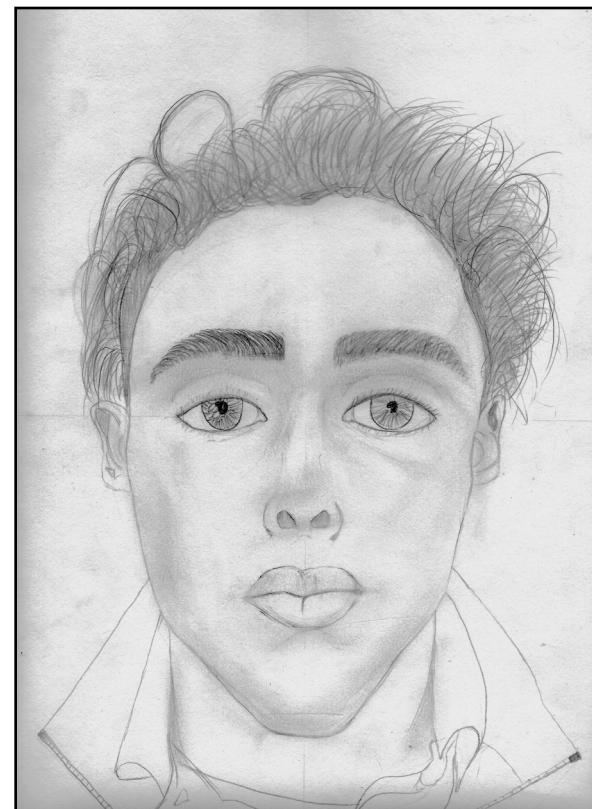
We only learned how to
memorize.

If knowing the answer is more
important
Than learning the lesson,
And our "education" is more
important than
Sanity,

Then our diplomas are more
important than our
Sanity.

Isn't that funny?

Thomas Scarpa '19
1st Place Sophomore Poetry



Self Portrait

This drawing, an assignment for my art class,
turned out to be a challenging project.
(8.5" x 11")

Emmanuel Resto '18

Zenga Library

A sonnet

The spark was lit; a hushed “Hello” he spoke.
A flickered talk endured. “You see the game?”
The chatter smelled no more than paltry smoke.
Among the mob, are these the ones to blame?

In time, the heat began to spread; the nerds
Discussed their grades, the athletes bashed Monroe.
To whom should guilt of kindling stoked by words
Pursue? To them the blame of blaze should go.

The forest burned a banquet hall. John smacked
His gum, Rob drank some soda. All were free
From stress of school, rejoicing in the fact
That they could speak! A brash voice snarled, “Be

Quiet!” it barked. The chilling silence filled
The room. The flame extinguished. None were thrilled.

Christopher Janas '17



Sanctuary

I attempted to capture both the leisure and learning found within the Zenga Library and Media Center. The sharply contrasted books show the immortality of literature while the memories of library shenanigans blend together as seen in the more muted lounge area.

Samuel Gillespie '17

The Road

It was a sunny afternoon and the sky was sapphire blue. I was finishing up my homework in my soccer gear, the ball waiting eagerly on my desk.

“Zhiming, I have something to tell you.” It took my mother a full minute to gather herself. “Your father has passed away.”

The gravity of the news did not sink in until we flew home and saw his ashes a few days later. “He would have lived if he were in Beijing,” my mother murmured. The regret lingered in my head for years, but when I heard about Doctors without Borders, my thoughts gave rise to a dream. At that moment I knew I wanted to become a doctor and bring medicine to inaccessible people.

That fateful afternoon ended the happiness of my childhood. I was ten. I became so quiet that my teachers felt the need to cheer me up from time to time. For quite a while, I still fancied my father sneaking up to me after returning home from a long trip, in order to surprise me with foods and toys from some exotic land.

His absence sent the company into a downward spiral and brought my mother out of her semi-retirement. She had to balance between the livelihood of more than 500 employees and me. Before long, she was away from home for days, or even weeks at a time, leaving me home with our housekeeper. “We all have a duty to fulfill,” she told me.

This sense of responsibility was also in my blood, knowing that the best way to help my mother was to help myself. I learned to manage my life in my parent's absence. Things as minor as finding a ride to my music class became the daily puzzles I had to solve. Little by little, I brought my life back to its old course, but under a different light.

As I came to terms with my loss, I also came to appreciate family, friendship, and the goodwill of people – things I took for granted before. The tragedy broke my heart, but not my spirit. I emerged with a gift of my newfound independence and the confidence to face what lies ahead of me.

This gift accompanied me when I moved to Canada in ninth grade to live with my brother. Linguistic differences were the most

difficult part of the transition, yet with great pressure comes increased effort. In two years I made Canada my second home, having a multitude of loving friends and happy memories.

Last Christmas, my journey continued on to the United States. A paperwork glitch cost me over two months of school. On top of that, there were curriculum differences and half a year's worth of classes that I had to catch up with. I survived the onslaught of stress and started to enjoy my life in the United States.

Zhiming Zhao '17
1st Place Senior Nonfiction



Fit For A King

I took this picture while in the Gardens of Versailles, because of the vibrant colors, and the depth of the shot. The meaning of this photo is to show the complexity of royalty's gardens. The Gardens of Versailles truly are a work of art, with bushes trimmed like giant mazes, layers of walkway, and even a lake to go row boating in. What strikes me about this photo is the distance of the Gardens as a whole, it seems they go on forever.

Connor Walsh '20

College Craze

Sorry, Mr. Powers, but I really like this college. Is it okay if I go to the meeting?

Lo siento Sra. Bonelli, Providence is coming today and my mom said I can't miss it.

Mrs. Muratore, there's another college visit; sorry to miss class again.

Mr. Fowler, I know today is a review day but I need to see Seton Hall.

Mom, Fairfield and Loyola don't come until Thursday, I know that.

Mr. Varco, my grade is dropping in your class. Is there any way to bring it back up?

Sorry I couldn't attend cultural club, Mr. Burke. I had to talk with my Guidance Counselor.

Coach, I can't attend practice today or the game tomorrow 'cause I'm visiting universities in Massachusetts.

Yes, Mrs. Barry, I have been looking at colleges.

No, Uncle Mike, I'm not sure what career I would like to pursue when I'm older.

You're going to USC? Congratulations, Kevin!

"Son, you need to focus more with your subjects in school."

Mom, I know my grades are low right now but I'm occupied with college meetings.

"Worry about grades next quarter; college prep is your first priority."

Dear Student, although you have been a good student at St. Joe's, your recent decline in academics and athletics inside and outside the classroom reflects that you have not matured throughout your junior year and have not met our universities expectations. We wish you the best of luck for the pursuit of the school of your choice. Sincerely, the college that was your first choice.

