



Student Art & Writing • Aquinas College

# Sampler **XXIII**

Spring 2011

## Acknowledgments

Front cover (oil on canvas):

*Watching Him Shave at the Sink* . . . . . Margaret J. Schmitz

Back cover (photography):

*The Trees Warm Roots* . . . . . Owen Fifield

Art selection/Photographs of selections . . . . . Dana Freeman

Manuscript selection:

*Faculty:* Dr. Daniel Brooks, Dr. Brent Chesley, Dr. Rebecca Coogan,  
Dr. Michelle DeRose, Gary Eberle, Lynnea Page-Jenkins,  
Vicki McMillan

*LIT members:* Allison Ferguson, Andrea Grant, Audrey Genautis,  
Lindy Hernandez, Jarrod Irwin, Lauren Folkes, Karen Mannino,  
Rachael Pinero, Samantha Rinkus, Jennifer VanderSlik,  
Ingrid Wolf

Winning poem judge . . . . . Robert Fanning

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Organizing assistant . . . . . Annie Cooley (LIT member)

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## **Sampler Twenty-Three**

A compilation of writing and visual art by Aquinas College students.  
(Grand Rapids, Michigan), Spring 2011

### **Contributors**

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#### **Writers**

Danielle Alexander, Alecia Alvair, Caitlin Bailey, Rian Bosse, Sarah Branz, Jeff Brems, Lauren Carlson (Hines), Stuart Clapp, Alex Clemons, Paris Close, Shelby Denhof, Taylor Divine, Allison Ferguson, Stephanie Giluk, Tiffany Goetz, Samuel Granger, Mary Guild, Robert Hartley, Laura Hartness, Lindy Hernandez, Kristen Hurst, Jarrod Irwin, Michelle Joynt, Tim Krauss, Jessica Lamb, Emily Lenhard, Erin Lilly, Erin Lodes, Robert Luebke, Karen Mannino, Anna Matthews, Duncan McCargar, Jessica McCormick, Erica Meyers, Rachel Pineiro, Michelle Plumstead, Brian Rabourn, Wesley Raynal, Samantha Rinkus, Monica Rischiotto, Nicholle Robertson, Jacob Sabourin, Jordan Sarchett, Monique Smith, Jennifer Totzke, Josh Veal, Paul Wizniuk, Ingrid Wolf, Asa Woodbeck



GHOST PONY – white ink wash & charcoal  
*Jamie C. Collister, Senior*

## Lunacy

I wake to the swish and sweep of the ocean  
outside the bedroom window and reach out for you,  
finding a low tide seabed where you slept, or feigned  
sleep, so briefly. Again, she has stolen you away.  
Siren, seductress. Cold celestial changeling.

Her gossamer light silks over you and spills  
contemptuously across my lap. I watch you  
stare, moonstruck, at her round,  
full bodice, waiting for her to begin  
her slow, seductive, strip tease. Temptress—

femme fatale, Mata Hari. You forget, she steals  
time and light, and in the end, reveals  
nothing. Again and again. Long ago, you said to me,  
*I'll give you the stars.* Seize me,  
the moon and I will swallow her whole.

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

"Lunacy" by Laura Hartness, Senior

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

The final judge was Robert Fanning who is the author of *American Prophet* (Marick Press, 2009), *The Seed Thieves* (Marick Press, 2006) and *Old Bright Wheel* (Ledge Press Poetry Award 2003). His poems have appeared in *Poetry*, *Ploughshares*, *Shenandoah*, *The Atlanta Review*, *The Cortland Review*, and other journals. An Assistant Professor of Creative Writing at Central Michigan University, Fanning's writing awards include a Creative Artist Grant from ArtServe Michigan, the Inkwell Poetry Award, and the Foley Poetry Award. For further information, visit [www.robertfanning.com](http://www.robertfanning.com).

*Robert Fanning's comments about Laura Hartness' poem follow.*

The poem *Lunacy*, with its layered and apt title, its engaging lyricism and charged diction, begins its sonic ebb and flow with the first line's alternating iambs and anapests, and lalts and plunges, carrying us forward into its sea. This poem works as all good poems do--at the level of the ear: it is a deluge of internal rhyme, and the eye: its imagery creates a sense both clear and mysterious. The narrative in this poem of address is fraught with passion, as the speaker tries to keep their lover from another's light--an age-old story that has another gravity here, as one point in this love triangle is the moon. This poem delights and entralls on several readings--and that too, speaks to its pull--on the ear, the eye, the heart of the reader.



Laura Hartness

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

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

Honorable Mention  
Academy of American Poetry  
Contest for Colleges and Universities

Birth  
by Kristen Hurst

*Robert Fanning's comments about Kristen Hurst's poem follow.*

The poem *Birth* is an unlikely success: a persona piece from the perspective of one soon to be born. Such a subject seems fraught with danger for the poet, but the poem manages to be quite moving--with its repetitions and refrains, with its simple voice, its subtle turns, and the startling last line. To consider the consciousness of this tiny being--of us all--as we waited within our own clearings of "tangled limbs / Shadows and dark--" is haunting and deeply *ceaselessly* amazing.



TEA WITH DAPHNI – clay  
Chelsea Lanning, Senior

## Birth

I have come this far,  
I am breathless.  
I smell the sweetness of the dark earth.

A brief moment of respite;  
a clearing of the mind.

I do not know where I have been  
nor where I am going--  
just forward, no looking back.

I am here, now, in this clearing.

The path narrows just beyond the tangled limbs.  
Shadows and dark—  
then light.  
A ceaseless pattern.

But I am here, now in this clearing.

I cannot see what lies beyond  
the crooked elbow-hand-fingers  
beckoning me to  
come,  
come.

And I wait; here, in this clearing.

I am safe and warm in this primitive place.  
I pause before the final push—

*-Kristen Hurst, Junior*

## Breathing in Innocence

Years ago, I,  
a child of idealism and youth,  
stood in the middle of a forest, that was  
neither my home nor my secret fortress.  
I stood encircled in the arms of the trees  
covered in leaves, whispering  
come here

here

here.

The golden leaves surfed on the wind,  
cascading to their destiny in a  
dreamy dance of  
tumbles

swirls

golden reverie.

Birds in their nests  
sang out over the forest,  
full of the hope of those who can fly.  
I stood below  
my blue eyes tilted to the skies,  
my ears open only to their songs,  
trying desperately to forget  
my own fate, cemented to the ground.

I wanted to  
fly

fly

fly

up into the cotton candy clouds,  
past the lemon-drop sun,  
into a galaxy of goodness.

I wanted to nestle my fingers between the feathers of a  
great golden eagle  
and let him take me wherever he wished,  
so long as our destination was up  
in the world that thrived  
above my head.



Alas, I,  
a child growing up,  
losing innocence, and  
graying around her rose-colored glasses,  
cannot fly.  
I cannot ride on eagles as though they are my play-things,  
but, instead,  
must let them soar around me,  
caressed by wind who is always their friend.  
My fate is different,  
somewhat more grounded,  
yet still full of the idealism of youth  
that I will  
never  
                  never  
                                  never  
                  lose.

- *Jordan Sarchett, Freshman*



UNTITLED – terra cotta  
*Chrissy Maziarz, Senior*

## Neurotoxic

Extracting venom from a serpent  
is simple  
press its face  
softly  
fangs sink into  
a vile  
and catharsis happens.  
A catharsis  
of poison.  
But a woman has  
no fangs  
that one can see  
and she can only  
hold it in  
until  
her body tingles with  
its potency  
till out her pores  
the venom pours  
and searing eyes  
and silent cries  
and she's found coiled  
on the floor.

- Rachel Pineiro, Senior



SELF-PORTRAIT – linoleum woodcut  
Samantha DeStefano, Junior

## 5AM

I remember you in that sea foam dress.

We'd had this conversation before,  
sitting on your hardwood kitchen floor.

It was five o' clock in the morning  
and we could barely hear the birds chirping  
over your endless laughter.

We spent the whole night  
acting as if we were high school kids after prom.

I remember the hint of alcohol still on your breath  
when you pressed your full lips against mine  
and it felt like the very first time,  
the first night we ever spent together.

With half lit eyes I stared at your eyes still closed  
as you passionately kissed me.

Gently pulling away, I stroked the petals of your hair  
like wild orchids.

You were agonizingly beautiful in your imperfection.

With the stems of your legs draped across me,  
you were my exhausted prom queen,  
my wilted rose.

Feet tired and dangling, you fell asleep.

Your heels were by the front door  
where you kicked them off.

- *Monique Smith, Sophomore*



AS PERENNIAL AS THE GRASS – oil on canvas  
*Margaret J. Schmitz, Senior*

### **War Symphony**

*in response to viewing "As Perennial as the Grass" by Margaret J. Schmitz*

War drags on in a place I know  
little of on the other side of this planet  
I believe we are meant to share. Violence  
continues as bodies burn and blood pours out.  
The meaning of war is lost on me; its insanity is not.  
My heart is broken. My soul aches for the others  
over there. For while echoing in their ears are the  
terrorizing sounds of war – mortar fire, artillery bursts,  
explosions, air raid sirens, and low flying jets overhead –  
I sit here comfortably in a darkened symphony hall  
listening to the tragically haunting sounds  
and brutal genius of Shostakovich;  
imagining the conductor's baton like a bayonet  
stabbing at the heart of anyone unlike ourselves.

*- Robert Luebke, Junior*

## Lingerie

*by Jessica McCormick, Freshman*

We were all ready for bed and in our pajamas with our teeth brushed and stuffed animals tucked securely under our arms and we were waiting for Daddy to come in and tell us goodnight because we would never sleep without that and a story because we were only four years old and Erica was lying in her bed and talking to the friends who lived inside of her head and I was frustrated even to the point of crying because I couldn't see these friends that lived in her imagination but wanted to be involved with her life and didn't understand how she could be so lonely or hateful as to make friends without me and we were best friends and worst enemies so naturally our room was a mess because we couldn't not fight long enough to get it cleaned up and Daddy came in to say goodnight and he was really angry with the mess and we scooted to the edge of the bed that was by the wall where he had less of a chance of reaching us and we hid as he picked up each and every object that lay scattered across the floor and asked what it was and where it belonged and what it was and where it belonged and what it was and where it belonged and what it was and we knew he was about to lose it because he just kept picking up random pieces of jewelry and clothing and toys and little girl stuff and each time he got more and more and more and more and more angry and finally the last thing that Daddy picked up was my little pink lacey nightgown and he held it up to display to us and said in his super-duper-angry-Daddy voice "what's this?! Trash items!?" and finally I had a streak of boldness and innocence and humour and sweetness and I sat up on the bed and scooted forward with a big ol' little kid grin across my face.

"No, silly Daddy," I replied with a smirk, "actually, it's called lingerie."

## Red Ribbons

by *Tim Krauss, Senior*

**Here come old flattop he come grooving up slowly** like he's got nothing to do but sit there, eyeing us heathens. We come up to his castle, all ten stories of it, with our clove cigarettes and Allen Ginsberg pamphlets. Once we've mounted the parking garage—no megaphone but height and the physics of sound—it's not poetry we really want, it's rock and roll. So we yell "I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness, starving hysterical naked, dragging themselves through the negro streets..." I turn to Mike as the energy dissipates, "We probably shouldn't have said that part about negroes." He bursts out laughing in his high to low pitched belly laugh. He brings his hand up to his face, showing slight worry through the laughter. His wild 18-year-old eyes and unkempt appearance are a neon advertisement for our cause against the night sky.

I feel a longing for homeless adventures with nothing but a rucksack and my wits. Maybe not mine. Maybe someone else's wits, like Kerouac's—if I could have them. But I don't know where they are and I haven't looked for them. I won't look because I have a warm bed in a middle-class home and my dreams. I feel fulfilled enough by the bravery it takes for a neurotic boy to yell down at a city. I would later find out that Kerouac died depressed and an alcoholic.

We're taking turns now and its mine so I face the light pollution khaki glow and yell:

### **I HAVE! Red riBbons red riBbons tied around my hemispheric emptiness**

that stands in a coffee shop in East Lansing, Michigan ('old flattop' right across the street). I with electric ideas that blow my hair about. I with at least momentarily exuberant youth in the seasick journey of emotions that is my life. Will I want to die tomorrow? I don't know.

I am here attempting to convey my young angst and artistic essence to the audience of college students, washed up middle-aged poets and musicians who have nothing better to do than attend an open mic night. We all buy hot drinks and muffins.

One man—long salt and pepper dreadlocks hanging over his guitar—plays a garden variety folk song. He's billing himself incorrectly. He should be protesting something like the endless war on this planet or the prohibition of weed.

Other people take the stage: angry poetry of lost love, sad poetry of lost

love, poetry of loneliness, poetry of feminist ambition, poetry of nature with metaphors that don't make sense. I'm eighteen; I smile and clap at it all—why would I say anything? I, too, long for the likely hollow praise.

Mike and I take the stage and I have “red ribbons.” As I rant about Kerouac, alcohol, cigarettes, artistic insecurity and other things I don't really understand, I imagine that I am doing something original—or at least engaging.

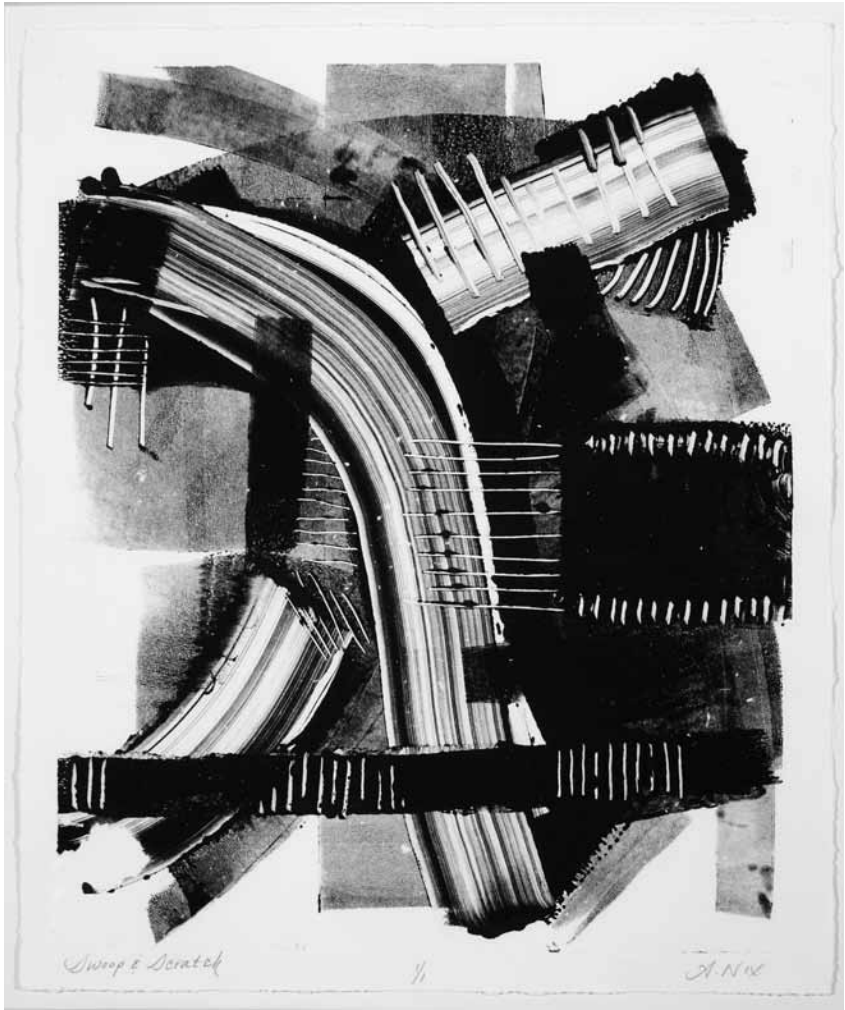
**I HAVE! RED RIB-BONS RED Rye Bones tied inside my belly and I stain those rye bones—those ribbons they—tie me around me. they tie me—into being. red ribbons. they has me.** And I use 'em like floss or fashion accessories. Swallow one end and make it come out my nose or eyes.

