

VISIONS.



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Kate
Allison
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A (Long-Awaited) Letter from the Editors

Dearest Readers,

Within these pages lie our blood, sweat, tears, and a good deal of our sanity. During the fall, we received dozens of submissions for this issue and, having so much to choose from and little experience with editing protocol, we were a bit overwhelmed. Fortunately, delight overcame our **sheer** panic as we read works that showed remarkable insight, introspection, and awareness— we sighed and remembered, *when*, our submitters are the ones who truly make the magazine. Our humble job was to weave pieces together and thus create a vivid patchwork, pieced by our peers and faculty.

This issue has taken eons to print because all of the people who worked on it are supremely talented— and we don't just mean those who submitted. Our editorial staff consists of perfectionists—which led to the layout and re-layout and layout yet again.

We'll admit it, our editing efforts were rather ambitious and green— more plainly, they were experimental and time-consuming. We apologize for the delay, realizing that those who submitted, along with our loyal readers, eagerly await this work in print. We can only plead for your forgiveness.

And so, we offer our humblest acts of contrition with our final and perfect (at least we think so) literary baby.

Happy reading!

Your Charming Editors,

Crystal Barrick
Lauren Xenakis
Patricia Letayf
Marilee Goad
Matthew Lyon

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We dedicate this issue of *Visions* to:

Brother Vincent Dinnean, FMS, a friend of writing, reading and learning, and a member of the Central Catholic family for many years

and

to Kenneth Chin, a friend to all who love life, and grandfather of senior Matthew Lyon.

May their memories be eternal.

Fire Alarm

i think that i'm kind of sure
this wasn't in the brochure

the fifteen days have already passed
so he just sits alone on the train
camo doesn't blend with colgate ads
the staring is driving him insane

r & r didn't get him far
he still had his house and guitar
but he spent all his time in the bar
he could have never really left

but then he sees a
Ruby Tuesday
and slowly starts to
Cry

the people start to talk to him
'thank you for what you do' they say
he mumbles out a thanks and thinks,
'i really wish i felt that way'

the fire alarm rung in his shack
he thought it was another attack
and yet, he is still on his way back
he can never really leave

i think that i'm kind of sure
this wasn't in the brochure

Jack Meighan
Class of 2007

CONTRADICTION OF A FREE WORLD

It's a free world.
Allowing violence
Allowing poverty
Allowing starvation
It's a free world.
While some throw food aside
Others die searching for some
Then once you hear it all in the media
You feel guilt for those in need
But what can you do?
It's a free world.
The world is screaming mercy
Like a volcano when it erupts with steaming lava because it can't hold anymore
The world is slowly dissolving into a hole
Going nowhere but down
It's a free world.
Leaving those who don't have anything with hope
And those who have more than enough wanting more
It's a free world.
Letting a six year old cross the street to buy candy cigarettes
Deporting those who crossed the border for a better life.
It's a free world.
Economy giving so much to those who warm up couches
So little to those who chase the dream so hard
And every glimpse of victory becomes harder to catch
The world is a roller coaster
Leaving the sounds of shouting echoes in the air as the ride hits a twist
Then when the ride is over... "who's next in line"
It's a free world.

Karina Castro
Class of 2009

A Huge Kick to the Face



Joanne Alexandre

Class of 2009

Ba Who

Ba who meditates like a mantis
and asks for nothing
who is rice and eggs
who is a paintbrush and a worn pair of pants
whose hairs are toothbrush bristles
is too busy to have a weekend
who calls me in Vietnamese “Ngoc Thu”
who translates that into “Jaded Book”
whose gentle eyes are drops of acid
can’t find time to rest
works in strangers’ homes ‘til sundown
who can laugh but isn’t bound to
is busy
is dipped in paint with a target
is tired shh quiet
doesn’t play anymore
is working, working, working
who talks to me about Buddha
is Bond, James Bond, a holy text, and an unfinished film
who lives and sighs sighs and lives lives and sighs again
who is the insect in his garden who meditates like a mantis
asks for nothing
for nothing but peace.

Stephanie Tran
Class of 2009

Grandson to Grandfather

Grandpa I'm so tired of working,
All I do everyday is work hard.
On the weekdays it's in school,
On the weekends it's in the store
I wish I were retired like you.
I wish I could just sit here all day.
I just want to stop.
Oh how I could use the sleep.
I barely see any zzz these days.
I can feel the days wearing my poor bones thin
I just want to lie down and let the days pass me by.

Grandfather to Grandson

I used to think the way you do
I used to think that life was just too hard
The days seemed to blend together
And I just wanted to break free.
My mind convinced my heart that it would be better to just waste time.
So that's what I did.
I did nothing during the most important years of my life.
I fell behind the times and time passed me by.
And now I have nothing to show.
I sit here all day because I have to not because I want to,
But have to
I gave up the time I had to do something and now I have nothing
And you're sure as hell not.

Michael Farragher
Class of 2008

I go to art class on Thursday nights with Pat Lutz, an artist in Newburyport. She paints landscapes. Especially ones with a lot of trees and flowers. Flowers exploding into bloom under the heat of a June afternoon. Pink, orange, purple, blue, and green, green, green. Summertime.

Pat also paints still life, like lonely pots and pans or claustrophobic fruits squeezed together in a little bowl on a countertop, homesick because they have been plucked from their place in the mighty trees.

Last summer, Pat taught me how to oil paint. After a week of learning how to use brushes and mix colors, she says I can start my first painting. It is of a picture of a solemn-looking girl with a confused smirk on her face. She is holding her chin up with her hand and flowers are dotted behind her.

Pat tells me that when I am painting, I should dip my brush into my jar of turpentine to clean it. Then I should swipe the bristles against the side of the jar to get the extra paint thinner off of them.

Every time I press my brush against the inside of my jar, like Pat told me to, I see the unneeded drops of paint thinner cry down the glass, sad that they couldn't hang on to the slippery bristles of the brush long enough to dive into a fresh puddle of oil paint.

But even after I do this, I usually still have too much paint thinner on my brush, so I swish the tip into a paper towel dotted with other drops of old paint thinner. These extra drops that splish and splash and swim into the paper towel are upset because they almost made it to the paint, but they weren't strong enough to keep from slipping from the bristles like wet soap to a child's hand.

Then, every once in a while, I *still* have too much turpentine on my paintbrush. It just won't drip off, and ends up getting into the paint and making it too runny. I can still mix a beautiful color with it, but I can't use it on my picture because it will draw attention to itself by making a big runny spot wherever I put it. This turpentine is selfish and wants to keep the color it makes for its selfish self.

Sometimes, though, when I have just the right amount of turpentine, I can mix it with any color of paint and get the perfect, vibrant finish. This mixture goes smack dab on the canvas, helping enhance the piece.

