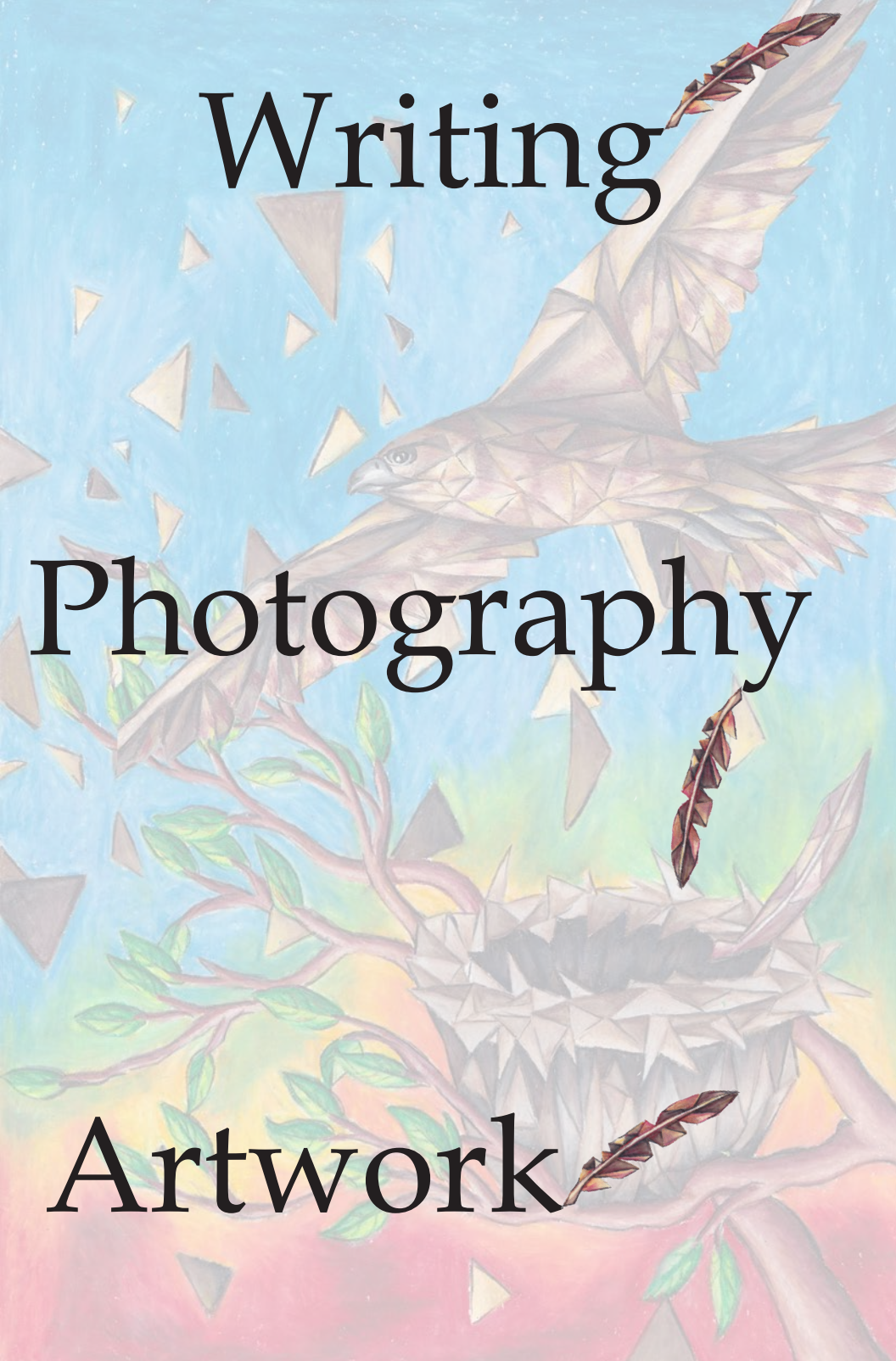


The illustration features a bird of prey, possibly a falcon, in a powerful flight pose. The bird's feathers are depicted using a complex pattern of overlapping triangles and polygons in shades of brown, tan, and gold. It is set against a vibrant blue sky. Numerous stylized leaves, also composed of geometric shapes, are scattered throughout the air, appearing to fall from above. In the lower right foreground, a single feather lies on a surface that transitions from green to a warm orange-red. The overall style is modern and artistic, combining naturalistic elements with abstract geometry.

2015

Vignette



Writing

Photography

Artwork

The *Vignette*

2015

Volume 54

St. Joseph High School
A Brothers of the Sacred Heart School
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Contents

Title	Author/Artist	Page			
Vignette Cover Art	Thomas Valenti '16	4	Devil's Woods	Jacob Senkewicz '17	37
Editorial	Liam Formisano '16	5	The Bog	Jacob Senkewicz '17	38
	& Joseph Bruno '16		Worry	Connor Quigley '18	39
A Confusing Poem	Joseph Cella '15	6	The Great Pacific Garbage Patch	Rohan Mishra '17	40
Loving Hands	Vincent Tummarello '15	7	Southern Paradise	Samuel Luis Javier '16	41
A Brief Guide to Cat Cohabitation	Mark Uszacki '15	8	Auschwitz	Mr. G. Milligan	42
Who, Me?	Dr. M. Gubernat	9	A Collection of Senryus on the SAT	Cyril Medabalimi '16	43
Seagull by Water	Mr. G. Milligan	10	The Letter	Michael Nitzsche '15	44
Water You Waiting For?	Jason Wan '17	11	Glowing	Samuel Javier '16	45
Living In Trash	Gil Gerard G. Austria '17	12	You Will Grow	Dr. R. Longhi '81	46
New York Skyline	Samuel Javier '16	13	Running	Robert Ghiano '16	47
Purple People Eater	Frank Gumina IV '16	14	Poem Written Upon the Announce- ment of Significant Death	Gregory Burton '15	48
I Am From	Dexter Jackson '17	15	Tattoo	Thomas Perlitz '17	49
The Shot	Max Finn '17	16	Gator	Joseph Mortillaro '16	50
Pride of a Lion	Adekunle Balogun '16	17	Drag	Spencer Cap '15	51
Are You Willing to Cross the Abyss	Cristian Butrico '17	18	The Detective's Tale	Kevin Stephen '16	52
Defiance	Michael Johnson '15	19	Call Me	Max Pirone '15	53
Where are You, Friend?	Hersh Thapar '18	20	The Big Apple	Samuel Javier '16	54
Vincent	Paolo Sering '17	21	Fossil Fuel	Spencer Cap '15	55
Roar	Julien X. Green '15	22	Broken	Cyril Medabalimi '16	56
The Buck	Taras Holovko '16	23	En Garde	Christopher Saulys '15	57
Blind	Kristian T. Quevada '15	24	Colors of America	Thomas Valenti '16	58-59
Perspective	Peter Coronato '16	25	Loading	Joseph Bruno '15	60
Effects of Fall	Tomasz Kasztelan '17	26	The Beat	Troy Posnansky '15	61
Leaf Life	Joseph Pulikeyil '15	27	Remembrance	Dr. R. Longhi '81	62
Wealth in Indigence	Kevin Stephen '16	28	Generations After	Gil Gerard G. Austria '17	63
Grasping the Future	Eric Ozga '16	29	Falke/Falcon	Michael Dolegiewitz '15	64
Lighthouse on a Hill	Mr. G. Milligan	30	The Heart of St. Joe's	Daniel Della Ventura '17	65
A Light	Michael Dolegiewitz '15	31	Metaphorical Marionette	Mr. S. Ascolese	66
The Master's Army	Tyler Vitale '15	32	The Composition of Composers and Artists	Karun Sekhar '16	67
The Royal Couple	Eric Ozga '16	33	Ballad of the Lazy Student	John Hoban '18	68
I'm Listening	Ms. C. Canciello	34	Star	Kevin Sweeney '16	69
A Moonlight Sonata	Kristian T. Quevada '15	35	Throwback Thursday	Evan Senkewicz '15	70
Lucifer	Stephan Kozub '15	36			

Global Epidemic	Anshel Bright '15	71
Ode to My Yo-Yo	John Hermit '18	72
Hanging Around	Jacob Torrisi '16	73
Happily Ever After	Rourke Morrison '18	74
Scarlet Memories	Joseph Pickering '15	75
Accomplishing Greatness	John Behr '18	76
Life's Journey	Jacob Senkewicz '17	77
Change from Serenity	Adekunle Balogun '16	78
The Pianist	Henry Schaeffer '18	79
Decisions, Decisions	Nicolas Castagno '15	80
Ariana Grande and Alicia Keys	Julien X. Greene '15	81
Beowolf's Victory	Michael Sabella '16	82
The End of Death	Luke Callaghan '18	83
Technology is Dumbing Us Down	Jason Manuel '18	84
Ferris Wheel, Budapest	Mr. G. Milligan	85
The Underdog's Tale and Prologue	Lucas Pick '16	86
Explore	Javon Hicks '15	87
Our Prayer	Liam Formisano '15	88
The Names Found at the End of a Lost Time	Michael Lambino '15	89
Policy/Dedication/Extras		90
Colophon/Awards/Staff		91

Vignette Cover Art

The cover of this *Vignette* edition reflects upon what the literary magazine represents - collaboration and solidarity. The *Vignette* staff, recognizing unity and cooperation amongst the group itself in addition to seeing the vast collaboration among the students' creative writing, artwork, and photography, desired to create a cover that displays the idea of different pieces coming together harmoniously. The cover shows fragments, whose various colors and sizes represents the differences among the St. Joseph High School student body, fitting together to form a soaring falcon that symbolizes the students' creativity and expression soaring free like the bird. The geometrical falcon takes flight from its nest on the back cover to show that the students' talents have the potential to lift them beyond high school and into the world beyond. The bird also leaves a trail of fragments in its path to emphasize the impressions that the creative stories, photography, and art leave behind in the minds of readers. The falcon shows the essence of the *Vignette* and the spirit of the students whose innovative thinking and designs come together to create a work of art in the form of this literary magazine.

Thomas Valenti '16

Editorial

11:20 a.m. on a warm spring day. Liam and Joe exit room 101 after period 4 AP Literature class.

Joe: [to Liam] Yo, are you going to the *Vignette* meeting today?

Liam: Ehh, I dunno dude. I still have to finish that *Beloved* paper and it's due tomorrow.

Joe: C'mon. It's the last *Vignette* meeting we'll ever have. Plus you do your best writing at 1:00 a.m. anyways.

Liam: Alright, alright. You've got a point there. I'll go to the meeting.

2:10 p.m., near the Student Council lockers outside of library. Liam: Yo you ready? Last meeting of the year.

Joe: Not just last meeting of the year, last meeting of our Saint Joe's career.

Liam: Yeah true. It's crazy how fast high school went.

Joe: I know!!! Can you believe we're gonna be graduating in just a couple of weeks?

Liam: It's absolutely unreal. I'm torn, too. Like I'm happy to be moving on, but at the same time, it's gonna be tough leaving this place, you know?

Joe: Yeah man, I know exactly how you feel. It's almost like we're getting pushed out of our "nest" and it's our turn to start flying on our own...

Liam: ... Just like a falcon!

Joe: Exactly! And man that sounds even cheesier out loud than it did in my head.

[laughing]

Liam: Yup! [laughing] Good thing nothing that clichéd will ever make it into the *Vignette*.

Joe: We can only hope, right? All jokes aside though, we better head over now.

While walking to room 101, Joe and Liam stop at the school seal outside of Main Office.

Joe: Remember hearing about that crazy tradition of not stepping on the seal way back in freshman year?

Liam: Yeah, absolutely. [laughs] Be careful now; if you step on it, they say you'll have bad luck and won't graduate.

Joe: Really? I had heard that it's bad luck because some dopey sophomore had stepped on it and all the girls that used to go here disappeared in a puff of smoke.

Liam: Oh, so that's why we're not co-ed. [laughs] You better check your sources.

Where did you hear that - at a pool party on top of O'Neil Hall?

Joe: Either way, it's all a bunch of malarkey. [motions to step on seal]

Liam: Dude, what are you doing?!

Joe: Relax! I wasn't actually going to step on it. I'd never do that. I've got way too much respect for the Brothers and for the school to do that. You know, like thirty years from now when we come back and visit this place, we're gonna walk down the hallway and without even realizing it, we're gonna avoid stepping on the seal.

Liam: I know man. As crazy as it sounds, we see alumni do it all the time when they visit. I guess it's just something that gets ingrained into us and never leaves.

Joe: Trust me, I know. My dad still does that all these years later. C'mon though. Don't wanna be late to our last meeting.

Both slowly tread down the hallway towards room 101. Upon arriving at the door to Room 101, Joe and Liam look out the exit doors of the English wing.

Joe: Hey dude, look at that! [pointing out the glass doors of the hallway] Liam: Oh wow look at that falcon. Don't see one of those every day. Joe: That's for sure. C'mon lets go inside.

Enter room 101

Joseph Bruno '15 and Liam Formisano '15

A Confusing Poem

As I begin to read I can tell by the poems style
That understanding its meaning is going to take a while.

The poet focuses on the rhyme and meter,
While I think he could have organized his lines a little neater.

The poet makes allusions to historical events,
But I completely miss them, thinking those lines don't make sense.

The symbolism in the poem is very clearly seen,
But I have no idea what any of these symbols mean.

The poet thinks for days about which words to choose,
Yet I pay no attention to the ones he decides to use.

The poet puts emotions and his soul into the poem,
But I am having trouble identifying the tone.

The poet uses metaphors and similes throughout,
But I find myself struggling to learn what they're about.

The poet uses enjambment in his lines to make words pop,
But I would prefer if all of the lines were just end-stopped.

As I continued reading, my frustration grew,
Because the only thing I could identify was the point-of-view.