These ribbons, I don't want them; they tie my guts in knots. They make me cry. But when they catch fire I feel like the son of god **with eyes that pass the ribbons of the air—have passed over and through (though more slowly) like the sculpting ribbons of god, like his giant cylinder sifter that dips in and takes (leaving crater like caved in spidertrap).**

I am playing a beat character. I point and flail my arms as though this all means something. It has a rhythm and a force I have imbued it with but it is mock slam poetry (for I am too self-conscious to pull straight from my brain, like undressing oneself of ideas in public).

Mike, beside me, plays “expressionistic air guitar” and head bangs to accompany my reading, his mass of red-brown curls flailing. And while this may be the main reason the audience accepts us and praises us, it doesn't bother me because for the moment I feel like a real artist.





SCRATCH & SWOOP – monoprint  
Allison Nix, Senior



## Ivory

Hunched over the StraightAsAnArrow spine  
You assess the vertebrae with your fingertips  
The first chord you strike is haunting, almost sinister  
But you look like a pro, sturdy and rigid

Your body ends at your wrists  
And your fingers become the keys  
The low boom of your left hand gives the body  
For your melodious right hand, as it tickles the black and whites

Eyes darting, head cocking to follow along  
The music is your map  
Your guide from heavenly highs to hells lows  
Everywhere in between

Light and airy are your hands  
As they massage the spiny keyboard  
Like spiders on a playground  
Your hands cross to keep.. in.. time..

*- Jeff Brems, Senior*

## A Heart Adrift

I carry my Heart in a black wool coat,  
Through the white whirling of Winter  
As it beats warmth,  
Thawing frozen souls  
Trudging trenches through the snow,  
Teeth speaking with chattering,  
Clenching palms with frigid fingers.

*. . . and so this Heart thaws and thumps.*

Like that spindly black Branch, naked and lonely,  
Who writes weakly on the winds  
The story of his glory  
As it leaves him every Fall.  
These days, he sways  
Clothed and glowing  
As Winter weaves him a wool of snow.

*. . . and so this Heart wishes warmth.*

Singing, like that Icicle, passionate and longing,  
Chasing after his own dropped tears  
Prayers falling  
Down  
To build the other.  
She rises up to kiss him  
As he exclaims, "O Ice of my ice!"

*. . . and so this Heart prays and hopes.*

Lend those hands in your lap  
To the reaching and crying  
Preaching and prying  
Of this Heart.

For bears and squirrels have fur to warm them in frosted days,  
Where flakes tickle and tease almost numb cheeks  
While a lake's skirt freezes into a flying fringe along the shore  
Where a stream slows and trickles t e d i o u s l y along the trail . . .

*. . . as the cold wind breathes.*

And so I am adrift  
With this Heart  
Molded to be held not in

The red-brown whiskers of beards  
Tattered sweaters with fraying sleeves  
Dark recesses of black wool coats  
Nor the fragile flesh of my chest.

But born to crackle  
Warm and loved  
In the hearth of your hands.

*- Samuel Granger, Senior*



### **A Driving Lesson in 55 Words**

“You’re gonna have to tell her.”

“I will... Later.”

“No you won’t.”

“I will, Sadie.”

“Riiight, Jessica.”

The sisters, seven and sixteen, stood in front of the formerly flawless Ford Taurus.

“Maybe mom won’t notice the dent?” mused Jessica.

“She will. It’s shaped just like the neighbor’s golden retriever,” said Sadie.

“Poor Blondie,” sighed Jessica.

*- Allison Ferguson, Senior*

## Ζήλος [zēlos]

A figure stands poised atop the Grand Staircase.  
Dressed in the purest of silver-blue silk which—nearly white—shimmers as if  
faery dust.  
Hematite adorns the boning of the corset and graces her earlobes and neck.  
Skin cold as ice, ringlets cold blue-black like a raven, and lips stained a rich ripe  
plum, she steps down the stairs slowly.  
Her hand caresses towering marble Greek pillars with nails longer than a mortal's.  
She walks across the floor, heels silent as if padded paws.  
Crystal ice blue eyes. Gleaming ivory teeth. Painted silver nails. Perfect.

*Except...*

Ζήλος is a vain creature just like her Lustful sister, Πορνεία [*porneia*]. Ζήλος  
shimmers as if a silver winter fox, wearing her silver faery dust oozing hubris.  
Slinking now into the column's shadow, Ζήλος prowls along the edge to spot her  
prey—her Man.  
For she has met him, just last night, and she acted a perfect angel.  
Soft spoken, manipulating whispers and smiles to weave her way into his heart.  
She sees him there—preens then grins—and starts to strut over.

*That is*

Until her prey links arms with another woman.  
She is not:  
Prettier than Ζήλος.  
Nor sweeter.  
Or more soft spoken.

Ζήλος doesn't understand why.  
Why she is left in the dust.  
Why she is forgotten.  
Why she is ignored.  
Why she is replaced.

*Hate*

Anger ignites and smolders in her core.  
Eyes once ice, crack and blaze amber.  
Ringlets once cold now crackle and spark.  
Silver nails sharpen to ebony, ivory files to fangs, lips snarl garnet.

### *Fury*

Furious Ζήλος becomes true.  
Gown silver and ice no more, nor gait smooth and poised.  
Shedding cool silver fur, the voracious rich burning scarlet unveils.  
Fire-Autumn vulpes replaces Silver-Winter vixen.  
Tail thrashes to and fro—bleeding red—permits anger to smoke and burn.

Ζήλος, full of Envy, darts back to the marble columns to seethe within the shadows of her cousin φθόνος [*invidia*].

### *Fur bristles and swells*

She does not understand, seething among shadows, why a mortal creature so below her standing snares her prey.

Why Men leave her standing in the dust.  
Why Men never stay with her for long.  
Why Men never remember her.  
Why Men never give her attention.  
Why Men replace her.  
Why she is forgotten.  
Why she is ignored.  
Why she is replaced.

Her constant need for praise and touch overwhelm mortal Men.  
Ζήλος curses her replacement.  
Fire fur refuses to settle silver.

### *Jealousy*

- Michelle Joynt, *Sophomore*

## I Just Want Six Seconds

(for Todd)

I just want six seconds where I do not think of you coursing through my veins, destroying me, and wrecking me from the inside out. I just want six seconds because I don't know myself without you, since you, since I took the plunge, since the flash, since the rush. You have destroyed me. You have destroyed my brothers. Killed and made dead. Strong men have been made dead by you. Hopeful men have been brought to their knees; left wasting, diseased, made disgusting by you; by your appeal of freedom, anarchy, liberation. I just want six seconds. I just want six seconds in the morning where I am not mourning the loss of you. I want my friends back. I want my freedom restored to a time before I knew you. I just want six seconds to tell him no. I just want six seconds of soft skin that I can touch without feeling cold. I just want six seconds where I am not sweating, or crying, or spun out searching for the next one, or worse, for a gun. You are in my blood. I want you out. I just want six seconds of the euphoria before those euphoric heights. I just want six seconds before zombie-land, before you stole my life. I just want six seconds free from paranoia, fear, loneliness. I just want six seconds before you took my soul. I just want six seconds before I got on this long and terrible ride. I just want six seconds  
I just want six seconds.  
I just want six seconds.

- Robert Luebke, Junior



UNTITLED – terra cotta, oils  
Leah Kellie, Junior

## A Sip and a Smoke

You are like coffee  
or tobacco.

I may have kissed you long ago,  
but your taste still lingers in my mouth,  
and your scent wafts from my moustache  
as my lips lay swollen from remembered smiles.

I know I can't go into public  
and talk for hours  
with you  
coating my teeth and  
lingering in my breath.

I could try  
and brush our memories,  
laughs, kisses, and love,  
off my soul, while saying  
"That was then"  
in order to present  
a shining smile and minty breath:  
a *tabula rasa* to meet  
these faceless crowds  
who cannot understand.

I just want to  
recline by my bedroom window  
with the toothbrush  
precariously perched  
on a distant sink  
as I slowly  
sip my coffee and  
smoke my tobacco,  
while politely saying  
with most fragrant breath,

"To hell with 'em."

- Samuel Granger, Senior

## Dreaming

*by Stuart Clapp, Junior*

Dreaming.

Or nightmaring—whatever you want to call it. Whatever it is I am aware that it isn't real. I can't really explain why, but I know it isn't. In my dream I just see someone watching me. It isn't anyone special, but definitely someone I don't know. The eyes are dilated, staring straight at me. I am helpless staring back; the nightmare does not give me the details of why but only a small barrier between us exists. The face is a man who hasn't shaved or bathed in some time, and most of the details are distorted in the dark, but I can see he has terrible teeth, crooked, overlapping and stained yellow. I look in his eyes, dark, distorted, and I feel uncertainty. Uncertainty for me about what this face has intended for me. Uncertain about the red drip on his lips and the dark glisten in his eye when he stares at me through the barrier that is between us. And as he reaches for me, he is able to stretch through the barrier and black shapes flash all around me—waking me up from my nightmare.

Sitting up in my bed and trembling, I turn and look out my window. It is a simple window with glass separated into six equal panes. I have begun to realize that I was dreaming and that I am safe in my bed—alone. I stare out my window for confirmation and see the pine trees, my willow tree weeping and swaying in the night breeze, my snowball bushes reflecting the breeze and the grass in the open spaces of my yard in the dark. Everything is shapes and shadows in the dark. No new shapes have appeared so I rest easy.

But something is out of place. There is no sound. No crickets chirping. No owls hooting. No coyotes howling. No chipmunks or squirrels quarreling. No birds singing. Just the breeze blowing and the empty spaces between its breaths. Where is the other life that makes ambiance for me to sleep with?

A shadow moves. Something large shifts behind the willow tree. It slides back behind. I think it saw me see it. It dashes to the next closest tree. And does the same thing behind this tree, bobs out and looks at my window and then bobs back. Now it runs to a tree behind that one. My full attention is now on this tree, because I cannot tell if I am dreaming or sleeping. Bobs out and stares for a few seconds and this time it waves. It isn't a friendly sort of wave, but almost like a drowning man's wave. There is stillness again. I have no track of time because my heart is racing now. It steps out in full view, even though it is still dark in the shadows. I can now tell that it is a man.

It now has abandoned any attempts it had before at subtlety and sprints crazily with arms flailing to the edge of my property tree line disappearing from my sight. I want to call the police, but my phone is not on my nightstand. I am alone. The night is reduced to silence and shadows now. No breeze is blowing.



I check my window and it is locked. My bedroom door is shut. Nothing has triggered an alarm or woken anyone else. Again, out the window nothing is stirring now. Was I dreaming? Hallucinating? Did I drink something bad or have a taste of spoiled meat? Maybe I saw nothing.

Now I can't help but watch out the window. Where did the figure go? Was it just my mind playing a trick on me? I can't hear any other sounds but I don't see anything else either. Darkness is creeping in. I am sleepy. The shapes are losing their distinction and phasing into darkness. Slowly though. Darkness is drifting in and filling all the gaps. My eyes are becoming heavy again. The clock on the nightstand reads 3:03. My alarm will go off in about 6 hours.

I don't think I can keep this paranoid watch much longer. My mind must have been simply playing tricks on me. Lights from the road or my imagination must have created illusions to accompany my nightmare. It is safe to put my head down...

All of the dark shapes that lost their distinction gain it back in a whoosh. As if a gun was shot off-nearly one hundred large, black crows fly off and reveal the shapes and shadows that existed before. Only now, a new shadow is standing in the middle of my yard. It is the man and he is staring at my window. Dear God help me. He is just standing there looking at me. How long has it been and how long has he been there?

He is walking now. Walking toward the window. It is a slow and menacing pace but I can only panic nonetheless. I do not trust myself to run for help because I must watch to see where it hides. He is going faster. Briskly pacing towards my window now. In a sudden flash, the arms go up in a drowning flail again and he sprints. Not in a straight line but still towards my window. I am paralyzed, clutching my sheets.

Seconds feel like hours as I watch this menace sprint for my window. I am able to see some of the details in the face and they resemble the nightmare I had. He runs closer and closer. Coming all the way up to my window.

He smashes his face into my window, pressing a distorted face into it to stare at me. I scream now. He begins to laugh like a drunk man who has an idea. I pound on my leg, pull at my face and bite my tongue trying to wake up again—but you only wake up once.



THIS WINDOW – terra cotta, oils  
*Leah Kellie, Junior*



UNTITLED – terra cotta  
*Katie Pleune, Senior*

## Blinded

After "Dark Sky" by Randall Stoltzfus

Holding on to this velvety darkness  
I can no longer feel  
My own heart beating  
Maybe there is a whisper of it  
Somewhere among the trees  
Never to be found  
Frozen in time I find  
Myself floating farther into  
This forsaken abyss  
The air is speckled with the tales  
Of lost souls  
Their loves and their lies  
Shoved into sharp corners  
To collect eternal dust  
Maybe I am simply dreaming that  
Rain is sliding down me  
Collecting in pools at my feet  
Oh sweet love keep me far from  
Any glimpse of salvation  
For I feel much more content  
To lie in this place of shadows  
Here I am invisible  
Naked perhaps but for what  
Shall it matter when you can never see  
I am that single dark flame  
That translucent light that  
Fills this darkened world with stars  
Take a light to my land and  
I shall fade away forever

Drop your light and your fear  
Let go of all those doubts  
I will slip my arms around you  
Embrace you with my coldness  
Rubbing charcoal kisses throughout  
your world  
Until it is nothing but a memory  
Tonight we sink into a blanket of calm  
Where no one else will disturb us  
So glance at those stars  
Sparkling all around us and  
Close your eyes forever

- *Jessica Lamb, Freshman*

## **A Song of Myself**

*with Thanks to Walt Whitman*

I sing a song of myself

and what I make to pass shall come to pass

or it if in its passing it causes itself to come to pass again so it shall come again to pass.

I am a heart and kidney and liver and lung and so much more than the sum of my parts,

I proclaim an infinity of potential dwindling towards an indefinite destiny.

I am not an angel but Eros can fly for I am a tern a swallow the wingtip of a wood thrush sliding on parking lot thermals.

I have a vortex in my bones the most beautiful spiral is the curves of my muscles wrapping my skeleton and pulling it effortlessly in three dimensions.

I have a body that feels and that body is only one body within a body within a body within a body that can feel the gravity of itself collapsing inward entangled six degrees of separation is six degrees too many I am decided.

I see a hundred miles in every direction and burst and trip on the curve of the earth and touch a hundred hearts in every direction.

I drink an empty belly full loading my rifle with a cornucopia to burst. O! what a glorious marksman to fill his own mouth and miss.

Float leaf like on the current in an old mill foundation and slough off clothes. I have always been the flagship of the armada discovering a new world. Push against me and embrace the unfamiliar; we have always been one as we are.

All of our feet are planted in loam and I am every green and coniferous thing that mingles in the air and I am enamored with my own perfume of must and sweat and dirt and blood and rainwater.

Falling on all of myself in equal measure when I run I am never covering my tracks and never looking forward or back for if I look forward I will forget and if I look back I might end up spices, but tasting of saffron is a privilege.

*- Duncan McCargar, Junior*



FIGURE 1 – pencil  
*Mary Reyna, Sophomore*

## Before

before our times begin  
before we can imagine  
there is a time  
there is a place  
where we are free

we stick-scratched our names in the sand  
we flew to the top of the Wepto Tree and sang  
songs that charged the air with ions  
to stalk through the fields like lions

and there we'd sleep beneath the sky at day  
because we never could at night  
the stars and moons and planets made  
a maze that was much too bright

but through the night our lungs ballooned  
so our feet could trample miry murks  
our veins drummed out through yellow croons  
to inhale exhale fireworks

at dawn we locked eyes and i could see  
the faintest freckle in the corner  
and i watched the blackness grow  
until it took the yellow over

but we grew small and quick and light  
and our feet ran ever further  
from each other as if they  
knew not the muddy sands of Spite

but soon we got too small  
to see over the shortest grains  
and as our hands and feet were shrinking  
the same disease consumed our brains

and you forgot the Wepto Trees  
and i forgot the sand  
and we forgot the critters crawling  
in what used to be our hands

and each our skins were each reborn  
onto another field  
but we would never remember  
exactly what had been concealed

all we have is the muffled murmur  
beneath the roar of rambling trains  
of a lion cub rolling through the mud  
and the yellowed freckles beneath his mane

*- Jacob Sabourin, Sophomore*



BLUE GOURD – stoneware ceramics  
*Karla Galvin, Non-traditional*

## Before I Sleep

*by Stephanie Giluk, Freshman*

While the pain was still smoking like the burns on his body, she kept her promise.