Seamus Conlon '18

Legacy

3 and 3 years ago,
The first walked
Through these doors.
2 and 2 years ago,
The second followed,
Steady feet on these
Sturdy floors.
1 and 1 years ago,
The third one was
Here, ready for the
Task.
And that leaves me
To live up to this
Legacy that is asked.

I follow the way of my
Brothers,
Three before me who
Have left their mark.

But I am like no other.
It is my time to play
The part

For this is my time
And my path that I take.
The last brother to
Protect the Seal,
Everlasting pride and honor
I do take.

Patrick Quigley '20



The Seal

The seal has meant so much to me since I was a freshman. The image of what I stand for as student and product of a Brothers of the Sacred Heart education is embodied in the seal. I made it for respect towards the school because I am proud of my belonging to Saint Joseph High School.

Brendan Shank '17

Thoughts of an Aspiring Surgeon

As a society, we look upon those in the medical field as saviors, practically piecing back together the lives that God intimately consecrated. Doctors can be seen as those who perform God's work, whether they are in the operating room or laboratory.

However, in a day and age in America in which the healthcare industry is not the most profitable one, why would a person devote his or her time to becoming a professional in the medical fields? Granted, professional surgeons with prestigious degrees can make a decent salary of about \$200,000 as an entering number that increases to about \$450,000 with experience. However, while these figures seem big, they cannot even begin to eclipse the million-dollar contracts of professional athletes or the billion-dollar deals of company CEOs. Moreover, physicians require an extra eight years of medical school devotion while those in sports, retail, or entertainment do not even need to attend college to amass their wealth. No common professional could compete with those figures, and it rouses a question in the minds of many physicians: How are we, the saviors of life, valued less than those who "work" for the entertainment of people?

Furthermore, the workday of an average surgeon is based upon the minutiae, and one abrupt maneuver of the hand or obliviousness to a patient's underlying condition could become a hellish nightmare. In fact, my father told me a story about his cardiothoracic surgeon colleague. This physician could not see plaque buildup in the femoral artery of the patient in whom he was inserting a stent. When the balloon catheter was inserted to position the stent in the closing artery, the plaque broke off and lodged itself in the inferior Vena Cava, the vein leading directly to the heart. As a result, the condition of the patient was elevated to critical, and the same surgeon had to spend hours removing the embolism before a heart attack occurred instead of simply stenting the vessel, which would have taken approximately 30-45 minutes. This is an example of how every patient can become a liability and therefore many feel that the job of a physician is a risky one without appropriate compensation.

For specific kinds of surgeons, every two weeks the hospital puts them "on-call." This term denotes the hospital's ability to call in the physician when he or she is off-duty in order to deal with an emergency situation in the hospital. These calls can be made anytime from lunch, to dinner, to 2 a.m. Despite the precision that their fields require, many surgeons are deprived of proper sleep and this contributes to a steadily increasing rate of dissatisfaction in their chosen field.

However, in spite of these hardships, the morality behind choosing the medical field must be considered and evaluated. Physicians should not pursue their careers on the principles of monetary compensation but rather that of humanitarianism. They should adhere to their Hippocratic Oath and desire the betterment of humanity's health. In essence, professionals in the medical fields devote their own lives to those who are sick or dying, and thereby mirror the healing miracles of Jesus Christ. Thus, it is this distinction that inspires me to become a surgeon.

Aris Agarwala '17



Lost at Sea

I took this photo because of the setting. The meaning of this photo is to capture the horizon and the ship, traveling aimlessly throughout the sea. What strikes me about it is how rippled the ocean is, and how far the horizon goes. It nearly blends in with the overcast sky!

Connor Walsh '20

Introverts: The Misunderstood Minority

Yes, that quiet kid in the back of the class can, in fact, speak, and would most likely want you to know that simple truth.

The aforementioned “quiet kid” is most likely a member of a group of people called introverts. For those unaware, introversion is not a made-up Tumblr gender; rather, it’s a psychological trait that roughly a quarter of the human population possesses. Although there are different degrees to which it applies, introverts are those who enjoy time alone, can be left to their thoughts for extended periods of time, and are generally the polar opposite of the group to which you, dear reader, most likely belong: extroverts. Introverts, due to their introspective and thoughtful nature, are more than twice as likely than extroverts to be shy and/or develop social anxiety. It is for this reason that the “quiet kid” is just that — quiet.

“But why does this matter to me?” you may ask yourself. Well, just because the “quiet kid” may enjoy some time alone, does not mean he would prefer all of his time being alone. Humans are social animals and as such, need social interaction with other humans. The problem for introverts is that social isolation breeds social isolation, which is to say that introverts often find themselves with very few people with whom they feel comfortable because they have trouble becoming acclimated to others. And so, here lies an issue that begs your attention, born through a general dislike of attention.

The purpose here, simply stated, is to raise awareness of the plight of those who exist on the worst end of the introversion spectrum. Introverts can be much more interesting, caring, and fun than they appear to be once people get through their shell, or shells for that matter. If you were to try to reach out to an introvert yourself, don’t be discouraged if your progress is slow. It takes time, but the reward can be well worth the effort. Maybe you’ll even make a new friend, something he’d likely be very appreciative of. So go ahead, talk to quiet kid in the back. You just might be pleasantly surprised by what you find behind that wall of silence. And social awkwardness. And...wait what? Stop typing? I’m rambling and making this weird? Oh... ok. Sorry.

Brandon Hornlein '18
1st Place Junior Nonfiction

The Cold Man

There once was a man who was old.
He chronically seemed to get cold.
So he went to the store,
And bought jackets galore,
But then he had too many to hold.
Walking became a hard test;
However, he did try his best.
But with so much to carry,
His arms grew so weary,
So he stopped to take a rest.
The man didn't know what to do.
Suddenly, as if on cue,
A lady walked up,
With a cute little pup,
And asked for a jacket or two.
The lady shared with him a thought,
On how he could clear ou his lot.
He gave them away,
A few every day,
Until he had less than he bought.
But then he was cold like before,
Yet he couldn't go back to the store.
He used all his cash,
To create a stash,
Of something that he has no more.
The man was then as he started,
With all his coats he had parted.
Some people may say,
That he's a display,
Of a generous man whose warmhearted.

Jonathan Penna '20



Down South in Bay St. Louis

The summer going into my sophomore year, I took a journey with other Saint Joe's students to Bay St. Louis, Mississippi for a Brothers of the Heart Student Assembly. We stayed at Saint Stanislaus College, one of our Brother schools. During my free time, I walked outside to the front of the school and noticed a beautiful view, so, I snapped a photo on my iPhone. When I returned home from the trip, I showed my family a week's worth of photos from the trip. As I got to that photo, it struck me differently than the others. The very next morning, I woke up bright and early to start sketching that photo. Whenever I find a photo that strikes me, I try to draw.