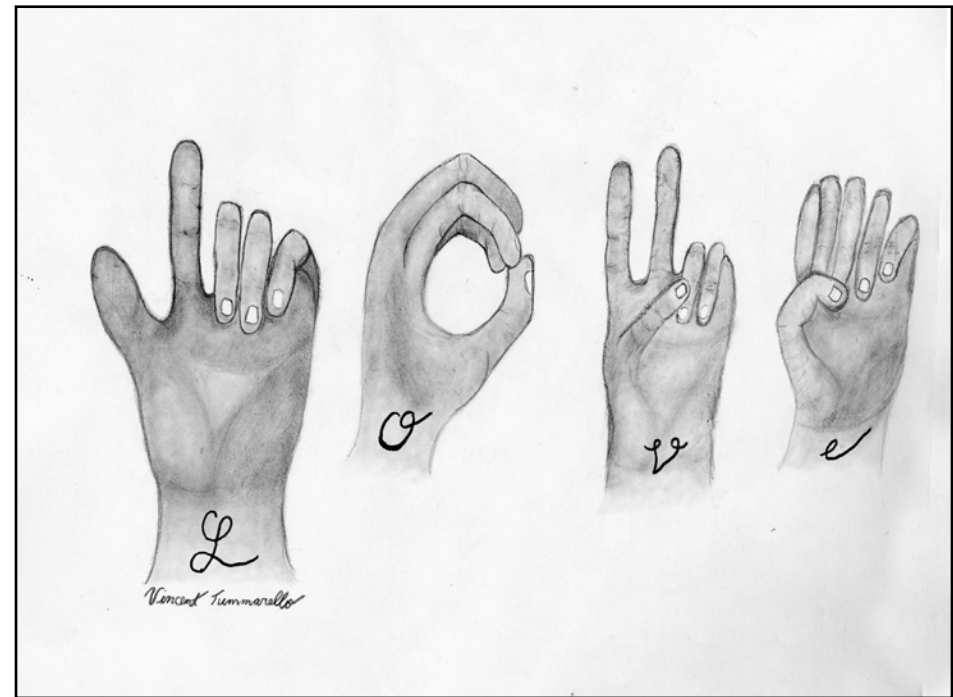
Why does he need to make his message difficult to find?
If he just told me what it was, I surely would not mind.

The readers say it's excellent, truly a work of art,
Yet its meaning is still lost to me. I don't know where to start.

Why the poet wrote like this, only he really knows,
But next time, I am hoping he decides to write in prose.

I'd probably find an essay easier to understand
Than this jumble of words on the paper in my hand

Joseph Cella '15



Loving Hands

Vincent Tummarello '15

A Brief Guide to Cat Cohabitation

I live with three cats. Some would say I own three cats. I would bet those people don't have a cat. One does not "own" a cat; if superiority is established at all, the cat generally believes he rules.

Since I grew up surrounded by felines, I have learned several of the "dos" and "don'ts" of living with cats. My three have taught me quite a bit. So, for all those with a new feline friend, I present a guide to kitty companionship.

First, cats are very territorial. Anything that is theirs is solely theirs. What is yours is also theirs. Some cats believe that anything that is the neighbor's, the housekeeper's, and especially the dog's is theirs. Therefore, it is very important to remember that the house you live in is yours—even though your feline may disagree—and that you, the human companion, set the rules. Remember this early in your relationship with your cat, and reinforce this to make your life with your cat much less stressful.

Some cats get along with people. Some get along with other cats. Some will even get along with dogs. Very rarely, though, will a cat get along with a pet fish, bird, or mouse. Two points are to be made about your cat living with others. First, be prepared to adjust. While young kittens can adjust to any company, adult cats cannot (or, just as likely, simply will not). Second, be wary when bringing in a new cat. For instance, a fish-aquarium enthusiast is probably not meant to have cats, as this is a recipe for, at best, a soggy kitty and a broken fishbowl.

Finally, I believe that curiosity does not usually kill the cat. Curiosity does, however, get the cat trapped in laundry baskets, covered in packing peanuts, or stuck in a very tall tree (all of these have happened to my cats). For instance, when we adopted our third cat, Maxwell, I volunteered to keep him in my room while he adjusted to his new life. With his safety at the forefront of my mind, I set about "Maxwell-proofing" my bedroom. What I learned very quickly is that there never has been, and there never shall be, a "Maxwell-proof" room. For instance, when I stored items in my closet that I thought could be dangerous, Maxwell learned to open the closet door. For the new owner, the key to making a cat's environment safe is doing as much as possible to make the environment safe, and then adjusting as well as possible to respond to the cat's habits. I can say, though, that your cat will probably still find trouble. For these events, I recommend keeping a camera on hand, because sometimes all you'll be able to do is laugh and take a picture.

Remember these tips for dealing with your new feline friend, and you'll share many happy years together.

Mark Uszacki '15



Who, Me?

Dr. M. Gubernat



Seagull by Water

Mr. G. Milligan

Water You Waiting For?

Life is full of problems,
Sometimes it's hard to get through.
You should treat it like an ocean
Just don't feel so blue.

When you're in deep trouble,
Don't think too shallow
Keep your head above the water!
Sea-riously, just go with the flow.

Life isn't like reinventing the whale,
Or thinking you cod do better
Don't stand under your own rain cloud
There's no need to be any wetter.

When you try, any-fin is possible
All the decisions are yours,
As they all say, "Seas the day!"
Water you waiting for?

Jason Wan '17

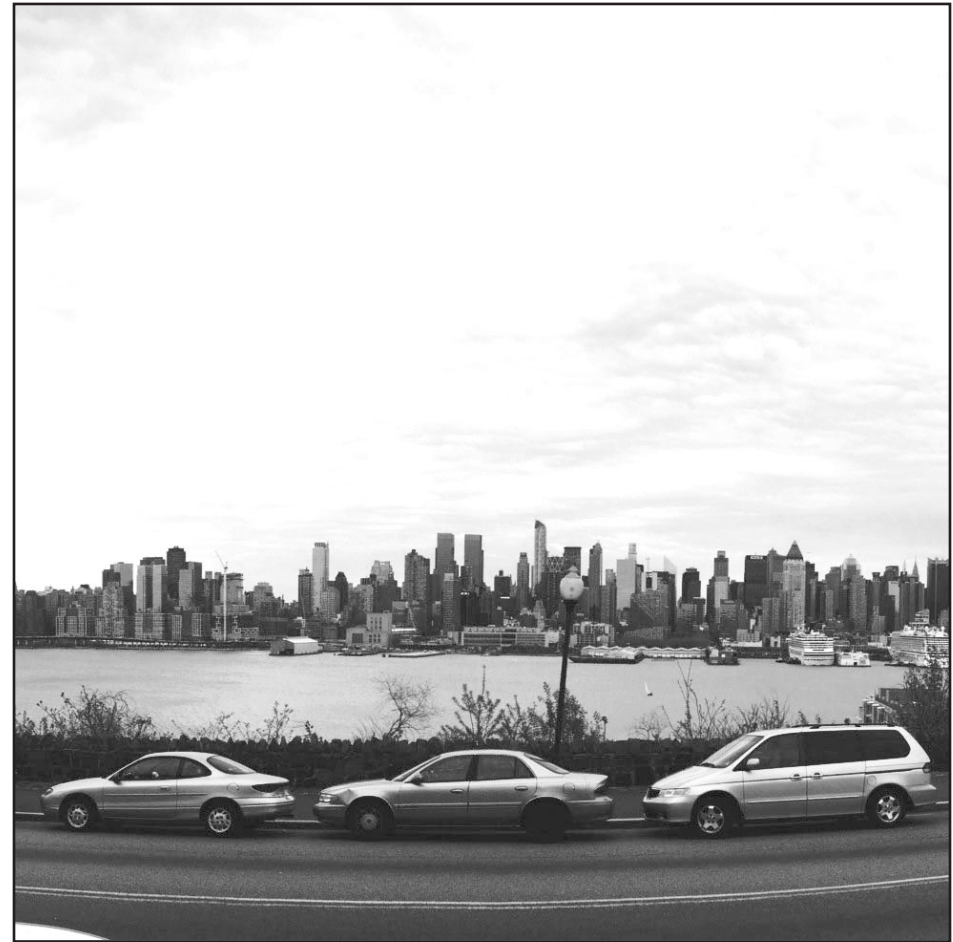
Living in Trash

Trash is trash;
It's dirty, worthless,
Ugly, and foul;
A word used to describe
The most vile and base of creatures;
A word associated with failed projects,
Bad ideas, and nonsense.
Yet, for some, trash is not trash;
Trash is their food,
their source of sustenance and nutrition.
It comprises their homes,
providing them shelter and safety.
It is their livelihood, their everything.
It is a gift from God
that supports them for another day.
They have nothing more...
But they never see trash,
They only see treasure.

Buhay sa Basura

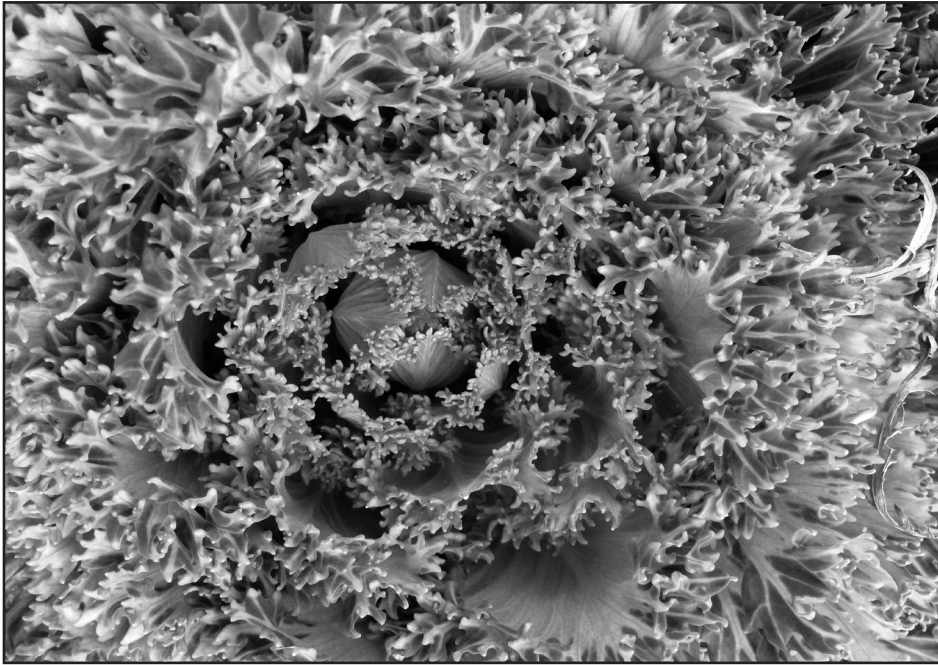
Basura ay Basura;
Ito ay marumi, walang silbi,
Pangit, at may amoy na di kaaya-aya;
Isang salita na naglalarawan
Ng pinaka-alipusta at babang tao;
Isang salita na nauugnay sa nabigong adhika
Hindi magandang ideya at walang bisa.
Ngunit, para sa ilan, basura ay di basura;
Basura ay kanilang pagkain,
Pinagmulan ng kabuhatan at kalusugan.
Ito'y kanilang kanlungan
Nagsisilbing silungan at kaligtasan
Ito ang kanilang kabuhatan: lahat ng bagay
Pinagkaloob ng Maykapal
Tulong para sa isa pang araw
Wala ng iba pa...
Para sa kanila, di ito basura
Nakikita ito bilang kayamanan.

Gil Gerard G. Austria '17



New York Skyline

Samuel Javier '16



Purple People Eater

Frank Gumina IV '16

I Am From

I am from fried fish, evenly cut cornbread slices,
and butter-coated sweet potatoes
that enhance the atmosphere of late night dinners.
I am from thick bristled brushes, shiny hair grease,
and the continuous buzzing of hair clippers.
I am from caterpillars squirming beneath my doorsteps.
I am from the wreath dangling from my door to the weakening,
dilapidated oak tree
in the middle of the lawn whose short life mimics that of my mother's.
I am from Tonya and Dexter, the oldest of eight.
I am from the talk too much and the name calling crew.
I am from the little church by the brook,
where each pew is congested with lively souls.
I am from a never ending family tree, where at the top rests
the memorable bodies that came before me, and at the bottom, me.
I am from the "Amen" and "God bless you," the things that warm my heart;
within my closet hangs a hand-knitted sweater inclosing unknown messages.
I am from those types of people, the ones that wished for a change.

Dexter Jackson '17
1st place sophomore poetry

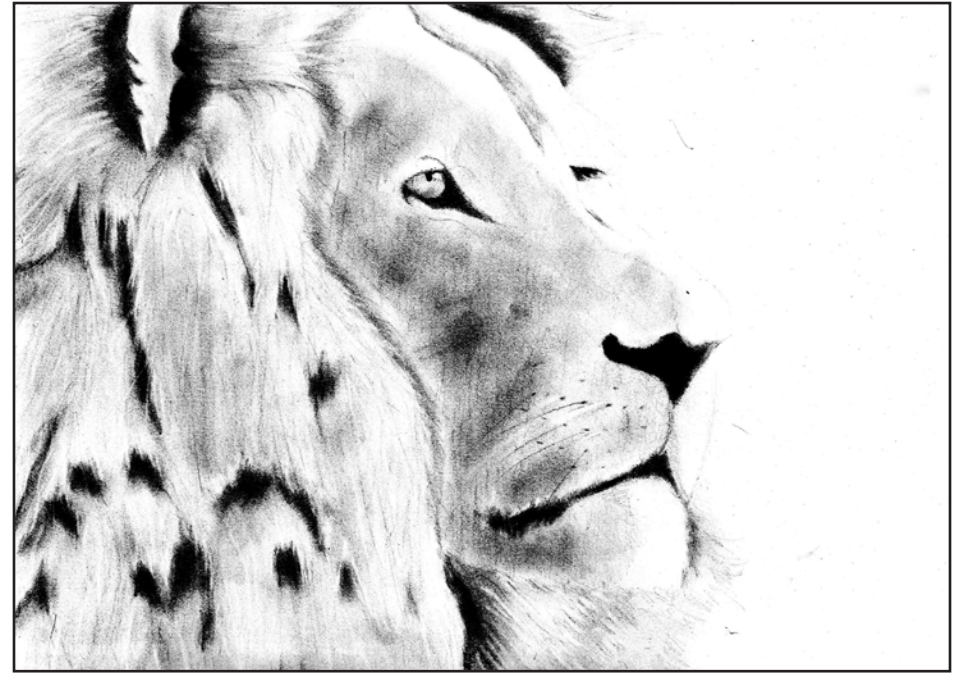
The Shot

I see my target. It's a herd of gazelle about 500 meters away, moving south on one of the most largely populated savannas in South Africa. They are highly keen to any movement, scouting for potential predators before they settle into their new grazing area. They keep the youngest of the herd protected as they wander aimlessly around in their tight formation. Every time they let their guard down, I move a bit closer. From my current location, my weapon of choice doesn't have the range I need to get the job done. I keep as low as possible hoping nothing scares them off before I can get close enough. The ground is packed tightly from the lack of rain, and the grass is sparse so I have to move quickly from patch to patch. Large rocks also litter the ground around me giving me some cover. The closer I get the more my nervousness builds. I start breathing a bit faster but I stop immediately, realizing that I have to keep my breathe as quiet as possible. If they run, I won't have another chance before my expedition ends. Patience is key. Without it I wouldn't get the angle or the shot. The sun is bearing down which could be a problem and it would only get hotter as the day progressed.

