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# Visions

**A New Literary Magazine for  
Central Catholic High School**

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## Dedication

*We dedicate our first issue of Visions to Mr. Warren Hayes, for his 41 years of service to the Central Catholic community. In this your last year, we thank you for your teaching, your guidance, and your inspiration. We wish you well as you pursue new challenges. You have permanently etched your name in the book that is Central Catholic High School.*

-- The Editorial Staff

# Stories...

"I think this new story is the one you've  
been waiting for."  
~ J.D. Salinger

## Reflections on a Life

Everyone makes mistakes; that's why I'm here today. Where is here, you ask? Well... here is heaven; at least, I think that this is heaven. My name is Jam Smith. Take a seat and get comfortable because this is the story of my life and it might take a while. Are you comfortable? Where should I start? I guess I'll start at the beginning.

I was born on a cold snowy day in July. That may sound a little strange to you, but I was born in Wasilla, Alaska. My name was going to be John Smith, after some historic guy, but the nurse that wrote out my birth certificate was a complete idiot. So, my name is Jam. It's different, but you can guess that my mom was upset over this and was still mad until the day that she died. She died of a heart attack. Good guess, but that is not how I died. My parents' names are James and Susan.

I was born into a poor family. My father lost his job when I was ten, and the only other job he could get was in his brother's cracker factory, Salty & Sons. So we packed everything up and moved to Sandusky, Ohio. When I turned sixteen, I got a job working at Calahan Auto. You may ask why I didn't get a job at the cracker factory. Let me paint you a picture: for the previous six years I have had every kind of cracker just sitting in my kitchen and have had to finish every box. Even a fat man would get sick of that. I can't even stand smelling crackers, never mind eating them.

It was my eighteenth birthday and I had all my family and friends around me. My girlfriend Sally sat on my lap giving me my birthday kiss, when out of the corner of my eye I saw my mother carrying my cake, the candles a-blazing. All of a sudden the cake dropped and she did too. I stood up, dropped Sally on the floor, and ran to my mother's side. Then I heard her say, "My left arm hurts."

I screamed, "Someone call 9-1-1! Sally, go to the bathroom and get the aspirin!"

The EMTs came to take her to the hospital. I rode in the ambulance with her. Before I left, I told Sally to make sure my father gets to the hospital. When he arrived, she was already dead. I walked out the emergency room so that my father could say his good-byes. Looking through the window and hugging Sally, I watched my father cry for the first time. The last thing that my mother told me was that she always loved my father and he always loved her, and that she saw that same love in Sally's and my eyes.

The next week we laid my mother to rest. Her tombstone read her favorite saying: "Everyone makes mistakes, make yours a good one." My father wasn't there that day. The day after my mother's death he checked himself into Happy Acres, a mental hospital.

The day after the funeral I told Sally my mother's last words and asked her to marry me. She said yes, and we wed on May seventeenth, my mother's birthday. My father was allowed to attend. That was the last day I saw my father alive, because he went back to Happy Acres and hanged himself. The next week I had to place my second parent into the ground.

I wanted to quit school and get a full time job to support my wife. My uncle would have no such thing and paid for our apartment and school. Our apartment was small, on the other side of town.

I spent years trying to make it up to my uncle, but all I tried just went awry.

It had been several years since the death of my parents and every year on their birthdays and anniversary Sally and I go to their grave. I went alone this time. Sally was in the hospital; she had cancer.

There I stood at the top of the hill, thinking about all the bad things that happened to me: the death of my parents and now Sally's cancer. *Damn the world*, I thought. I reached into my pocket, found a gun, and placed it to my head.

I whispered to myself, "God, if you want me to live, just give me a sign."

All of a sudden I looked on the ground and there was my wallet lying there open with a picture of my two little girls. I had little twin girls that were born the year before. They are Lily and Susan, named after my mother. That was what I needed. I pulled the gun away from my head and threw it into the lake. I kissed my parents' gravestone and walked away.

I started walking to the hospital and on the way I stopped at a convenience store to buy the local paper. The headline read "Hundreds Dead When Plane Crashes Into Local Factory." I read further that it was my uncle's factory. Later that week I placed a third relative into the ground.