The meadow was gorgeous, all free air and fresh grass. She tried to stand under the single willow that interrupted the green of this lovely place, but she thought she smelled ash on the breeze. Collapsing slowly like a rotting building, she lay curled against the tree and waited. Waited for a long time, but he never came.

Every year, on the same day, she waited. Always in the middle of summer, their favorite season. She brought nothing but her body and she left nothing but memories. She was as unyielding as the willow beside her, and as patient. Because she knew that one day, he would come to her again.

The years consumed her, and the girl was surprised when she realized her life had moved on around her. When she had found someone different to love, she escaped from his sleeping arms early that clean morning and ran to the meadow on bare feet. The grass was wet and springy under her toes and the willow welcomed her, as always. She waited the whole day. When he didn't come, she went back to her unexpected life.

More time passed. Stubbornly, it moved at once so quickly and too slowly. Years had escaped her notice again. That day, she woke early, left her husband's tired arms, and slipped into her children's rooms to kiss their growing cheeks. She left, running barefoot to the meadow, feeling her own accumulation of years weigh down her soles. The sun warmed the unchanging grass and the weeping willow like fire warms flesh. She waited until the sun lost its grip on the sky. He didn't come. She walked back to her family.

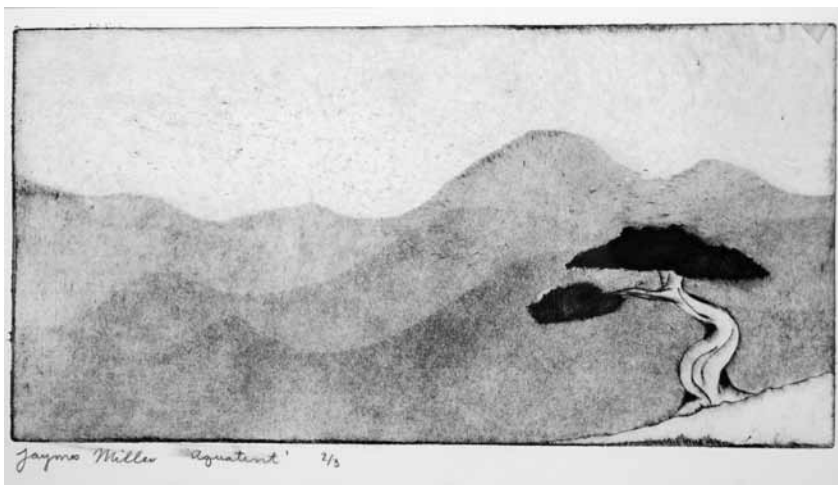
Now she was old enough that she didn't lament the years she had lost. She gracefully acknowledged time as the greater, if relentless, master. Her house was almost empty, her children living with their children in cities far away. That morning, she left her husband's knowing arms and ghosted through the silent house. She ran barefoot down to the meadow, her aging body straining to keep



up with her heart. The meadow was untouched by that which had stolen away her life and was stealing it now, minute by minute. She sank down by her proud willow and waited until darkness made the green shoots black. He didn't come. She waited for a moment longer, taking strength from the eternal tree beside her. She went back to her emptying life.

Time had ceased to be something that seemed immeasurable and mysterious. It was now an old friend, beckoning her to come in from the cold so she could rest forever. Rising from an empty bed, she walked her creaking bones through her dusty life and out the door. Her bare feet soon left rough pavement and met silky grass, the color of his eyes in sunlight. The willow stretched toward her, welcoming her home. Wind stirred the beautiful haven like an expectant breath. She reached her place under the hanging branches and tried to stand, but her old legs finally gave. She collapsed effortlessly, like a seed searching for earth. She exhaled into the ground and was very, very still.

She didn't have to wait long. He burst into the meadow like a storm in the summer and ran to her, laughing. She leapt from her body and ran to him, feet light. When they met in the middle, no words were needed. They joined hands and left together on the next swirl of wind.



AQUATINT – print  
Jaymes Miller, Senior

## BLACK OXFORDS

*with Thanks to Laura Kasischke*

*Don't bury me in these  
shoes, my father said.*

He placed them against a wall  
on the floor in the entryway  
and laughed, and we  
could both see why:

the pretense of them was surprising.

And it continued to surprise us

all through fall  
and into winter,

while beneath them, under the floorboards, the mice  
hid in the dust, as if

the darkness and blanketing grime  
in which they hid (*that*

*promiseless, humorless place without  
time, without hoping, without*

*working to know, or cope, or love—no*

*wish, no sight, no protest, no bluff) as if*

it were a refuge,  
not a crypt,

just like the rest of us.

*- Laura Hartness, Senior*

## Suppose You Could Return—

you could look around and say,

*This place is my past.*

It's a part of you

as long as you remember it.

My home, my backyard,  
the patio, the deck and the pool—  
its clear waters mirroring  
the blue summer sky,  
pines beyond the chain link fence,  
tall maples rising  
from the overgrown lawn,  
a grill and a picnic table,  
and everyone would be there,  
eating and talking and laughing...

Suppose you could return  
to a place you once knew,  
unchanged, preserved,  
a photo of older days  
brought to life.

*- Ingrid Wolf, Senior*

## “corde mea”

*by Mary Grace Guild, Senior*

She is the mind's queen, submissive in title alone. Love is her inherited purpose, her insoluble right. A chamber of secrets, she whispers influential requests. I call her my own, but she does not belong to me. She is warm, kind, and fierce: a cabaret of passionate discourse. Her mood shifts with the wind, violently gusting in feverish fury and swiftly returning to a calm, cool breeze. A child in spirit, she is ruled by her whims and therefore reigns in spontaneous bliss. While not always wise, she is forever true. She will not hide her face, but simply soften her voice--she is never silent. Her decrees affect all, whether or not she intends them to. When noticed by her, be cautious. She is likely to give into her selfish appetite, though she knows better. By nature, she shall perplex you with her docile will. Overbearing, stubborn, and insistent one moment, she will render herself indecisive and helpless the next. Any who fall object to her must brace themselves, for she cannot contain her own ardent devotion that beats and pulses through her.



PORTRAIT STUDY – pencil  
*Karen Mannino, Senior*

## Dancing with Reality

*by Tiffany Goetz, Senior*

In the kitchen they dance—brother and sister. She holds him up in her arms. Swaying, singing along to some James Taylor, her voice soothes him while his can't pronounce the words, a gibberish that is a calming sound to her. She may have to hold him in her arms, support him on her hip like a baby, but he's still strong. In his laughter and smile she finds solace, she finds faith.

Dressed in a sports bra and athletic shorts, just home from working out, she stands bare to the world. The tattoo of a cross and the Christian fish shows on the back of her left shoulder from when she began to believe in Him again, a design her mother had made for her. Six tattoos can be found on her body, all symbols from which she can't run.

On the island counter behind the dancing pair is the sketch of the angel wings her mother drew for a seventh tattoo. Inspired from the quote "On golden wings we fly" and another reference to her brother, it's the symbol of his freedom from the chair he lives confined to. Beside the drawing is the crumpled paper with a guy's phone number, one she'll never call because she won't find time.

Time. All she wants is time—time away from class and homework, assistant teaching and tutoring. Everything she does revolves around school and all she wants is time away. It's the reason why she came home to her parents' house, why she's spending her time dancing on the kitchen tile to the lyrics of "Fire and Rain."

In the midst of James Taylor's voice, her cell phone rings with each text. Wanting to forget the outside world, reality, she unconsciously turns the phone on silent. Slipping quietly back into the dance, she dips him and makes him laugh with his crooked tooth grin. In that smile, time fades away as only the reality of that single moment begins to exist.

## Shooting Star

*with Thanks to Rita Dove*

Before the bike races down the steep hill, Hesitation  
brakes. Confusion halos your mind  
like clouds wrap stars in the sky. Hesitation held too long fades stars,  
unlike light, the Darkness waits...and waits.  
Orange traffic cones blockade the bottom of the hill  
before a new construction begins.  
Dare you take a chance?  
Then by luck, or maybe fate, a rapid stream of light shoots from the darkness,  
through an oculus in the clouds. You relinquish Hesitation  
and let the tires race down the jagged cement.  
Machine gun vibrations travel through your blood,  
making you forget that Darkness waits.  
You remember the beat of your heart, the harsh kiss of the wind,  
the thrill of the moment, surging  
the stagnant blood to your head, a flashing light  
like a missed message on a machine, letting you know you're alive.

*- Alecia Alviar, Sophomore*



## the state of things

i dropped my wallet in a wooded grove the other day  
and  
to my surprise,  
found it quickly upon my return.  
there,  
amongst the shaded patch of long-fruited mulberries,  
delivered to my ear was a most pleasant song;  
riper and more vibrant than the wood.  
as it drew nearer,  
i discovered that it wasn't song at all, but merely the random chatter of things.  
i had mistaken forest ragtime for a philharmonic.  
    why, then —  
    why the desire to return?

*- Alex Clemons, Senior*

## Happy in the Dark

I'd like to be  
a solitary reveler  
in the night.  
Held up under the moon  
by gravity,

I'd hear my laughter  
ring out alone,  
never a dafter  
sound in a quiet  
street. And

I'd cry up to the moon  
with wordless sound,  
that I'd worked the day  
to death and smile  
into silence.

- *Anna Matthews, Sophomore*



## Burned

*by Caitlin Bailey, Senior*

He lights a match and throws it into the woodpile. After coaxing it with kerosene and newspaper stories of unknown murder victims, he manages to make the fire roar with delight. The crackling sound of twigs can be heard miles away, but only the trees surround us, listening in on the fire consuming their brethren.

I stare at the flames, mesmerized. They dance and move with such frenzy that I can hardly keep up. She has a body of her own, lifting her burning arms to the sky, waving them wild and free, then shrivels when she feels the coolness of the air outside the safety of her home. Fire is hot, so I have been told, a temptress waiting to seduce children to her scorching fury.

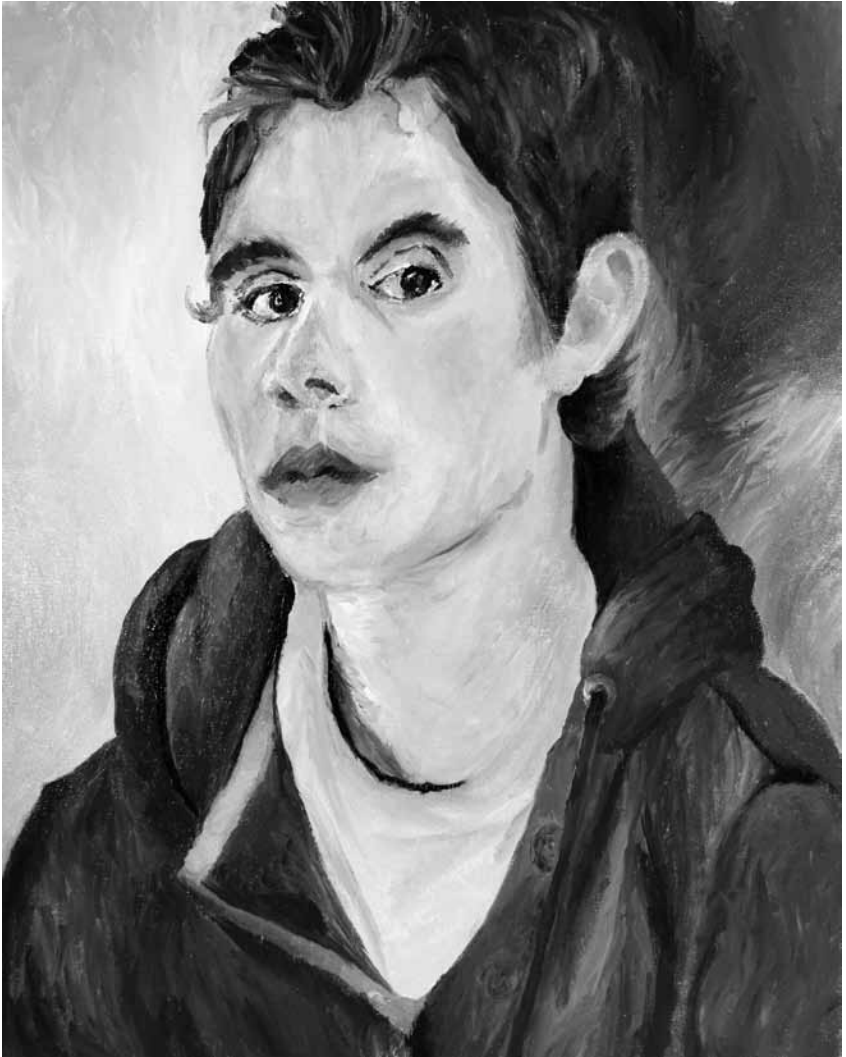
The inferno beckons me closer, enraptures my being. I want to throw myself on top of the blaze, save her from the cold penetration of the world. I want to burn with the wood, suffer its anguish as it sputters for life. My finger sears with pain as I feel the flame's breath, the piercing sting of love. Death's warm embrace.

## Lacuna-Matata

Erasing words  
one by one  
swallowed up by white  
nothing  
is my mind  
my heart is slate  
good for roofing  
they say  
remember when we could surrender  
to the innocence of  
hide and seek  
time is an interruption from  
the eternal game we play  
we mask  
we endeavor to accumulate the hardened shell  
—exoskeleton—  
of bullshit molded just for  
you and me  
but I'd rather curl up  
along side of the lion  
vowing to eat no flesh  
the lion and the lamb  
decide to rent an apartment in Denver  
and work minimum wage jobs  
despite their degrees--  
what shall we learn from  
William Blake-  
William Shakespeare-  
Will you Will you not?  
To be or not to be  
that is not the question when  
Freud says you're mentally insane to  
ponder this question and Melville decants the premise  
I'm out of my mind but  
in it all the same.

- *Rachel Pineiro, Senior*





SELF – oil on canvas board  
*Tom Smith, Senior*

## Blanc

*by Josh Veal, Junior*

White is nothing. It is an infinite canvas for endless creation. We tear off a square and paint a pretty portrait, then flip it over and write a lettre d'amour. We fill it up with ink and lead until we just see words but the white is always there, enveloping the crude black figures. You don't print white; it's already there, yearning for a story. It's a block of marble waiting for Michelangelo to strike. White is a new beginning falling from the sky, drowning our cars and homes in a blank slate, the dead lawns and deserted trash hidden in a sea of purity. It's all the colors at once, unraveled by glass prisms and misty skies. And any color taken out brings a new one to life. White is everything.



UNTITLED – ceramic stoneware  
*Pamela Zeiler, Junior*

## Frostbitten Spine

The Tavern—

a rustic bar on the outskirts of Juneau

feeds and keeps me warm seven days a week.

After work at 5:30 PM precisely, I take shelter in my private booth,  
alone to waste the days away.

The seat in front sparkles with a shine

like a finger of light,

beckoning for attention.

I fiddle with my watch while the grumble in my stomach is the only voice I hear,  
so I drown it in whiskey to keep the pain at bay.

The torn wallpaper and uneven floor boards camouflage my body,

a tattered sanctuary with nothing to worship.

My grey beard frays and my skin sags,

the deep wrinkles count the years I have wasted away.

Gorgeous Hazel serves my daily dose of caribou burger,

*who does she go home to at night?*

A ring on her finger glistens light

into my glazed, yellow eyes

so I take another shot of whiskey to keep those thoughts away.

When closing time nears, I slowly rise;

the joints in my body

moan and howl with anger.

I'm careful to tip Hazel a generous pay

before I'm on my way to end another wasted day.

Gazing back at my "table for one",

I close the door behind me,

the frigid air stabbing my nose with icy knives.