I thought about getting something with more range, but it was already too late. I was already 250 meters away from the herd. They seemed to have settled down a lot more in their new temporary encampment. Another risk would be the herd moving, even without a predator scaring them off. *Luck of the draw*, I thought to myself, as I inched ever closer to get into range.

It's an odd feeling when you know that you're close to the end of something very important to you, one way or another. After hours of this, I've finally gotten within range. The herd is 50 meters away. My heart begins to race as I set up the perfect angle for the perfect shot. The closest gazelle is a young male with a beautiful coat of short golden fur, with a strong looking pair of antlers. I take aim at it, envisioning the shot in my mind. One movement of my finger and it would be over. My heart is racing as I exhale and shoot. Finally, I got my picture.

Max Finn '17
1st place sophomore fiction



Pride of a Lion

Adekonle Balogun '16



Are You Willing to Cross the Abyss?

Cristian Butrico '17

Defiance

Bound in the clutches of the night
With Death and Darkness by my side,
Mine eyes no longer see the light
As I face the rising of the tide.

The whole world stands still around me.
The masses cast their heads down in shame.
Though I stand alone against the sea
I refuse to be tamed.

Battered by doubts, plagued by fears,
They watch and wait for me to fall.
Never shall they see my tears;
I am weary but still stand tall.

Though my struggles may never be known
And no records of my pain exist,
My voice shall raise a defiant tone
As I rage against the abyss.

Michael Johnson '15

Where Are You, Friend?

He came in during the spring,
His spirit was in the leaves of the cherry blossom,
He was as tranquil as an autumn breeze.

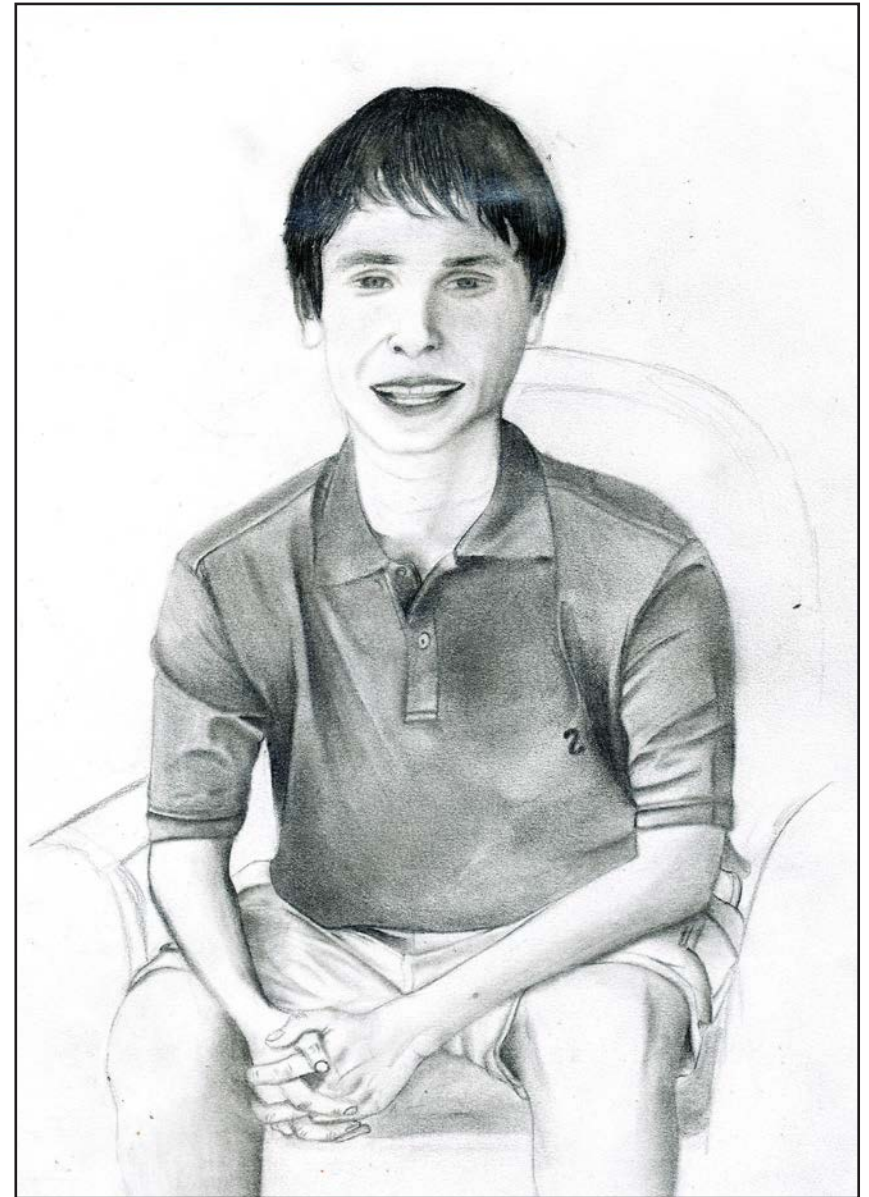
He carved his own path,
We hiked on others'.
He made mistakes,
But rose above them.
He climbed the mountain,
While we gaped at its size.
We were common fish in the sea,
He was the exceptional one.

He was a healer to the injured,
A rescuer to the refugees,
And water for the thirsty.

He was life, its true meaning,
Tomorrow's death had no effect on today,
Today's sunset was only meant to be enjoyed today.

He came in as a damaging storm, but left as a memory,
His actions touched our hearts.
Where had he come from?
To where has he gone?

Hersh Thapar '18



Vincent

Paolo Sering '17

The Buck

Ever since I visited Yosemite National Park a few years ago, I've been distinctly cautious around deer. On the trip, after all, the tour guide had inadvertently disclosed a closely guarded Yosemite secret: the sole animal-related death in the park had ensued only when a negligent tourist approached a wild doe.

In the years that have passed since my trip to California, I've seen a number of deer, with the vast majority of them wandering in remote, sylvan areas; nonetheless, I had an unfortunate tendency to hesitate and linger while the beast bolted off.

Yet it was only recently, when I discovered a buck on a backwoods trail, that I was able to surmount my apprehension around the animal that I derisively called the "king of the local nature reserve."

In the midst of summer training, I had decided to take a different trek on an evening run – and yet began my usual commute through local suburbia. As I passed a trail I had only skimmed once in the past, an inner voice called me to turn – away from the road, far from the dust, and into the wilderness. The weeds obscured the path, and just as I escaped the belligerence of smog and car horns, so too I discovered a rhythmic pace on the uneven track.

About half a mile into the run, a large buck bounded onto the trail in front of me. His antlers were tall, and his powerful hind muscles bulged as he froze – the proverbial "deer in the headlights". I halted and met his gaze – but the beast stood there motionless.

My next move was at once unexpected and unnerving. I lunged forward, attempting to frighten him off, and though he flinched, he remained loyally in place. Only when I relaxed the deer did too, lowering his antlers and launching powerfully into the brush.

Much like the deer himself, I sprang forward, falling back into my usual pace, but something felt *different*. I pursued the path persistently, far deeper than I had ever gone, trespassing onto a local nature reserve – a crown jewel hidden in industrial Jersey. Deer bounded across the trail, yet I remained true to form – and refused to slacken my stride. The trail, however, spoke otherwise; covered in deep mud, long branches, and thorny vines, it soon became impassable.

Even when I, covered in specks of blood from the prickly bushes and soaked in sweat from the midsummer heat, flipped to return home, I did so with newfound energy and spirit. As I passed by the last portion of the path, I crossed the several-acre grassy field nearby. As I returned to the trail, for some peculiar reason, I wasn't weary at all. As I ran and ran, I thought for a moment that I saw one last deer – tall antlers, hidden in the bush, right in the corner of my eye.

Taras Holovko '16



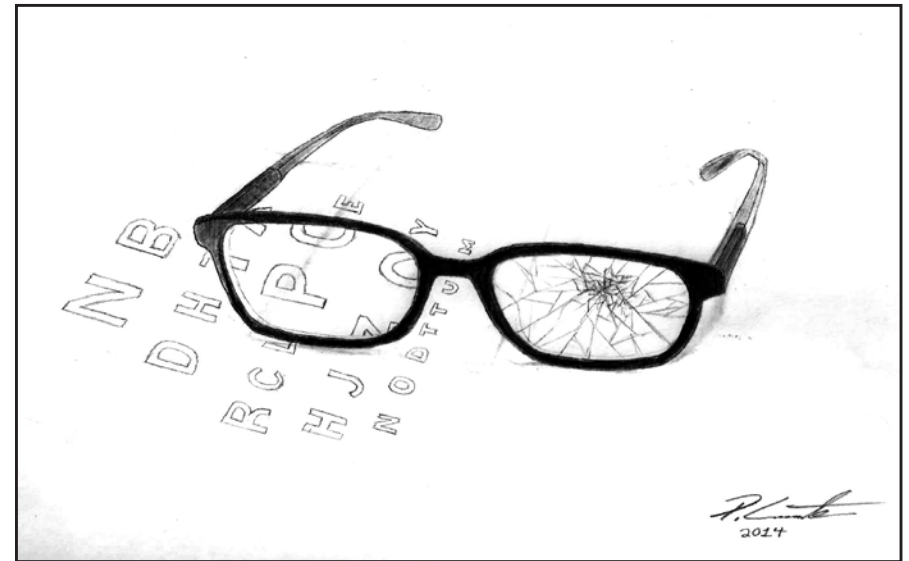
Roar

Julien Greene '15

Blind

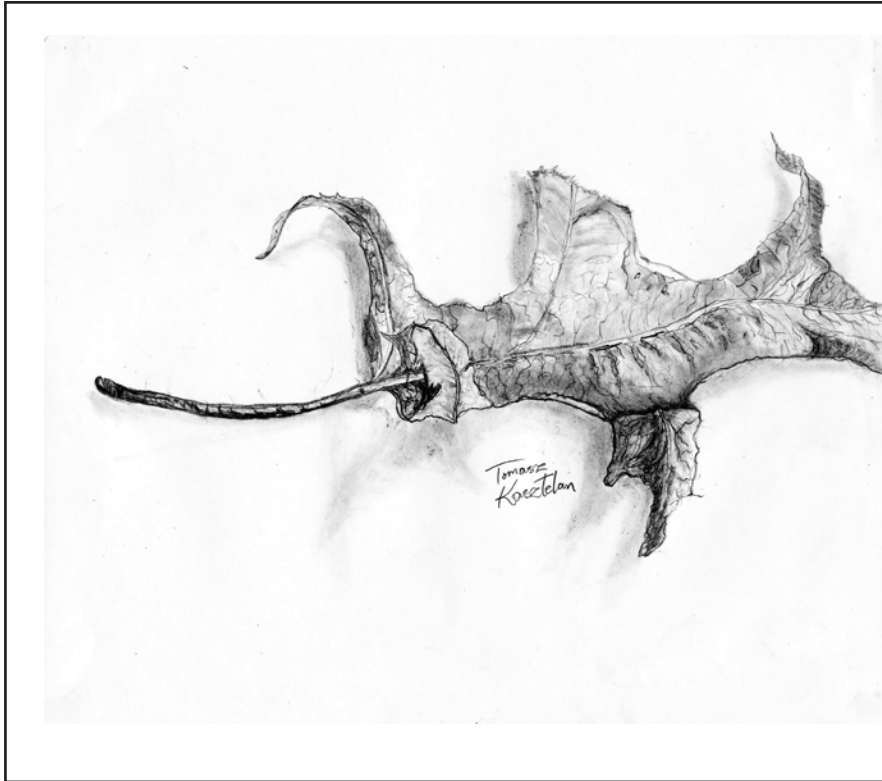
I came into the world without a curse
That's plagued this world for centuries, designed
To rupture concentration and coerce
The ill to scorn all faith. Yes, I am blind.
Oh, I have heard of broken families,
Victims of personal technologies.
Delusion that whoever sees believes
Is not a fruitful ideology.
I listen to my family read poems
Of Shakespeare, Spenser, building a robust
And happy bond between those in our home,
Which leads to sympathy and tacit trust.
Thus, through this trust my blindness sees defeat.
Whose eyes are blind? Not mine, they don't deceive.

Kristian Teopengco Quevada '15
1st place senior poetry



Perspective

Peter Coronato '16



Effects of Fall

Tomasz Kastelan '17

Leaf Life

Spring gives birth to me-
My home no longer barren.
The sweet smell of April
Embodies my lush nature.

The sun is my temptress
And water is my knight.
The generous tree of life crushes
Death and creates the heavens.

Summer rolls around
As my strength swells.
The cool breeze shakes
My abode for pleasure.

I start my day in the east
Till the sun returns in glory.
I finish in the west,
Where he hides till tomorrow.

Masquerading myself in shades of
Rose and pumpkin.
I yearn for the return of
My lover, my mistress.

My legs are weak, my body is frail.
I slip and float slowly to the earth
Looking up at my desolate dwelling
Till my body crunches on the soil.

Joseph Pulikeyil '15

Wealth in Indigence

The muffled sound of my phone alarm underneath the pillow woke me. Pulling myself into a pair of running shorts, I walked stiffly outside and began my routine run, up and down the five flights of stairs in the compound. The sun had not yet risen over Nagpur, but running outside onto the streets of one of the poorest, most dangerous cities in India would be foolish even at this hour. After four miles of stair-running, I stopped upon the building's terrace and peered out onto miles of ramshackle buildings and congested streets. I had flown here alone, nearly eight thousand miles from home, to work with my aunt and the other Salesian sisters in these slums of Maharashtra.

Three hours later, after morning Mass at the chapel I was greeted at the courtyard, in Hindi and broken English, by a few smiling children: "Good morning, big brother!" The three hundred-plus residents of the Home for Handicapped Children all came from impoverished families and endured various disabilities, from missing or defunct limbs to cerebral palsy. One boy looked up at me and grabbed my arms, and I hoisted him onto my shoulders, grinning. Ignoring the pain that shot up through my knee, I carried him over to the bevy of other children and began the daily task of fastening their calipers and crutches for walking. Mine would be a long, purposeful day.