A year later I graduated and found a job in Boston, so that Sally could be at the hospitals that I had had to take her to twice a month. The job was hard and I had to work long hours, seeing very little of my family. It was all worth it to me, for my wife got what she needed and my girls were okay.

One day I walked in to a Seven-Eleven to get some lunch and I decided to buy a lottery ticket. That night I watched the number game. You wouldn't guess what happened. I didn't get one of the numbers. To say the least, I was mad. I placed the same numbers once a week always on a Tuesday. I still didn't win anything.

One Wednesday I walked into the same store that I always buy my ticket at and I was told that the winning ticket was sold at this store yesterday. I took my ticket and the first number was the same, the second was correct, and that was all. It wasn't my ticket. I ripped up my ticket and threw it on the ground. I then took a look at the ground and there was something on the bottom of my shoe. It was a lottery ticket. I looked and it was the winning ticket. I didn't scream. I just handed it to the clerk and called the lottery commission. I just won one hundred million dollars.

The next day I quit my job, and in fact I bought the company! I put half the money into two trust funds for my daughters that they will get on their wedding days. I also put a lot of the money into finding a cure for Sally's cancer.

It wasn't looking good for Sally. She had operation after operation, but nothing did any good. She had lost most of her hair because of the radiation therapy. One day I went to the hospital to see her, but she wasn't in her room. I thought that she can't die, not now. This can't happen again. I searched all around the hospital. Finally, I went to the morgue. There was her doctor. I asked if she suffered. He didn't know what I was talking about. I explained to him that I went to her room and no one was there. He told me that she was getting better. The last operation worked. Then he told me to which room she was moved. This was the last good thing that happened to me.

I had to go into the city because there was a problem at work. So, I went in and fixed it. I walked outside and my cellphone started to ring; it was my wife. I was talking to her about coming home. I stepped off the curb and all I remember is a flash of light and the honk of a horn.

Well, that was my mistake. Was it a good one? Well, yes. I died when I was talking to the person I loved more than life itself. I got to say goodbye. Remember this: that everyone makes mistakes, but to make yours a good one.

Gregory Kern  
Grade 11



## Her Hair was Brown

Her hair was brown, tied back in a messy, greasy ponytail. It swung behind her, as if it were flicking away flies. Her wide, gawking eyes were almost black, and one couldn't tell where the inky iris ended and the pupil began. Her skin was as white as a sheet, with huge pores, and her cheeks and nose were shiny and red from the cold outside. She walked with an unjustified authority, taking the earth in wide unfeminine strides, her bulky black boots *galOMPing* steadily as she entered the department store. She showed her large, square teeth as she smiled and took off her tacky ski coat, which she had been stuffed into.

The saleswoman hoped that she didn't try to steal anything. But in her experience, she knew shoplifters didn't dress like that girl did, like they didn't have the brains to know that stealing was possible.

The saleswoman pressed her lips together, feeling the paste of the lipstick, then she adjusted her suave, navy blue jacket. On a subliminal level, this comforted her, because it let her know that she had at least the common fashion sense to be worthy to walk among the attractive people of the world.

"Hi!" the girl greeted her with a naïve smile.

"Are you looking for a formal dress?" the woman asked, trying to stop the girl from pawing through her beautiful dresses on the rack. She reasoned that maybe she could send her away with some cheap designer knockoff.

"Yes," the girl replied, that sickening schoolgirl smile still plastered on her face, "My friends and I are going to the prom."

"Do you need any help?"

"No, thank you."

The saleswoman huffed quietly. Of course she didn't want help. She'd probably find some blazingly shabby garment and be the laughingstock of the prom. Unless all her friends were trailer trash like her. Laughing, the woman entertained herself with the idea of the pathetic party until the girl returned to the desk with a dress.

"I'd like to try this on, please," she asked.

The woman silently handed her the dressing room tag.

A few minutes later, she heard a gasp from the dressing room. Smiling, the woman pictured the girl glancing at the price tag.

In a rustle of fabric, the girl exited the stall, and looked at herself in the huge three-way mirror.