I slide into my car, with clothes uncomfortably cold

and reach for the bottle of whiskey to warm my veins.

The passenger door hasn't been opened in months,

and to the cold I bitterly pray,

and hope, and wish for another soul

to taste my loneliness—

just for a day.

- Robert Hartley, Junior

## Pet Violet

*In imitation of Edward Hoagland*

*by Karen Mannino, Senior*

The stems of an African Violet look like spider legs, the really hairy ones, like tarantulas. My mother inherited an African Violet from her grandmother and lovingly, tenderly repotted it, watered it, pampered it. It grew wide hair leaves on the end of thick hairy stalks growing out of a tough hairy center, but no flowers. My little sister knocked it over one day and so it died.

Last year when my dorm room looked especially sterile, I found myself in Meijer's plant section. A small army of purple flowered tarantulas confronted me, and nothing else seemed practical. The one I took home, like the rest of its regiment, sat low, but poised to scurry, in its squat terracotta pot. It was in full bloom, deep violet-red; the small petals looked like they were grafted off some more delicate plant, crushed velvet against the Velcro leaves. I examined it carefully, peering under its leaves mostly out of curiosity. Those thick stalks might have moved aside to accommodate my prying fingers, and I wouldn't have been surprised. The stalks are quite stiff, and I shuddered a little the first few times I pushed them aside to touch the soil beneath, unable to shake the spider image from my mind.

The African Violet sat on my window sill all year long. I watched the tiny buds uncurl and lift their heads as if to see what the world was like above the canopy. It continued to blossom through the fall semester until my absence over Christmas break tried its patience too far.

My standoffish attitude was soon softened by the violet's considerable charm. It may be a bit spiny, but it's really a softy at heart. It drooped sadly when I was away and busy for even a few days, the leaves getting limp and pale. I found that limp violet stems are even more unnerving than stiff ones. I'd do just about anything to make that cold soggy go away. It usually perked right up when I came home and gave it some attention. I was always shocked, half an hour after I watered it, sat beside it at my desk and began on my homework, that it had resurrected itself to its former state of alertness.

I accidentally scorched one leaf by setting my hot pot too close to it while I boiled some water for tea. It curled in on itself and turned brown before I noticed. I chided myself harshly for having such an over crowded window sill. The rest of the leaf soon shriveled up, pulling itself back into the under layers from whence it came. Violet leaves like to die alone, away from my eyes. I eventually lifted its mourning companions and tried to break off the dried up carcass and throw it away. The living plant clung fiercely. I fumbled to pull the dry twig out, lift the other living leaves so that I could see, and keep the little pot from falling over all at the same time. I gave up quickly, worried that I was

poking my clumsy fingers too deeply or roughly into its sacred interior.

I meant to give it to someone to care for over the summer. I meant to plant it in a bigger pot in hopes that it would flower again next fall. But when I got up with the sun to catch the train home, it was still crouching on my window sill watching me. I probably should have left it there, in case someone cleaning the rooms decided to adopt it.

But it is only a plant after all. I threw it out. It looked very patient, and vaguely threatening in the bottom of my trash can. I tied the bag off and tossed it into the dumpster.



STILL LIFE GESTURE STUDY – charcoal and oil  
*Margaret Miller, Freshman*



UNTITLED – stoneware  
*James Zordan, Senior*

## **Fading Rose**

Broke the vase this morning,  
that one that used to sit upon our dining room table.  
The flowers inside  
used to compliment one another,  
where the dull colors brightened  
as the light from the others shone.  
The vase  
that once sparkled in the sunlight  
now lies shattered on the floor,  
a million pieces  
broken,  
edges sharper than knives,  
cutting my hands as I  
pick up the pieces.  
Blood on my hands  
won't wash away,  
won't dry,  
staining the single white rose  
withering on our black linoleum,  
alone.

*- Tiffany Goetz, Senior*

## You Should Let Go

You fall across the sea,  
the ocean of us; the large vast  
space that's grown between  
keeps growing and growing, larger  
and larger.

You fall in and swim, trying to reach shore,  
to reach me, my side. You dive  
from your dock to bridge the gap  
between us but I've already  
set sail. Your screams are drowned  
with water, your apologies, so many,  
keep coming but are no good.  
They won't save you; I'm sorry,  
the damage you've done is done, no going  
back, no swimming can help, nor no  
grand gesture.

Your only safety valve, not drowning  
in my tears was me moving on. I throw you a rope  
but you're too far. You ask me  
how I could toss the oars, you say  
I'm the reason we're drifting apart, why  
the rudder can't be fixed—you're right, I am.  
But you tossed the compass,  
the future, any future we ever had; we're lost  
with no direction. You're still  
blaming me, your apologies turning into hateful  
curses and ruthless words, and you're losing  
me further. The bridge you've  
built burns in your own flames of passion. You don't  
realize I'm saving us, our sanity,  
our future, however distant and different,  
by letting go. My tears have dried as  
I've let go—you should let go too—and are  
the reason you no longer drown.  
Say thank you, for  
I've forgiven you, although  
you don't deserve my forgiveness.

- *Tiffany Goetz, Senior*



## **Daydreams at Night**

Sleep easy  
and worry not when dreams elude you.  
Rather, rise out of bed with the sun.

If you should want to  
hasten toward the dark,  
bring with you your daydreams.  
Rest with light eyes and a bright mind,

Advance from  
the lullaby of daylight, let flow the  
zenith of your inner eye's dream.

Yes, you must sleep easy,  
and carry the weight of your mind,  
ready to encounter  
all that lies ahead—day or night.

*- Sarah Branz, Sophomore*

## The Visitation

An imitation of Lucy Grealy's "Mirrorings"

by Wesley Raynal, Senior

There was a long period of time, almost an hour, maybe more, where I would not and could not allow myself to look at my grandpa. At age nine I was torn between paying my respects to a man who had a tremendous impact on my childhood thus far, and the fear of what that body in the front of the room might look like. I feared that the image of that body would not reflect the image I had in my head of truly great man.

I sat in the third row of chairs, the seat along the middle aisle. Not too close, but not too far away. The whole place was so lifeless. The walls covered in bland wallpaper with poorly designed flowers speckled throughout, the floor was a faded maroon color with an extraordinary lack of color near the door where people had been shuffling in and out for who knows how many years. The room was dark with only a few dimly lit lights and it smelled like old people and formaldehyde. I sat in that chair and watched as tens, maybe hundreds of people walked up to the coffin and did what I could not bring myself to do.

My grandpa had been here, in southeast Michigan, his entire life as far as I knew. He lived in Detroit, Harper Woods, Port Huron, Grosse Pointe and Clinton Township. It seemed that he had made a lot of friends along the way. Some I recognized, but most I had never seen before. Some of my dad's friends from work were there to show their respects and to support our family. I would give a little smile to everyone who looked my way.

You can always tell when people are talking about you – one person sees you and then asks your parents "*What's he doing over there?*" or something that implied that you were behaving strangely. Then both parties involved would look at you and then your parent, or whomever, would say "*Oh, he's just hanging out,*" something to cover up the fact that you actually are acting strangely but, no one else has to know.

It looked easy enough for everyone else, going up to the coffin. Some of them cried, but for the most part everyone kept their composure. My little sister

wandered and climbed up onto the chair next to me. “Did you see Grandpa yet?” she asked. I shook my head no, my eyes glued on the brown box in which his body lay. “It’s scary,” she said. We both sat in silence and looked toward the front of the room. She had just confirmed my biggest fear – the body in the coffin would not reflect the man I knew.

When most of the old people had cleared out and there was nobody standing in the front of the room, I stoop up, eyes still fixed on the coffin. I stepped out into the aisle and it felt like everything in the room faded away. I could feel everyone’s eyes on me – Mom, Dad, Grandma, my aunt, my sister, my dad’s friends from work, my uncles, all of them, their eyes following me. I broke my gaze and gave a sideways glance at my dad; he gave a small, encouraging smile. I did my best to smile back. I stepped up to the coffin and what I saw made me shudder. I did my best to stay strong and stood my ground. After a moment I unbuttoned the top button of my sport coat, knelt down, folded my little hands, and prayed for a man I loved so much, in front of a body I did not know.



## Independence Day

*by Laura Hartness, Senior*

Sitting on the cool dry sand, burrowing our toes to find residual warmth from the summer day as the deep blue grey of night approached, we all believed we were free. Free of adult supervision. Free to carry out this essential summer ritual just as we pleased. Free to dance barefoot around the fire and revel late into the night. Intoxicated with our newfound freedom and the cocktail of smells carried by the slight breeze: one part musty algae, one part charred pinewood of bonfires past and a twist of coconut from the lotion not yet washed off our tanned skin, we eagerly awaited the darkness. Solemn preparations ensued with unspoken, but a nonetheless understood hierarchy of responsibilities for this sacred summer rite. The little ones waited with their knees tucked up to their chins against the cooling air, sitting on their hands, concealing their anticipation as the sand concealed their toes. The older girls gathered the critical elements: a pristine bag of puffy white marshmallows, chocolate bars lined up in their box like bars of gold, the familiar blue box of graham crackers and long, dangerously sharp roasting sticks. These materials were assembled with purposeful, concise, adult-like authority, our sisters filling the absentee role with motherly ease. The oldest in the group, our brothers, focused intently on the most important piece of the evening, artfully arranging a teepee of sticks and logs for the fire.

As the sky darkened and the yellow glow of light from inside the house brightened, the picture window view of our parents clustered around the table played out before us like a silent film. The manicured expanse of lawn reaching up the hill to the house stretched in the growing darkness, and our parents slipped farther and farther away. This was the night that they played a card game with a bad name, a word I wasn't allowed to say. They lifted their spirit filled cups ceremonially and drank deep. Cigarette incense wafted over their heads as they fanned their cards and threw coins with abandon to the middle of the table. The stern, corrective mom and dad faces were replaced with relaxed, wide mouthed laughter that was unfamiliar to us. The chirping crickets and the gentle lap, lap, lap of the waves amplified our silence and chided us as we stood there mutely watching these people that, all at once, we knew and didn't know at all. We understood then, that they were not the benefactors of freedom, they took it for themselves that night, throwing us into the fire as sacrificial offerings to secure their own night of independence.

Turning our attention back to our little ceremony, we stood at the ready with our own minute offerings of stick impaled marshmallows as our older brothers anointed the kindling with gasoline and casually tossed the match onto the vaporous, fuel saturated pile of wood. As the towering column of flames cast its tall reflection on the great room window, we let our marshmallows burn and stole glances at our parents, willing them to look out at us, but they never did. We stood alone together under the inky night sky, with sticky fingers and the sickly sweet taste of childhood on our lips, until the warm tangerine glow of the fire on our faces quietly cooled, then went to bed, hours before our parents did.



PLAYFUL – low fire ceramics  
*Karla Galvin, Non-traditional*

## **Insincere**

Insincere is a \$200 cream  
on the face of indifference.

At the roots of her conviction  
there are touches of gray.

Disguised as concern,  
she shades her eyes with Chanel.

Speaking figuratively,  
she hides hers well in a web of Spandex.

Shopping without Prudence,  
she buys herself falsies.

Insincere refuses lunch with Truth  
and eats a box of donuts on the way home.

*-Kristen Hurst, Junior*

## **Maybe the Sea is Endless like My Love for You**

*(Inspired by the novel Krik? Krak! by Edwidge Danticat)*

Maybe we were meant to be.  
Like the stars belong to the sky  
you were meant for me.  
Maybe, just maybe.  
Perhaps our meeting wasn't by mistake  
and you bumped into me at the right time,  
the right place.  
Perhaps it was pure fate.  
Possibly we were lovers in a past life  
and we had a family of four  
with you and me, a son and daughter.  
Possibly we held each other at night,  
or suppose our love was forbidden  
like fruit from the knowledge tree  
and your family disapproved of me.  
Suppose we were forced to keep hidden;  
maybe we were separated through time  
like lost lovers divided by a raging sea,  
making it impossible for you to swim back to me,  
and maybe the sea is endless, like my love for you.

*- Monique Smith, Sophomore*

### **If time is**

If time is a river  
    that flows and flows  
into the seas and the oceans and  
    the Great Beyond  
then we are fish.  
We are fish swimming  
    up and down  
    and back and forth  
trying to find where the time went.

If time is a poem,  
laced with complexities and subtleties  
and captivating words,  
then I am the ink  
    and you are the metaphor  
and together, we will leave a beautiful stain,  
and we will      run      out  
together.

If time is the thread  
that stitches together my clothes,  
your absence  
    will permeate  
        my existence  
because all that I do  
will be woven with its color.

*- Jordan Sarchett, Freshman*



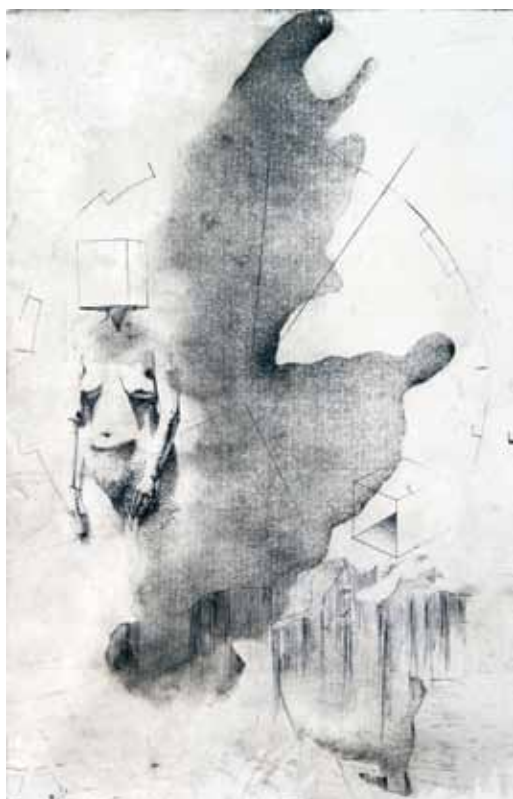
Bachelor of Fine Arts  
*Student Work*



UNTITLED – medium *Laura Steinbacher*



GAS STATION – medium *Patrick Maguire*



UNTITLED – printmaking  
*Margaret J. Schmitz*



UNTITLED – medium  
*Laura Steinbacher*



TACK IN THE DARK – photography *Owen Fifield*



TACK IN THE LIGHT – photography *Owen Fifield*



GAS STATION – medium *Patrick Maguire*



UNTITLED – medium  
*Laura Steinbacher*

## **Eighteen**

There is a place for things in my room,  
a purpose for stuff on the floor,  
a reason it's piled in the corner,  
and why you can't open the door;  
there is no time to put it away,  
and no space for the memories to keep.  
There are some things I'd rather not say.  
If you left me alone I could sleep.  
The day has a mind of its own  
and my shoes are missing a lace.  
The week is too long for the weekend  
and the universe exists for my sake.  
You may say that I'm lazy or rude,  
too old to be young as I am;  
don't know if I'm bad or I'm good—  
just doing the best that I can.  
There's a reason that time and space  
cannot see the person I'll be;  
one is determined by you,  
the other is determined by me.

*-Kristen Hurst, Junior*

## **Hung Up**

Embrace me  
wrap me in your fuzzy hug  
never let me go.  
Collect the moisture  
running down my cheeks,  
my arms, my legs.  
Keep me warm,  
safe from the cold.  
Hide my insecurities  
make me feel like I am the  
only one for you.  
And when I am done,  
you will be hung up to dry  
with the rest of my towels.

*- Caitlin Bailey, Senior*

## Envy

by Shelby Denhof, Freshman

I envy those whose minds are based on sensory objectivity – on touch and taste and smell and sight and sound. Struggling in the dark is perhaps the most unbearable because it clouds the external reality. I try to remember a time when I sensed the world: when I touched it, when I smelled it, when I heard it. I mean, truly. I can only ever remember experiencing through a sort of lens, through a pair of eyes perhaps belonging to me, but perhaps also to something else. The darkness is deep and heavy, but inside it I've found a sun to light even the darkest of winters. Or so said Camus in more or less words.

I write this not for injury, not for thought, nor for sadness. All that is naught. I write this because if you do not tell the truth about yourself, you cannot tell it about other people. To look life in the face.