My motivation to make myself useful, however possible, landed me in the Physical Therapy ward, teaching children to walk for four or five hours a day. Sometimes I fell asleep at the bench, unaccustomed to the time difference between New York and Mumbai. At night, the children welcomed me into their cafeteria to sit on the floor and read to them in my strange American English, teaching me Hindi in return.

My hours of working with the children, however short, taught me much. I had hardly been able to hold back tears my first night at the home, but since then I had begun to see inexplicable joy in the eyes of those who had nothing. It was as if their dearth of material possessions opened up a new realm of wealth, a mysterious happiness unattainable for those raised in luxury. The children's physical disabilities gave them an intangible emotional fortitude, and their dependence on each other created strong mutual bonds of trust and compassion.

My brief period of work in Nagpur was a rare glimpse into the lives of those whom we so systematically classify as "less fortunate." More than living testaments to the human will to rise above sufferings and setbacks, these young ones exemplified the fragile preciousness of human life. Love made these children get up and walk every day, and they deserved nothing less in return.

Kevin Stephen '16
1st place junior nonfiction



Grasping the Future

Eric Ozga '16



Lighthouse on a Hill

Mr. G. Milligan

A Light

He was already a freshman at Saint Joseph's when I first met him at the Woodbridge YMCA, where its swim team, the Tiger Sharks, was starting its spring practice. I was only in seventh grade, and new to competitive swimming, so I practiced with the junior group while he, along with the older and more accomplished swimmers, practiced with the senior group. During the ensuing months I would often watch him and the other senior swimmers, hoping that one day I would become good enough to swim with them. As the weeks went by, I noticed how much better he seemed to be than even the others in his group. I do not know exactly when, but at some point during that first year, I made a decision that I wanted to be like Matt Rein.

Matt's physique was thinner compared to other swimmers on the team, but his muscles were well toned and developed. Once in the water, he seemed to have endless energy, able to swim distances in practice far longer than what anyone else could swim. Maybe it was his work ethic, for Matt always exceeded the coach's challenges and expectations. Possibly it was his disposition- happy, relaxed, never complaining about the drills, and always being attentive to what the coaches were saying. Whatever the reasons were, when we had our meets Matt seemed to win every one of his events. He was the one everyone would look up to and depend on to lead the way.

One of my many memories of Matt was when he tried to help me get my varsity letter. At the end of my freshman season, the team held last-chance time trials, for anyone attempting a varsity time. Matt already had his times, but he told me that he would swim with me to help pace me, even after swimming his heart out in the final meet. I did not get my varsity time then, but it was the closest I had yet come. That is the Matt Rein that I will always remember.

While I only knew Matt from swimming and high school, I know he had many friends and touched the lives of many people. I cannot speak for them, as each of their experiences with him was personal and unique, but I know the effect that Matt had on me. Two of his events were the 200 and the 500 freestyle, which I also swim. Now I will be swimming these events for Matt. While he is my role model as a swimmer, Matt Rein has also become an inspiration and role model for me as to how to live as a good person.

Matthew Rein died tragically in an accident on September 13, 2014. He did not "go to sleep" and he certainly did not "pass away." Many people use these trite or well-meaning euphemisms for this part of life. Yes, death is, in fact, a part of life. Matt, however, is alive now more than ever, in the hearts and minds of those whom he touched and loved. At this very moment, Matt is with all his friends and family members in spirit. Now with God, Matt Rein is an inspiration, a light for all of us, a light shining bright in our often darkened world.

Michael Dolegiewitz '15
1st place senior nonfiction

The Master's Army

Belligerents sprint to the field of battle
Bent on war like a legion of jackals
Pit bulls embrace slaughter by the sword
Lives on the line in defense of a lord.

Infantry engage, in wholehearted gait.
Stalled in the center, a dreary stalemate.
Serpentine mercenaries slither deftly on the flanks
In fruitless endeavors to tame the feral phalanx.
Concealed archers prime ravenous bows,
Though rigid armor halts feeble arrows.

Trebuchets glare at the rival formation
Cannonballs crash upon a fixed location
At last a weakness! Famished sharks salivate and cry,
"Enemy Constable unguarded! Send in the Cavalry!"

All the king's men now commence the flood
A fertile field supplanted by a sea of blood.
The Constable cringes at the horde which surrounds.
Escape is impossible! Hollers of victory resound!

Checkmate.
White wins.

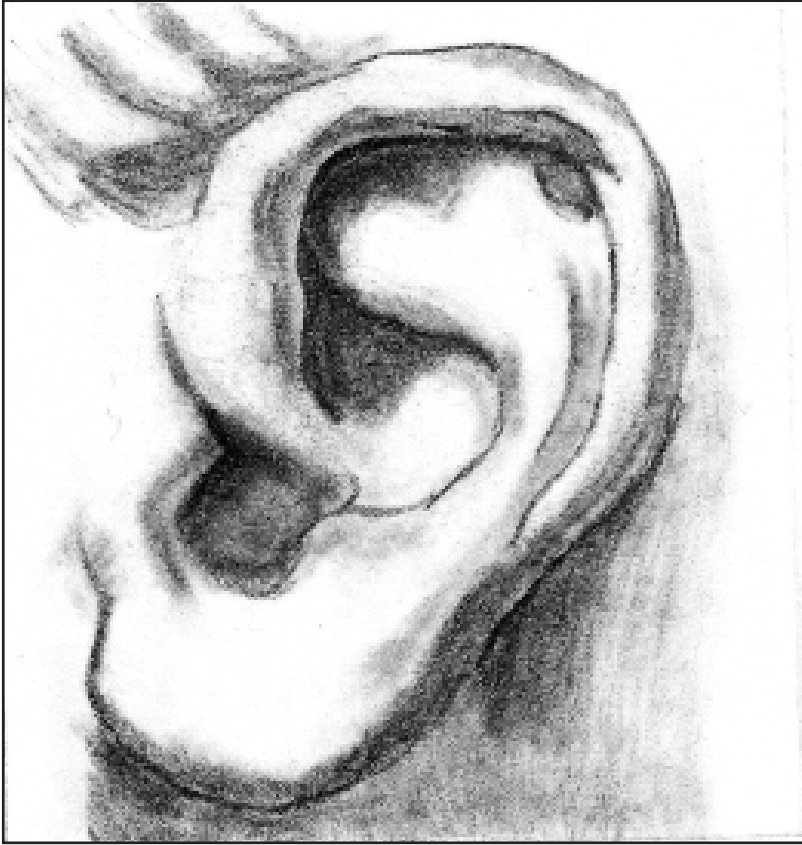
Tyler Vitale '15



The Royal Couple

Eric Ozga '16

A Moonlight Sonata



I'm Listening

Ms. C. Canciello

No, today is not some ordinary day. Today is the day I will walk up there and express my emotions to the best of my abilities. I will not hide in fear of facing great challenges, tackling these tasks like great heroes of the past; above all else, I will be true to myself.

I remember how in earlier years I approached the piano effortlessly during my share of performances in various recitals. Upon each new encounter with the instrument its heavy keys and the eyes fixated on me seemed to pale over the years. I learned how to perform my selections with power and confidence, which came after many exhausting hours of practice and after many stressful lessons with my piano teacher. Back straight. Palms up. Elbows out. Head up. More expression. More emotion. This became some sort of paradigm that felt forced and unnatural. It all seems so bland to me now.

The piano lessons were barely lessons at all. The main objective of any classical teacher is to teach the students how to read notes. Being that I already knew how to do so, the lessons just became an outlet for which my instructor would release the tension of living a normal adult's life. Every weekend I developed a grouchy mood after driving 45 minutes on Saturday mornings just to be yelled at by that moody woman. She taught by ear, refusing to actually read the notes while the student practiced it in front of her. Unfortunately, this led to countless false indications that a wrong note is being played, when actually the composer meant to add those dissonant notes in the first place. The student cannot even correct her, as she would claim that that would be out of line and merely disrespectful when the student is actually justified by the composer himself. This was my life for twelve difficult and lengthy years.

But no, today is not some ordinary day. I have been waiting for this moment for as far as any lover has waited for his beloved, and I've withheld my emotions from truly being expressed. I knew that this would change my life forever, and I chose to accept the repercussions. I didn't want to set boundaries upon my musical creativity and just follow the notes like other people around me during recitals. I wanted to ride toward the musical horizon, venturing to the distant Lands of Composition and Improvisation, making them known to others around me as if I were an adventurer. I yearn to inspire the ears and the hearts of other musicians who look to me to show them how not to follow music like a parrot that mimics its owner. I seek to redefine what it means to be a pianist. Now was the time. I march up to the piano with the pomp and circumstance of a graduate on his or her final night in that school, facing the plucky but powerful woman who stood behind it, telling her, "I quit."

Kristian Teopengco Quevada '15

Lucifer

I woke into that choking night of cold
And muck and gloom and smoky skies, dark as
the deepest bosom of my soul. I clawed
myself out of the dust and death, the fangs
of ice gnawing my charred, burned corpse.
But what a woeful sight was that of which

I met. Fires that licked the darkest of
the skies cast plumes of suffocating ash
over the land, glazing the realm in coats
of cruel beauty, and sinister glory.

Off to my left, a river I did see,
Brimming with scorching, vicious, sins, dancing
in pain and loss and fear. Yonder the surge
of that accursed stream, did stand battered,
burning ramparts, casting the light of wrath and
rage into the woeful pit. The steps I
took did singe my ashen soles, till they did
dark and char into hardened boots of coal,
like hooves of goats. As I approached the wretched
keep, scorching passion transformed my skin the
hue of lethal roses, dried blood.

As I began to climb, my ruined palms
dug into rough rubble, spilling my shameful
blood onto the starving ground. The ash drank
deeply from my life, and I began to
feel the frost of Lethe ensnare my heart in
sharp daggers of woe and spite, and wicked
beasts of serpent heads and equine rears sprung
from tormenting earth. Infernal flame shrouded
my frame as I approached the spire's peak.

I gazed out o'er that foreign realm.

Endless despair and skies of smoke and ash
ensnared the land. Maenad tempests thundered,
and vulgar wind struck out across the cursed
plains. I stared inside myself, and saw my
crumbling core corrupted with the mold of sin.
And when I saw my fiends claiming that realm,
I knew this justly was my spiteful land.

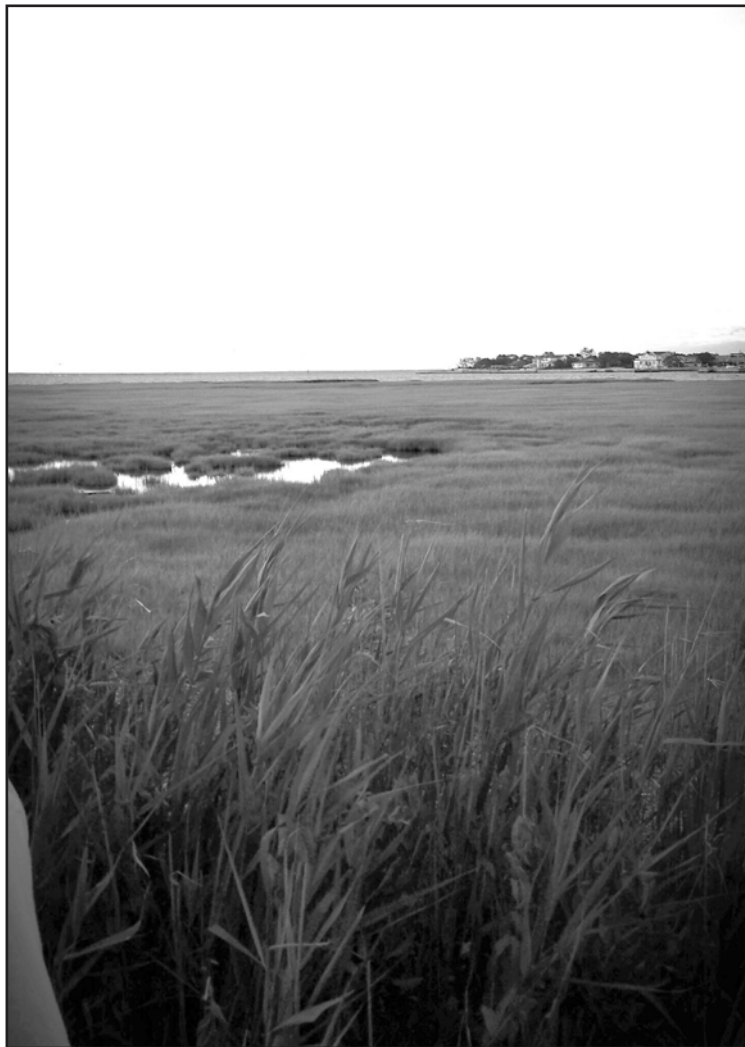
This was my Hell.

Stephan Kozub '15



Devil's Woods

Jacob Senkewicz '15



The Bog

Jacob Senkewicz '15

Worry

It is at the front of all my thoughts,
And weighs heavy in my head.
It follows every breath,
Every sigh, and every word I just said.

It shakes me, it breaks me,
It leaves me empty all inside.
I can't shut it off, I can't shut it down,
It comes at me from all sides.

If I could make it go away,
I could relax and rest easy.
Instead it rips my gut apart.
Sweating hands and stomach so queasy.

I fall asleep, I wake up,
Yet it hangs thick like December fog.
I get up, I get dressed,
It follows every step I log.

Compulsive, controlling, a focus without end,
Wasteful, consuming, crooked logic that no one could defend.
It eats at me, it makes my mind
Wander paths that it normally would not find.

I will conquer this fierce enemy.
I will make it go away... someday,
But right now I can't think about that,
Because I have to... worry.

Conor Quigley '18

The Great Pacific Garbage Patch

Imagine a wasteland with three million pounds of plastic sitting inside an obsolete area twice the size of Texas. Now take that image and plant it the middle of the Pacific Ocean. Unfortunately, what you pictured is not fiction, it is real and a poison to the Earth we live on.

The North Pacific Subtropical Gyre is an oceanic desert. Not only is it forsaken by animals, it is filled with trash. Of the numerous ways humans affect the oceans (oil spills, pollution from cars, boats, and factories), the Great Pacific Garbage Patch is the most detrimental and has the greatest impact on the ocean.

People carelessly toss garbage into waterways. What most do not realize is that currents eventually carry the plastic to the Garbage Patch. There is no specific person to point to; all humans are equally responsible for the trash in the patch, even those of us who live miles away from the shoreline. Trash that is disposed in a river or stream feeds into the ocean. From there, the current brings the trash to the Garbage Patch. Garbage from North America takes about six years to reach the Patch, trash from Japan and other Asian countries only takes a year.