The dress was a royal blue, with a small waist and long full skirt. There were no designs or prints on it but the fabric had a very subtle shine to it, making such decorations unnecessary. The neckline was cut elegantly high, as if it were a necklace, and the absence of sleeves warranted a beautiful wrap or shawl of some sort.

Blissfully, the girl spun, watching the skirt float gently outward and swing around her as she stopped.

The saleswoman stared in horror. This hussy was contaminating a thing of beauty! How awful to see the delicacy of the work of art mutated to a gruesome covering for a common cockroach!

Still admiring her reflection, the girl exclaimed, "I love this!" to no one in particular. With one more *swoosh* of the skirt, she turned to face the saleswoman and said, "This is perfect! I'll take it!"

She could stand it no longer. In one move, more lightning-quick than a cobra strike, the saleswoman's hand shot out. She was about to grab the torso of the dress to rip it off the demon, but she regained control at the last second, as her hand lay on the girl's stomach.

Quickly, the woman said, "Honey, that's way too tight. You'd better try about 6 sizes bigger."

And those words, the blade of the condemning guillotine, hung heavily above her head in the thick silence that followed.

She noticed something...different about the girl. Her looks were still as shabby as ever, but in her eyes – her *black eyes* – danced a defiant flame.

"I'm too fat aren't I?" the girl said, the blaze in her eyes still mesmerizing the woman, and her voice flat and dooming, "Well, I'll have to do something about that."

The girl slowly walked past the woman, her legs taking wide, but regal strides, until she reached the middle of the store floor. She sat down in the middle of the walkway. Her skirt lay around her, like the fragile petals of a lotus, her hands lay in her lap, porcelain white and graceful, and her head staring straight at the woman as if in meditation, in being one with all existence.

Panicked, the saleswoman hissed, "What are you *doing*?"

Without changing her position, the girl answered, "I will sit here until I starve enough to be thin. Then I can wear this dress."

"Fine," the woman spat, "Makes no difference to me."

Ten minutes passed. The girl didn't move. Nervous, the saleswoman tugged on the collar of her sweaty turtleneck underneath her jacket.

Curiosity brought a random shopper to the formal wear department. She circled the girl, still an unyielding statue.

"She looks so real!" the shopper exclaimed.

"Who?" questioned the saleswoman.

"Your mannequin! She's gorgeous!"

The woman laughed. "She's not a mannequin. That's some crazy girl who happened into my store today."

The shopper's eyes examined the woman. "Are you sure?"

"Hey!" cried another voice, "Mommy! I want that dress when I grow up!"

A few feet away stood a little girl and her mother. The girl's wide eyes were fixated on the figure on the floor.

The saleswoman took off her jacket, wondering if it had gotten hotter in the room.

Slowly, more and more onlookers gathered to witness the spectacle of the marvelous almost-human model. Young girls fawned over the princess, women yearned for the secret of the lady, boys saw true feminine art for the first time, and men pondered what the inspiration could've been for the sculptor.

The saleswoman wiped sweat from her brow as she took a few steps into the crowd.

"Go away!" she shouted, "It's not a mannequin! This is a *real girl*!"

All eyes had been averted to the woman. The mother put an arm around her child and stepped back protectively.

"Tell them!" the woman ordered the girl, "You stubborn idiot, tell them you're human! Talk!"

She breathed heavily, her skin crawling with the heat. Two men stepped up to restrain her, but she slapped them both. Her hands shot out again and grabbed the girl's face, her

manicured nails digging deep into her soft skin, and the tormented soul came screaming out of the woman's body when she shrieked, "*SPEAK UP, VERMIN!!!*"

Their eyes locked. The saleswoman let out an unholy screech as the fire in the girl's eyes blazed into her own. She felt the flames lick her entire body, she felt her makeup melt and smudge off with the sweat, and when she tried to back up, each step burned. Her high heels failed her, causing her to crash into the three-way mirror. The last thing she saw before she fell unconscious was an inferno of silver flames ready to consume her.

The girl and the crowd tried to help the woman. The shoppers were too panicked to realize that the mannequin was real. Someone called an ambulance, and the woman was lifted onto a stretcher. There were no serious physical wounds, but the paramedics doubted her mental capacity when she started screaming, devoured by superficiality, about the hideousness of the hospital gown.