Conor Quigley '18

Like Father, Like Son

Ever since I was a child, I have always abhorred mushrooms. Every fiber of my being rejects the taste, smell, and even sight of that appalling fungus. However, I never truly understood why this was the case. My father believed that all fungus were poisonous to some degree and that even a nibble of the tamest mushroom would invite disease. I believe that my father's beliefs became mine so I evolved from a life of mushroom indifference to one of mushroom detestation.

However, in retrospect, it's comical how many decisions in our lives have been predicated on the ideas and perspectives that our parents tend to impress upon us. Whether it is something as simple as hatred for a certain sports team or love for a specific political party, our parents have swayed our interests by influencing our impressionable, young minds.

In an age of global apathy, most people formulate opinions that need acceptance by the status quo, resulting in incorrigible complacency. With the hustle and bustle of the modern era where we seek to tackle too much, it is really easy to adopt others' ideas and who better to rely on than the people who gave birth to us and have supplied us with everything we have wanted since day one?

However, our parents have experienced the world for decades more than we have; consequently, they have developed an irreplaceable wisdom that can't be completely disregarded. However, just as the butterfly leaves the cocoon, we all must grow beyond the concepts that our parents impressed upon us and develop personal beliefs fueled by our own understanding of the world.

It is time to reevaluate our stance on the conditions that plague our nation in order to develop the core values that will define our generation, not the generation of our parents. Rather than assimilating into our parents' routines, we must grow to create our culture and awareness of global events. Too many opportunities are presented to us; we all need a distinct personality to enact the change that will define our generation. The transition is difficult, however, and reevaluating our options and opinions is daunting.

Change is a process, and if reexamining our fears takes multiple decades so be it, because our personal actions will change our beloved Earth.

I guess it is time to give mushrooms a chance and take a bite of the world that I once thought my parents owned.

Jashanveer Johal '17



Then Where

There was no idea or thought in my mind when I took this picture. I was just using the telephoto lens as a tool to view the landscape. Then this man appeared in my viewfinder. I clicked the shutter. I do not know what he was doing. I can see that he was having a cigarette, but I don't think it explains the picture. Maybe he was just tired and taking a stop, thinking where to go next.

Xiang Rong '19

Thank You

She was there, watching him
dream from the start;
She was there, holding him,
when those dreams fell apart.
She was watching from the
time that his eyes opened
'Til the first time that his heart
was broken.

Oh, how those first years were
great!
All day, they could play;
She was like a big roommate.
Then, she could see the
approaching Doomsday.
Like the imposing clouds of a
Storm,
It would come, in this or
another form.

Every day, she told him one
thing:
"I will love you, always and
forever."
She kept him under her wing
But he shut her out, despite her
endeavors.

He told her of his thoughts of
paradise,
"Never, ever give up on that
dream,"
Was her only advice.
Still, he let it float downstream.

She saw his first date,
Said, "You treat her proper!"
Still, mistakes are fate,
And he eventually dropped her.

Everything he did, she pushed
him
Yet always, he pulled away.
Oh, how this made her grim;
Once blond hairs turned to
gray.

Now, tears in her eyes,
away he flies,
A smile on his face,
At all this new space.

Had she raised him right?
She had loved him through and
through...
Amid the Storm, her face
turned white.
Maybe one day, he might just
say thank you.

Michael Botting '19

True Love

“Away from me you get, you lie;
Away from me, away I say!
Leave me be, just let me cry.
I gave you all; you threw away.”

So bawled the broken blinded boy
who damned the sun and moon above.
“The World has played me like a toy
With this forgery that it called love.

If love’s a lie, then what of me?
Don’t I deserve that luxury?
Worldly promises are all I see
Hollow are their oaths for me.”

In this loneliness wept the child forlorn,
Like a confused deer, like an orphaned dove.
“Fooled I’ve been by beguiling luster,
What is this thing that they call love?”

It was then that Love spoke out, unseen,
“Maybe this Love you speak of is a who.”
Startled, the boy replied to the dream,
“Show yourself. Tell me Love, who are you?”

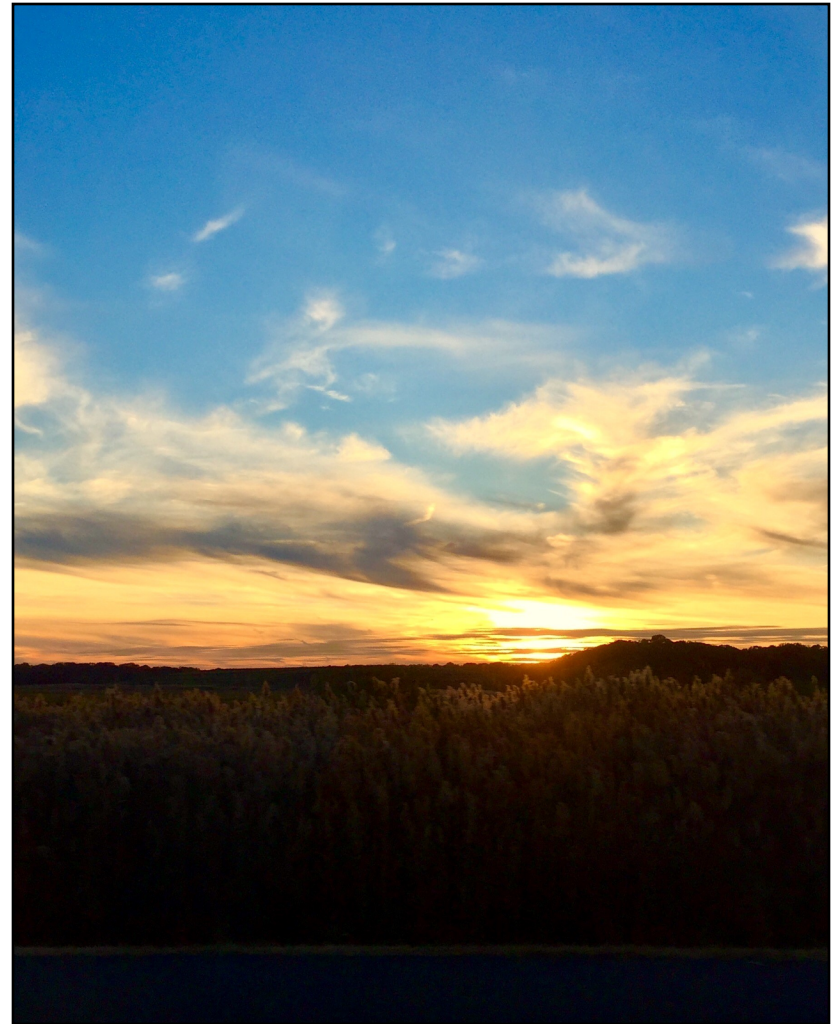
“I am who am,” replied the voice,
“not what the world claims me to be,
I am who perished for your choice.
Will you love others? Will you love me?”