Unfortunately, 90 percent of all the trash thrown into the ocean is plastic. Plastic is not biodegradable, which means it will not break down completely overtime. Instead, it photodegrades, which means it fragment into smaller and smaller pieces, without breaking into compounds. These bits of plastic are called mermaid tears, or nurdles. Nurdles are the most damaging part of the entire problem. They damage marine wildlife easily, and soak up chemicals from water— only to be later consumed by animals in the ocean.

Thousands of animals die each year because of the Garbage Patch. Albatross parents confuse plastics (and nurdles) for food, and in turn feed the plastic to their chicks, resulting in over 200,000 deaths of albatrosses. Loggerhead sea turtles mistakenly eat plastic bags, believing the food to be jellyfish. The Great Pacific Garbage Patch has the ability to destroy entire food webs. These bits of plastic block sunlight, essential for sustenance, from reaching the plankton and algae below. Countless other animals feed on plankton, the death of which can result in more loss of wildlife each year. The Great Garbage Patch also makes it difficult for ships and submarines to navigate the Pacific Ocean. Beaches across the globe are buried in five to six feet of trash. Others are covered in plastic sand, millions of grain like plastic pieces that are impossible to clean up - all of which is a direct result of our needless want to dispose trash easily.

The Great Pacific Garbage Patch is located above a gyre, which caused this patch to form, but only human dumping in waterways made this patch real. Cleaning up the debris may not be easy but it is necessary to keep the world clean. Many animals are affected across the world because of the three million pounds of trash sitting in the ocean. Although governments will not willingly contribute to the cleanup of “The Patch,” there is some effort being made by local communities and organizations. The cause is only as strong as its individuals, so to help out, sign petitions, create flyers, do what you can, as the Earth will not last long at the rate of the Patch’s growth. Do you want to make a difference in the world? Here’s your chance to start.

Rohan Mishra '17
1st place sophomore nonfiction



Southern Paradise

Samuel Javier '16



Auschwitz

Mr. G. Milligan

A Collection of Senryus on the SAT

Registering now,
Very expensive to test.
I'm paying for stress!

There are three sections,
Divided into ten parts,
Prolongs the torture.

Test is tomorrow,
Must concentrate completely.
Oh look! A squirrel!

Late-night studying
Not ideal the day before.
Should be sleeping now.

Nearly four hours,
One-sixth of my Saturday.
Why, O Fate, this day!

Vocabulary
Lists beyond three thousand words.
Where do I begin?

Why, Multiple Choice,
Are you my savior in school
My tormentor here?

Number two pencils
Blacken circles for answers,
Patterns on the sheet.

Twenty-five minutes
Experimental section.
Which one could it be?

Seventy minutes
Critical Reading and Math,
Sixty for Writing.

Writing the essay,
Must make it extremely long,
My hand is cramping.

Why must I fill in
Both bubbles and a written
Answer for grid-ins?

"That Reading section
Had a riveting passage!"
Said no one ever.

When it comes to math,
Despite calculators' help,
No math is better.

Passage-based problems,
Tedious beyond compare,
Must resist slumber.

Sentence Corrections
Look like there is nothing wrong...
There was something wrong.

This is just absurd!
The question has no answer.
Oh! That's an option.

Incorrect answers,
Penalized for being wrong,
Wary of guessing.

Running out of time,
No questions have been answered,
"E" for every choice.

Finished the exam!
Will never take it again!
Scores came...just once more.

Cyril Medabalimi '16

The Letter

The letter overwhelmed me like a curse,
The subject of my nightmares brought to life.
In misery it held my mind immersed,
Its contents cut as deep as any knife.
Its words had made my thoughts and blood run cold,
They shook my aspirations to the core.
For when I read that letter, I was told
The chance to live my dream would be no more.
The moments passed like eons in that state,
Engulfed in bitterness and sad regret.
My disappointment crushed me like a weight,
But I resolved I'd not surrender yet.
My destiny is only shaped by me;
A letter cannot curb what I can be.

Michael Nitzsche '15



Glowing

Samuel Javier '16



You Will Grow

Dr. R. Longhi '81

Running

It looked so simple, yet so elegant. If done correctly, it was almost like watching a masterful artist work. An orchestra of huffing and puffing, deep compressions of the lungs were followed by yells of both triumph and agony. The victors were obvious; they wore medals proudly around their necks. It was a culture all in its own. The outcasts were lapped by those born for this art form. Those receiving medals were proud but not nearly satisfied. The glory and honor lasted hours before the sun would rise and ask, "Who is getting better today?"

I watched at a distance. I questioned myself, "*What would it take to be a part of that?*" From first glance this seemed easy, put your head down and just do. Upon further examination, was I really willing to commit to being successful? I was. That is where my struggles began.

I woke up with only the sun by my side some days just to perfect the art. Long summer days begged for long sessions of mastering my own body. By the time the leaves started falling I felt invincible. Some days the sun would rise along with our companion the rain. Rainy days could easily constitute a day without rehearsal. Snow soon followed and even then I refused to be slowed.

My invincible body would soon learn I wasn't so unstoppable. The skeptics surrounded me. I refused to let myself down.

As the snow began to melt and the flowers bloom I went to where I had first begun my journey. Only then did I understand the art I was unsuccessfully attempting to master. I heard a yell from the stands, "Break through," the voice rang. "Break through the pain," the voice called out once more. Magnificently, every one in attendance witnessed this artist break through. A steady, even pace of a huffing and puffing orchestra turned into a symphony harmoniously attaining an impressive feat of confidence, strength, and endurance.

In the weeks that followed my injury was no longer an excuse. It was a piercing pain but an internal voice rang through my body, "*Break through,*" it cried to me. And I did. Pain became nothing more than a word. No, I wasn't invincible but I now learned the beat of my own symphony. A metronome within me taught my body to be perfectly in sync. My feet were percussion, my inhales were meticulous woodwinds, while my exhales were perfectly tuned brass.

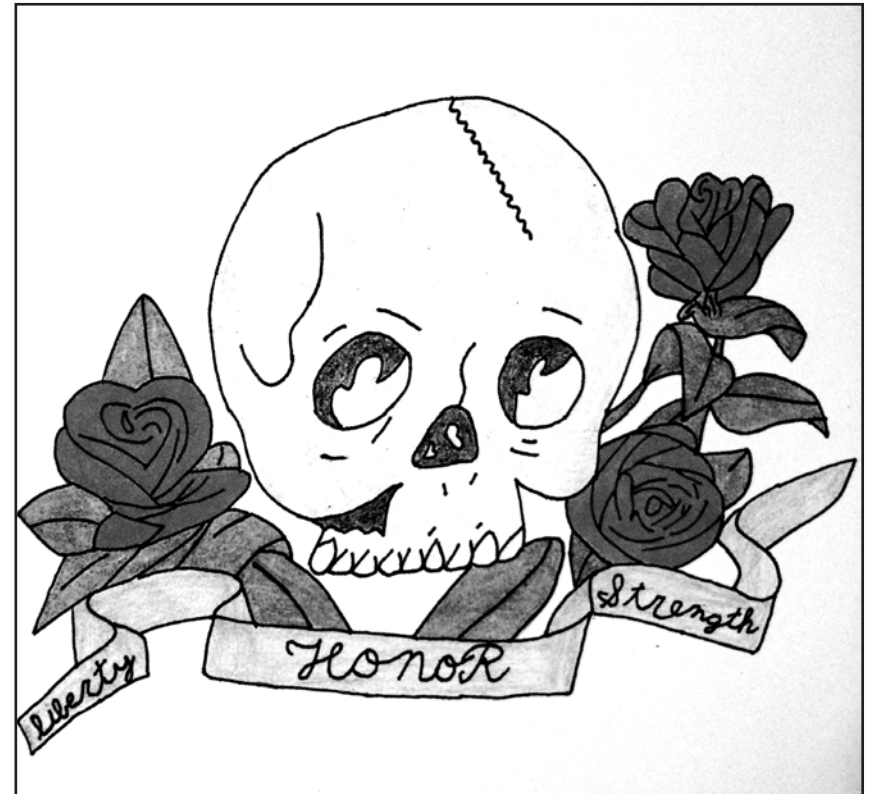
I was no longer "just doing." I was running.

Robert Ghiano '16
1st place junior fiction

Poem Written Upon the Announcement of a Significant Death

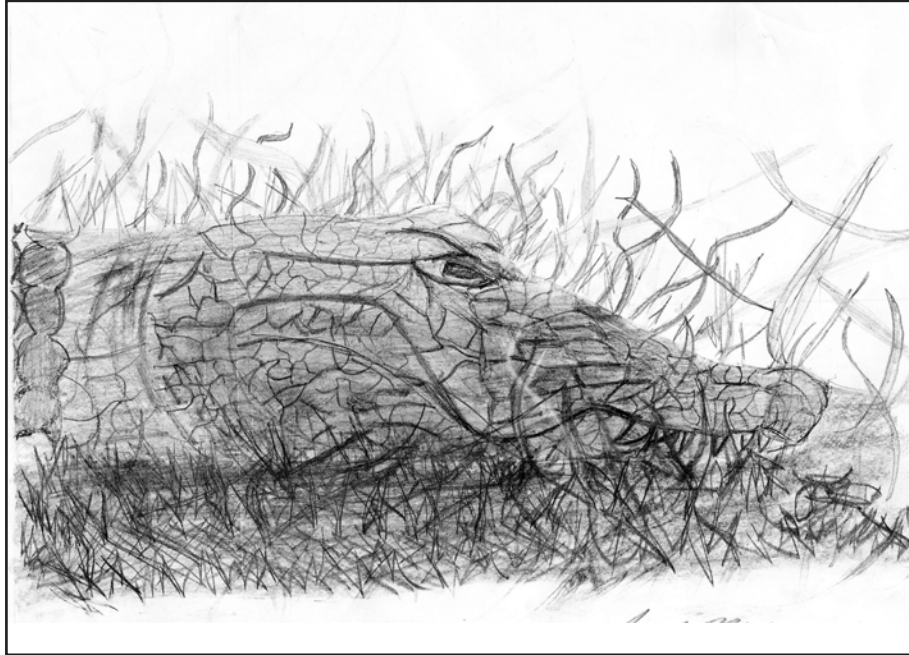
Why does the pen across the paper move?
What has the poet's calculation been?
What theory does the ink intend to prove?
Some theme arises as the lines grow thin.
A solemn sadness sets across the page,
The best ideas are trapped in a cage.
The glossy sheen of dark print fades to black,
The modern quill soon ceases in its course.
The writer – inspiration he does lack.
Pen falls to paper, dried up at the source.
The thought of giants fallen 'fore their time
Does stop the poet's brushstrokes, kill the rhyme.

Gregory Burton '15



Tattoo

Thomas Perlitz '17



Gator

Joseph Mortillaro '16

Drag

I turn the key, and grip the sweaty wheel a little tighter as the thunder from the forced induction big block engine of my Hell Camino roars to life, coughing the water out of its chromed side pipes and growling at the spectators. Looking out of the right window I meet the glare of the bloodthirsty opponent, peering through his shining helm and menacing chariot. My heart rate skyrockets, and I check and recheck all my panels and gauges with nervous energy. The tire smoke from the burnouts of the others behind me makes breathing in my helmet almost stifling. The flagger waves me to the line, and in my peripherals I see my opponent do the same.

Both of us are staged now. Now is the moment of truth, to see if those hours invested in heads, injection, timing, exhaust, and all the other little parts will add up to be enough. The top light on the tree ignites, and I instinctually start to build brake boost on the line. It feels like forever for that green light to glow bright, and in the few hundredths of a second before it does the tunnel vision starts to sink in. The previously deafening roar of the engines fades into to a muffled rumble. Go. I throw my shifter into gear and mash the pedal, getting thrown back into my seat and causing my eyes to water. I feel my slicks hook up on the prepped track and shoot me forward at seemingly Mach speed. Almost immediately, the shift light on my tachometer illuminates, and autopilot has taken over. Slamming through the gears, I'm off the gas, clutch, shift, clutch, and then gas again, all in a split second. I can feel my opponent alongside me, but being so close to the edge of destruction keeps me locked in the zone.

Faster and faster, the finish line appears through the mirage of the heat rolling off the chrome Weiand blower. The quarter mile pass is over, and I relax a little in my 6 point harness, content that I've outrun death at 160mph once again. Slowly, I notice that the adrenaline coursing through my veins has me shaking as I reach to get the slip and see the final time. Results: The Silver Bullet with 8.83 at 159mph, and my beloved Hell Camino pulling its personal best of 8.65 at 165. Triumphant, I loosen my death grip on the wheel, and load the car up on the trailer. My family and I pile into the towing Toyota Yaris and we return home in jubilant spirits to watch NASCAR.

Spencer Cap '16

The Detective's Tale

One windy, cold October afternoon, a solitary black SUV traveled down a deserted highway. Inside were a Detective, his Assistant, and two petty Criminals. The Detective, a tall, well-built man of forty-five, peered at his notes for the impending interrogation. He was dressed in his standard work uniform, which consisted of a crisp white shirt and a close-fitting tweed blazer above navy slacks and polished black oxfords. He chuckled as he glanced over at his inexperienced Assistant, who was nervously shaking with his hands on the steering wheel, and at the two young Criminals in the back seat. The Detective, a former Marine, was known as a raconteur, and he considered telling a similar tale for the motley crew in the truck. Clearing his throat, the Detective began his story.

My dearest gentlemen, I see you're stuck
For two more hours with me inside this truck.
Now I can help to pass the time, if I may,
With stories from the fabled glory days.
Some years ago, in the old rugged West,
There lived an outlaw, doubtlessly the best
At plundering. Now, he was on the run
From justice, having stolen many tons
Of silver. But while traveling, he saw
A bloodied, bruised defender of the law
Without his things or horse on which he rode,
Just left for dead alongside the dirt road.
The sheriff! He had been attacked and beat
By criminals. He surely soon would meet
His death if no one came and helped him now;
He'd bleed and die from his attackers' blows.
The thief considered; if he chose to aid
The sheriff, he would surely have to trade
His freedom and do time in the town jail.
But then the outlaw saw the man's face pale.
He rushed the sheriff to the hospital
And paid, in silver, the good marshal's bill.
The nervous plunderer now sat in wait
For the old officer to wake, see straight,
And recognize the thief for who he was;
A criminal, who'd broken many laws.
Indeed, the sheriff soon recovered, and
Quite firmly seizing the young outlaw's hand,
Said, "I know who you are. To you is due
Much prison time for theft. Now, this you knew,
But still you chose to save me from near death.
For that, I set you free from your crime's debt."
From the old sheriff's generosity,
The outlaw learned about integrity.