The strongest turpentine that stuck to the brush the whole way over to the pain gets the glory. The turpentine that cooperates with the paint mixes a hue with just the right consistency. This turpentine understands and meshes with all the other mixtures already on the canvas to make a difference in the big picture. A drop of turpentine can make a difference in the big picture.

As I go through the dipping, swishing, and dripping process of mixing turpentine with paint, I think about how much turpentine is like humanity.

Humans start out in the jar. Everyone has a chance to grab onto the brush if they really want to. Anyone has the ability to seize an opportunity. If they seize it and accidentally fall back into the jar, there is still a second chance for them. But, if they are lucky enough to stay on the brush, they might be able to make it to the paint if they are smart enough and strong enough to hold on. But some people just have wrong intentions and even though they harness a great opportunity, they will never make an impact in the big picture or the world because they are lazy, or don't want to make the effort to hold on. These people get squished back into the paper towel and don't get a second chance to get back on the brush.

Then, sometimes, there is still bad turpentine that stays on the brush even after I squish it into the paper towel. This paint thinner represents the smart, talented people who only want an opportunity to be selfish and make a name for themselves. They mess up the colors they are mixed with and want to attract attention. But they never contribute anything good to the big picture, even though they may change it. These people, who usually end up staying on the palette, either get rinsed into the sink or wiped away into the garbage. If they do make it to the picture, they are always covered with a worthier mixture.

The worthier mixtures are made from the strong, determined people who stick to the brush, work with the paint they are put into, and cooperate with other mixtures to achieve a balance. These are the people who change lives. These are the people who contribute to the world. These people are represented by the turpentine that mixes well with the paint and adds to the big picture.

When I'm done painting for the day, I throw out the used paper towel, clean my palette, keep the unused turpentine sealed in my jar, and wash my paintbrush of all the hopefuls.

Kala Gleason
Class of 2009

Mirrored War

They fight against foreign combatants.
We fight against foreign concepts.
Their enemies are insurgents.
Ours is ignorance.

They are tacticians and soldiers.
We are teachers and students.
They rely on logistics.
We rely on logic.

They worry about bombs, ambushes, and kidnappings.
We worry about bias, academics, and Katrina.
They talk of MIAs, IEDs, and RPGs.
We talk of GPAs, MTV, and SUVs.

All of us are fighting a war, whether we realize it or not.
Some contribute their bodies. Some contribute their minds.
While they are fighting to protect the country they love,
We stay behind and fight to preserve the country's ideals.

Neither they, nor we, can afford failure,
But which is worse?
If they fail us, our country will cease to be.
If we fail them, then our freedom will cease to be.

Matthew Lyon
Class of 2007



Untitled

Gripped fists I hold
As I'm told
Lies
To that of my surprise
Unlock the true path
That lies within my past
And so I hold on, wait
And simply anticipate,
Strong grips that nearly match,
That of an intellectual grasp,
For I know the truth that lies within...
 Each last gasp for breath,
 Each mechanical ex-& inhale
 Each beep closer to a tale,
 Expressed by that last step.

Death,
It's over
Her time had come,
In turn allowing my life to be what it's become,
Emotions stir amongst thoughts,
All compressed in a mind that thinks outside the box,
'Cause others simply state,
Like all others it was just her fate,
But I on the other hand,
Cannot accept but rather demand,
Truth amongst a situation of the blind,
For teardrops blur the vision of sights I'd rather not find,
'Cause this picture isn't perfect,
And so such thoughts come to my mind direct,
To end the seemingly endless fight,
To be engulfed by that bright light,
Do I dare allow my hands to act as both a criminal and attorney,
Permit what is not to be,
There thoughts clutter among questions,
Caused by all life's imperfections,
&& so I fear that in this test,
None of these choices apply,
For these perplexities,
Were in truth never meant to lay to rest,
& then I snap back and find me,
Once more within the grips of reality.

Katie Zappala
Class of 2009

L'Amour De Ma Vie

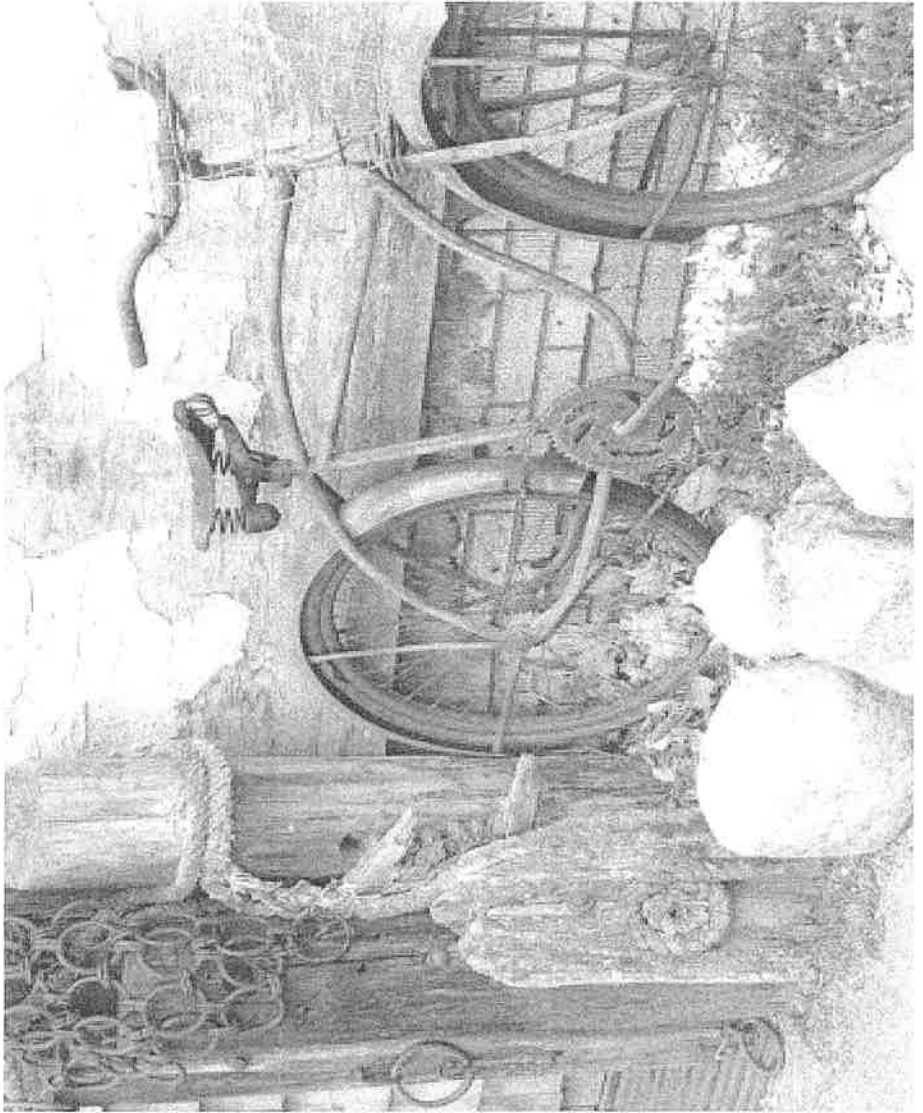
Tant que le ciel ne moura pas
mon amour envers toi existera toujours.
Tant que tu me regarderas
mes yeux seront remplis de joie.
Tant que tu me parleras
Ma bouche aura que de belles phrases
pour te faire rire.
Tant que tu me toucheras
mon coeur sera rempli de ton amour.
Tu m'as donné une sorte d'amour qu'aucune
personne n'a jamais ressenti.
Ton amour est si fort qu'il est remarquable
à l'oeil nul.
Mon âme t'appartient éternellement.
Alors, s'il te plait,
aime moi comme je t'aime.