I am the firstborn from the dead
Who died again for the human race.
I am the poor whom you have fed;
I am your only saving grace.”

The child now wiped his tears to see
The voice that now stood flesh and bone.
With outstretched arms call out did he,
And melted the boy’s poor heart of stone.

“Take my hand; I’ll show you the world,
A place laced with grace from up above,
A world to be changed by only one,
Anyone, that is, who knows True Love.”

Ryan Stephen ‘17



Hidden Highway Valleys

I took this photo because of the sunset, and how it illuminated the crops alongside the highway. The meaning of this photo is to show there is a beautiful shot everywhere, even on a boring highway. What strikes me about this photo is the depth of the shot.

Connor Walsh '20

Full Circle

I approached my last room at the nursing home, and I could not help but to think of my new niece, Sky, who was born four days earlier. My brother and his fiancé had just been blessed with their first child. The excitement filled my eyes as I held Sky in my arms for the first time. Her charcoal eyes, peach skin, full head of hair, and tiny feet were my only thoughts as I entered into room 343b, the last room of the top floor, which was set up for patients in the dementia ward and hospice. As I walked in to give the man the Eucharist, I could sense that this man, William, had pain throughout his body. His skin was very pale, the room smelled like human waste, and his breathing was irregular and heavy. As a nursing home EM for the last few years, I was used to these sights, smells, and sounds. These things combined usually meant that a person did not have much longer to live. After reintroducing myself, I held out the Body of Christ and delivered it, stating, “the Body of Christ.” After I placed the Eucharist in his mouth, we said a quick “Our Father” together. He followed this prayer with a request.

“Would you please visit my wife? She is just upstairs and to the right,” William said.

“Another member of our team is getting that floor right now, but I can promise you that she will get hers,” I said cluelessly in response.

When I walked out, I quickly went looking for a staircase because I had promised William that I would take care of his wife. After frantically looking up and down the hall for a staircase, a nurse asked me what I needed. When I told her my situation, she told me about William. When he first came into the nursing home, he and his wife were both admitted. However, about six months prior to this encounter, she had passed away. As a dementia patient, he could not remember so they had told him that she was “just upstairs and to the right.”

This moment has defined me ever since, as it has taught me that life truly has its highs and lows. As Sky approaches her baptism, I see the role of religion beginning to form in her life. It makes me think of William and how he was loyal to his everlasting beliefs. I hope William’s undying faith can be carried onto Sky as she embarks on her religious journey.

Christian Kainer ‘18



Still In Our Hearts

I took this photo to remember my visit to the Normandy Cemetery, the part with the US soldiers from D-Day. All these men risked their lives for another country, showing unity between nations, coming together for one cause. The meaning of this photo is to again, show unity across nations. What strikes me about this photo is the neat line of gravestones, and the shape of them.

Connor Walsh '20



Parliament

My third picture is one of my favorite pictures because it holds a beautiful perspective on one of the most important parts of London. Looking over Big Ben and Parliament.

Thomas Young '20

The Final Appointment

The time has come for me,
I've had my flash in the pan
But now I'll return to ash.

I see the rider
Thundering on his pale horse;
The ghastly specter,

My collector, my guide to the dust.
I don't trust, but I
Feel the tug on the rope

And now it's too late.
My hope and my fate are
Lying, dying underground,

Spellbound, I cannot move.
My body falls to the earth,
My being compressed,

I am pressed into the soil.
My blood to oil, my flesh to coal,
Ahead of me, a toll awaits

To judge my soul.
Surrounded by sound, bells clanging,
Thunder banging,

Shattered glass scatters, but
Does it really matter when
Life gets old and cold.

I hear a knock on the door,
Feet gliding across the floor, and
"So sorry you had to wait..."

But you know we're never late."

Christopher Muniz '17



Creek in an Autumn Forest

The forests at autumn give out a beautiful image. It gives us those warm, fuzzy feelings of times long ago.

Samuel Rizzo '17

Life and Death

“The power to question is the basis of all human progress.”

Indira Gandhi

What is life? What is death? What happens after we die? Are we dead before we are born? Is life merely an in-depth dream we wake up from when we die? These few questions, although simplistic, are groundbreaking. They envelop the mind in an enigma, confuse and distort our reality and expose us to our fears of nothingness and the unknown. However, there is really nothing to fear. Epicurus, the ancient Greek philosopher, once questioned humans' fear of death by saying, “Why should I fear death? I am, death is not. If death is, I am not. Why should I fear that which cannot exist when I do?” These eye-opening and enlightening questions cause us to think outside the typical realm of thought in an attempt to extend the understanding of both life and death.

Death, by definition, is the end of life for a person or organism; however, are you dead when you stop living or when you are no longer remembered? Do you no longer have a birthday when you are not there to celebrate it? This may never be known and may continually be debated and debunked for eternity. Regardless, some may argue that you are dead when you stop breathing, while others may say you die when there is no one carrying on your memory. Mothers who lost a child may think otherwise. They may believe that their child lives on forever in their hearts and in the hearts of those who had memories with the child. Nevertheless, these ideas are subjective. Whether they are true or false, the questions will remain.

Life, in its most basic form, is a juxtaposition. Life is contradictory. Questionable as it may seem, life and death are contingent because they depend on each other. With death comes new life and the only thing guaranteed in this life is death. You can question whether you are living when you take your first breath, or when you are an individual sperm cell generated by your father's being. Here, the integration of science and religion is necessary to enlighten, teach, and explain what is incomprehensible.

In the analysis of both life and death, some questions may be left unanswered and truths shrouded by uncertainty; however, in order for there to be progress in this field, we must open our hearts and minds to accept what is already set in stone and what remains unknown.