Kevin Stephen '16



Call Me

Max Pirone '15



The Big Apple

Samuel Javier '16

Fossil Fuel

I began life as a rocky infant,
curled up under a great mountain
with no sense of worth.

One day, I was scooped up,
loaded into a truck,
and rolled into a noisy factory.

I was melted down,
poured into molds, hammered flat, bolted together,
even given a chrome badge with my name on it.

I was given 4 shoes, glasses, and a shiny coat;
soon I rolled out of that factory
and into my new home, his driveway.

I was his greatest treasure;
caring for me like no other,
we enjoyed each other's company for years.

Yet one day, the rides stopped forever,
strangers came and went into his house
and I was left there, dusty and forgotten.

Soon, a stranger came and put me on his back
and towed me to a yard full of
forgotten treasures.

I was pushed into this strange box
where the walls came closing in,
crushing my bones, destroying my beauty.

I ended life as a wrinkled shell,
crumpled under a mountain of scrap
with no sense of worth.

Spencer Cap '15

Broken

The weary knight slowly reached for the rusted sword that lay by his discarded armor. Dull eyes scrutinized the similarly dull blade. The knight scanned his meager room for his whetstone. Frail hands grasped the blemished whetstone and became strong again; vapid eyes briefly regained their vitality. The sword passed over the stone in smooth, measured strokes. The knight's hands moved separately from the old warrior's thoughts.

The war between the two kingdoms still persevered. For thirty long years, the knight had urged his lord to make concessions and seek peace. The perceptive knight knew that the king continued the war merely to avenge the loss of his queen. The beloved queen had boosted the morale of the king's subjects and had provided rational thought to the king's devices. Once the opposing kingdom assassinated the queen, the king's tactics became erratic and nonsensical. The bishop of the castle, a sagacious prelate and close companion of the knight, was captured alongside the queen. The bishop had been offered amnesty in return for loyalty, but he had refused to betray his king. The knight scowled at the memory of the bishop's gruesome execution. The bishop's sacrifice was not unaccompanied. Manipulated like pawns in the king's grand scheme, peasants with little or no combat experience were forced to battle on the front lines of conflicts.

The enemy incorporated their own peasants into their armed forces. While the enemy grew stronger, the knight's kingdom grew feebler. Troops dwindled, and the castle walls deteriorated at a rapid pace. Tremendous structures could no longer provide adequate protection for the imprudent ruler. The knight was now his lord's last line of defense. Although the knight could avoid obstacles that would ensnare most others, he could no longer aid his king; any movement would result in his capture and immediate execution. Each day, the enemy advanced and got closer to declaring checkmate.

The knight's thoughts were suddenly interrupted by a discrepancy in the clash of steel and rock. Mystified, the knight glanced downwards at the blade. His eyes widened before returning to their insipid state. The knight allowed the whetstone and sword to fall from his grasp. He left his room without hesitation; there was nothing that could be done. The chipped and broken sword rested alongside his abandoned armor and whetstone.

Cyril Medabalimi '16



En Garde

Christopher Saulys '15



Colors of America

Thomas Valenti '16

Loading

This new age has brought us
Many new toys,
From the monitor to the hard drive to the portable device.

Children two, three years younger than us
Have grown into this age.
All they know are chargers, Wifi passwords, and batteries.
They can demand anything and can retrieve it in seconds.
But what if they couldn't?

What if that spinning loading circle
Just kept on spinning?
What if that progress bar
Just stopped progressing?
What would our generation,
And the innumerable generations after us, do
If we could no longer load?

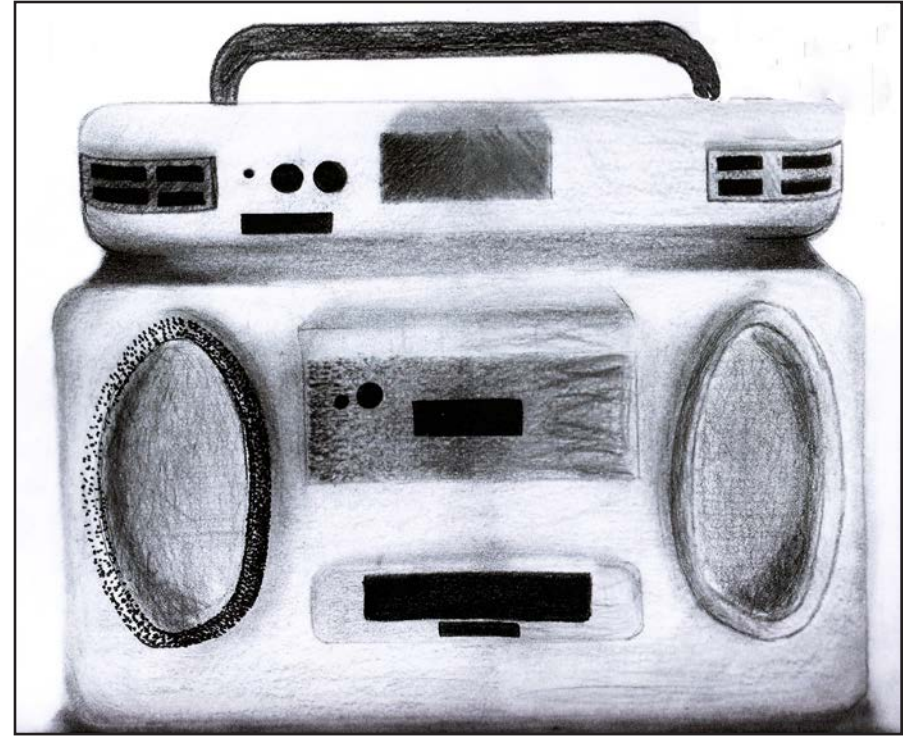
This world has survived,
Nay, thrived
For thousands
Upon thousands of years
Without the aid of a handheld device or computer.
However, they have become a necessity
To live in the world today.

Working no longer entails manual labor.
"Working" is the speed at which
The latest gadget or device
Can process the thousands
Of daily requests made
By children in the third grade.

Playing no longer entails staying out
'Til the streetlights come on.
"Playing" is the latest Xbox or PS4
Game that comes out every six months.

This new age has brought us
Many new burdens;
From work ethic to labor to patience.

Joseph Bruno '15



The Beat

Troy Posnansky '15



Remembrance

Dr. R. Longhi '81

Have you ever wondered how people generations after ours would react to the American Teen Culture of today? A lot can change in what seems to be just a few years. Every year, we grow older and progress further into our education. In our world, popular artists fall out of favor and new younger ones take their places. Sports teams are always changing, and new athletes are always emerging. Trends change, new fads evolve, and our entire culture changes.

Have your parents ever told you about the culture of the 70s or 80s or have you ever watched a cheesy YouTube video on the time period and laughed as you watched them dancing in bright, loose-fitting clothes while donning an immense jungle of curly hair on their head? In this way, their culture was just as unique as ours is today. In fact, their movies were so modest and mild that you'd think they were produced by a church. During this time, our parents didn't have the Internet either. They didn't film vlogs, update their statuses, Instagram their every meal, send embarrassing Snapchats, tweet about their every action, or drop hot mix tapes. They entertained themselves by watching television, listening to the radio, playing on the streets, and making up their own games; they certainly didn't have cell phones, Xbox Ones or PlayStation 4s.

However, here we are today with our Nintendo DSs, Xbox Ones, PlayStation 4s, and our own entirely new culture. Our culture has popularized the wearing of baggy, revealing, and comfortable clothing. Everyone seems to be wearing sweatpants and other workout apparel for anything but exercising. We've also made it a trend to create consistently arbitrary words and phrases that end up used in everyday speech. Words like swag, bae, ratchet, and homie are appearing everywhere. Phrases like YOLO (You Only Live Once) are also being thrown around as the mottos of the generation. The only dictionary you'll find these words in is the "Urban Dictionary." In addition, a really big dance trend is twerking, which is defined by this "Urban Dictionary" as "the act of moving/shaking one's buns/bottom/buttocks/bum-bum in a circular, up-and-down, and side-to-side motion." Moreover, in today's society, nobody would be caught dead without a cell phone; almost everybody, even a lot of grandmas, is part of social networking in some way. Plus, the Internet has taken over our entire lifestyle to the point that we can't live without it. Movies have also become fiercer and less strict in their legal depiction of graphic nudity, drugs, and violence. Music too has embraced artists like Justin Bieber, Miley Cyrus, Nicki Minaj, and One Direction who are famous for either comically having fan bases of children ages four to twelve or for being so overly revealing that their music videos could be rated R.

It is hilarious to think about how future generations may react to our culture, and even more interesting to think about how long our culture will persist before it is again replaced. But, more importantly, how will we react to this change? Because I'm quite certain that our parents and grandparents didn't quite fully understand why everybody was calling each other bae and "shaking one's buns...in a circular, up-and-down, and side-to-side motion."

Gil Gerard G. Austria '17

Falke

Vier Jahre lang warst du ein Falke.
Im Nest wirst du stärker.

Du wirst mit
 Sprache,
 Literatur,
 Geschichte,
 Wissenschaft,
 und Mathematik genährt.

Jetzt stehst du am Rande.
Deine Flügel sind Glauben und Mut.

 Lernen,
Du fliegst, Lernen,
Höher, Lernen,
Aufsteigend,
Du wirst immer ein Falke sein.

Falcon

For four years, you have been a falcon.
In the nest, you become stronger.
You are nourished with

 Language,
 Literature,
 History,
 Science,
 and Mathematics.

Now you stand on the edge.
Your wings are faith and courage.

 Learning,
You fly, Learning,
Higher, Learning,
Soaring,
You will always be a falcon.

Michael Dolegiewitz '15



The Heart of St. Joe's

Daniel DellaVentura '17

Metaphorical Marionette

Sal Ascolese

Maestoso

1 Cm Gm7 Fm Cm D°7 Ab G7(b9)

5 Cm Gm7 Fm Cm Fm G7 **Fine** Cm

9 Eb Db Dbm7 Gb Dm7 G7 C E

13 Eb Db Dbm7 Gb Dm7 G7 C

17 Cm Gm7 Fm Cm D°7 Ab G7(b9)

21 Cm Gm7 Fm Cm Fm G7 Cm

Allegretto grazioso

25 C Dm G C G Dm G7 C

29 C Dm G C G Dm G7 C7

33 F F#° G A7 D G7 C **D.C. al Fine** G7(b9)

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The Composition of Composers and Artists

I tried making a Liszt of potential poetry ideas,
But I couldn't Handel it.
The Strauss kept getting to me,
And eventually I let the ideas out of their Cage.

The thoughts flowed like a river in Little Britten,
But occasionally my mind wandered to the Byrd-s outside my window.
Constant distractions became Payne-ful, as did the sound of the keyboard.
To be completely Franck, the creativity stopped.

I know an opinion Varese with each person,
But my mother says one can Telemann by the way he writes.
A lack of creativity can indicate Laize-ness,
While a rushed tone can indicate that the author was Bizet.

Alright, it's time to quit Messiaen around and get to the Hart of writing.
I Haieff to say, there are many ways to write a poem.
Spontaneity is Gudanov for me,
But most prefer Haydn messages and planned plots.

The same idea applies to art.
Sometimes people Gogh and throw paint on the canvas,
Resulting in a "modernist" modern day Picasso.
Artists create masterpieces for enjoyment, or for the purpose of Monet.

The creativity came back to me, and it was Surreal like Dali.
All the time wasted on tangential ideas made me want to Scream!
The inner conflict of whether or not to try a Vitruvian prose,
Or to maintain a rhyming Soliloquy was truly Kiln me.

The rhyme scheme is nonexistent and does not Madder.
There is no reason in the arts, only emotions and Saul,
Just as there is no Kancreat idea in writing.
All of art depends on expression, and really bad puns.

Karun Sekhar '16
1st place junior poetry

Ballad of the Lazy Student

"Teacher, O Teacher!
I hope you're not irked...
I hate to tell you, but
I don't have my homework.

"But Teacher, O Teacher!
Just listen, I beg.
I really need the credit,
I'm on my last leg!

"Teacher, O Teacher!
Listen to me well.
Here is the story I have to tell:

"Teacher, O Teacher,
You wanted your essay.
I admit it with chagrin,
But I had nothing to say!
All around, I searched for the muse...

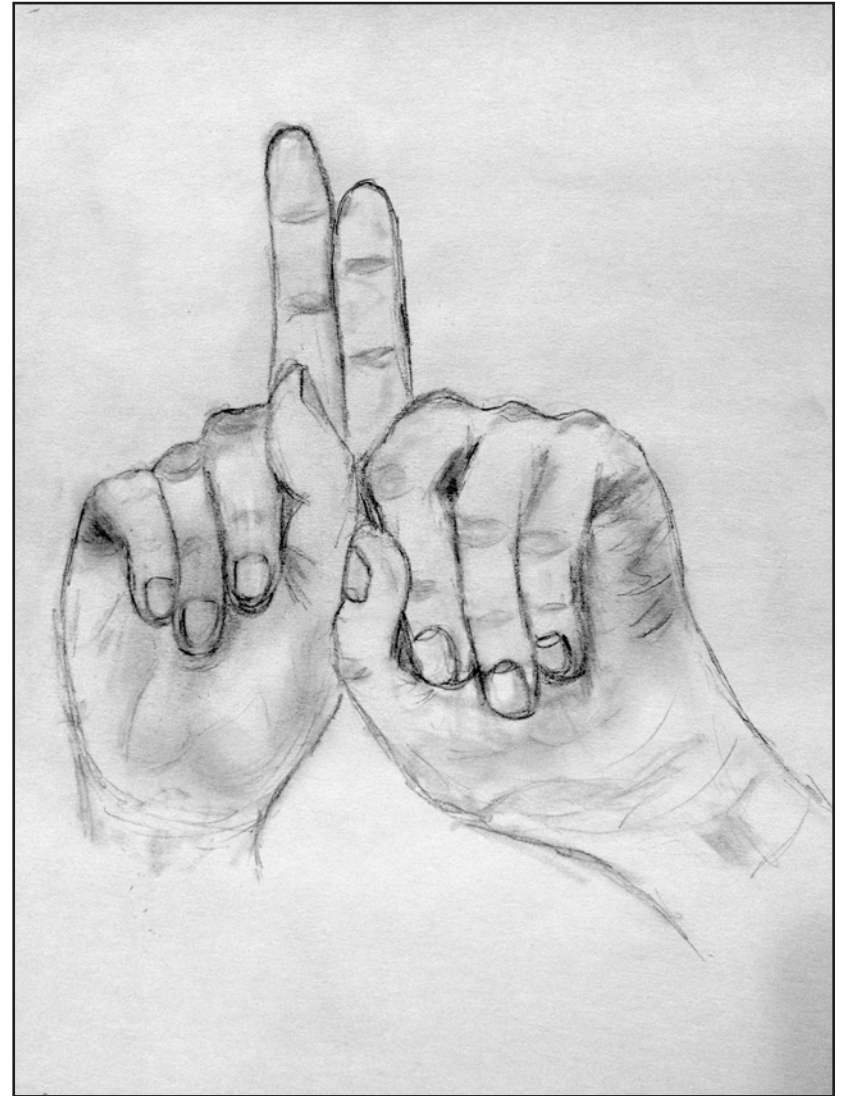
"Teacher, O Teacher,
I looked to my hands!
The instruments of creation,
Their abilities are grand!
But when I needed them most
To complete your assignment,
They appeared to be starved
Of all mental nourishment.
What could I do, tell me,
What could I do?