Mukena Mbiye
Class of 2008

The Love of My Life

As long as the sky doesn't die
my love for you will exist forever.
As long as you look at me
my eyes will be filled with joy.
As long as you talk to me
My mouth will recite only beautiful phrases
to make you laugh.
As long as you touch me
my heart will be filled with your love.
You gave me a kind of love
that no one has ever felt.
Your love is so strong
that it can be seen with the naked eye.
My soul belongs to you forever.
So please,
love me like I love you.

Translated by Patricia Letayf
Class of 2007



Matthew Joyal
Class of 2008

London

My neighborhood is colorful. The houses seem to be all alike. All brightly colored. As if the blues, pinks, and reds jump from house to house, painting themselves onto doors and shutters. My neighbors are all different. Each one has a story. Down the street and to the right is Crazy Cal. She lives in the yellow house with the bright green shutters. She has a beautiful garden filled with colors and bees. She has every type of flower known to man-kind. We call it the Garden of Eden. Every morning she waters her plants. The roses, the daisies, and the tulips all smile as she goes down the rows giving them a drink. Me and Lisa used to pick her sunflowers when she wasn't home, but we quickly stopped when she started asking the neighborhood kids where her flowers went. I once asked her how she kept her plants so colorful. She told me it was all in the juice. I never understood what she meant until Charlie told me that she was a witch who made her own potions. I tried to stay away from the house after that. Across the street and through the wooden path is where Mrs. Abram lives. She has to be a million years old, but she'll live for a thousand more. That's what she tells the brave kids who ask her age. I believe it too. Mrs. Abram doesn't own a car. "Never have, and never will," she says. If she has to go somewhere, she takes her bike. She pedals all over town. I see her at the supermarket, at the Laundromat, and even sometimes at IHOP. Every morning though, she pedals her way down the street to Eddy Dee's Coffee Shoppe, where she sits at booth 10 and drinks her lonely cup. Every morning she orders her coffee and Eddy asks "How do you take it?" And every morning Mrs. Abram answers him the same way. "I take my coffee as black as me," as she points to her chocolate skin. The brown house to the left is the only house in my neighborhood that lacks originality. It's just brown. A brown house, with a brown door, and brown shutters. The family inside is no better. The mother of the house is troubled. She's an alcoholic who abuses her kids. Ms. Jane is what we call her. She spends her days with the only friend she has in this world: her vodka. Her husband is Mr. Mike. He seldom speaks unless he is lashing out at his wife. I've never seen him hit her. He probably never will. Nonetheless, she reports him as an abusive father. Needless to say, the children are troubled. As young as they are, they still have their problems. Ms. Jane has recently been admitted to a hospital where she is being treated. Mr. Mike and the kids are adapting to their new life. A life of freedom. A life without their mother's violence and abuse.

I don't want to live here. I just don't belong. When I get upset, I go for walks. Real long walks. Past Crazy Cal's garden, past Mrs. Abram's bike, and past the brown house with its gloomy eyes. I walk and I walk and I walk. Sometimes I run. It's like my legs can take all of my anger and sadness and transform it into energy, power, strength, and courage. When I'm walking, I close my eyes and imagine that I'm somewhere else. Somewhere new. Somewhere like New York, or Los Angeles, or London. Yeah, somewhere like London. That's where I want to be. Not here. Not this small town with its five-page newspapers, and its lonely streets. Not this neighborhood with its trailers and its lack of pride. I belong in the city. A place where I can go to escape. A city where nobody knows my name. A city where I can just start over. I can make new friends and new mistakes. London with its castles and accents. London with its fashion and traffic lights. Yes, London. London is where my heart belongs.

Lisa Martin
Class Of 2009

Perception

There are two worlds in place of one
One of beauty and darkened eyes
The other prejudiced and full of lies

Can you tell me where you stand?

Perhaps you come from a world unknown
A place I know not of
But for now, I ask you bear these two
And keep an open mind

Can you look beyond your world?

The first, I speak, is a world of order
Where chaos and discourse reign
The normal world of light and day
Though be it all the same

Can you see and understand?

The second is like a mirror
Reflective yet reverse
And so I will explain now
So briefly here in verse

Can you listen to my words?

This world I speak of, is a word apart
To some realm of nightmares
And to others, a world or heart

Can you fathom what I say?

A place where music transcends time
With clothing black, and freedom real
With faces pale, and words sublime

Have you listened to my words?

Can you tell me where you stand?

Can you see and understand?

Can you look beyond your world?

We are here beyond this window

Created here in words

And if you understand them

And can look at this world unmasked

You will see us hence evermore

Behind the looking glass...

...Contently looking back.

John Kulesza
Class of 2007

an excerpt from "Roses in the Winter"

Carlson Ford could never sleep. He stayed up all hours of the night watching a colored screen flash before his eyes until he finally laid his head down for the rest. Some people would consider it insomnia, but that was hardly the case. Carlson wasn't an ordinary twenty year old. His career was partying, and he was very good at it. He could sleep all day without a care in the world, while everyone around him worried about his plans for the future. Without a job or money to pay for everything, he lived with his parents who took care of his everyday needs. Carlson was a strong selfless man; however, he suffered anxiety and always had a problem with addressing new things in life. His aspirations were high but his motivation was barely visible. His dream in life was to become a writer. He strived to be one of those men who sat in a room for endless hours of the night typing away his thoughts with hopes of his work being published. He had an artistic mind and wrote about the most amazing images with great detail and thought. Carlson got away with plenty of things, but the one person who got him was his one and only grandmother, Rose.