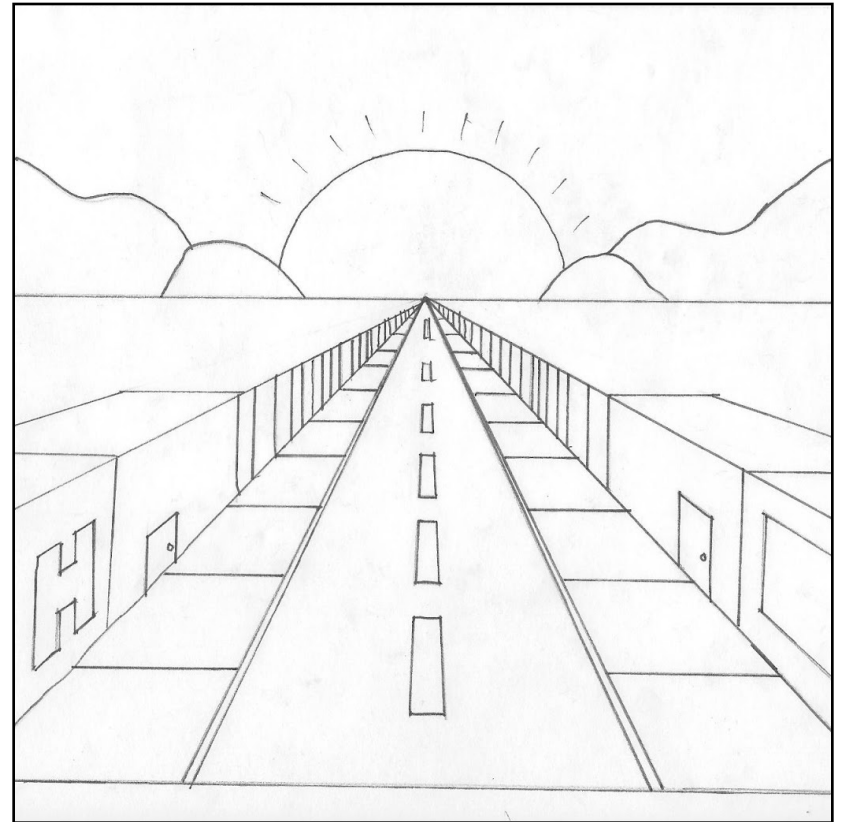
Tour'e Reeves '18

Life's Journey

A poem in iambic pentameter

A pair of wanderers embarked upon
The short but ever changing path of life.
The first saw much and yet saw naught, for though
He had the gift of sight, he lacked the gift
Which many sought, the gift of deep insight.
The latter saw what few could see, but he
Saw not the many norms of daily life,
For fate decreed that blindness curse him so.
Before they saw the sum of all the earth,
Alas, the being that is Fate was swift,
The path sojourned, alas, became no more;
The journey on the path of life was done.
The deed, once done, their Fate inquired of both:
"From life you have learned what?"
The first, with scant to say, was pushed away
By Fate, who deemed the first as blind and lost.
The other pleased the being more, for he
Had learned life's truths despite his lack of sight.
The lives of these are much like ours, but which
Of these are we to be and will become?

Jason Manuel '18
1st Place Junior Poetry



Die Große Straße

This perspective drawing is a depiction of Germany's largest road, it is nicknamed 'Das Große Straße' translating to "the big road." On the road there is only 4 buildings representing the 4 people who built it in the year 65 BC. The road is fenced in simply because it looks better that way.

Anthony Papa '18

The Edge of the Abyss

That place was really something. Nothing much was there, just darkness that was slightly lit by an unknown source. It was quite foggy; therefore, I was not able to make out much of anything. It was cold, my body shivering uncontrollably. I could see the breath that emitted from my mouth before it disappeared into nothingness. There was also an incredibly annoying noise. It was low pitched but it was just loud enough to let me know it was there, one long, continuous, unwavering tune. It was driving me crazy and there was nothing that could allow me to take my mind off it.

At least, that was what I thought until I found myself on the edge of a cliff looking down a hole so far I could not even see the bottom. It was horrifying, but I did not know why. I did not have a fear of heights or anything, but something about it was just...dark, evil even. My instincts were screaming Back away! Turn around and run for the hills!, and while it seemed like a sensible thing that anyone with a brain would do, I could not.

In fact, if anything I was somehow getting closer to the edge. Something about it was so tempting. I was feeling compelled simply to fall off, letting all my troubles go into the wind as I disappeared into the darkness. Why should I not? My wife had passed and the children were in foster care. I was one penny away from being evicted from my run-down apartment in a run-down neighborhood with nothing but murder and drugs. It was indeed a nightmare. I hated my life. I could swear at God for days on end for putting me in this situation. Why me? Out of all the people me? I wondered, becoming frustrated.

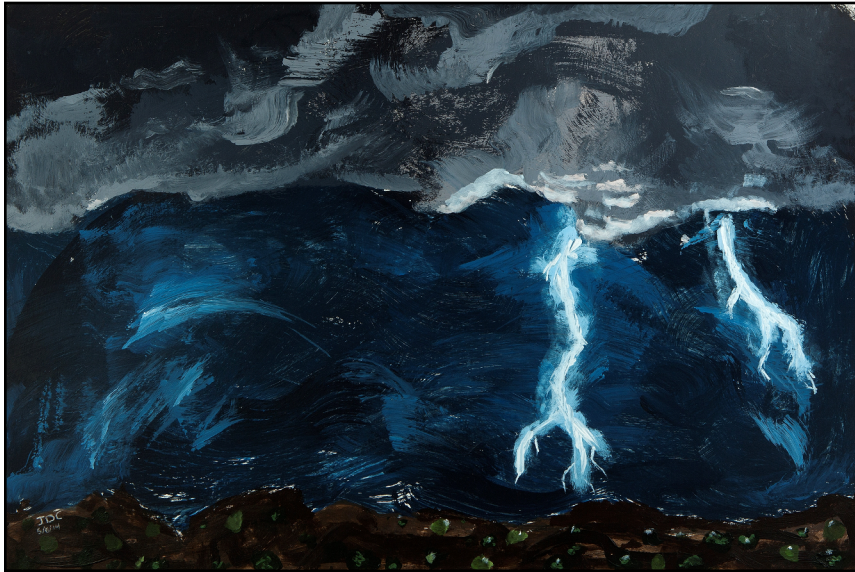
Yes. This is the solution right here. I could jump off right now and finally be free I thought to myself. All I could think was, Where have you been all my life? I turned around, back towards the hole. I leaned back, smiling as I lost balance and found myself in a freefall. The feeling was extraordinary; I was weightless and could feel the intense level of relief caused by my problems simply fading away. It was the best I had felt in a long time.

That is until something grabbed my hand, stopping me from plunging into the darkness. I looked up at my “savior” with anger;

however, this thing, this person looked at me with a half-smile (it did not seem like he was in the best of moods) and pulled me out. If I did not know any better, I would have said he was me. We shared the same look through and through, except his facial expression made him seem like he had been through Hell and back.

Whoever he was, he seemed to have read my mind because he said, “Hey, don’t you dare try and give up again. Name’s Will, by the way.” The long, continuous noise then changed, beginning to beep in a strange rhythm. Call me crazy, but I think heard echoes. They were saying something like, “He’s back! We got a pulse!”

Jared Little ‘18



Raging Storm

This painting is made in acrylic paint, on canvas, using brushwork. The day I created this piece, something had angered me so I took it out on the canvas board. I felt a “raging storm” inside me.... (Just kidding.) It did feel good thought to show the height of a storm and take all my frustrations out in creating the painting. 36 in x 48 in on acrylic board.