"Teacher, O Teacher!
My mind wouldn't think –
For I was pre-occupied!
There was a fire, and souls were in danger, and I had to just... just...

(Well, okay, *that* part might be fabricated...)

"Teacher, O Teacher!
I have an excuse!
My stopwatch had died, and... er...
Oh, it's no use.
A zero it'll be."

John Hoban '18



Star

Kevin Sweeney '16

Global Epidemic

Poverty is a worldwide epidemic, heartlessly stretching its hands to inflict the poorest of the poor, not differentiating between people or borders. Traveling through the desolate dirt roads of Madurai, India and the bustling asphalt streets of Trenton, New Jersey, I was surprised to see the stark resemblance of the two. During my venture in India, I visited a deaf school. Walking through the school gates I was met with a conglomeration of sights and smells. My eyes watered at the putrid smell of cow manure, fecal waste, and urine. Through my blurry vision I was met with the ghastly sight of children playing barefoot in the waste on the dirty floor. I was dumbfounded, however, by the joyous voices of children playing despite their deplorable conditions and environment.

I went to the school originally to discuss health and hygiene with the students in order to spread awareness on how to live a more sanitary. However, I found my presentation useless due to their lack of basic needs such as clean water or sinks. To combat this social injustice, I started a fundraiser to aid the school and allow them to receive necessary sanitation equipment such as clean water and toilets. With help from family and friends, I was able to help these children in a small but discernable way.

My experiences in India raised my awareness of the issue of poverty. This summer, I also joined Justiceworx at Trenton, New Jersey and witnessed poverty in America first hand. During this one week volunteering opportunity, I worked with less fortunate kids at a preschool daycare. At first, no social or economic setbacks were evident within the kids; they seemed to be happier and more playful than kids that I had encountered in the past. As soon as my service group entered the gate of their playground, we were greeted with smiles and a multitude of hugs. “¡Hola! ¿Como Estás?” they all asked as they lured us to join them in play. By their joyous giggles and laughter, my colleagues and I thought they must have lived a very privileged life.

We were very wrong. As we put the 37 kids to bed, the teacher began to tell us about the students’ stories. Many of the kids were from families who illegally came to America pursuing a better life. The most unforgettable story was of a young boy named Anthony. Anthony was the most happy, fun-loving kid in the day care. However at home, the story was much different. The living conditions of his home life were unbearably frightening– he was constantly bitten by bed bugs as he slept. He told the teachers he was so scared of sleeping in the bed that he would sleep in the bathtub. I was completely undone by this revelation. Trenton, a city only 40 minutes from my home, had a problem of poverty.

My summer voyages changed my worldview: through my experiences with those in poverty, I developed a compassion for the less fortunate. Poverty does not only exist in third world countries, it exists in our own backyards as well. Children are the future, and they should not be hindered by poverty.

Anshel Bright ‘15



Throwback Thursday

Evan Senkewicz ‘15

Ode to My Yo-Yo

When I am at home my yo-yo is always close at hand.
Like a silent partner waiting for me to summon its talents,
I use it to think, to amuse myself, and sometimes to procrastinate.
When Mathematics becomes monotonous and mind-numbing,
I slide the string on my sturdy middle finger
And send my yo-yo sailing down and up.
It mimics the talents of a graceful tightrope walker
Always following the string back and forth from my hand.
But oh, beware the hangman's noose that quickly tightens without warning.
It suffocates the condemned criminal that is my middle finger.
Even though my finger gasps for air it continues my yo-yo's flight.
During this flight my yo-yo radically reflects radiance off its round surface
To make lights shimmer on my walls.
The lights move simultaneously with my yo-yo.
My movements, like that of a puppeteer manipulating his marionette,
Make the yo-yo dance across the room
For my amusement and joy.

John Hermitt '18



Hanging Around

Jacob Torrasi '16



Happily Ever After

Rourke Morrison '18

Scarlet Memories

As Scarlet awoke in the forest clearing, she realized quickly she was in trouble; her memory gone, she was dressed only in a dirty dress and ragged red cloak, and she was terribly lost and confused. Struggling against a pounding skull and wobbly legs, Scarlet wandered for hours, well into the night. Just as she was about to collapse of exhaustion, rising out of the thicket of trees, appeared a manor. It looked dark and looming, yet obviously well-kept and in recent use. With the last of her strength, Scarlet managed to shamle up to the door and knock before collapsing on the front porch. She woke the next morning to discover her saviors, the benevolent Grimm family: father Jacob, mother Wilhelmina, and the little twins Hans and Greta. They offered her a place to work and sleep – a fine deal for a frightened amnesiac girl.

It was a quiet and simple life, living in a mansion in the middle of a forest, and Scarlet took to it and her adopted family quickly. The trouble started three months after her arrival, when the staff awoke to find a number of dead mice impaled with nails to the front door. The horrific scene left the household rattled, and the children with nightmares for a week. Matters only worsened when another incident, involving the entrails of a fox, occurred just a month later, and similar disturbing scenes followed at a quickening rate. The house was terrified; who could bring such horror to this home? Questions went unanswered, and the household was locked in a bloody mystery.

One morning, the gardener claimed that he had seen Scarlet herself the previous night stringing up the garland of dead bats that now hung over the fireplace mantle. Of course, he was quickly corrected and made to apologize. Poor Scarlet could never have done such a horrendous thing. And yet a few days later a similar accusation came in, and then another and another. Soon even Lord Jacob and Lady Wilhelmina looked at her out of the corners of their eyes questioningly and whispered quietly among themselves. With her whole world up turning against her, Scarlet felt desperate and ready to snap.

The killings started with an accident. How else was a young girl like Scarlet supposed to protect herself from the drunk, oafish groundskeeper who rambled on about demons in human guise, but to use a weapon? When she swung the poker's metal spike into his skull she thought she should be scared witless. Yet, the adrenaline rushing through her veins and the feeling of wet, warm blood on her face awakened her to some void, some wild hunger that had remained empty until now, that could only be filled with the grotesque offerings of animal blood. But even that could not contain her. Scarlet became giddy, mindless, swinging the poker swiftly and gleefully, humming a wordless tune. As she lost track of time, of space, of her own body, she could only offer a Cheshire grin at the bloody splatters left in the wake of her rampage.

It was past midnight when Scarlet finally awoke in the master bedroom, next to what seemed to be a fireplace poker. She was confused; had she not just been in the parlor? Looking down over the foot of the bed, she gasped as she saw the remains: mother and father embraced even in death, children dragged into the room leaving a red streak on the white carpeting. And as she collapsed on the bed sobbing, her scarlet-soaked memories returning, the girl could not help but smile.

Joseph Pickering '15
1st place senior fiction

Accomplishing Greatness

I have not yet accomplished greatness.
No one will ever say
I finally made it.
I tried over and over again to prove them wrong.
Countless hours on and off the court.
Countless years trying to be the best.
I worked so hard.
I always had hope.
Still, nothing seemed to work for me.
I thought my dreams were over.

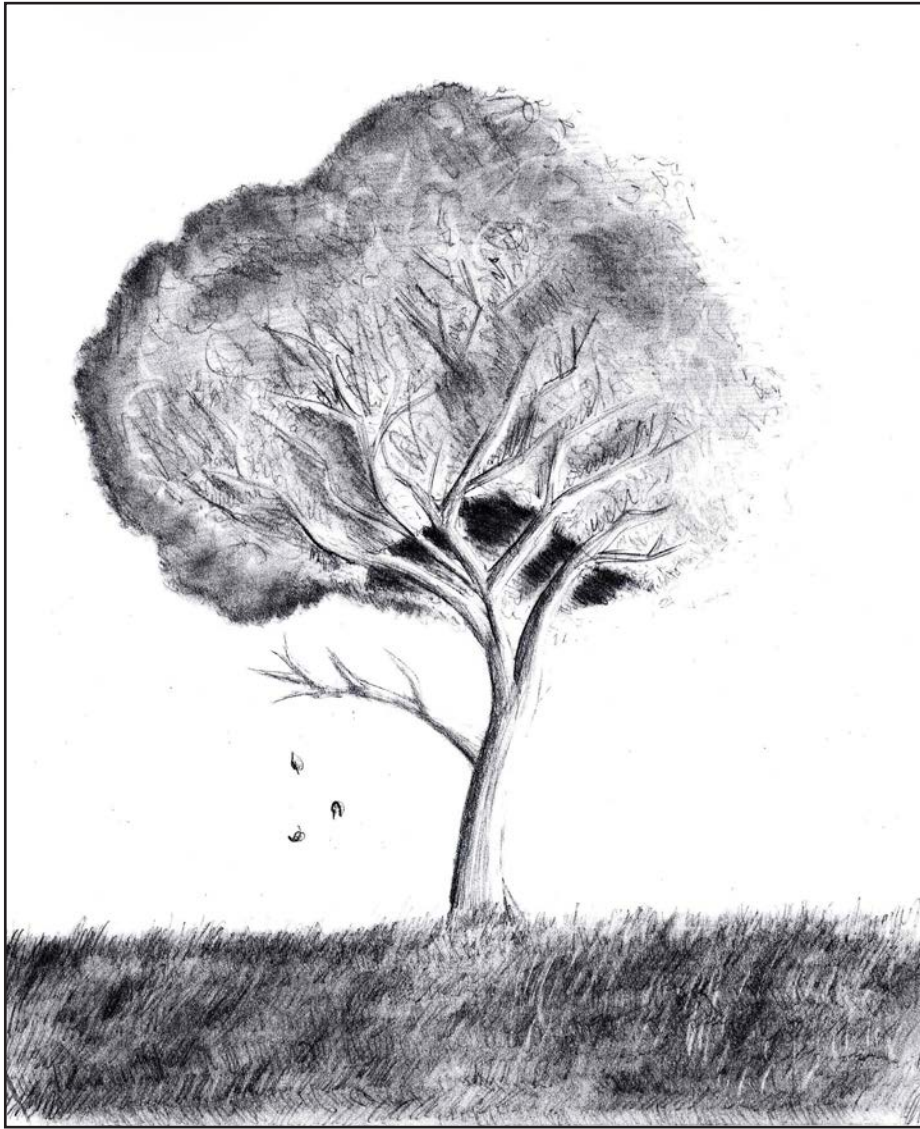
(now read from bottom to top)

John Behr '18
1st place freshman poetry



Life's Journey

Jacob Senkewicz '17



Change from Serenity

Adekunle Balogun '16

The Pianist

Mr. Hartford was a pianist by trade and for all his life he could recall concert after concert. Now he felt that he was at his last one. He was very old and everyday he could feel his strength withering away and his joints stiffening. He could still remember when he first took to the piano. When he was small he attended a dinner where he took great notice of the music playing. It was unlike anything he had ever heard. But at one point he noticed the man playing the piano had left and it was now unattended. The temptation was too much, so the young boy snuck away to the wonderful instrument. There he sat himself upon the bench and proceeded to make a harsh sound, trying to recreate the pianist's song. He was only stopped by his parents, who later decided to send him to lessons. His concerts soon followed.

Those times were over. He could no longer play longer pieces or heavy chords, but Mr. Hartford was set on making this last performance his greatest. He walked onto the stage and carefully adjusted the bench to the right distance and sat down in the center. He placed his feet on the pedals and stretched his arms. As he waited for the applause to subside, he struggled to recall his first concert. Mr. Hartford was a younger man then. He had practiced for days on end and had been so nervous that he was afraid that his hands would be too jittery to play. Soothing himself, he had said, "I will be fine" over and over. He had to play a piece by J.S. Bach. As he began that first time, all his fears slowly melted away and he blended into the piece almost as if he were in a dream. At the end of that piece he received a standing ovation. From then on he performed concert after concert, recreating that great feeling between the music, the musician, and the listener.

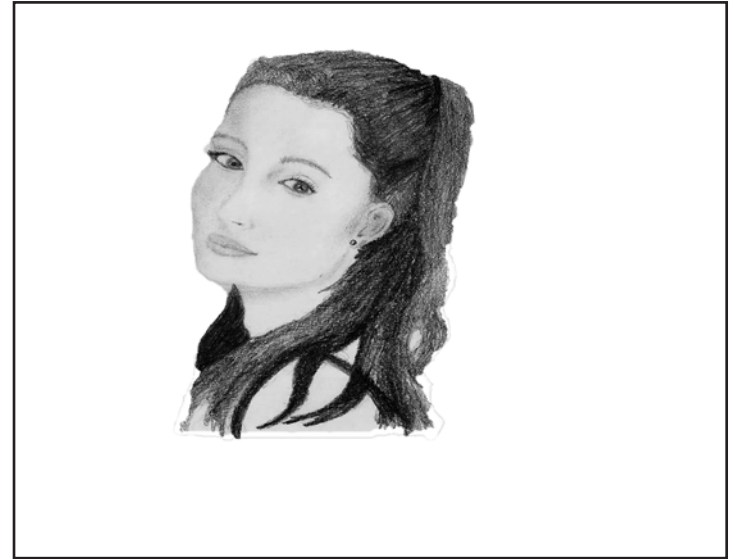
As he began his current concert he felt his joints creak and his heart race, but Mr. Hartford did not care. He played this piece, the piece that began it all, with all the emotion he had. He played the music beautifully and flawlessly. It seemed to ease the pains of his body as he played. His arms were flying across the keyboard and his feet were tapping to the rhythm. Then, as suddenly as his piece had begun, it had ended. He held the last note to preserve his last song as long as possible, but it faded away like a setting sun. The audience applauded and stood to give a standing ovation. As Mr. Hartford stood, he felt a sharp pain in his chest. He clutched his chest and his vision blurred. At that moment, Mr. Hartford knew it was his time. He grabbed the piano and gave a final bow, his farewell to the world, and then sat down again. Then there was a crash of notes as Mr. Hartford collapsed on them. In those moments, he felt something he could not explain, a sense of completion and yet a sense of loss. However, he, at his core, was very content. He led a good life and died doing what he loved. Many men have died regretful of their lives, but there was Mr. Hartford, dead upon the piano with a deeply content smile.