I envy, yes, those dull pleasantries which I often refer to, yet I don't know if I've ever actually experienced them. When did I last hear every word that spilled from your lips? When did I last truly feel the snow beneath my fingers? When did I last truly smell the flowers you've given me? When did I last know what was truly occurring to me? I cannot tell you, for, perhaps, it never happened at all.

I envy, yes, your naïveté. Even if I see past your self-inflicted lies and pain and happiness and worry; even if I have long held that it does not really matter, I still wish that I was able to sense with you—to suffer compassion, to live life through all of its trivialities.

I envy, yes, the choices of time and space which make things appear so difficult when in reality it is only so simple.

I envy, yes, but can you *feel*?

Eventually I will leave you, although, you should know, it will probably have nothing to do with you. That I think is the worst part: that there is nothing, that there was never anything that you could do to keep me. I am lost within this darkness, so it is known, but I stray not towards your light—only farther away. And for that I must apologize because I never meant to hurt you, but it was and is somewhat inevitable.

That is indeed the sadness of life, the immensity and complexity of its beauty, its inevitability. It's quite impossible to avoid and I've avoided it for much too long. "Always to look life in the face and to know it for what it is. At last to know it. To love it for what it is, and then, to put it away."

### Figure 3: Cardiovascular System

A nerve is stroked  
soft, a feather  
billowing  
up and down.

The polished inner walls  
collapse then charge  
when the muscles sense  
red alert,  
the signal from above,  
a siren screaming,  
warning that eyelashes are dancing  
on the outermost shell  
of the subject's topos.

The monster  
can be vicious,  
a musky raccoon  
pulsing with rabies.  
It is a hungry beast  
wanting to explode  
from overindulgence,  
too much sugar, caffeine,  
too much cayenne, jalapeño.  
After the frenzy,  
self-inflicted overdose,  
the storm  
having passed,  
the cars crushed,  
the bystanders rushed

to the nearest hospital,  
it'll lick any low tide,  
taste-test any modest whisper  
to oxygenate away  
the saccharine decay,  
the fear settling in the core  
of its rotting stomach.

It is swollen,  
an engorged plum,  
juices that stain carpets.

- Erica Meyers, Senior



0.1% - 2 – woodcut  
David Besteman, Sophomore

## Cat Scratch

Grabbing this old BB gun by its rust patched barrel, my grandfather told my brother, “whole quarter for every cat skin you bring back here.” He spit the same red color from his teeth after, and Nate can be some kind of ass these days so he believed him.

It was a stray the old man was after, that'd leave scratches in the large tomatoes that hung like fat ticks from the thick stalks of green in the yard. Mom decided to name it Odysseus, saying it was just searching around for a way home.

My uncle Dwayne said they should make *catsup* and covered his eyes while we all hollered, trying to wipe the tears that came with his dim-witted smile of a laugh. I asked Grandpa what he was going to do with the tomatoes, if the cat wouldn't get to all of them first.

The group settled as if I shouldn't have been so smart. Grabbing me by the neck, putting a shears to my ear, he said to me, “How'd you like getting clipped like that?” I dropped to the floor and saw his startled eyes; in my hand was the dripping pool of what he had decided to do.

- *Rian Bosse, Senior*



## Daisies

The flowers you gave me  
still sit on my dresser from last September  
when they bloomed upright, fed  
on oxygen and water.

But like a fire built with gasoline and damp wood  
blooms brightly before it smolders  
and stinks,  
those white daisies,  
sunshine yellow in the center,  
fell over with broken necks  
losing one wilted petal after another  
until only prickly brown orbs remained  
attached to brittle bodies.

For laziness,  
I never threw those flowers away.  
The dead leaves crumple like ash  
beneath books of poetry,  
dusty silver prints  
and discs  
without cases.

I imagine eventually the daisies  
will either be ground to dust by  
the rest of my life, buried  
under more Kierkegaard, Plath, and Tolstoy,  
or else replaced by the flowers of another.

- *Jordan Sarchett, Freshman*



UNTITLED – stoneware  
*Tom Olsen, Sophomore*

## The Sea

by Shelby Denhof, Freshman

A countdown to nothingness has to begin somewhere, for Elias it began at the sea. Silver strips of lightning rippled through the sky, looming black with clouds poised to burst with a fury long withheld from the coarse Maghrebian earth whose antediluvian sands burned a golden yellow. Elias's feet touched the warm sea. The surge shackled his ankles and pulled him into the luminescent waves foaming and splashing at the shore. The horizon faded into a swathe of orange and purple, echoing off from the turning clouds, a brazen chariot to carry the sun to Gehenna. He gazed into the void, almost expecting something to leap forth from its vast emptiness: perhaps the Messiah, perhaps the great Accuser.

Daphné stood defiantly against the breeze. Her white Saturday clothes and her curly brown hair seemed to move with a life of their own in the warm breath of Notos.

*Viens*, she called out to him.

He turned and met her eyes, glowing green in the pale light of the storm, then turned back to the sea. It, too, called him. The sea called him forth to drown in its encapsulating gray waters, to end his life as it had seemingly begun from an eternal sea of nothingness, the gray waters of the womb.

Elias broke the shackles, left the sea to its emptiness, and shoved past Daphné.

*Elias...*

He kept walking; the sand became hard beneath his wet feet.

*Elias, where are you going?*

Notos blew harder, muting the silence between them with his wind. Thunder clapped. The deluge fell.

Elias had arranged his life like a museum, keeping its memory in the form of books. Hundreds of them lined the yellow walls of his Médina apartment: a colorful display of devotion to their words, their prophecies, their teachings. Some remained unintelligible to him, written in foreign tongues which he didn't dare learn, but others spoke to his soul. He had arranged them not by size or by color, but as a timeline to his life. They began with *Genesis* and currently ended with *The Trial*.

Elias worked for a Franco-Jewish quarterly writing societal and religious pieces.

He somewhat enjoyed the work, but the pay was meager. His life bored him, as he saw it, a dull routine of going to the Oudaya café with paper in hand, sipping thé à la menthe with friends, watching the sea turn and swallow the earth. Elias longed to escape the labyrinth he knew as Rabat and flee its dull pleasantries, its overwhelming depravity. When he walked its streets he felt melancholy, lulled by a sense that what today brought tomorrow would also bring.

Elias stood outside of the Médina walls, orange and towering. He watched the blue taxis zip by, the usual horde of people move in and out of the Médina, and the busses that lined the boulevard release a constant flow of gibbering people and choking exhaust. He loved Rabat because it was in constant movement, but he hated it for its static nature. His entire life had been spent behind those orange walls, down those cobblestoned streets, in the maze that is the Rabat Médina, and his life had never changed. It was always on the same track into nothingness. Elias felt like a ghost in his own home, because he was.

Daphné entered his life three months ago. They met at the café. He brought her to his apartment. They made love. She left. He called her back to him. She moved in. Elias was horribly afraid that he didn't love her, or maybe just out of pity, or both. He had long ago convinced himself that he was incapable of truly loving a woman, yet he had called her back to him. She had moved into his apartment, into his life.

He had gotten her a job with the quarterly as a photographer. She would venture out into the city and take a dozen or so photos to accompany his stories. His boss Éphraïm had deeply criticized the move, but hired her nonetheless. She was pretty—average height, shoulder length curly brown hair, strange green eyes, pale European skin—but she didn't have a story; she didn't have a home.

*Why do you arrange your books like that?* she would ask him.

*I don't know,* he would respond.

*Why are you always out so late?* she would ask him.

*No reason,* he would tell her.

*Do you love me?* she would ask him.

A pause, and then, *Yes.*

*Where are you going?* she would ask him.

*Out,* he would answer.



PIECES – woodcut  
*Lesley Albert, Sophomore*

## Last Call

the mass sways in and sways out, coupled up, a lonely crowd  
their faces and hands linked together like the deafening band  
that's skipping off-beat—sounding like—

—something short of wonder and awe.

the space tinkers out—last call

get your drinks and grab your gloves—fingerless so the addictive sticks won't fall

you see her

walk tall

drink more and run

faster

you mustn't go after

what you want

it's too close to the pain in your chest

too close to destroying the goals you've set

keep on track now—

don't lose sight of that far away trophy you've been dying to get

look back—don't—

You're almost there .and you. you won't trip over such a vice as this

no

not for a pretty face and a laugh that brings back nervousness—

not for the promise of warm nights spent held up and raw—

not for her

*her*

her passions are too much for your heart, too much to let in and give out

not now

not when you still miss her eyes

no

not *her*—the other girl,

the one who has your dreams wrapped.tight.like.night that threatens to break  
into dawn

—and in its absence

love is such a defeating thing

.and you. you'd like to win

so you won't play again

- Jennifer Totzke, Junior

## Nobody Knows the Names of All Those Birds

by Shelby Denhof, Freshman

He awoke to see the buttons of her spine: a chain of islands, ridges running parallel to the bed sheet. He could not overcome the sudden sensation of the morning. Why was it so hard to recreate the night? Nothing felt the same in the pale light of the morning as it did hours before, wincing at the pulsing candle. He wanted to feel the same strength behind his syllables, believe in the shapes of his tongue, yet somehow by morning things retreated and became passive. His conviction ascended to an unreachable place and evaporated with the shards of dew. He thought of whispering this confession to the freckles on her back, to the crumpled flag-shaped birthmark, and watch his words become absorbed into her skin. His thoughts would breach her cells and it would be the closest they would ever come to understanding. He didn't even exhale. Rustling the covers and turning to face the window, he felt the bed dip as she escaped to the bathroom.

The tap was smooth and cold as she slowly turned the bronze handle. In a steady and aerated stream, water pooled around the sink drain. She looked at the marble bathtub and the peppermint and lilac candles bordering the rim reduced to puddles of wax. The room held the scent of bath salts and creamy soap. Shutting off the tap, she splashed water glacier-cold onto her face. Again and again until the shock was replaced with acceptance. The calm grey and gold patterns on the wall brought her into the morning. She did not look into the mirror. When she walked out of the bathroom and saw him lying shirtless on his back, arms crossed behind matted hair, a cold weighted pain expanded in her chest. It began at the base where her ribs separated and grew from the size of a walnut to a dinner plate. It was as if someone was slowly pouring chilled coins down her throat. There's only one way into this life, yet so many ways to get out of it.

He kept her letters and stories inside a Vonnegut book wedged inconspicuously on his book shelf. There was no particular significance to the book besides the fact that she had given it to him on a whim. He had not read it, yet its pink spine with ivy green text always commanded his attention when he stared at the vast collection of words in his library. He thought of the novel's color as he looked out the window at the bleeding sky. *I could keep a penny locked inside a safe to insure we'd always have a wish to throw. I could let small animals overtake the house, creating language simple and strong. I removed the batteries from the smoke alarm.*

The kitchen was small and white. She poured honey-glazed cereal into a hard white bowl, the crisp round pieces rattling. Her eyes fixed on him as he opened the freezer door and grabbed coconut flavored vodka to mix with tomato juice. His naked feet stained the hardwood floor, his footprints a darker shade of maple. The ragged blue robe hung off his frame and exposed sparse wispy hairs on his pale chest. He sat beside her, and they stared out the window. Slowly he twirled a dull green stalk of celery in his glass, evening the ratio of vodka, juice, and spice.

Later, driving through standing fog in the night, ghosts stay at the edges of the road. Shapes become static. They are no longer three-dimensional. They slip away from their plane and dart about in the road, the weeds. A stop sign plays host.

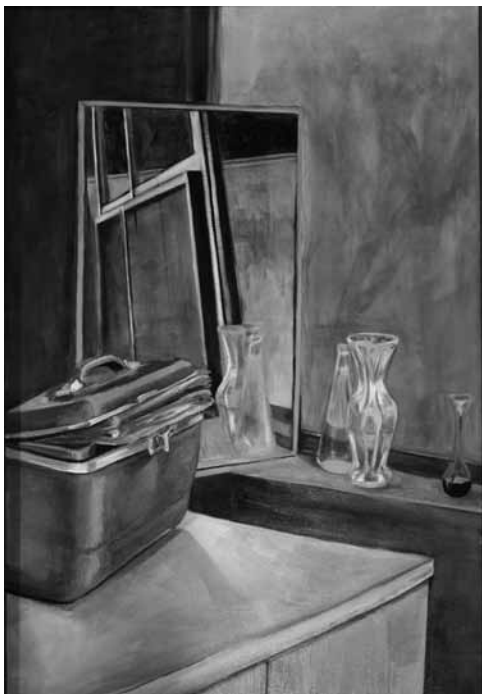
*Let's make a baby.*

*Let's have a party.*

*We don't have that many friends, she said.*

*A baby always brings smiling faces.*

It was done with a purity reserved for physical science. Beauty in heat, static, hazard. They danced on the cusp of catastrophe, and named him Henry.



UNTITLED – oil  
Emma Dalrymple, Senior

## Mangos

Mangos took away the scorching Honduran winter  
from my skin,  
bathing my tongue in tart syrup.

Green and nectar yellow,  
they smiled down at me  
as if the sun would always be  
pounding through the air

until it was night.  
We were all in bed,  
guarding our heads  
against the cockroaches.

At night, we slipped into sticky sheets  
that slid across our sweaty bodies while we waited,  
listening to the city outside

drifting off to sleep.

BANG!

Even in the humid climate  
shivers crystallized our bones  
as we wished we were home  
and away from their guns.

BANG! BANG!

Hoping it wouldn't be this way every night,  
lying awake,  
praying for heaven's sake  
that no one was dead.

In the morning, the sun poured in  
the way it had everyday before,  
warmed us to the core like chicken soup from home.



But there was no chicken soup.  
Only mangos.

Mangos were safe and plentiful,  
fresh every day—  
edible in so many ways, ripened or not.

BANG!

Were we to fear again, in the light of day  
that the guards outside the shops and bars  
with their military guns and metal stars  
took no sleep?

Sister saw the looks in our eyes  
and laughed with her own,  
like there was no reason to fear that someone had just died.

She pointed to the trees where the mangos hung  
so far from my tongue  
that it was painful.

I watched as one fruit fell,  
landing on the aluminum roof with a

BANG!

and I understood why she had laughed.

- *Emily Lenhard, Junior*

## I Guess I Have Never Really Understood...

Crying out, my body relinquishes its status as healthy.

Distress! Distress!

I feel as though I've lost a pound or two.

The amount of snot I eject  
saturates a myriad of tissues,  
at least a box or two.

This is followed by an all too well  
remembered feeling where screws  
feel as though they become lodged in my throat  
with every gulp.

Amidst relaxation,  
or at least as much relaxation as  
can be had in such a state (one  
that feels all too much like Michigan,  
where the climate will only offer  
unsatisfaction), I desire only one  
medicinal liquid.

The most consumed drink globally.

Mommy carefully steeps  
throat ointment for me.

Served with a kiss, she wishes  
her love could cure anything, it's nice.  
Hopeful, my first sip comes & goes  
and the lubricant that would loosen the  
screw's grip on my throat did not.

Laced with honey & the love of my  
mother, that which cascades down  
my throat cannot be disguised.

Incapable of nothing except  
instilling more agony, the entire cup  
is beckoned into my system by my  
mother's presence whilst  
treacherous taste terrorizes  
thine throat.

Certain vows, such as this one, strike  
such a deep emotional chord within  
individuals that they are rendered  
unbreakable.

I'm never drinking Lipton tea  
again.



UNTITLED – stoneware  
James Zordan, Senior

- Paul Wizniuk, Senior

## Ode to Beards

One could argue that Jesus wore it best  
as depicted famously by da Vinci,  
all iconic in its fullness,  
yet later plucked by his tormentors;  
or perhaps Che Guevara  
reviled by some, adored by others,  
captured stoically for an eternity  
in his beret of liberation.

You represent wholly:  
wisdom, knowledge,  
virility, yet still:  
crudeness, simplicity, and  
an air of eccentric disposition.