Rose was a little old woman who made an effort to criticize everything around her. She was just about five feet tall and then there was her hair which added a few inches to her height. Rose was a thin woman who walked with a slight hunch and when she talked her voice quavered uncontrollably while her hands shook sweetly. She was very strict and grew up only knowing how to work for what she earned. Her husband died from a heart attack when he was in his forties, leaving her with four sons and a business to run on her own. Her boys always gave her a hard time with their tattoos, girlfriends, and cigarette smoking. When one of her sons got a tattoo, she went into his room every night for a week with soap and water trying to scrub it off. It was then apparent that the tattoo wasn't temporary. Rose was also a terrible driver. This was probably because she drove with two feet. She lived on one of the busiest roads in the town, with cars flying through the street and people yelling out the windows at each other. When Rose would back out from her driveway, she would beep the horn then floor it. All her grandchildren held on for their lives while in the car with her, but no accidents ever happened. Carlson was her oldest grandson, and Rose always made it her initiative to criticize his lifestyle. She'd argue with him on what he did all day, and how he was surviving without a job. Carlson just usually sat in his chair and took it all in, like nothing was wrong, but inside, he was about to snap.

It was mid winter and Rose's driveway was packed with snow. She knew this was an opportunity for Carlson to make some good money, so she gave him a call for him to shovel her driveway. It was two in the afternoon and he had just woken up. However, he put on his winter jacket and headed over to his grandmother's house.

The driveway was a square of cement that was just wide enough for her car to fit perfectly. He anticipated staying for only forty-five minutes of consistent shoveling; however, those forty-five minutes would turn into three hours because of Rose's demands. Carlson unlocked the shed and grabbed an old rusted shovel surrounded by cobwebs and hidden behind piles of chairs. As he began to shovel, he heard a loud cry from the second floor window. He slowly looked up and saw his grandmother's hands waving out the window, calling him up.

Jeana Sullivan
Class of 2007

Realization

It's like I'm blinded from the world in front of me only seeing what I want...
beat from the truth and scared of what will come next.
I do not understand or comprehend the events that occur.
One day, somehow, the secrets will unfold and reality will settle into my mind.
This is taking over my body like a drug,
I'm addicted to caring.
I don't know why, when I should care less.
But I care way too much about you.
What you think, and what you do,
why you don't call and why you don't talk to me.
All these questions burn inside of me like I'm some kind of ash tray
well, I'm sick of being burned.

The Contemplation

I am consumed with my untrained thoughts.
They are unknown to all but those who try to make a connection with me.
Should my soul open its doors to those who dare to discover?
Or should I keep them locked and live in a false harmonic lifestyle?
The true passion will reveal itself with time,
but the clock is ticking and it has produced nothing.
The truth should not be hidden or swept under the rug,
it should be written in bold for all to see.
But others cannot accept the truth,
society shapes us to fear the truth.
As a result, how can I possibly reveal it?

Mallary Forzese
Class of 2008

My Own

We live in America. And being Peters and Jennys are just easier. Binh? people ask. Buu? They trip over the letters and sounds and we get sick of helping them back up each time. They say it doesn't matter, but there's a difference despite what they'd like to believe. Or what they want *us* to believe.

So I am Kathy. Not Katherine or Kathleen. Just Kathy. No rhyme, no reason. I liked it, my mother tells me. And that is simply how I became who I am for the rest of my life. But being Kathy wasn't enough. I have a lot of names, like socks. And I wear different ones all the time. Perhaps the pink pair today, or maybe the black stripes on grey. I'll be Kat for them now, their little Kit-Kat and Kay. Their sweet baby, *bi*. *Yeung me*, their good sheep. Their Katsupand Katapult and Kaffy and Koof, which is really Koofy but shortened, and Kadafoe, too.

But one day, I grow tired of being their anything. I want to be my own. So I come home and tell my parents I want to change my name to Rebecca. Yes, Rebecca. Rebecca Ban. And they laugh and tell all their friends and relatives what a silly child I am.

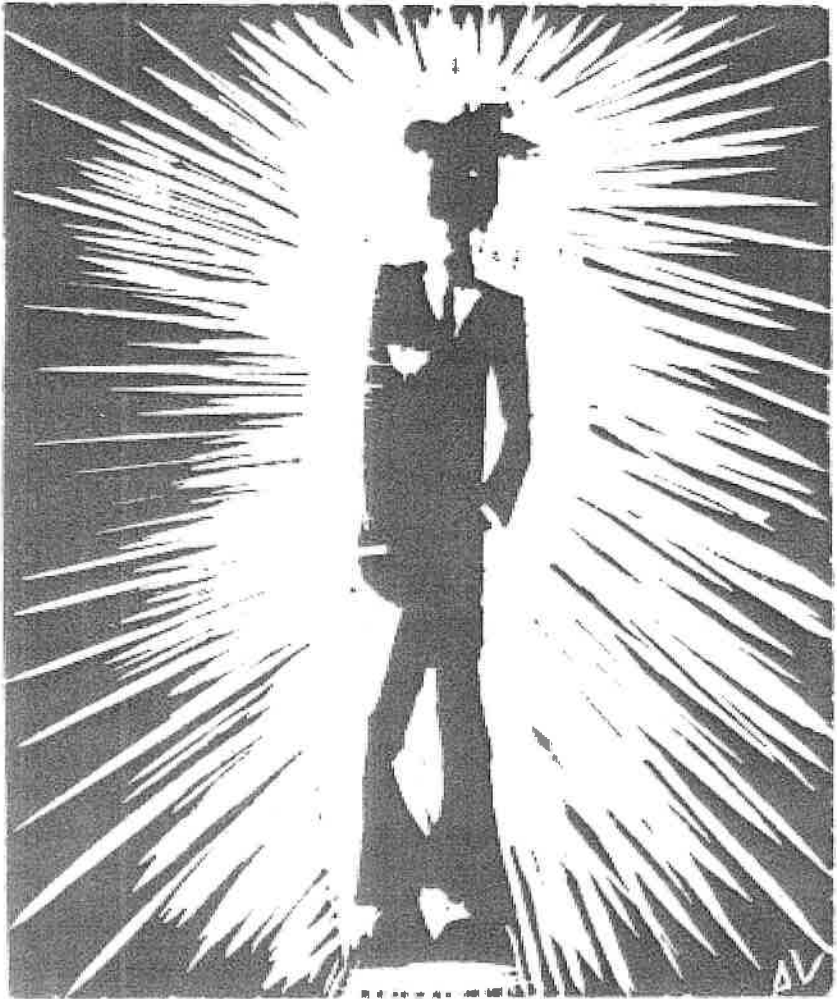
You know, my sister teases, if you change your name, we'll have to kick you out of the family because you won't have the same last name anymore.