Danae K. Fegan  
Grade 11

# Poems...

**“A poem should not mean  
But be.”**

**~ Archibald Macleish**

### **Red Light Means Love**

Lover, you're so sweet. Hon, you're so cute.  
Baby, I'll never give you the boot.

Whenever I'm lost or down, I just think, "You're mine."  
If loving you is wrong, I'm guilty of this crime.

On the dreary, dismal days when I am without you,  
Sadness comes over me and I don't know what to do.

But I just imagine your gentle, loving touch,  
And every time I do, I love you so very much.

I can't explain this intense, burning feeling for you,  
But I don't need to because I know it's so true.

All I see is that we're fun and unique,  
Just like those crazy kids on Dawson's Creek.

I thank the Lord each day because, who would have guessed,  
You and I together are perfect happiness.

I hope this small poem helped you to realize and see,  
That loving you makes sense and me so very happy.

I Love You.  
For B.M.W.

Bobby Ringuette  
Grade 9

## A Friend

A friend is a person you keep close to your heart  
And is someone whom you miss when you are apart.  
A friend can be trusted to hold all of your secrets;  
And will never tell them to a soul, especially the secrets you hold deepest.  
A friend is always there when you need her to be;  
And will often seem like a part of your family.  
A friend comforts you when you are filled with fury or sorrow,  
And tells you to look forward to what lies in front of you tomorrow.  
A friend is forever loyal, honest and true;  
And is trustworthy and eternally faithful to you.  
A friend is kind and generous and always ready to share,  
And is a sweet and wonderful person who will unceasingly care.  
A friend is a gift that is highly treasured;  
The importance of having a friend cannot be measured.  
A friend is invaluable in many ways,  
And is someone a person can hold until the end of days...

Brigid McKernan  
Grade 9

## Druantia<sup>1</sup>

Druantia prays by the lake;  
She doesn't see my reflection  
Whisper to me,  
Come down with me  
Druantia.

She doesn't see the reflections  
Which carry her oh-so-well.  
Hear the one that speaks to you  
Over the wall,  
Beneath the moon,  
Underneath your starry blanket.  
Keep me in your arms  
Dread the coming morning.

Over and through  
The White forests,  
Feel the winter magic  
Emitting from your fingertips.

Pebbles spoil the reflections,  
They stir like leaves, unsuspecting.

Matthew Daly  
Grade 9

I stick my hand into the shadow  
But I can't pull myself through.  
The reflection screams back at me  
But all I can do is watch  
So much order to the current  
But my fear is in the center.

Over and through  
The White forests,  
Feel the winter magic  
Emitting from your fingertips.

And I don't want you to see  
Just yet...

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<sup>1</sup> Celtic Fir Goddess known as "Queen of the Druids" who symbolizes passion, fertility, creativity, and knowledge.

### **What They Tell Me**

I've been told that my hands are like a child's hands, only used to  
play and color, and not to work.  
I've been told that my hands are not capable of working, lifting, or  
even holding a pen.  
Even though my hands look young, they are older than most hands,

Because they have been through good times,  
bad times, sad times, confused times, great times, and hard times.  
Going through all of those times  
Wouldn't you think that my hands would be old?  
But the people who tell me this don't think so. They think that my  
hands are weak and fragile like the petals of a flower  
But I tell them that my hands are strong and sturdy like the stem of  
the flower

Always holding up the blossom to let it feel the rays of the sun hit  
each and every petal,  
Always helping it get to the top and never being far behind.

I've been told many things but I never let those things get to me

Because I never let them pass my hands.

Christian Tavares  
Grade10



### **What You Did For Me...**

You lit the flames inside of me  
That danced and burned  
And filled with passion for you.

Each time we met,  
You planted the seed  
That made my heart grow  
And expand  
And beat  
With love for you everyday.

You sparked the romantic  
Who I was inside  
And you gave me a new outlook on life.

### **Patience**

Time tells me if I wait  
I might find you have feelings for me, too.

More than anything else I want time to be true.  
Often, time asks me to have patience – the more patience, the  
better.