Jackson Costello '20

innocent

innocent

betrayed
gasping for air
tragic for it loved truly
deplorable for it loved deeply
heartbreaking for it loved honorably

love

it hung
swaying
lifeless
beaten
bruised

had been

it once forgave
it once lusted
it once laughed
it once lived
it once loved

murdered

head hung low
eyes closed
heart stopped
lungs crippled
love ceased

that day

John Schleck '17



An Endless Array of Beauty

This photo was taken after a track workout, when I looked up and saw how beautiful the sky looked.

Jobanpreet Saini '17

The Early Life of a Woman in 1692

Endless work to no avail, toil without end.
 My life is ripping at the seams, not even the strongest yarn can mend.
 I have been convicted for partaking in the dark arts.
 My soul has been tied to a post; I have been shipped away, sobbing from my heart.
 I have been betrayed by my fellow townspeople and I await my fate.
 I shall be burned at the stake, my companions screaming with hate.
 A nurse, farmer, businesswoman, they all were wrongly convicted.
 It did not matter; some were even heavily afflicted.
 The title “Witch” was harshly forced upon the most suspicious,
 Usually placed upon by the most ambitious.
 So here I lay, awaiting my long and painful demise.
 No one can save my soul now, not even the greatest Gods in the skies.
 Farewell my friends and cherish these words, for these are my last breaths
 “We will be remembered for all of these innocent deaths.”

Bryan Eidson '19

Mist

She'd been waiting for this for a long time – her first night on her own. What better way to celebrate than some time by the fireplace, especially on a cold night like this, thought Linda. It was fifteen degrees outside, unusually brisk for a November night. Linda, already insulated with a sweater and sweatpants, found that she was still cold but she traced it back to a window that was left open. She quickly closed it, not wanting to let out the fire's heat. Why warm the house without a perfect seal? thought Linda, chastising herself.

Returning to the fireplace, Linda assembled the logs and kindling with ease. She could build a fire as though she were a well-seasoned Eagle Scout, a skill honed through countless camping trips with her father, dating back to her early childhood. Linda's father had always assured that she would somehow be involved in their campsite's setup, whether it be pitching a tent, building a fire, or even gathering the firewood. Striking the match, Linda's mouth yearned for the taste of s'mores, hot dogs, and cans of lukewarm Chef Boyardee. We never could get that pasta as hot as we wanted, Linda thought, smiling. She held her match in her hand for a few seconds, with its gleaming phosphorous flame, before throwing it into the fire.

She could never forget that on her very first trip with her father, matches terrified her, not the fire, but the hissing. As soon as she'd heard the ominous tsssss, Linda scrambled to her feet and dashed away as fast as she could. She was waiting for that hissing to lead to an explosion! Eighteen years later, holding the very thing she had feared, Linda could only grin. I've sure come a long way, she reflected. There's nothing to fear about something you can control. She tossed the match into the hearth.

Linda stood up, grabbed an afghan lying on the floor, and sauntered onto the nearby loveseat. Gradually, she felt the heat in the room grow. It was a peculiar feeling, for Linda had never assembled a fire in an indoor fireplace before. She was surprised by how quickly the air around the fire warmed when it was perfectly

insulated indoors, instead of it escaping into the night sky. Feeling sweat on her brow, Linda peeled off the afghan. She was finally comfortable.

Linda reclined, soaking up the warmth and reliving the memories with her father. Long nights, ghost stories—she was feeling drowsy—Chef Boyardee, nestling inside the tent, cold sleeping bags... Linda's eyes grew heavy, lost in the mist of the past, the mist of the fire, the mist of memories. The heat in the room increased, the air felt heavy because the flue she'd never known about remained closed. The mist was all round her; she fell asleep to the mist...

And never woke up.

John Hoban '18
1st Place Junior Fiction

January Fifteenth, Two Thousand Eight

On January 15, 2008, I was in 3rd grade and just finished a school basketball game in Perth Amboy. After the game, my mother and I dropped off my older sister at her Girl Scouts camping cabin. It was far away and the roads were icy and covered in snow. The last thing I remember is rushing my mom out of the cabin because she had been talking and I was eager to get home. Little did I know that I should've waited.

On January 15, 2008, I was in car accident; I almost lost my life. I can't recall anything from the accident, so everything else in this essay is based on the accounts of doctors and family.

I was in the backseat when our car was hit on my side and spun around, hitting a pole, again on my side. My mom was fine but I was unconscious. My mom quickly called the ambulance to help us, and eventually I was rushed to Robert Wood Johnson. I apparently regained consciousness in the ambulance, but I can't recall it. I do vaguely remember the nurse telling me to talk, who then concluded that my voice was slurred, which was a sign of blood loss.

The doctors began to prep for my surgery. Terrified wouldn't come close to describing the emotions my mother was feeling. It's best to say that she felt that her world had been shattered. She called our priest and I was anointed in the hospital. During my surgery, they began to pray the rosary. My surgery was estimated to take six hours, but I was out in three. My mom told me she saw the sun begin to set when the doctor came in. When she thought it could be a sign that I had passed, she burst into tears. However, the doctor brought her the greatest news.

I had severed one of the arteries in my head. They had to coil it, but they couldn't stop the blood flow. Fortunately, I was born with three arteries instead of two. This allowed the doctors to coil the bleeding artery and still allow blood flow. Because of this gift from God, I was able to live and grow up to be the person I am today. I have God to thank for the gift He gave me and I am eternally grateful to Him. After the surgery, I was able to rehabilitate my body and move forward in my life.

Isaiah Acosta '20
1st Place Freshman Nonfiction



Rolling Reflections

I took this photo because I am a big fan of anything with wheels, and a Range Rover is definitely of value to a car guy. The meaning behind this photo is to capture the colors of the background, reflecting of the chrome paint job. What strikes me about this photo is again, the reflection of the surroundings and the paint job of the Range Rover.

Connor Walsh '20

The Dark Embodiment

It was nine at night when Justin wriggled his way under the cozy blanket that his grandmother had stitched up for him when he was younger. Being only nine years old, there was much he was afraid of, so her loving gift ensured his security. Once he grew comfortable, he turned onto his back and looked around carefully, checking to make sure that nothing was out of the ordinary. His drawers were closed, the window curtains blocked out all intruders, and his teddy bear kept him company. But once he thought everything was stable, he realized the worst possible flaw in his personal defense: his door was unlocked.