Henry Schaeffer '18

Decisions, Decisions

Oh how am I expected to select.
One, sweet and caring, she is charming, cute;
The second, like the devil but perfect.
Oh what am I to do, for I'm not astute.
One is relaxed, the second resolute.
And which is more attractive inwardly?
Oh vanity, impede the damned dispute.
Alas, this rigid choice can damage me
If I decide, and choose impulsively.
For sure, the vixen will induce distress,
But will her pleasures be her golden key?
Oh I beseech this; my result is best.
Prevent a choice of lustful, youthful haste,
And grant an outcome that displays good taste.

Nicholas Castagno '15



Ariana Grande



Alicia Keys

Julien X. Greene '15



Beowulf's Victory

Michael Sabella '16

The End of Death

The spectral image of Death appeared in front of the last man who was left alive. It had only been a week since the man's entire village was wiped out by a great storm, leaving him alone. During his week of solitude, all the man did was crawl on his hands and knees in search of proof that there could be another living thing on Earth, but he quickly realized his search was pointless from the moment he began it. He had just begun taking his first break from searching in hours when Death had finally appeared to him. Death's eyes, as dark as onyx and as cold as a winter's night, stared impassively at the man as if he was just another problem that needed solving. Death walked slowly and steadily towards the man as he lay still against a large rock. The man didn't flinch or even pretend to be surprised when he saw Death appear, since he had been expecting it for days.

"Ah, I've been waiting you," the man began as if they were old friends reuniting. "This must mean that I am really the last one alive doesn't it?" Death continued to move steadily towards the man, ignoring him. Only when Death arrived in front of him did the man begin speaking again.

"Are you quite sure that I really am?" the man asked, keeping his friendly tone but wearing no smile to support it. Wordlessly, Death raised his skeletal arm and brought it down, suddenly stopping mere inches from the man's neck.

"Are you positive about this?" he asked. The man was overtaken by fear but his words came out more confident than ever before.

"If you kill me and I am truly the last living thing on Earth what will become of you? What good are you if death has ended?" Seeing that Death wasn't going to reply he continued. "Are you sure that you want to strike me down with that scythe of yours if it would result in the end of life? I will ask you one last time. Are you, the almighty grim reaper known as 'Death,' prepared to reap my soul and bring about the end of death?"

Unflinchingly Death lowered his scythe to the man's shuddering body and released two souls at once from the worldly shackles that bound them for so long.

Luke Callaghan '18
1st place freshman fiction

Technology is Dumbing Us Down

The advances in technology over the last two decades have increased our reliance on technology. Technology has given us many things that make our lives easier: computers that can perform complex math for us, phones that enable us to communicate over long-distances, and airplanes that allow us to travel all over the world. However, we have to be aware that we are approaching a point where we might become over-reliant on technology. The simplest of actions such as driving, browsing through a dictionary, and basic physical exercise could soon become quaint memories if we continue the acceleration towards over-reliance on technology. I agree that many of these activities are not essential to daily life and technology may be doing us a favor in these instances. However, it is through these simple actions that we stimulate our brain and enable ourselves to continue to develop and expand our knowledge.

Advances in communication and transportation technologies, exemplified by the ubiquitous smartphone and the ever increasing levels of automation found in our cars have continued to inhibit the development of our social and intellectual skills compared to past generations. Prime examples that have contributed to this include “Siri”, the artificial intelligence on iPhones, texting, and the situation of driving an old car without sensors versus a new car with them. Smartphones have surpassed basic parameters of a phone by tracking activity and biometric data while new sensors and security have made driving cars much safer than it was in the past. The process of technology dumbing us down continues its insidious progress.

Popular forms of entertainment such as TV and video games provide us with unique entertainment compared to the past. However, when they are used too much, one gains absolutely nothing from them since they teach almost nothing! Instead, they only serve to make the individual dumber. We get hurt the most when we rely solely on technology to force feed us our entertainment.

The technology that has been produced for the last couple of decades has created a rapidly changing world. We are moving at a much faster pace than in the past. As a result, the youth of today are barely keeping up with the pace of change, while those from past generations are being left behind by this changing world along with the accumulated wisdom of the human race embodied in them. This is why it is even more important for us to not become over-reliant on technology. We have to accommodate those who have the knowledge to help us. It is the key to avoiding the creation of a dumbed down population.

Jason Manuel '18

1st place freshman nonfiction



Ferris Wheel, Budapest

Mr. G. Milligan

The Underdog's Tale & Prologue

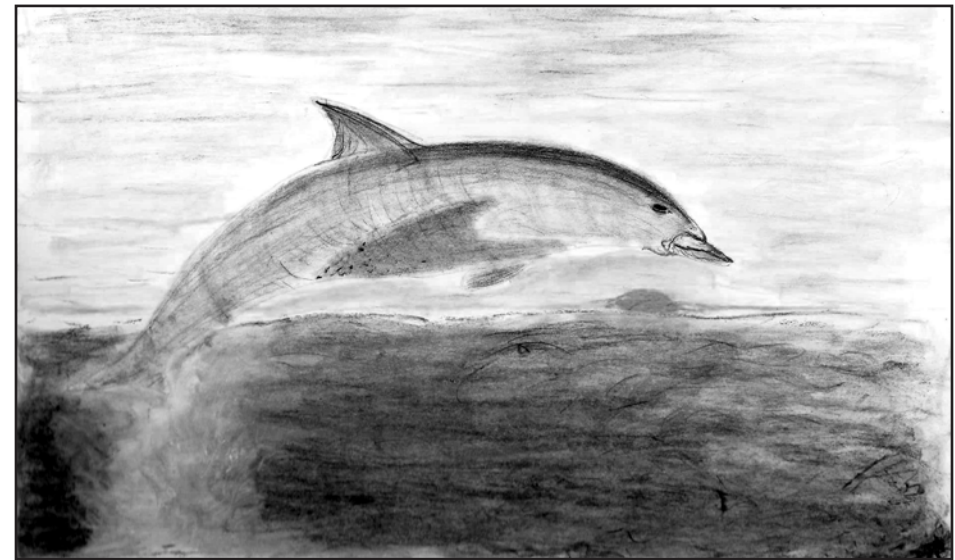
A Canterbury Tale Parody

I am good enough, he thought. *I can prove them wrong, and I will.* The old bus rattled along the endless highway as members of a high school baseball team entertained themselves after a recent victory. However, one player had suffered a devastating loss: a degradation of spirit. Though nimbly built, he was "too small;" though smarter than his teammates, he was still "too small." Meanwhile, towards the front of the bus, the Coach, Pitcher, Bus Driver, and Athletic Director sat perched like peacocks, telling pompous stories of glorious past triumphs. The Pitcher arrogantly turned to face this teammate and sneered mockingly, "I bet you have nothin' to say." Sensing yet another spiteful challenge, this Underdog began a tale with the determination and perseverance of a long distance runner.

A year ago, I read a tale:
A man determined to prevail
Survived against all odds and still
Remained unbroken in his will.
In childhood, he was troublesome.
He stole and robbed, let hardships come
To compensate for his small size.
But then to everyone's surprise
Young Lou began to leap and stride
And on the track built up his pride.
The Zamperini name became
Renowned with world Olympic fame.
He worked to set the one-mile best
Until Pearl Harbor stopped his quest.
When drafted to the Air Force Corps
To fight in the Pacific war,
His plane crashed in the ocean blue
Just one year after forty-two.
Through shark filled seas, in doldrums haze
The life raft sailed o'er forty days,
Then drifted onto hostile lands,
And fell in brutal captors' hands.
They held him in a prison cell,
A solitary earthen hell.
They took a belt and smashed his face
And mocked and taunted to disgrace.
They beat his legs and broke his feet.
His spirit they aimed to defeat.
A body withering to the bone,
Unbroken soul, life's point unknown.

Then freedom came in forty-five,
A miracle for those alive.
But two long years that felt like nine
Had dearly cost heart, soul, and mind.
The daily toll destroyed a life.
He drank, he fought, abused his wife.
In agony each day prolonged;
Turned to the Lord to make him strong.
Through life Lou raced straight up a hill
And finished with unbroken will.

Lucas Pick '16



Explore

Javon Hicks '15

Our Prayer

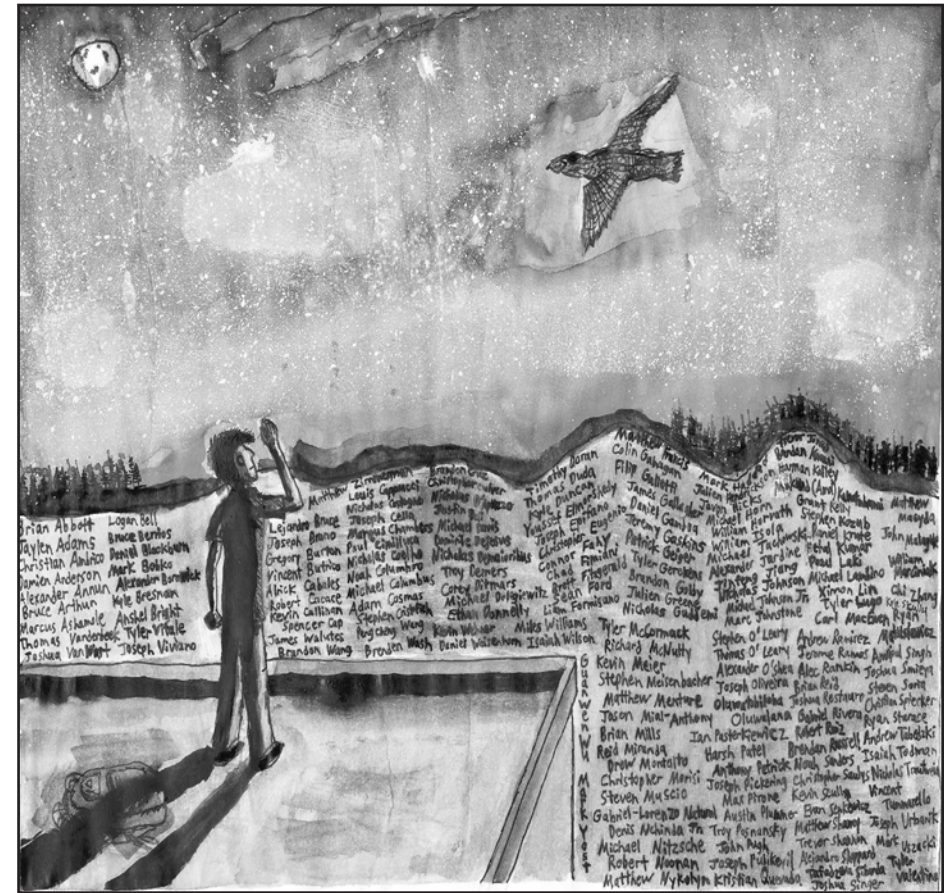
Though I must have passed it countless times throughout my four years here, it was only recently, as I began at last to comprehend the rapid approach of my final days as a St. Joe's student, that I came to understand that one powerful, yet often unnoticed, image that hangs so prominently upon our library wall. In it, I see that elusive, confusing, and at times clichéd standard by which we are called to live as students of St. Joseph High School. In it, I see the *St. Joe's Way*.

The painting, Arnold Friberg's *Prayer at Valley Forge*, depicts a moving scene from one of the most crucial periods of our nation's history – the winter encampment at Valley Forge. There, the soldiers of the fledgling Continental Army suffered through brutal weather and freezing cold that tested their very will to survive. In that place, more and more men were dying or deserting the cause each day. Yet, in that dark and desperate moment, George Washington, by far the most powerful man in the newborn nation, chose to kneel down in the snow to pray for the survival of his men and for the strength to lead them through such a crisis. Friberg depicts this moment majestically in the painting and, in doing so, illustrates what I have come to believe are the three crucial qualities required of leadership – genuine concern, sense of duty, and humility.

In Friberg's work, the General's true care and concern for his men and, through them, the citizens of the new nation as a whole is made evident in his prayer. That care for his countrymen is exactly what set Washington apart from so many of the monarchs of old and made him such a beloved authority figure. In addition, Washington's sense of duty and responsibility to those who entrusted him with the power to lead, exemplified in his prayer for their survival, demonstrates his dedication to the common good and his ability to rise above his own personal pride and ambitions. By kneeling low on the forest floor and calling upon a Higher Power for guidance and aid, Washington also displays the humility and reverence necessary to be a magnanimous leader.

As I prepare with nervous anticipation for the next stage of my life, I have taken the time to reflect on my experiences these past four years. Through it all, I believe my time here has been defined, as it has for so many others, by my own personal search for that important and mysterious *St. Joe's Way*. Repeated regularly, yet never explicitly defined, the concept seems as though it must be found and interpreted by each student in his own time. It is for that reason that *Prayer at Valley Forge* has become so much more than a simple artistic representation of a historical figure to me. In Washington's humble and hopeful prayer, I see a man, a leader, firmly dedicated to the service of God and others and that, I feel, is the true embodiment of the *St. Joe's Way*.

Liam Formisano '15



The Names Found
at the End of a Lost Time

Michael Lambino '15

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.

Dedication

This year's *Vignette* is dedicated to Br. Michael Yerkes, S.C.,
a dedicated supporter of all things St. Joe's.

Vignette Extras



Please scan the QR code on the left to view additional *Vignette* pieces, including videos, audio, and color photographs. You can also access the files by visiting www.stjoes.org and then clicking the *Vignette* link within the Clubs & Activities page.

Colophon

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

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The cover was designed by Thomas Valenti '16. Folios were designed by the *Vignette* staff.

The magazine was printed by Yes Press, Inc. with a press run of 1,000 copies. It is comprised of 91 pages using a 5.5 x 8.5 inch format.

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

Vignette Awards

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"
2003:	ASPA - "Second Place"
2002:	ASPA - "First Place"
2001:	ASPA - "First Place"

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