Hirsute as you are,  
primitive and wild in names like  
donegal, garibaldi, junco, verdi  
or simply  
full, goatee, stubble, and  
soul patch. You present a yearning

cut deep in society's psyche  
for meaning, for depth,  
understanding,  
for truth, justice,  
for style. In vogue,

plaited with interwoven threads  
of gold and red,  
adorned and decorated  
with beads on hippies,  
ringlets on orthodox Jews,  
gray, white, and unkempt  
on the faces of judges and philosophers,  
or trimmed neatly on hipsters. You rule

sovereign as a king  
or a cow. You mask,  
you define,  
you strengthen jaw lines  
and frame lips.  
You nuzzle the neck of my one true love.

*- Robert Luebke, Junior*

## Small Game

1.

My grandfather makes sandwiches  
with mayonnaise and cheese, the way I like them.  
Two for each of us, and I eat one sitting outside  
his old mobile home that can't hide away in these woods  
while he pours coffee in a silver bullet of a thermos.

2.

He chews kernels of yellow corn between his teeth,  
grinding like tires on a gravel road. His brown hairs  
are tipped with white and in the wet wind they glisten.  
This morning he stretched those bone thin legs that carry  
and hide him among the stalks of fallen brown corn.

3.

When I walk next to my grandfather, I hear his massive boots  
turn up clumps of dirt and ice that crack and crumble.  
I carry the Swiss rifle he's lent to me on my arm  
like a soldier. Its wood stock is polished and in its reflection  
I can see myself marching like the soldiers I often pretend to be.  
My grandfather flicks my ear. He tells me we aren't here to pretend.

4.

While the sun settles the fog, he's leaping over the rows  
of dirt and stalk, playfully straying from his mother.  
Over his right ear sticks velvet shed bone, straight  
like a dagger. The other side has an extra tip,  
a starting branch like a sapling adorning his head.  
Three dull points, his only protection.

5.

I sit in my grandfather's lap, the gun barrel leaning through the cut out window of the tree fort we've climbed into. I tell myself that soldiers most definitely do not sit in the laps of their grandfathers. He taps my shoulder and points to the open field portrait the cut out makes, to the leaping over the thinning rows. I wait for its pause, puffs of steam carrying through the air from my wet nose, my eye set through the center of a scope. When my finger squeezes the trigger, the crack pops and rings in my ear; the cold metal sticks to my skin.

6.

Hooves kicking dirt and brushing the brown paper leaves hanging from stalks, he stops, his bowled nostrils streaming steam, a tired tongue hanging, lapping crystals of frozen water from the grasses. And then a crack fills his ears as quickly as it fills the hill valley. He jumps, but lands on his side, stomach and lungs pulled tight as the hot tension fills his arched chest. His eyes water and drip dry in the cold.

7.

My grandfather tells me I've become a man today. With a knife, he draws a line over the white hairs of the belly and, along with a warm stench, stained red bowels pull from the cavity. I stand back and watch my grandfather play butcher, my wetting eyes stinging in the dry cold. I have to tell myself standing out there in boots covered with shredded corn leaves, stalk, and dirt, that soldiers most definitely do not cry or sit in the laps of their grandfathers.

- *Rian Bosse, Senior*

## The Lineup

*inspired by "Navarre Siblings" by Chris LaPorte*

In the summer the winds blew dirt  
from the fields against the back of our white house.  
In the fall my father routinely made us wash the siding,  
rubbing off the thin layer of brown from the long strips of wood  
and clumps of black from under each overlapping layer.  
But we hadn't yet then, our work being spent all that summer  
on our humble acres of corn bowed down in the sun  
that never let it rain enough through those burnt months.  
*We have to do it now*, my mother said,  
*this weekend while we can still get him down*,  
talking about the church photographer  
who took the portraits of each family  
every five years for the church directory.  
And it had to be there, back behind our old house,  
against that weathered wall where we had no windows  
that looked into our disheveled home,  
because we had nowhere else on our coverless land,  
no standing trees or brush, just the backdrop of our fields  
that hung like the head of my hapless father.

So on that day  
we stood over the crisp ferns  
fallen drab against the house in the brisk of fall.  
My father in his only suit,  
shifting his glasses over his nose  
hiding his apprehensive eyes,

my mother with my baby sister in her arms  
telling me to take my hands out of my pockets  
and to look respectable,  
my older brother standing in his loose tie,  
a space of dirty white created in his short distance from us,  
the longing for somewhere else  
hanging off his straight face.

The photograph sat over the center of our fire place that year,  
taken in black and white  
as if it had been sketched with the thin dirt of our own fields.  
The dark lines between the wood  
measuring us up to their inches,  
until my father took it down the next fall  
and made sure we never let it all build up  
like that again.

- *Rian Bosse, Senior*



### **Moby-Dick, or The Chase**

We chased but knew not why  
This illusive beast eluded our try

Days turned her more ambiguous  
Certain observations became less true  
Our facts were our experience then—  
Subjective perceptions of the blue

Her ghostly-white skin reflected  
Man's vast erroneous depictions  
Behind her wet eyes lay hidden words—  
Ages of interpretations

- *Asa Woodbeck, Junior*

## Treatment

“Breathe.  
All the way from your toes,”  
she says.

Body stretched out,  
his clothes tucked away in a sealed plastic bag.  
Packed with the free socks he always takes—but never wears.

All metal items taken off. Check.

He heads out.

[            ]

He’s ready, they tell us.

The waiting room  
is silent; it’s 6:30 in the morning.  
(I suddenly have the urge to hold my brother’s  
hand, but do not).

I can tell this is old news to him,  
our shoes squeaking on the sparkly clean floor at every step.  
To him, these are familiar halls, familiar smells, accepted silence  
among the exhausted faces who were once sitting next to us.  
For many, this is where reality hits,  
while for others, this is where they hope to find it.

We enter the ward.

“Welcome back,” she says cheerfully,  
and yet some part of her seems stale—  
much like the Saltines my dad will soon be eating.

He is not shaking.  
No magnetic force leaping  
from vein to vein. He looks



normal, not too different from before,  
his eyes still adjusting to real life.  
Or at least this new one he has once again entered.

Breathing natural, now, that is.  
No instruction needed.

And he's cognizant.  
Cracker crumbs and soda drips  
collect in the corners of his mouth.

"Ok, better. I feel almost normal," he says.

"When is the next one?" he then asks.

My brother and I look at each other,  
our eyes wondering, did it work?

Only time will tell.

- *Monica Rischiotto, Junior*



CASS CORRIDOR – graphite  
*Patrick Maguire, Senior*

## Smoke

*by Erin Lodes, Sophomore*

“I don’t know what the fuck he’s talking about,” he said, and I looked up at him from where I sat on the carpet at his feet, where I’d been the whole time his roommate and he had been arguing. His face was stone, his eyes full of frigid fire. I knew it was coming and I was ready for it as he put his laptop on the floor and got up from the big armchair I was leaning against in a rush of harsh, deliberate movement. I shifted out of the way, but his leg still scraped up against my arm and my shoulder. The contact pulled my body towards him; I started to tip over, and I had to catch myself with one hand pressing hard against the floor.

He didn’t apologize. I wasn’t surprised.

I pushed myself back up straight, not wanting to fall, but I could not keep my body from turning towards him, could not keep my eyes from tracing the familiar contours of his shoulders and his back, the places where his shirt clung and the places it hung loose. The quick rhythm of his feet and the swishing sound his jeans made were a song I had heard too many times but could not get enough of.

He didn’t turn around and look at me, left on the floor of his living room alone, silently watching him leave. He went out to the small room at the front of the house that had windows overlooking the street. When he yanked the door shut behind him I didn’t even flinch, used to that gunshot by now. I just stiffened my spine a little bit more and shifted my gaze back to the TV.

It was like I didn’t breathe in those few seconds; all of me was too focused on his retreating form. So when my lungs expanded, I felt them take in all the emptiness he’d left in his wake. And when they collapsed, I filled the room with all of the comforting words I was not brave enough to offer him. My fingers clenched around the fabric of my jeans as I drew my knees in closer. I knew what he wanted, what he needed; he would be smoking it by now. He’d already been pulling the pack out of his jeans pocket when he was walking the five steps from the chair to the door.

But I got up. Because I wanted to. Because maybe, just maybe, he wanted me there. Maybe he needed me too. Maybe.

I rose up on unsteady, stiff legs, and crossed a carpet made of broken eggshells. I opened the door and felt the winter air and cigarette smoke hit my face. Willingly, I entered the shroud of midnight he had tucked around himself like a blanket. Softly, I pulled the door closed behind me, shutting out the light. He had the windows cracked open, and the freezing night air was seeping in to curl cold fingers around me.

“Hey,” I said into the dark, looking at the shadows of his face. The fire of his anger had been replaced by jagged ice and impassable frozen tundra that did not belong in those warm eyes. I shoved my hands deep into my jean pockets so

I would not reach out and wrap my arms around him in a futile attempt to melt away his glacial walls.

He didn't look at me.

I walked over and sat down on the bench that was next to his chair, and I looked out the window, same as he was doing, trying to find what he saw there, trying to understand.

Smokey silence hung over us, it was so heavy, and I wished it was the weight of warm arms around me. But it wasn't. It was this fog he created, made it hard to see through, made it hard to walk through, and I grew exhausted when I tried to find my way to him. So instead I tucked my arms around myself, settled in, ready to wait. I watched the burning glow of his love, trapped between two fingers as he brought it to his lips, wondering if I was feeling jealous or not.

"Why don't we switch?" He got up and I mimicked him, falling back into following, steps to a dance he'd forced me to learn so I didn't trip over all my unasked questions. I took his comfortable chair; he took the unforgiving bench.

For some reason this small caring gesture gave me courage.

"You okay?" It was a pitiful attempt at penetration but the small candle was all the light I could bear to give; it was all the courage I had. I waited, looking at him openly this time, knowing he wouldn't meet my gaze here in the dark.

"Yeah, fuck, I don't care."

I shouldn't have been expecting anything more. I don't know why I still hoped for an opening in the murky swirling smoke shield around him; I don't know why I still attempted to burn away this haze, or why I kept coming back to get lost inside it.

He stood up; he'd finished his cigarette. He exhaled smoke and I inhaled as he walked past me, marveling at how a smell I had once despised was now something that I clung to.

He could have said something. He could have reached out, reached for me. I should have known better. Maybe I did. He pushed the door open roughly, always roughly, and went through it. I didn't move, just waited. He pulled the door after him, leaving it open just a crack, and I stared at the line of blazing light he'd drawn across the dark room. It pulled me after him, but I resisted, looking away.

I breathed in the traces of burning smoke he'd left behind, holding onto a bit of his warmth. But it faded, and I shivered in the cold, wrapped my arms tighter, digging my fingers into the soft flesh of my sides. And then I sat and I stared out the window so I couldn't watch him leave again.

## This is a Poem for My Mom

my fragile, concrete mother  
when did you get so small?  
    shrinking in my arms  
        I hold on tighter  
to calm your raging seas  
    and I realize  
        at nineteen  
    how you gave me  
sinews and strings  
    of your muscles  
    bits and pieces  
    of your bones  
until I could stand  
    on my own  
you placed each feather  
sewed them all together  
and then you gave me  
    the beat  
        of your heart  
and watched me fly away  
    so I write this for you  
my fragile, concrete mother  
    to give you the stars  
    I found in the sky

*-Erin Lodes, Sophomore*

## The Diamond

by Erica Meyers, Senior

They could see everything. She could feel nothing.

“There’s no way in Hell I’m going up there.”

The air around her face was thick, a breathy gray fog. The mountain was sweating from its sharp silver edges and tickling her face, throat, weak lungs. After climbing for an hour her skin was seeping with perspiration, and yet her forearms, shins, and cheeks screamed the color of a cardinal’s robes, each knuckle of her hands an icy, papal white as they cracked with each crag her fingers clutched and each crevice they dug into.

Dry heaving and wet, she folded into a cranny to rest, melting into the throne of cold metamorphosed sandstone. She could see her reflection in his glasses as he knelt down and wondered if he could read her face, glimpsing that in this moment she wanted nothing more than to push him.

To watch him glide down, ricochet and bounce like a children’s toy, a faceless, lifeless paper doll.

He arranged the holiday to salvage what they had lost in their marriage.

Where had the art gone? The design born of bodies and whispers?

“You’ve come this far. No point in stopping now.” He held out his hand and lifted her up, steady, careful to not shake their balance, cut the limited bond between hiking boot and slippery stone. The panorama pulled her eyes down, a visible gravity tugging at her from the ocean coast half a mile below them, a greedy child wanting her all to itself. She thought she could smell the salt.



## Territory of Tall Tales

*with thanks to Kate Braverman*

I am always hiding  
like a country in fear of exploration  
somewhere near the edges of the earth.  
You may not help yourself to the land.  
Nor attempt to seek my treasure.  
Maybe a locket safeguarding ruby.  
Don't try, I have it buried.

From this life I have my skin.  
I encase it in black broken glass.  
I make it so you can't see through.  
I have taken away all resemblance  
of sunlight, stars, ice, crystal,  
transparency and failing.

I said I have no roads.  
I said I have no directions.  
You don't know my desperate  
hurricanes or my faults where earthquakes  
ache on the forsaken  
plains of carefully concealed secrets.

Take your fictitious fairytales,  
pictures of princesses and shining  
knights on white horses.

Take your weapons.  
Take the cannon, guns, and bombs  
and even the ground that you have walked upon,  
digging into my earth like a poison in my land  
devastating everywhere you step.

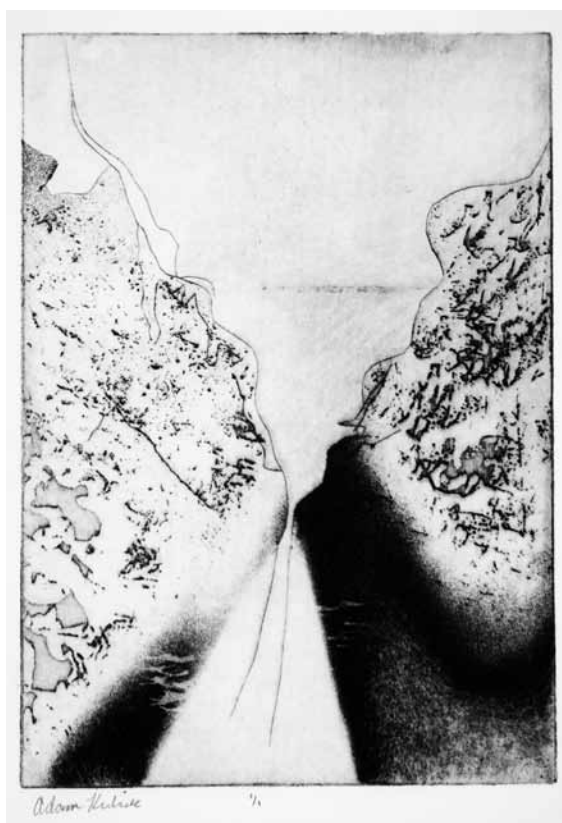
What I am will remain mystery  
like the ending to a novel  
you thought to be too dull.  
It could be a hidden El Dorado  
or a decaying neglected castle  
you cannot enchant anymore.

You will not be able to pen  
the gallant adventures of attempted  
exploitation that would have been travesty.

I will be for you a territory  
of tall tales. You will never savor  
the colors that taste like musical  
calligraphy painting my constellations,

or what my language whispers.

- Erin Lodes, *Sophomore*



UNTITLED – line etching/aquatint printmaking  
Adam Kubiak, Senior

## Pale Ale

I throw my phone across the floor and fall back on the pillow, the fan whispering a white noise lullaby, ignore the chill from the occasional gusts that find their way up my short shorts I wear to bed. The alarm goes off again and I knock over a beer left over from the night before, turn off the beep; my dry hands reach for the nearest t-shirt, fumbling. I touch a set of keys.