He broke out in a cold sweat and gripped onto Mr. Teddy for consolation. Justin was worried someone would enter, but he couldn't move to fix it. He felt paralyzed by the fear of the unknown, and the sound of his racing heart soon filled his head, making him grow dizzy from worry. Justin began to shake as he watched the door for even the slightest of movements. He could feel the darkness surround him and engulf the room as his feeling of insecurity grew. A few minutes passed, and he gradually came to a calm. As if too soon, the eerie cry of a familiar creature - along with a faint creak - began to resonate from just outside his room. Justin's eyes widened as he reluctantly gazed back at the entrance, focusing on the door and noticing a massive gap between door and frame. Justin briefly glimpsed at the beast's pitch black and tendril-like hair gliding into the room. The silhouette of its much larger and threatening shape slowly unfurled beside the entrance, a toothy sneer plastered on its face.

The room seemed to spin as fear overtook his thoughts. Justin pulled his precious blanket further up just under his nose as the figure crawled in an unorthodox manner while beginning to groan, replacing the silence that had drowned the room. It crept around the room, colliding with his dresser, the walls, and his toys, all with an unnerving sound. His music box crashed to the ground and began playing a soft, broken note, clearly irritating the beast. Justin listened closely to the noises the creature produced, for he

could not see it in detail. He soon detected what sounded like nonsensical rambling coming from

it. He faced his teddy towards the monster, as if it were to defend him in this dark time. As it grew nearer, Justin noted the monster's garments: tattered and disheveled clothes, which dragged behind it, resembling a black widow spider's web. The hair on his neck stood on end, and the air surrounding him felt frigid, as if touched by the cold hand of Death. Justin began tearing up, accepting his fate. The beast slowly rose from his side and latched onto his body, its piercing red eyes peering into his. Dripping from the creature's mouth was an amber liquid. As it lunged forward, he sat up in his bed screaming in a panic. He looked around and noticed his mother sitting against the bed with strained eyes and a half empty bottle of alcohol in her hand. She mumbled to herself in a low tone.

Eddie Padilla '19



Home For The Holidays

I took this photo to continue the holiday spirit, and pass it on through this capture. The meaning of this photo is that people need to get into the season, not just as another holiday, but to keep Christ in Christmas and make every Christmas better than the last. The part of this photo that stands out to me is how appealing the lights are, as well as the overall warmth of the shot.

Connor Walsh '20

The First Flake

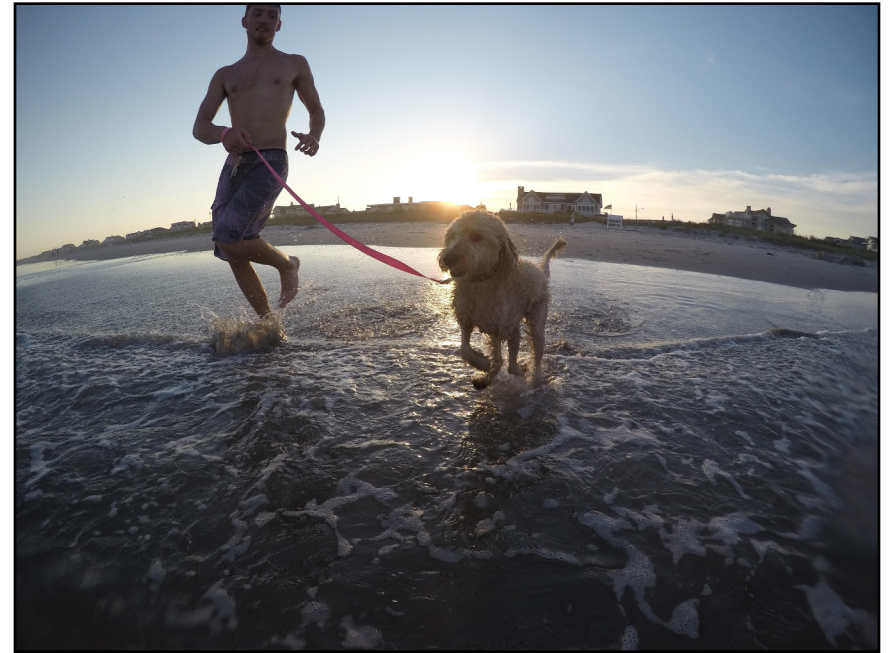
I awake from my slumber and notice the chill.
 I peer out the window, engulfed in the scene as I sit by the sill
 And spot the frost that has blanketed the earth outside.
 Over the horizon comes billowing clouds. As they ride,
 The impending weather is secure.
 I run downstairs and out the door
 To retrieve the paper but also to await
 For the arrival of the very first flake.
 As I stand there waiting, the frigid air chaps my lips
 And I am reminded of how my emotions will eclipse
 When the first one will fall.
 When the first one will fall.
 As I look to the heavens to search for the weather
 I can hardly see the white specs float down like a feather.
 Such a fragile little spec drifting at the mercy of the wind.
 Thinking of its unique beauty makes me grin.
 The flake drifts closer and closer until it falls on my nose.
 There the crystal-like flake froze.
 Its perfection is unmatched, symmetry like no other.
 As if I were the first one to discover
 The magnificence of the one that fell first.
 The magnificence of the one that fell first.
 Just as quickly as the flake came, it went.
 The beauty melted away into nothing. I wish I could prevent
 It from ever escaping my grasp
 So that I could behold it as all time lapsed.
 When the first one fell.
 When the first one fell.

Christopher Jones '17

Cold Feet

A chilly day in August for a swim.
Sweat and sun dapple my brow,
Peeking through the deep emerald leaves.
Step after step, an endless trek,
Warming my face and body,
Yet my feet trudge on through that dewy grass.
The death of the trail breathes new life into my heart,
Now beating quickly beneath my bones.
A toe in to ease my mind,
Yet the swirling depths seek only to hasten the shivering.
The call of a friend lifts me high
To the edge a new frontier
To conquer.
Rough-hewn stone, the only connection to reality;
A small whispered prayer,
The fast cool swoosh of air and water intermingling
With my senses.
The deep, refreshing breath of life filling me,
Slowing my heart,
Only to be cast me aside in favor of
The rush.

William Kacani '17



Dog Days at the Beach

Summer 2016; Stone Harbor, New Jersey - Zoe takes on the Jersey Shore. It was her first time getting to experience the beach and I knew I had to capture it on my new GoPro. Her excitement brought a smile to everyone else on the beach watching. This one frame perfectly depicts her happiness throughout the whole experience.

Spencer Cohen '17

Within These Walls

Doctor Sepeliet was a tall, gauntly man. His presence made people uncomfortable, similar to how a wolf's howl would make a young boy feel while camping alone. The Doctor's skin seemed almost gray in the moonlight, and his ancient, dark eyes could see into one's soul with the intensity of a forest fire. His countenance rarely exhibited a smile, although his ghastly grin could be compared to a snarl when it did show itself.