Somewhere, somehow, Rebecca Ban gets lost between the cracks. Left behind sitting on the grass while Kathy Tran runs off to play with the other kids in the sandbox. And when I come back, she is gone. Gone someplace where I cannot find her. Olly olly oxen free! Rebecca, Rebecca, olly olly oxen free...and then nothing. And I forget for a while all about her, and wanting more than being just Kathy Tran.

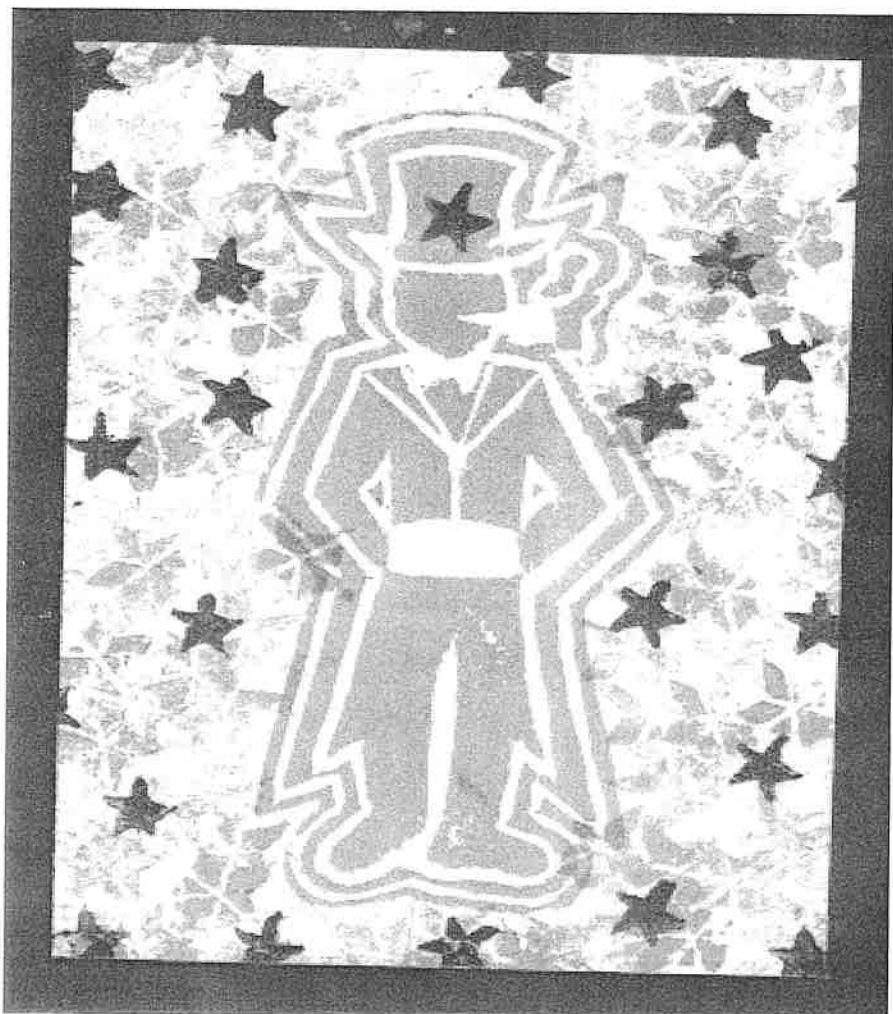
Tran. It's half my name and half of who I am, I guess. But it doesn't mean anything. Well, it means that my ancestors were Chens in China and some of those Chens went south where Chen means Chan and Jackie Chan is my long lost relative. But probably not, because my ancestors were the ones that went further south to Vietnam where Chen and Chan means Tran. And from where Trans like my mother and father would run, run to look for a place where they could be and have their children, even long before I ever was. So now they are Trans in Lawrence, Massachusetts where Tran doesn't mean Chen or Chan but something different. And I can be, but at the same time, I am just a Tran.

Here I have a sister from another mother and another father. But she is a Tran like me. We have grown tired of being their anything. We want to be our own. And when I couldn't have done it on my own, we find Rebecca again and redefine ourselves. We aren't Chinese. We aren't Vietnamese. We aren't even American. We're Trans. Like transcontinental transportation and translated transmissions. Like grams of trans fatty acids. In fact, we're Grams now. Grams whose meanings don't change no matter where you go. And you can be, just as you are. A Gram. A Rebecca. Just no one's. And all your own.

Kathy Tran
Class of 2009



Ms. Vander Els
Faculty



Stephanie Richardson
Class of 2007

En Especies

a dapper fellow, really.
pin-striped & primed,
pondering of points & decimal places—
blemishes on the face
of dear Mr. Washington,
plagued by these hotspots and dots com,
communicating in mint
crisp as his breath.
gawking lips ponder
of this man, so charming—
dare I say
he is cold hard cash.

Crystal Barrick
Class of 2007

Skin

Another word unspoken, another awkward moment to add to my list
Another guilt-ridden wrong, another mistake gone, a half-hearted miss
You were there and it's quite clear that I can't let it
Go and it shows as I lose all of my control

But it is so easy

'Cause something you said got under my skin and I couldn't help but dive right in
Hold my breath and close my eyes and hope I heal from the
Inside

I can't seem to pin a point on the map; everything is entangled in the past
All the lined criss and cross as I often tend to get lost
Amongst all this red tape; can't you see I'm just a waste
Of your time, and I'm not fine as I drown in all of my lies

But it is so easy

'Cause something I heard got under my skin and I couldn't help but dive right in
Hold my breath and close my eyes and hope I heal from the
Inside

All my life I've run away
From who knows what I cannot say
I don't want to hurt you or anybody else
But who the hell is supposed to save me from myself

'Cause something I felt tore me apart and I no longer have the heart
To fight back what's killing me and I can't find the air to breathe
All of this in, I'm wishing for a new skin
To slip on into so maybe I can avoid the truth
Of something you said, got under my skin
And I couldn't help but dive right in
Hold my breath and close my eyes
Hope I heal from the
Inside

Nicole Mailloux
Class of 2007

Loud and Quiet

I'm the clumsy kid. I'm the one who doesn't know how to show he's happy to see people or comfort people when tears trickle from their eyes.