I wonder how she could have taken off without her keys safely attached to a lanyard, “house,” “car,” “work.” On the pillow next to me I spot a strand of hair not my own, extracted with hands, scientific method of experimentation, remembering the chill of vertebrae pushing through skin, the shadow of beer on our breath, finding out just how short her short shorts

are. I slide out of bed, forgetting to exchange the short shorts for some less skimpy attire, walk downstairs with the keys, silent, tip toe, the floor warm under a blanket of beer bottles and silly string and sleeping drunks without pillows or comforters, just their coats, open mouthed, drooling, a chill and shudder here and there. I cup my mouth with my hands

and blow hot air into them once or twice. Rub my hands for friction. She’s not here, nor is her purse, her short shorts, or the rest of her six-pack we left in the refrigerator to chill in case of parched throats. I clear some cans and set the keys on a countertop, march back upstairs and throw my face into a pillow, ignoring the blinking red light on my phone, and the puddle of beer.

I used to hate the taste, preferring strong cheap liquor to beer. Rubbing alcohol amnesia, face first falls into snow banks, hands sliced and diced trying to perform knife tricks, pillows over faces, hellos and goodbyes in basement corners, short shorts and Hooters tank-tops, learning every nook and cranny for missing keys, pockets full of numbers, batted eyelashes, “I’ll see you?” “We’ll chill.”



“A taste of karmatic medicine,” I think. The wind-chill  
blasting at the old glass panes of my window keep the puddle of beer  
frosty, so when I reach for my phone to call her the cold isn't keys  
but moist hoppy ale. I start dozing off when the mattress shifts and hands  
find their way to my own, knees behind knees, short short  
to short short, two heads on a flattened, stained, lint-covered pillow.

Other hands have fit before and other hands may just as well paint that chill  
that the short short sporting babe seems to be so good at, sober or beer  
induced lust; I shift the pillow so she has space, half-consciously mentioning her  
keys.

- *Erica Meyers, Senior*



## **Returning**

Will you peel back the pages of my hardened core,  
and remind me of the words that are written there?  
Read to me the story of my heart.  
Tell me by the lakeside, of truth and faith.  
Ripples of change that brush and mold,  
and roots that grow in rich, fertile ground.  
Sing to me the song that drew me to the water,  
and I will find my way again and drink deep.

Then my roots will be stronger still,  
and I will be alive again.

- *Mary Grace Guild, Senior*

## Talk Back

*by Nicholle Robertson, Senior*

The night I found out you died I didn't feel a thing. I sat sunk into that cracked leather couch as my mom whispered to your mom over the phone hoping I didn't hear. When she walked over I knew something was wrong—I knew what was wrong. Rikki was crying and crying, her face stoplight red, sopping wet from her salted tears. Shouldn't I have been the one having that reaction? I mean you were MY best friend, mine. So, she shouldn't be the one crying, I should have been. I should have been the one who couldn't hold herself together. She's always been about making a show.

You were sick—this way was better for you. No more needles stabbed into your thin blue veins. No more lonely nights in the hospital, the speckled black and white screen flashing from the Disney movie no one changed for you. No more snickers from down the table in the cafeteria at our small elementary school, “That girl has no hair,” or in the store when little kids (littler than us) asked their moms, “Why does that girl look like a boy, Mommy?” since the radiation had taken your long, wavy, blonde hair away. No more hearing rhythmic beeps from the three machines you were hooked up to at a time. No one was saying, “Be careful girls, you don't want Mickell to get hurt,” even though we were just having fun. No more missing the “good” t.v. shows, birthday parties, sleep overs and late night sledding in your backyard because “you need rest.” No more being a normal kid. Although, I guess you weren't.

Yeah—I guess that's why I wasn't sad.

The week after you died—and I'm not sure if you saw this in Heaven or wherever you are—I woke up in a cold sweat. Uncontrollable shaking from the coldness I'd felt since you were gone. I wobbled into the living room and climbed into my mom's lap making that same black, cracked leather couch squeak from the pressure. With my ripped up, seams missing, dirty Arthur doll against my cheek, those same salt-filled tears that rolled down my sisters cheeks a week ago encompassed mine. Shaking. Cold. Gagging. I missed you. I was certain I was dying, too. Someone had to keep you company, anyway and I wanted it to be me.

I wasn't dying after all—although sometimes I wished I would have.

“It's finally hit her,” my mom said to my, then, step-father as she stroked my messy, undone, bed-ridden, long, jet black pony tail.

What hit me? Nothing hit me. I was sad is all. I missed my friend. My friend who I'd never seen again. I wanted to play and laugh and see her in school. But, I never would.

I would never see the glow of happiness around your smile that took your entire face up. I would never hear your uproarious belly laugh that caused a contagion of laughter all around. I could never talk to you about the cute boys

(which you did more of anyway). We'd never be able to spend dawn to dusk at the beach, fingers in the water seeing how pruned they could really get, or sled until they felt like they were falling off. No more sitting on your old, green shag carpet counting how many Beanie Babies you had, gushing over the fact you only needed three more. No more singing Backstreet Boys at the top of our lungs, or flailing our arms and legs around your mom in the kitchen as she made PB&J while we danced to Nsync (Who cared if you had to be a Backstreet girl or Nsync lady, we chose both).

I would never have you again. I would never have my best friend again. My other half. My better half (even though I'm a twin).

And that I could not handle. You weren't suffering anymore, sure. But, I was. I missed you. That's all.

Every day for three months I woke up, the same thing happened: Cold sweats. Crying. Shaking. Three months I couldn't sleep—I didn't sleep (and neither did my mom). I sat with Arthur in her lap as she rocked back and forth, back and forth sucking in her scent of laundry soap, baby throw up (gross) and perfume, listening to her hum softly in my ear trying to make me fall asleep—only to fail.

One day, finally, I didn't wake up. One day I slept through the whole night. One day the pain of missing you didn't keep me up. I found you in my dreams—in my memories. You could still be my best friend—just not in the normal way. But, we weren't normal. And, anyways, some way was better than no way.

I could talk to you in my head. And you could talk back (they call it a consciousness now, I guess). I remember those days at the beach, singing Backstreet boys (AND Nsync), late nights counting Beanie Babies and dancing in the kitchen. They became my reality—I spent more time in them, with you, than in the “real world.”

I learned to love in those three months. How to carry someone in my heart. How to keep you even though you were gone. You taught me how to be happy in your life. And in your death...you taught me to love, to hold on to those we can't see, to remember. You taught me how to roll around in the sand, to sing at the top of my lungs, to live again.

## To Soothe the Sun

The blue sky was oblivious to the  
wildfire dancing across his skin.  
Shadows and sweat pooled  
in his eyes as a subtle headache pinched  
his face as he gazed with all stillness  
over the tractor wheel and down  
the rows of corn  
with husks swaying  
in the afternoon sunlight.  
As the wheels trudge and churn  
he blinks.  
Beads of sweat cascade  
through the red stone  
riverbanks of his wrinkles.  
He dismounts from the tractor and stretches  
his back. Skin tight, red, and numb  
envelops him in a warmth  
suffocating and pulsing.  
He sets his dusty boots  
by the door and sits  
gingerly on the couch;  
every fold, thread, and cushion  
tickles his skin with sparks,  
stoking the embers,  
setting the fire ablaze.

He hears the creak of the floor  
and sees her smile  
as she sits down by her burning man.  
She sits and presses her hand on his face  
and doesn't rake the coals, but rather  
deliberately clutches  
his arm and rests  
against his chest  
to smother  
to soothe  
the sun within his skin.

- *Samuel Granger, Senior*

## Your Daughter

Your daughter's like a faucet, mother.  
All things being said without much thought.  
Thinking words before doing, words breaking over balconies.  
Your daughter has those words that scare boys away, mother.

Your daughter has that glare,  
that jaw,  
that question on her face.

All things being said too much, too quickly, too soft,  
too loud at lunch time. Mother.  
Your daughter has all those words that sit perched  
on telephone poles over the highway.  
Big black birds,  
her words.

- Taylor M. Divine, *Freshman*



SIGNATURE PLAID; SELF-PORTRAIT – oil on canvas  
*Blake Stapleton, Senior*

## Rubber and Tar

*by Samantha Rinkus, Senior*

The Brighton High School track was illuminated. A steady stream of light surrounded it, engulfed it, radiated from its depths. This light didn't come from the setting sun behind the tall bleachers, or the cold stadium lights which had just switched on as spotlights for the dozens of people who milled below. No, the light which was cast among the painted lanes and green field came from the small flames which flickered around the inside of the eight-lane track. Trapped in white paper bags, these flickering flames of hope emitted rays on the footsteps upon the rubber and tar. I was eight years old when I first witnessed this walk, this parade of soldiers, this new meaning to the circle of life, this Relay for Life.

Upon our arrival, the first thing I remember noticing was the atmosphere. It was relaxed, nothing like what I expected when entering a place full of disease, fear, death. There was a barbeque going, kids running around laughing, adults standing and talking, others out on the track walking. I didn't realize the importance until later on in the evening, as I watched more candles being lit in memory of those lost to the illness, or in hope for those who were currently fighting. Looking at all the women who had fought and won, I finally felt a spark of hope ignite in my heart. Then, the victims walk began, and I stood by and watched as my mom joined the other cancer victims. I will never forget that sight: the women walking in the flicker of candlelight, their hollow cheeks and wrapped heads the only sign of their disease. I watched in wonder as these women smiled and laughed, as if nothing was wrong, or maybe because everything was wrong, I couldn't tell. But still they marched; against all odds and expectations, they marched.

Shadows of these women follow me now when I step onto the track. No, perhaps not of the women themselves, for only my mother's face comes forward in the memory. It's the shadow of their fight, of my mother's fight, of the deeper meaning that these circles of rubber and tar represent. When I see my mother smiling at me from the fence after a race, I see a different smile. A smile revealed by the flickering light of life, a smile that circumstance made unlikely, made inappropriate, even. It was a smile in the face of the fight, in the line of battle, in the pain of triumph and defeat. My mother was the victor in her war, and she left her scars behind on the finish line, among the rubber and tar.

## Ode to the Fly

*with Thanks to Emily Dickinson*

I heard the wind whistle as I Lay dying;  
The cold swept—through the Door.  
I fingered my wound as I strained—trying,  
To hear the incessant Wind.

The tiny, creeping Cracks—  
Of the ancient, Failing door  
Let in the well-meaning crystals, Salt,  
From sand on a distant Shore.

I closed my eyelids, let it go,  
The Sounds that tied me to Him  
And lie back, finally resting—  
A friend to the Whistling wind.

With white-burned cold, of moving air  
The Wind grew close to Whisper.  
And then the sound, it drew despair,  
And then I could not hear to hear.

*- Lauren F. Carlson, Junior*

## Racing Fuel is Bubblegum and Childhood is All Things Sweet

by Danielle Alexander, *Sophomore*

I have never smelled anything as sweet as burning asphalt. There is a coolant they put on it at race tracks that smells like Bubblicious gum the exact instant you open the wrapper—only stronger.

As a child, I would sit on the rickety aluminum bleachers and close my eyes as tires squealed and sickly sweet smoke, thick like hookah, wrapped me up in my itchy fireproof suit. In those moments, with my eyes closed, I wanted to be the first female drag racer, even though I knew there were already others. I felt an urgency in my eight-year-old heart, a quickening as the lights turned green and the cars roared and screeched like great beasts of some magical world—perhaps Harry Potter.

I would wait in the shade of our 1970's Winnebago between rounds, reading the aforementioned as a washcloth from the cooler dripped ice water down my back. I would read until the water turned lukewarm, no longer dripping, but still a comfort to my sun-cooked shoulders. I would read until my father would appear. He would always nod—just once; sure, quick, and true—and I would know it was time. I would wait for this moment all day, anticipating seeing him walk around the side of the trailer, a Lucas Oil Series baseball cap on his head, his beard three inches long, even in the summer time. He would appear—my dad, the same as always—thin, with big, thick glasses that were too large for his small face, his belt buckle of a cowboy on a bucking horse glinting in the sun. He would appear, perhaps with a jug of racing fuel in hand, or a tire gauge, or an anemometer to measure the wind speed on the track—always something—and I would jump up, ready to race.

My Dorito stained fingers made their way into fireproof gloves, a neck guard replaced the now-warm wash cloth and the itchy jacket went over my sunburn with a wince. My short legs would swing over the windshield of the Plexiglas dragster—carefully, first right, then left.

Next comes the five-point harness, the long wait, the claustrophobic helmet. I would crash my helmet into the padding of my roll cage as I waited, reckless, suddenly, as the time grew nearer.

Finally it would come—the smell of the track, like bubblegum and racing fuel. The smell is so clear in my mind—so clear like the moment the light turns green, and your foot connects with the pedal, and you are no longer a person but just forward-moving motion, and for maybe six or seven seconds you are free of everything but the competition.

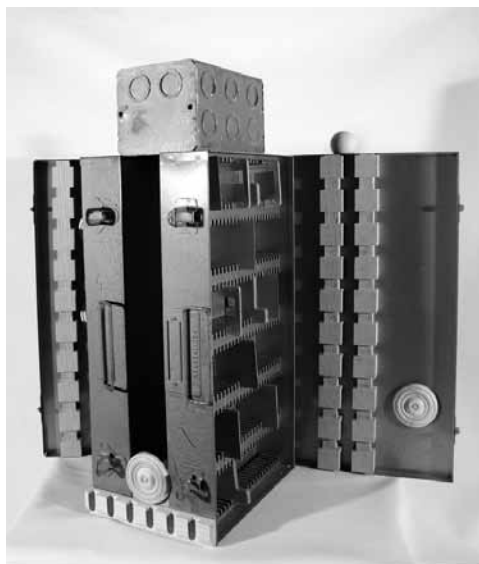
Years later, with Harry Potter growing dusty on the bookshelf, and Doritos sometimes an acceptable dinner in my insanely busy life, I long to return to the place that was the time before my father died and before I knew what it was to miss a smell that you can't find anywhere else but the one place you can't go.



## **My Mother's Laughter**

*by Erin Lilly, Sophomore*

"I'm so happy to be getting rid of you!" My mother's smile was perfect, turned up in all the right places, not forced. I almost believed her. Putting the last of my boxes on the floor, I flashed an incomplete smile. She did a little dance, her happiness taking up all of the space in the small room. Her arms lifted the ceiling and her feet shook the floor. Her fingers made a sharp popping sound, creating the beat for her body to follow. It was contagious. I found myself laughing without thinking; the noise flew from my mouth before I could stop it. "Now that you're gone I'm gonna throw myself a wild party to celebrate." I couldn't quite hear her over my own voice. Our laughter filled the room, bouncing off the walls and intensifying to escape the narrow enclosure. Sounds slipped through the thin walls and cracks around the door into the busy hallway. And then we were silent. Before she left, she took me in her arms, held me close. I stood in the middle of my room alone, realizing just how empty it was without her.



WOOD STEEL MILL – metal and wood  
*Karen Sitron Haight, Senior*

## Do You Remember?

*by Samantha Rinkus, Senior*

The dock is barely visible in the corner of the photograph. Without that slight sliver of silver from behind my shoulder, it would have appeared we were standing aboard the boat which is looming from behind him. This is a good moment for us, brother and sister, bonding, a rare and opportune instant for this picture. Whoever took it must have seen us, must have noticed the rarity of this occasion. The date and time are unknown and irrelevant; what matters is centered perfectly in the frame, a true Kodak moment.

Our faces are scrunched. Whether in jest or against the summer sun, I cannot say. Although both of us are usually showing off our dimples, the family inheritance, in this moment only mine are visible. A happy smile of finally being able to rest my head on his shoulder; although not older, he is certainly taller. Although taller, he is certainly not stronger, but I hide his thin frame well. He looks solid in this picture, strong, and I think that's why he likes it so much. Little brother, we've had so few moments like this before. Now, time together is stolen, the span of land and water which have separated us for the past few years has left its mark. Our childhood years of bickering, at times escalating to true disgust and abhorrence, still ring in my ears and guilty revulsions send chills down my spine.

We are both culprits of these constant attacks against the other's self-esteem and self-respect, this I know. But I was so horrible, so mean-hearted, so angry. Why was I so angry? You were always so quiet, so small; home was not an escape for you from the bullies at school. How did you manage? Do you even remember, now, all that I am guilty of? Do you remember the yelling? I yelled in anger, I yelled in frustration. I yelled for the TV, I yelled for the computer, I yelled for the toy, the book, the game. I yelled because you saw my flaws, I yelled because I knew you didn't share in many of them. I yelled at you for being weak, for crying. But, most of all, I yelled because you wouldn't say the things I said. I yelled because, many times, you didn't yell back. I yelled because I could. I yelled that I wished you were never born, that I wished you would run away. I yelled that I hated you, that I wanted anyone else than you for a brother. Do you remember this? Is that what you think of when you look upon this stolen moment in the summertime?