The Doctor was a creature of the night, despite his poor eyesight. He didn't wear glasses but his left eye had been replaced with a glass version when he was young. He wore a jet-black hat that concealed his crazed, light gray hair. He wore a pale suit at all times. The Doctor had also invested in a small funeral home in town. This was an excellent investment since he prosecuted criminals whose lives were often decided with the death penalty.

The Doctor was such a powerful man that he was able to change the laws of his town so that even shoplifting was punishable by death. My brother was an innocent man whom he wrongly prosecuted. His imposing stature and intimidating manner swayed the jury to convict my brother.

I'll admit that my brother's conviction weighed on me, but it never drove me insane. I knew, however, that the Doctor's crimes couldn't go unpunished, so I followed him to his office one evening. The weather was peculiar that day. The clouds had descended upon the world, thicker than the smoke produced by the town factories. The Doctor worked in a small, plain building on the outskirts of town. He followed a long dirt path through the woods to arrive at his workplace. The forest and clouds pressed in on us, stealing my breath and quickening my heartbeat. As we neared his office, the sun disappeared over the horizon.

When we finally arrived, he sat at his desk while I waited outside, unseen. His office was on the second floor of the building, a small obstacle for me. The building was dilapidated and made of bricks, so scaling the wall was no problem for one as determined as I was. I crawled in through his open window. He was facing away from the window and showed no sign that he had detected me. I took a step forward and he started. I froze, eyes wide, as his chair started to swivel. My ears detected a high pitched, throaty gurgle emanating from him. Laughter.

"I suggest you get on with it," he cackled. I surged forward and seized him by the neck and compressed my fingers around his

throat until he was purple. His one good eye bulged, yet he still seemed amused. That haunting smile adorned his face and I screamed in fury, throwing him out the window that I had entered. Unfortunately, as I released him, my body continued forward with his. We twisted in mid air and the last thing I saw before blacking out was his awful grin above me as my body smashed into the ground, cushioning his fall.

I awoke surrounded by velvet. My face felt cakey, as if someone had painted it. Everything was dark, yet I felt something metallic in my pocket. I reached in and grasped a ... flashlight? I switched it on and tried to sit up. I hit my head against something wooden and my vision flashed red for a moment. I shined the light in front of my face and saw, embroidered into the velvet of the walls around me, the words "Sepeliet Funeral Home."

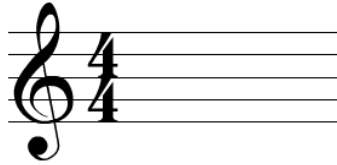
Michael Botting '19

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Michael Botting '19



One, two, three, four,
Trip-a-let trip-a-let, four-over-four.
Gone offbeat? Go start again;
After four a measure ends.
One, and, two, and,
Half time's slow but four still stands.
One, rest, two, rest;
We can still go slower, yes?
One . . .
One whole note, the measure's done.
Note that now there's room for none;
Another measure has begun.
One by one each measure plays,
Sounding notes to make a phrase.
Equal beats the measures are,
Singing 'till the double bar.

Jason Wan '17



Endless Possibility

It's pretty cool how simply pressing keys on a piano can create sounds and harmonies that make people feel all sorts of different emotions. The power of sound on one's mind is extraordinary and the possibilities in making music are endless, reflected by the seemingly never-ending keyboard as it fades into the distance.

Jason Wan '17

The Tale

My pen, worn down, lies on my table.
I stare with pride at my new fable.
Hours on hours I worked unceasingly
To create the epic before me.
My hand is crimson and stings with pain,
This great effort cannot be in vain.
One final review, just to make sure
That my fame is completely secure.
I rub my eyes and begin to read
About my demigod's mighty deeds.
Bit by bit, I covered the chapters
Until I start to shake with laughter.
How could I be so stupid! I roared.
Hundreds of mistakes that I ignored!
The castle of pride that I had made
Stood on pillars of false accolades.
I sought courage to endure this pain
But nothing came, for my soul was drained.
I envisioned the publisher's face
Smirking at me with contempt and hate.
He would give me no pity, I thought.
The whole project amounted to naught.
Filled with remorse and despair I lay
Until the sun rose to my dismay.
Haze retreated from my tired eyes,
And my hands grew strong to my surprise.
I gripped my pen once more with resolve.
All my sins and failures, I absolved.
I swore that I would not be cheated
Of the success that I so needed.
And once again I began to bout
With the ferocious demon of doubt.

Matthew Parayil '19



Suburban Sunset

I took this photo because of the sunset, and how it nicely drew attention to the trees leaves. The meaning behind this photo is that not all great photos have to be far away from home. I took this out of my attic window, and there is no difference in the beauty. What strikes me about this photo is how the sunset lights up the leaves of the tree, and how it brings out their fall colors.

Connor Walsh '20

Policy

All students enrolled at SJHS, 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 SJHS 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. 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.

With the exception of artwork and photography, submissions will not be returned. The editors and advisors reserve the right to edit manuscripts for grammar, spelling, punctuation, and clarity.

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## Cover Art Inspiration

My cover artwork reflects the many opportunities our world has to offer. These prospects include the jobs or occupations that we can choose to pursue in the future. In order to reach our goals, we must walk a path where we discover our passions, learn through education, gain experience, and make connections with others. Each path has a tree, symbolic of the opportunities that we may want to pursue. In the background the sun rises, representing our new journey. We the students have a journey not only to reach our goals, but also to find ourselves. Our world is full of opportunities for everyone, no matter what creed or race. In our world, our future is for us to decide, but in doing so, we must set and pursue our goals in order to triumph and prosper.

*Paolo Sering '17*

## Vignette Staff

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Gil Austria '17  
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Christian Consales '18  
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Samuel Gillespie '17  
Nolan Jacobs '17  
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Joshavveer Johal '17  
Rourke Morrison '18  
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Matthew Parayil '19

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### Cover Artist:

Paolo Sering '17

### Moderators:

Dr. Martine Gubernat  
Mr. Matthew Marino '95



*staff photo by Dr. Adele Ellis*

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Dedication

This year's *Vignette* is dedicated to our new President and his wife, Dr. Gregory Brandao & Mrs. Jody Brandao, who are devoted to the charism of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart and whose daily lives are paradigms of Catholic faith and integrity.

Colophon

The *Vignette* is published annually each spring by the literary and art staff of the Vignette at Saint Joseph High School. Copies are distributed free to all students and staff at SJHS.

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 Paolo Sering '17. Folios were designed by the *Vignette* staff. The magazine was printed by Yes Press, Inc. with a press run of 750 copies. It is comprised of 122 pages using a 5.5 x 8.5 inch format.

Thanks to Dr. Martine Gubernat & Mr. Matthew Marino '95 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***

- 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”

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Vignette Online



Please scan the QR code on the left to view a full-color version of the *Vignette*. You can also access the file by visiting www.stjoes.org and then clicking the *Vignette* link within the Clubs & Activities page.