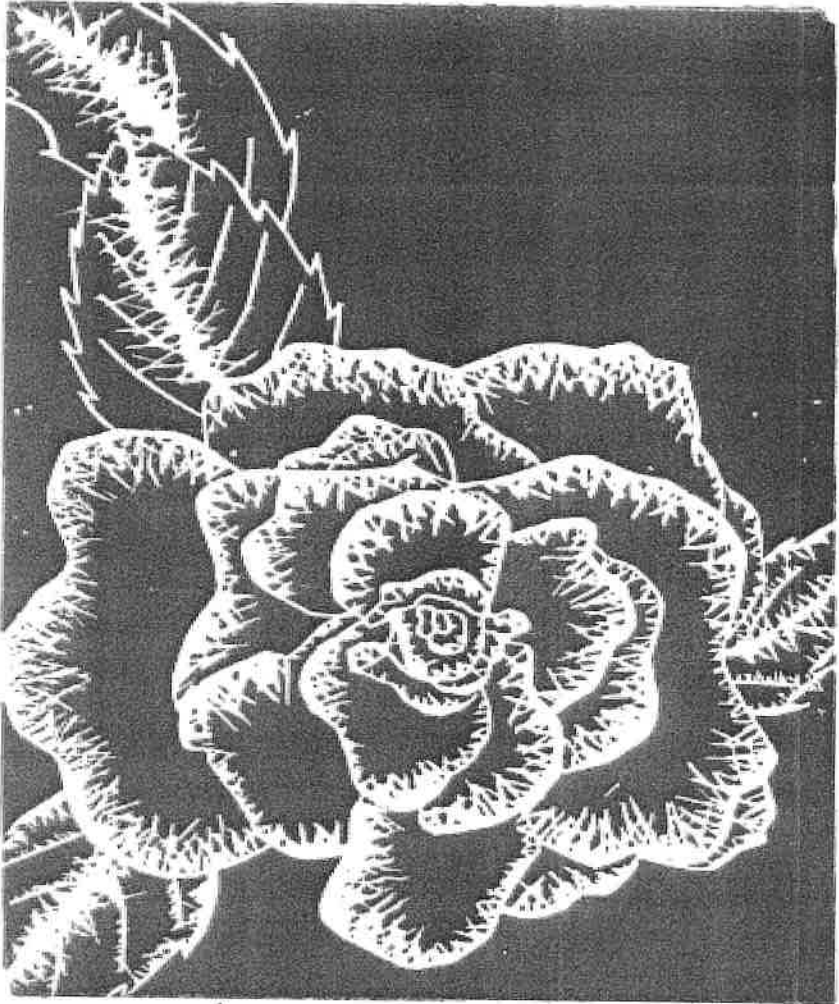
A girl tells me casually that she'd like to travel the Trans-Siberian Railway. Me too, I tell her, and I mean it. I've been thinking about it since I saw that documentary in history class, with the huge forests of snow and the travelers from everywhere sharing food and vodka. We can both go on it together, the girl says, seemingly in jest. Yeah, if we meet each other in Moscow, I say, wishing I really believed there was a chance of such a thing happening. When we walk away, I forget to say goodbye or see you later or anything nice, and when I realize it, my heart is an overstuffed backpack with broken straps.

A senior told us at the beginning of our first year of high school what we should expect in life. She said, let's face it, most of us probably won't leave the Merrimack Valley. But now I've lived in a place by another ocean, in Washington, I don't want to just find a job and grow in a flowerpot. I want to creep out into the garden and grow with all the other plants—the willows, the watercress, and even the weeds.

I know people who don't like the idea that the world can be one's home. I don't know what's wrong with that. Wouldn't it be wonderful, I want to ask aloud, to feel comfortable with the whole planet, to feel like part of a big family, for the whole earth to feel like one happy revolving restaurant? That's just the way I want to feel. I want to travel the world, with a banana smile and a Rasputin beard.

But until I can learn how to open the window, I'm stuck in my flowerpot. I keep inside myself, shut up in a big brown house, and become the one who forgets to say goodbye.

Dominic Delabruere
Class of 2009



Cate Adamopoulos
Class of 2007

Green Eyes

Reflections from the journal of Lisa Cenca

It was something in her face that struck me. The features were strong but not aloof. Her jaw line, jutting and almost clenched with just a hint of softness at the chin. Her nose, nye big nor small, was poignant none the less. British maybe German. But there was elusiveness to her face. Not quite tangible yet it felt like the scar of a tragic death. This immense and intense feeling permeated through her most striking feature of all – the green eyes.

Her eyes, like emeralds set in a queen's ring. They were wise and well read and they spoke volumes of knowledge to me on days when I felt absence of thought. To the green eyes I brought a feast of modals, should I, could I, would I, may I. With all of this, the eyes understood and they relinquished my insecurities. When I stood before her with my own eyes filled with tears, hers welled with mine. Those green eyes wrapped long arms around me. Without blame, without criticism, they listened. And when a lightening bolt struck me, the eyes applauded and affirmed. The eyes nodding and congratulating made me feel confident and sure of my work.

The mystery still remains behind her eyes. But now when our eyes meet I feel connected. It's the feeling of friendship that only women can see.

To the green eyes of Karen Moynihan, I am grateful.

Lisa Cenca
Faculty

Most Popular Outcast

I had the personality. I had the friends. I had the brains. We would always joke around. "Meatball," "Kool-Aid," "School bus." That's what they would call me. I laughed with them all the time pretending it didn't bother me. Deep inside, it was another story. No one would see me cry but the four walls of my room. What they found funny, what they did *just for fun*, it hurt. It really hurt.

I had always been a chunky little girl. Or as everyone else said, "I really liked cake." But that was just another way to say the obvious. I was fat. Nine years old. One hundred and fifty pounds. Fourteen years old. Two hundred and thirty eight pounds. I guess to me food wasn't just what I ate to stay alive. It was where I found comfort. Where in some way I found relief. This was the way it was until how I say "I saw myself in the mirror." I had paid no attention to my weight in the past. I guess hearing people make fun of my weight all the time made me take it as a joke. That all stopped when I tried on a size seventeen with a front butt. Which didn't close.