I never hated you, little brother. I never hated you for one second. I envied you, like I've always envied you. Now, I am proud of you, proud of what you've become, proud of who you are, who you are becoming. Mom always listens for it

now, the fighting. She always waits for the moment when I, you, we would snap and revert back. Will it happen again? I don't know, but I hope not, pray not. It's nice, now, this new peace, this discovered tolerance and compassion. Maybe it's only temporary.

But here, this picture, this moment, we have evidence. It is shown here, the capabilities we possess. You were my archenemy, my nemesis, the ultimate foe. But here, here is peace, here is happiness, here is love. Here is our future, little brother, it's hanging on my wall. Here is the first time I can really see the resemblance. We have the same nose; I never knew that. Thank you, little brother, for staying strong. Thank you for not letting me destroy you, because if I succeeded in that, it would have destroyed me as well. Thank you for this picture, a treaty for the future ages of sibling love, not rivalry.



### **Conqueror of Our World**

*by Danielle Alexander, Sophomore*

We grew up in dry hay and pine needles, in a gravel pit out back, in our imaginations, because Lord knows there was nowhere else to go. We would run, run, run down that old path, my self-mutilated bangs plastered to my face with sweat, until we reached our “clubhouse”, an abandoned fifth wheel camper with a plywood door that smelled of mold and spilled Kool Aid. It was here that I brought my books, running with them rolled up in the front of my shirt when I was six and I had myself convinced that our house would catch fire like the neighbors and destroy my Laura Ingalls Wilder collection. It was here that I was Pocohantas, a cowboy, a Civil War soldier, and I had you so convinced that scraggly bush was our embankment and the enemy was just over that dirt hill with the rotting cardboard box, that you cried like a girl and shot me in the shin with your beebee gun for telling mom. It was here under rolling gray clouds of the last of summer that we wrote and conducted our first play with broken crayons and scrap paper, our only prop a sword made out of a moldy old spoon that we dug up worms with. It was here that you stood tall, proud and undefeated, my older brother, conqueror of our world.

## **Today My Brother Cleaves Unto His Wife**

*With thanks to Yehuda Amichai*

Today my brother cleaves unto his wife  
and driving home, I ignore my parents.  
The glowing groom and cross groomsman  
both succeed, splitting off.  
We don't want to argue *now*  
about our oaths, or wearing white,  
or Mom and Dad's suggestions.

Then husband and hermit, we found their table.  
We were a family a few minutes,  
joking and wincing.

Cleaving away has always been  
the sacramental rite of my family.

*- Jarrod J. Irwin, Sophomore*

## Sturdy Branches

by *Lauren F. Carlson, Junior*

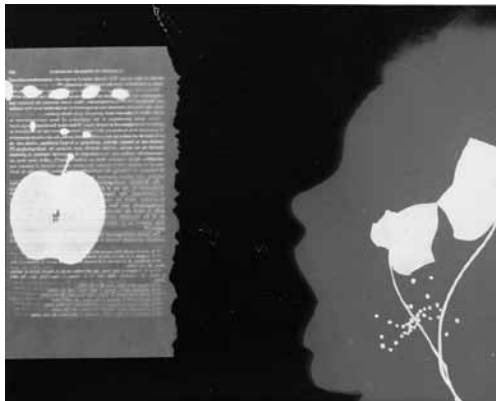
The tree was my home. Amongst its sturdy, ancient branches, I filled my mind with the childhood wonder of 50-cent novels and R.L. Stine. In solitude, above the chatter of crumbling marriages and ten-year-old bully sisters, I measured the words and counted the moments before sudden twilight.

The caterpillars didn't mind. I was one of them. With each page turn, I discovered new exotic places, frightful adventure, and chilling mystery as they inched along, each new section of mountainous bark an eye-opening discovery. The bees, too, were my friends. The rotund, lazy bumblebee zigzagged in an attempt to welcome a small child to his suburban oasis. The stings, as it were, occurred only in the printed words of horror science fiction; I looked up from the page to feel at once safe, in the arms of the forgiving tree.

I could smell the blackberry bush. Sweet, smashed conglomerate that colored the dirt beneath and wasted nothing in the crumbly, earthy pie.

Beyond the carefully plotted shrubbery lay a yard of madness, intensely green in mid-summer and overgrown with ecstatic dandelions. The tree, my safe haven, sprouted up as the ruler of yellow minions that threatened her noble domain.

There I sat, twisted, all knees and happy, dreaming of my fantasy worlds. There I was, mingling reality with fiction, as I turned the page and reveled in the silence of the tree, and the symphony of words within my mind.



FOOD FOR THOUGHT – photogram  
*Bernadette Poirier, Senior*

## Endless Ballet

*by Josh Veal, Junior*

That spring I was cutting through a parking lot when I saw a path and a sign that said “PRIVATE PROPERTY”, and then, “NO TRESPASSING”. Which to me meant, “MAGICAL FOREST”, and “DON’T TRUST THE FAIRIES”. Naturally, I got off and walked my bike between the signs. Frantic leaves reached out across the trail and brushed my legs as they clambered against each other for sunlight. The flowers they were fighting for were in full bloom and the smell penetrated my stuffy nose and sank deep into my nostrils. The scent lingered even as I ducked under a fallen tree and headed down a long, steep hill. At the bottom was a picnic table, barely. The rotting frame might not have supported my bike if it weren’t for the roots and branches acting as crutches, treating the abandoned table like one of their own. My eyes followed the tree’s roots and came to a dock. A dock nestled away under an archway of trees and surrounded by a glistening sheet of water.

I stepped through the portal of branches and out onto the dock with my mouth wide and my eyes wider. Nothing could have prepared me for this. There, tucked away from the rest of the world, was life. I could feel it. The sun danced on ripples sent across the water by spiders and insects gliding across the surface in a frenzied ballet. The trees rose from the ground, not like pickets in a fence, but like an elegant tapestry, spun from the ground up. A hundred different patterns and colors waved to me from across the water. A large bird gracefully skimmed the pond with its long slender wings, searching for a fish made more of meat than bones in the thick teal water. He soared up to his throne, nestled high in the one tree bare of leaves, to overlook his kingdom. His subjects zoomed through the air around me, stopping only for moments to see if they could take me. I shook my head and they moved on. I had no interest in slaying dragonflies and the damselflies weren’t in distress. Their nymphs flitted and frolicked happily under the water, content with their young lives.

So this is the way it was all through spring and summer. When the world was too much and my space was too little, I retreated to the pond. I talked with a hawk, I walked with a deer, and I’m pretty sure a raccoon winked at me. Sometimes I would go at night when the moon was full and the air was crisp. In those nights the world was my canvas and the flashlight was my brush. I would paint masterpieces that disappeared at the flick of the wrist. I conjured up an owl, caught calling for a mate, and a skunk, sending me on my way as fast my legs dared. But the moon made the greatest work of all, the night’s magnum

opus. It spread itself across the pond like nature's blanket. Under it, the world slept, despite the night winds that broke apart the trees' reflections. Fear crept in like the moonlight through the branches as I took in the distorted reality and complete unknown surrounding me. I was at the mercy of the night, and it was exhilarating.

Now, the world is shifting. The cold autumn winds have come and woven dozens of new shades into the tapestry as dying threads fall out. I feel like I belong there. My eyes are still wide and my heart still picks up every time I step out onto that dock. Fantastic images and words come flying into my mind and fill it to the brim. Whenever I need these images I just close my eyes. I'm there, soaring over the endless ballet, dipping my wings into chilled fall water before pitching up towards the distant sun. I come to rest on a fading white limb, worn and frayed with the fond memory of my aging talons, and I'm home.



REMINISCENT – ink on paper  
*Pamela Vander Jagt, Sophomore*

## Red

Damn your red jacket  
and the way it makes my pulse quicken  
and my palms sweat  
and my eyes search out for every hint of redness everywhere.  
It took two weeks of you wearing that jacket  
for everything red to become you.

The juicy flesh of a freshly cut tomato,  
the weathered paint on my uncle's barn,  
my mother's poppies,  
shiny apples piled high at the grocers,  
paper cuts,  
freckles on so many faces,  
they have all become  
your blue eyes  
your sandy brown hair  
your smile.  
Even the siren of a fire truck,  
and all other emergency vehicles by association,  
have become  
you.

Rojo. Russo. Rouge.  
The words slide down my throat  
like sweet strawberry sauce,  
and even the harsh angles of stop signs,  
(God knows I see them often enough)  
remind me that I have given  
14.29% of my color spectrum over to you forever.

I am scared.  
My cheeks,  
they turn red when you open the door for me  
and the words are red in my stomach



burning,  
burning,  
burning like the red embers of a dying fire.  
They want so badly to escape  
and fly through the air like the Red Baron,  
to find their mark in your ears.  
But I keep my lips tight and flash a red, painful smile  
because I don't want you to hurt me.

I don't want to hate the color red.  
I don't want my blood to turn blue and cold every time  
the red shingles of a McDonald's catch my eye.  
Or want to puke when I see sunsets  
or red balloons  
or cherry chunk ice cream.  
I want to keep my color precious,  
to tuck it away in the depths  
of my red, red, peach-pit soul  
where the sun cannot make it fade  
and the harsh fingers of bleach can never touch it.  
I need for my knees to be strong  
and my heart to be warm  
when I see  
red ink on postcards,  
construction paper hearts,  
and fingers stained with the juice of July cherries.

- *Michelle Plumstead, Sophomore*

## Shadow Pirate

by Lindy Hernandez, Senior

Shadows dance in the twilight, flitting past stores, restaurants, and billboards. They mimic and mock in exaggerated silhouettes, conversing in pantomimes that snap to attention when they sense searching eyes. Under the gleam of florescent lights, they leap around grates that spurt white steam from a land below the city streets. Amidst the spectral steam and gathering gloom, a man-boy walks alone.

He trots to music blaring from a set of overly large headphones, unaware of the growing darkness. He turns, striding confidently down a back alley. The only light emits from flashing construction signs around a manhole flanked by two dumpsters.

An old man stumbles out from behind a dumpster. Stringy grey hair and a matted goatee match his oversized, ragged coat. A dark blue cap emblazoned with U.S. VETERAN hides his eyes. Shuffling forward, he spits out a cigarette that glows briefly among a pile of ashes. Looking up, he coughs and asks, “You lost, boy?” in a crusty voice that smells like stale beer.

The man-boy sneers and brushes past.

“Well that’s not very amiable,” the old man murmurs. Squinting, he holds a plastic card out to the construction lights. Louder he announces, “You’re not one of those namby-pamby fairy boys, are you, Peter?”

Stopping abruptly, Peter pulls down the headphones and shoves his hands into empty pockets. “What? Where the...?”

Pivoting around, he spies his driving permit in the man’s left hand. The right arm, raised above his head in a jaunty bow, is missing a hand. The heavily tattooed forearm is split in two, creating pinchers that hold Peter’s wallet aloft.

“*What happened to your hand?*” he wants to ask. Instead he says, “How did you get my wallet?”

“One learns to make do,” the old man drawls, rocking back on his heels. “Was in the Navy, I was. Sailed on the Jolly Roger.” He pauses, tipping his cap up to reveal a network of thin, pink scars crisscrossing his jowls. “Finest ship ever, in my humble opinion.”

Peter rakes a hand through his blue-streaked hair and approaches the old man. “Whatever, dude. Just hand it over.”

The old man considers Peter’s outstretched hand and grins wide, baring a few blackened teeth. “Not yet, Peter. You have to pay the toll.”

“What do you want, old man?” he barks, taking another step closer.

“Me? I’m jus’ your average monger, come out to look for a bargain. Ain’t we all?” He winks.

Peter reflexively steps back. Standing straighter he states, “Look. I don’t know what drugs you’re on, but if you’ve got anymore, let me know.”

“Pathetic,” growls the old man. “You’ll have to do better’n that. What’s it gonna be, Peter m’boy?”

Peter huffs and checks his watch. “What do you want?”

“How ‘bout your shadow?”

“What?” Peter glimpses his shadow from the corner of his eye. “Sure,” he says, throwing up his arms. “Whatever. Just give me the wallet—and my license—or I’ll have to come back with my boys. They won’t be so patient.”

Undaunted, the old man grimaces and spits out the side of his mouth. “I’m taking whatever cash you have,” he grumbles, holding the wallet in the crook of his elbow and looting through it with his remaining hand.

Peter advances and snatches up the wallet. “Fine. It’s only ten dollars anyway.” He throws the dollar bills at the old man’s feet and backs away, saluting him with both middle fingers.

“Be gone with you!” thunders the old man, but Peter barely hears him over the music he turned up on his headphones.

The old man retrieves an outdated prosthetic claw from one of his pockets. Two of the three claws are broken, leaving one long, sharpened metal hook. He follows Peter on steady, silent feet to the end of the alley. A truck passes by, washing them in the light. For a moment, Peter’s shadow is elongated, stretching all the way to the man with the hook. The old man strikes, pinning the shadow to the ground with his hook. It thrashes and scratches at the pavement, leaving scorch marks behind. And the man-boy walks on.

## The Raisin Bran Man

Sir Quilliam the African Pygmy Hedgehog  
is a bizarre little animal.

Who would buy a pet that can't survive  
in a sub-seventies environment?

i run and run and run and run  
i jump off my wheel to see if  
there is food where I now am

Shrieking! Cold Water! How? Shower!  
Showering in my clothes,  
senses overloaded, pain shifting around my torso.

OW OW OW OW OW

My hands have melted.

the man was fixing my heating tower  
with boiling water and tupperware  
where did he go?  
where is my raisin bran?

- *Brian Rabourn, Junior*

## Reverie

*(inspired by Amy Tan's "Breeze")*

Between two worlds,  
we've crossed each others paths, yes?  
In a meadow before the sleeping sun,  
we were lost but found one another.

And previous to it's awakening,  
we will desert this place of unknowing,  
as our time together is only temporary.

I wish to lock you away in my heart,  
your eyes, your charm, your scent,  
burying the key underneath my pillow,  
like there was no escaping.

Spilling truths and confronting lies,  
these confessions soothe my aching heart.  
I am unarmed and vulnerable,  
for these feelings have left me naked.

My fluttering eyelids open wide like lenses.  
Soon after they have captured your existence,  
I will always know this wasn't a tale;  
I've met you once in an unforgettable reverie.

*- Paris Close, Freshman*

## In Season

That first bite would be spectacular:  
teeth grazing softly on the skin before puncturing through,  
juice gushing out, dripping down my chin and onto my tank top,  
seeds spinning around my mouth while I molarized the fruit.  
I stared angrily at the tomato plants underneath the kitchen window,  
green rocks floating deceptively on thin vines  
while I suffered through a carrot.

- *Emily Lenhard, Junior*



SELF-PORTRAIT – oil on canvas  
*Tiffany Fluker, Sophomore*

## **Writers**

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Caitlin Bailey 39, 61  
Rian Bosse 64, 76, 78  
Sarah Branz 49  
Jeff Brems 17  
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Stephanie Giluk 32  
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Jarrod Irwin 100  
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Anna Matthews 39  
Duncan McCargar 28  
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Asa Woodbeck 79

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David Besteman 63  
Jamie C. Collister 3  
Emma Dalrymple 71  
Samantha DeStefano 10  
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Tiffany Fluker 110  
Karla Galvin 31, 53  
Karen Sitron Haight 35  
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Patrick Maguire 57, 60, 81  
Karen Mannino 36  
Chrissy Maziarz 9  
Jaymes Miller 33  
Margaret Miller 45  
Allison Nix 16  
Tom Olson 65  
Katie Pleune 26  
Bernadette Poirier 101  
Mary Reyna 29  
Margaret J Schmitz front, 12, 58  
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Laura Steinbacher 57, 58, 60  
Pamela Vander Jagt 103  
Pamela Zeiler 42  
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