Having patience isn't easy, though.  
But you are worth the wait.

Amanda Aufiero  
Grade 10

Maybe it was because I was a little over-tired at that moment,

Or maybe it was because I am easily amused,

But I don't think I have ever seen anything as beautifully perplexing as the swirled contortions of smoke that arose from the wick of my candle last night. I was completely awestruck and felt a bit foolish for allowing myself to be entertained for so long with a simple candle. Yet I could not find the strength within myself to walk away, and even long after the charcoal colored streams had dwindled, I found myself longing for more. I was left in a state of hypnosis and awoke the next day in a fog. I am still baffled as to how the smoke had lasted as long as it did, and why it seemed to appear with such an exuberance of beauty to me.

Perhaps it was because I was a little over-tired that night.

Jen Shamberger  
Gradell

## Fatal

One world cramping in,  
hard to breathe.  
One life deeper  
than what we can conceive.

What is in a man?  
Ability, faith.  
What isn't there?  
Selflessness.

What do you want from me?  
Material.  
I've given all I don't need.  
Well, what do you know?  
Personalities are all  
that you don't own.  
One mind  
Infinite capacity  
In groups  
With rules of conformity;  
What's the use of thought?

A priceless gift  
So often bought  
One time;  
Nothing that I can't quit  
Once more;  
Well, nothing that's permanent.

Eric S. Landers  
Grade 12

What's it worth to stop?  
The more you add  
The more you're at a loss;  
One shot --  
I'll pull through someday --  
Too late  
Didn't want it anyways.

What's it worth to chance?

When the ends and the means  
Are in your hands  
One day  
Which way to turn  
One life  
With courage to earn

You can't always win  
But soon enough you'll end  
If somewhere you begin.  
Is it fatal?  
Is there nothing we can do?  
Has it been decided  
Without me and without you?  
Is it fatal,  
Our time just left to waste?  
Is it over?

I don't believe in Fate.

## **Inspirational Haikus**

### **1). To Ambrose Bierce**

Look! A grasshopper-  
You are wise grasshopper.  
Here comes my boot. Crunch!

### **2). To George Clooney**

Cape Cod chips are good  
Oily, greasy, heart attack!  
Just like on E.R

### **3).**

Crowds cheering for me  
Ev'ryone is watching now  
I fell down the stairs

Erin Morin and Meghan Wholey  
Grade 11

## His Eyes Speak So Little

It's in his eyes.  
He doesn't see it, but it's there.  
The sadness, the shock, the truth.  
His father is gone.  
Emotions are staggered and hidden-  
Won't let his feelings be seen. Locked away  
Inside, hidden by a fake face, locked behind  
His eyes. The glare, that vacant stare with  
Pain and suffering that will probably never see the  
Light of day.  
He's tough, tries to be. He was brought  
Up to be the man; strong for his wife, strong for his  
Children, strong for his siblings.  
So-who's strong for him?  
When doesn't he have to be strong? When can  
He show his own true colors? Would he, even if  
He could? who knows at this point, he's been so  
Strong for so long – it's not obvious whether  
He will ever be able to surmount his own inborn  
Pride and free himself of the turmoil that writhes  
Within his heart and shows in his eyes daily. He  
Masquerades – I know, you know – it's more apparent  
Every time he tries to hide it. The more he tries to hide  
The more shows up in his eyes. They're deep,  
Sorrowful, yearning and closing. They close out the  
World with one long stare, you're shut out of his true  
Self – never to know what lies behind those eyes–  
Those eyes that show so much  
And speak so little.

Carolynne Sott  
Grade 12

### **To the Core and Back**

Deeply she digs into the strong Earth,  
Each scoop a moist rich  
Loam of honeyed amber harmony  
That glows like her liquid features.

She flings dirt wildly  
With manic passionate precision  
Spraying energy upward and outward.  
I wonder if she'll hit bedrock someday,

Though I know she'll never stop.

Emily Tredeau  
Grade 11

### **The Rise of the New Phoenix**

When a country falls then that country is no more.  
When species die, animals become extinct.  
But when humanity dies our ashes shall be spread far and wide,  
And from those ashes of our dying people  
Shall arise a new breed of life.  
From that breed the next step shall be taken:

Let us hope that we move forward and not back.