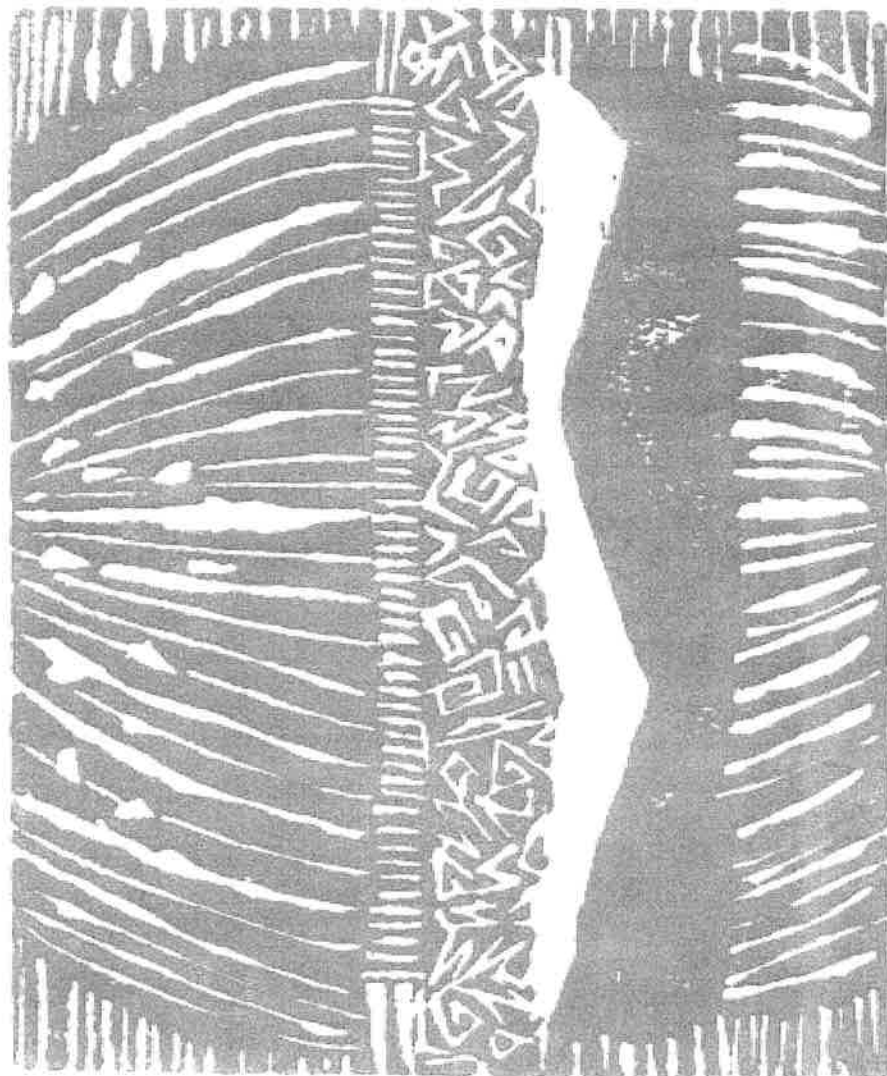
Fifteen years old. One hundred and thirty four pounds. Took just a little over a year. One hundred pounds. Gone. I didn't see the day coming. They didn't see it coming. And some still don't. I've heard everyone's opinion. "Liposuction, bulimia, anorexia, serious eating disorder." But those comments don't bother me anymore because I know what it took. It took sweat. It took hard work. It took self-control and self-will. It took hope. It took tears. It took faith. I had faith and still do. My weight loss is my biggest accomplishment in life.

All the comments I've heard ever since I learned to walk? I let them go. And for the people who said them? I forgave them. Have I forgotten? Yes. There's no point holding on to the past when you can never relive it. It's meant to be left behind. I was an outcast. Not so much among everyone else. I was an outcast to myself. But I learned to accept myself.

Food is no longer my comfort. No longer what I run to. I was the shell. I no longer am the shell. Because I let it crack. I let myself out.

Karina Castro
Class of 2009

Gluttony



Matina Pithis
Class of 2007

The moment I realized I could read, I was lying on my stomach in the library center in my kindergarten class. The multi-colored carpet matched my red sweater; my legs were bent at my knees, perpendicular to the floor. I was looking at a book about snowmen and a little girl, trying to pick out the words I knew. After tireless mornings of struggling over Dr. Seuss's *Hop on Pop*, and realizing that "th" sounded like a hissing snake, the words finally came together to make meaningful sentences. I could understand—and it was a glorious moment.

Ever since, I have lived in a storybook world that I retreat to whenever I need to take a break from reality. Some people run, others eat chocolate. I read. When I can't get calculus or when I argue with my mother, I'll take a break, and read *Ella Enchanted*, or if I'm really desperate for a good laugh, *Eats, Shites, and Leaves* (a play off *Eats, Shoots and Leaves*). My brother and sisters used to complain that I spent too much time reading, so I learned to hula-hoop while reading, and we had hula-hoop competitions. I always won, since I became so engrossed in the book that my mind didn't concentrate on the competition, but rather Harry Potter's magical realm. I learned how to follow the words, even as they swayed and dipped in front of me, letting me adapt to reading on long car rides.

I became so involved in these fictional worlds that I forgot where the characters' lives ended and mine began. After reading *Little House on the Prairie*, I began unconsciously narrating my life in third person. Once in a while, I would catch myself, but usually, my imagined memoir continued uninterrupted, as I described and recorded every trivial detail. And books that ended differently than I wanted them to end drove me crazy. After reading Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women*, I wanted to throw rotten tomatoes at Alcott's grave since Jo didn't marry Laurie.

Last September, on the Friday of my first week of junior year, I came home convinced that I was going to fail physics, I was the only person in Spanish who couldn't understand the teacher, and I'd be eaten by my English teacher. I didn't think to talk to my friends about what was going on, since I thought I was the only one in the world feeling this way (I was so wrong). Instead, I pulled out one of my all-time favorite books, *My Sister's Keeper*, and got ready to begin my internal grousing. As I delved again into the book, I found my self-pity evaporating as—through the story—I realized that there were a lot of people with problems more complicated than my sadistic teachers. I got this feeling of confidence, even though I'd only cracked open a book.

Like I said before, I've entwined my own experiences so much with what I read, so I am constantly comparing my life to the lives of some of my favorite characters. It's probably not natural; it's probably strange, but it's who I am. Reading has offered me a perspective on the world that I can't get from news stories. In a book, the characters have feelings, ordinary lives, and a conflict to overcome—something that I can relate to beyond violence and death. You hold your breath as they face their fears, feel your face grow red as they embarrass themselves, and cheer when they make it past their obstacles. Turns out I passed physics, no one understood the Spanish teacher, and my English teacher didn't eat his students. The character of Lauren Xenakis made it past the conflict to the resolution.

Lauren Xenakis (College Essay)
Class of 2007

The Love of One's Enemies

Today most will say actions against you must be repaid
"Most" as in those who oppose the law that was laid
When Jesus preached that an "eye for an eye" wasn't the way to get by
So if someone rocks you in the face give him the other cheek in its place
Don't be afraid – it's no mistake to replace hate with grace
But it's tough to choose the hard sayings of the Jew
Who continued the teachings of the Old books with those of the New
Yet it's true, they're easier to claim than do

So when the snake wants to bite, resist the plight of the fight
Follow the path that's right
You're in God's sight

Ronny Ead
Class of 2008

Untitled

“Why me, Allah? Why me?”
she cried as beads of sweat
dripped from underneath her burka.
The dark man held her at gunpoint
And yelled at her to be quiet.
He shoved her into the trunk
of the old Mercedes and sped away.
“I do not want to die!” she
screamed in Arabic while
she tried to untie her hands.
The car came to a sudden halt.
Her burka had slipped off.
He made her stand in the busy road,
and she tried to hold back her
tears as she felt the heavy
bomb wrapped around her waist.
“Save me, Allah,” she prayed
while the clock ticked with rage.
She counted the remaining seconds
of her short life.
Three. Two.