Nathan Palmer  
Grade 11

## Shadow

Our eyes met without connecting,  
Wasn't ready when it came.  
Perfect timing, I was trusting-  
Appreciate it, she takes the blame.  
Reaching for some ironic delusion  
Held dissected by the mind.  
If she doesn't need what she is needing,  
Why am I always left behind?  
Ripping away at heart wallpaper,  
Putting the locks back on each door,  
Closing up, for this winter-  
Cushioning fate and wishing more.  
Chilled inside and layered external,  
You haven't seen me stumble true.  
She waits before she attests to following-  
Wondering why I walk next to you...

Kristin DeSantis  
Grade 12



## On Finding a Poem

And so the question came to me as I knew it  
would sooner or later:

“Why don’t *you* write a poem?”

I squeamishly entertained the idea as only  
an English teacher prodded by his student  
can.

The insecurities of doing what one asks  
others to do surfaced and  
added rather smugly to the suggestion  
*And show us how it’s done!*

Hmmm...

So I began to think of all the wonderful  
poems  
I had scrawled in notebooks, on napkins,  
and  
Scraps of paper

Sitting by the beach  
Or driving home at night  
Or watching a sunrise  
Or listening to jazz

Now lost in some folder  
Or notebook  
Or box

Awakened by the Muse –  
Or so I thought.

Why write a new poem when there are  
plenty of old ones?

Eight boxes, four drawers, and several  
sorted piles later, the question and the task  
still loomed before me:

Where the heck were they?

Mr. Joe Welch  
English Department

Still no poem to  
*Show ‘em how it’s done.*

Few things in life are more elusive than a  
worthwhile poem.  
I sought tragedy, and humor and brilliance.  
I found only tattered pages and layers of  
dust, a cricket cadaver – guess he couldn’t  
outrun the can of Raid –  
and my bronzed baby shoes.

And so I sit furiously scribbling on a piece  
of paper in my lap  
Using the *Norton Anthology of World  
Masterpieces* as both a makeshift desk and  
osmotic inspiration

Creating  
Writing  
Finding

Did I uncover the poem I was looking for?  
Not exactly.  
But this one will suffice.

For sometimes poems are wordy  
And sometimes poems are pompous  
And sometimes poems are callow.

But they are poems all nonetheless, worthy  
of being lost – or found –  
in the simple search for something to write  
about.

# and Essays

**“As soon as you connect with your true subject,  
you will write.”**

**~ Joyce Carol Oates**

**Note: The college application requires students to write an essay that reveals something about themselves. Both “The Compound” and “An Epilogue to Innocence” represent two actual essays written as part of the college application process.**

## The Compound

The Compound, located thirty miles north of Boston in the small rural community of West Boxford, is home to my family. Biologically speaking, there are four of us. My dad Al, my mom Linda, my brother Dustin, and I make up the core. We have added Tobi, the dog, and Shadow, the cat, but it does not stop there. The Compound is "home" to my extended family and our chosen family. The welcome mat is always out, coffee is always brewing, and The Compound is always brimming with activity. We nicknamed it The Compound years ago because of the sense of security and strength it holds for those who reside there, but its strength is not limited by its New England colonial frame.

My life is full. I have been blessed with strong genes from both the men and women in my family and it is this foundation that has made me the strong woman that I am becoming today. In an age where heroes are few, I have four - my grandparents. My grandmothers, Rayma and Ray, the true matriarchs of the family, have taught me that nothing is unattainable. My maternal grandmother, Rayma, an avid story teller, shared tales of her youth in British Guinea and of how her family fled to the United States because malaria was stealing the lives of her siblings. She balanced work and family and never compromised who she was. She challenged me when my social plate seemed too full or not full enough, and always helped me to reach for higher goals. I thank Ray, my paternal grandmother, every time I win a tennis match or capture a swim title. Because of her own athletic ability and belief in my talent, my confidence has grown and flourished. Last year, I was robbed of their daily presence, but not even death could quiet their spirits. I hold their memories in my heart, and their words in my mind, as I continue to unfold the living legacy they left behind.

My grandfathers, Raypa and Fifi, have instilled beliefs and traditions that will last my lifetime. Raypa, my maternal grandfather, whose stories of W.W.II seem surreal, and who copes with the loss of his soul mate of seventy-seven years, is a living example that "the road of life is sometimes rocky, but definitely worth the trip." At eighty-four, he always has a joke to tell, an ear to lend and a heart filled with love to share. He has made me realize that my life is what I make of it. Fifi, my paternal grandfather, came here forty years ago fleeing war-torn Lebanon, and made me realize that every day we must count our blessings. Those who come by The Compound on Christmas Eve will see the table set with seven fish, an Italian tradition that has been passed down for generations. On Christmas morning, the family awakens to the smell of garlic pork, symbolizing good health and fortune. On New Year's Day, duck is the main course for good luck throughout the year and Easter holds the challenge of capturing the last remaining uncracked egg.

My grandmothers' presence is in my parents every day. My mom, who has taken over the role of matriarch, is continuing the strengths and traditions from previous generations. She has taught me the importance of our heritage, yet encourages my growth and development. My dad keeps the grill fired up and the conversations lively and constant. We have had our battles, especially during the times he just did not realize I had all the answers! He sticks firmly to his principles and I respect this stubborn quality, but I also admire the vulnerability and humanness he allowed me to view on the day Ray died. It was the first time I ever saw him cry and it brought me to realize the fragility of life. The message that my brother Dustin left when he went

to college echoes in my heart and sums up the closeness that The Compound has created between its boarders. "Remember kid...I love you" will always remind me that it does not matter where we are, it is what we hold in our hearts that is most important.

The Compound is not just about food, or bricks and stones, but about the spirit and life it thrusts from its soul. I have experienced some pretty incredible times within The Compound. Sometimes I laughed so hard that I cried and others I cried so hard that I thought I would never laugh again. Now, with my goals set high, and the strength of my family supporting me, I am ready to move beyond the safety of its confines and emerge from its walls shadowing my new ventures with my memories from The Compound beside me.

Brianne Camilleri  
Grade 12

## An Epilogue to Innocence

Laughter, cartwheels, playful shoves, and pink ribbons triggered a feeling of innocence stored away in some forgotten crevice of my identity. Chubby cheeks, bare feet, and "Hey Dad, watch me!" blurred across my memory until the scratchy fuzziness jolted me back to the present and I got up to hit rewind. Still remembering, I wondered why life can't be fixed by just pressing rewind. The three girls in the video represented the truth about growing up and I only vaguely knew one of them- myself.

Looking back, anyone might have guessed how I would turn out. My utter assurance that I could never be wrong, my ability to convince the other two that I was the best gymnast when even my somersault was lopsided, and my optimism that even the "bad guys" of the Disney scene must have at least the pieces of a heart, evolved into the outlook that I salvaged for my views today. I've failed, failed even better, and eventually turned my failures into successes, never allowing myself to admit that I believed some feats to be impossible. I am happy, if not content with my understanding of life, but also continue to question, pursue and have faith in my never-ending collection of dreams for the future. I see myself as accomplished- as a prominent senior leader, a recognized speaker and writer, a well-balanced student, and a well-known face and voice in my community, but I also feel rewarded in the more highly credited aspects of family, friendship, and love.

From that small video fragment of the past, one can quickly perceive that the little blonde bombshell, Britt, was also going to make her mark on the world. Her choreography of our dance routines for the town talent shows and the backyard performances we put on for the neighbors foreshadowed her overwhelming stage presence and ability to dance and act with the same energy and talent that she had at age six, before she knew the meaning of self-consciousness. Brittany's determination to stay on her chosen path and eliminate distractions created by the opposite sex, drugs and alcohol, and the social expectations of her peers has led her to a different kind of success and a simple beauty and easy comprehension of life and its personal value to her.

Realizing that the lives of these two girls have resulted thus far in everything they had hoped for and have fulfilled every expectation made for them by this remnant of a 15 minute video flashback, the viewer, in this case myself, asks what about *her*? That's right, the redhead, the ball of energy, the only one of the trio who would rather comply and relinquish her own games to play ours. This little girl is Kat, and she is the one for which I wish I could press rewind. Kat was really the best gymnast, the biggest giggler, the messiest freeze pop eater, and the most concerned with having fun. She was the most emotional of the group and the most likely to follow her heart. She was the kind of girl who proved her need to fit in by running home crying when she was voted the most sensitive of the group or agreeing without hesitation to be the youngest sister in our games of "house" when Britt and I would argue for a half day for the position of oldest. Nowhere in that video did I see the Kat that exists today.

Kat now battles depression. She has missed out on her entire high school career, labeled suicidal, and subjected to a support group of myself, Brittany, her family, and a guilty ex-boyfriend. While Brittany and I attended our junior proms, Kat attended a mental hospital. When we were writing term papers, she was writing in a journal (that is, when they allowed her to have a pen). While we watched kids our age experiment with drugs and alcohol, Kat was downing prescription pills. When Brittany left for college, and as I plan to go to school, Kat looks forward to the bleak cycle she has been living for years now, doctors, medicines, and loneliness. The world sees her as sick. As her friend, I see her as hurt. Some days it's hard not to shake her.

prove to her that nothing's different from that sunny day in my backyard, and tell her to get over it. Knowing that she doesn't even remember the days when she was that hopeful kid is like continuously rubbing in her face that something took a part of her life away and she's never going to get it back.

Our story defines life experience. We all started out in the same place, three little kids with nothing more to worry about than our scraped knees and broken toys. Two of us grew up. Two of us are still growing up. And one of us thinks she was left behind. The truth is she wasn't left behind. Kat came with me as I moved on. Because of her I cherish health, work to make everyday important, and apply her losses to my strengths. She showed me not to give up on myself, to trust and support the people that are important to me, and gave me the ultimatum that life without living is a different kind of death. She got rid of life's candy coating and fed me the real thing. For that I am forever grateful and because of that I continue to believe that someday someone will show the last member of our childhood clique what she has already taught me.

Anonymous

Grade 12

## About Our Editors

**Carolynne Sott, Editor-In-Chief.** A resident of Methuen, MA, Carolynne competed on the track team for one year. She is currently involved with the school choir and chorus, the Raider Review and the Florentian. She attended the Middlebury Young Writer's Conference in her sophomore year. Outside of school, she plays handbells and sings in her church choir. Her life revolves around singing and writing. Writing is the outlet of her self-expression.

**Emily Tredeau, Assistant Editor.** A lifelong resident of Pelham, NH. Hobbies include cow tipping and watching the grass grow. Widely regarded as "an odd one", she can often be found staggering and babbling near and around the Central Catholic Theatre. Emily has recently been connected with the infamous Denver "noodle incident", and was last seen heading west in a stolen neon pink '78 El Dorado. She denies everything.

## About Our Associate Staff

**Amanda Aufero.** Resident of Methuen, MA. Enjoys writing and reading poetry and is a current member of the Passport Club.

**Victoria Aufero.** Resident of Methuen, MA. Co-Vice President of Peer Leaders. Involved with soccer, outdoor track, the National Honor Society, and Project Rebuild 2000.

**Kristin DeSantis.** Resident of Methuen, MA. President of the Student Council, Kristin is also involved with the Student Ambassadors and Campus Ministry.

**Christopher Kingston.** Resident of Danville, NH. Enjoys acting and writing. Involved with track and the Theater Guild.

**Nathan Palmer.** Resident of Methuen, MA. Involved with the Student Ambassadors, the National Honor Society, and track. Enjoys writing, reading, and drawing.

**Jen Shamberger.** Resident of Methuen, MA. Ran track and cross country for two years. Attended Middlebury Young Writer's Conference last year. Current member of the Math League and volunteer at the Andover/North Andover YMCA.

**Also contributing time and effort were:**

**Erin Morin, Brad Dufresne, Danae Fegan, and Caitlin Thomann**

If you are interested in submitting material for the next issue of *Visions*, please speak with our editorial staff members when they visit your homeroom. Writers must submit both a hard copy and a diskette compatible with school software. Submissions are also accepted for consideration in room 209 before and after school.

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