One.

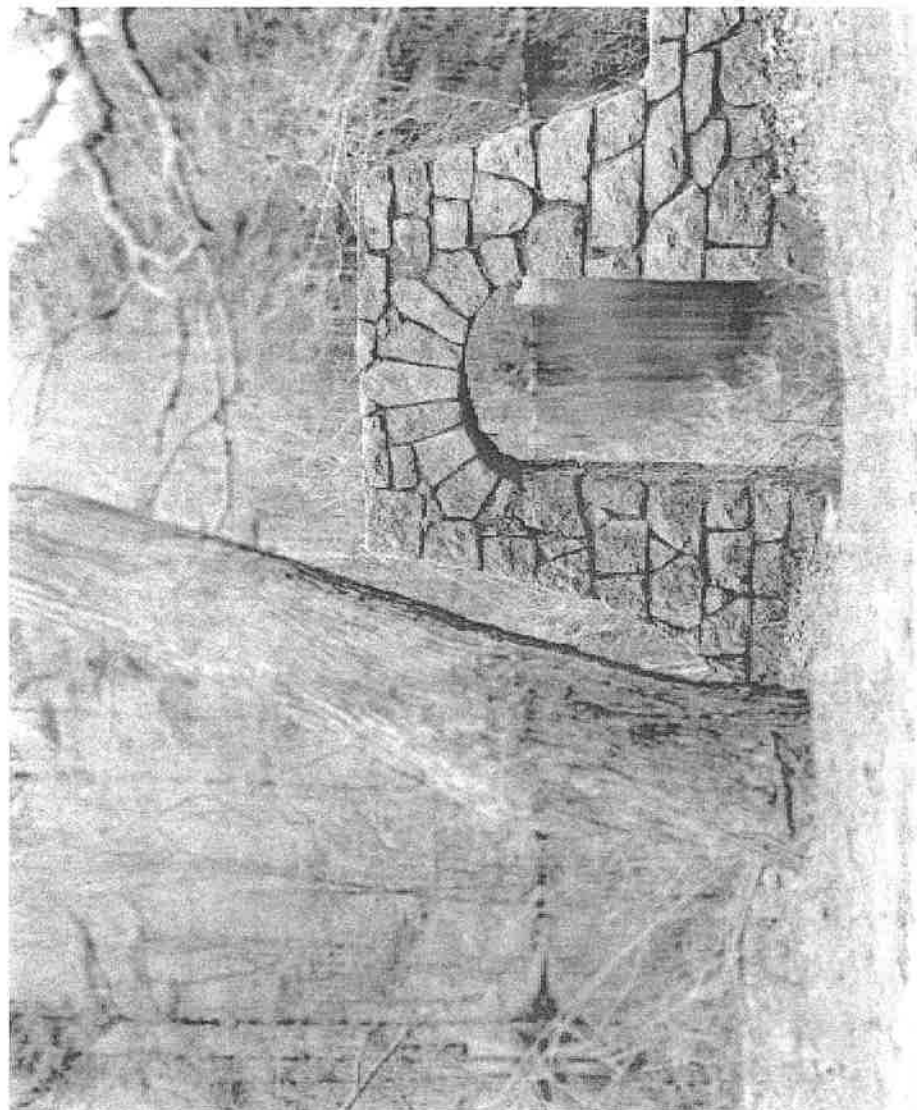
Patricia Letayf
Class of 2007

Names & Dates

The sun is shining brightly and the rays of sunlight appear as if they are scorching the leaves upon the trees into a burnt orange color. A cool wind blows, and I close my eyes as the breeze brushes back my strands of hair that have fallen from the ribbon that held it all together. When I open my eyes, every leaf that had lain on the ground before the wind had in some way changed its position. I can hear a car off in the distance; the gravel beneath its tires crunches as the large piece of metal continues to roll on. I peer down at my own feet. They stand upon pebbles that I dig up and place on the stone that has loved ones beneath it. In my right hand I hold a bundle of sweet, scented flowers. After placing them before the stone, I gather the deceased petals of other flowers and scatter them about. Behind the bundle are names and dates etched into the large grey rock. What do these names and dates really mean? They tell nothing of who these loved ones once were. All I see are names and dates. I look to my left and find myself looking over a sea of stones nearly identical to the one I am standing at. I look to my right, and I see the same. I wonder how many people before me have done just what I have done and thought just what I am thinking? Maybe many people, maybe very few. I will never know for sure. I will never know the answers to many questions I never got the chance to ask my loved ones. Another cool wind blows, I close my eyes, and a warm tear cools as it rolls down my raw cheek.

Madeleine Schnier
Class of 2010

Gateway to Eternity



Matthew Joyal
Class of 2008

I had a secret that I could not tell. I am Lebanese. The seeds of embarrassment began to grow when I entered "big kid school." My mother, who stayed at home with my younger siblings, packed me gourmet meals in my lunch box—or should I say *stuffed* them in. The Aladdin lunch box I carried each day was so heavy that I would have preferred to carry a bowling ball in each hand. My classmates shook their lunchboxes to see what was inside. I didn't dare. If I accidentally tossed it, I would have knocked down one of my friends like a bowling pin. During our lunch prayer each day, I would beg God and hope that my mother had packed me a Lunchables, the all-American-kid lunch. Needless to say, my prayers were never answered. I lugged my briefcase-sized lunch box to the cafeteria and took my seat. When I unzipped the bag, a strong aroma burst from it and all heads turned toward me. I never dumped the contents of the lunch box onto the table. It would have been too humiliating. I did not need the other kids to torment me because I could feed a small country with the contents of one lunch bag.

Until I was eight, I thought the Beatles were an insect, and needless to say, I was wrong. When I entered school, a tidal wave of American culture hit me, and I drowned in it. While other kids gobbled up macaroni and cheese and watched Nickelodeon, I ate *koosa* and *kebbeh* and marveled at my grandmother's ability to interpret Turkish coffee cups to tell my mother's future. I was shocked when I entered preschool and realized I had to speak English. My childhood home was a little branch of Lebanon dropped in the foreign land of America.

I refused to go to the country that had been the root of my humiliation. Why should I have to jet off to a far-away country for two months when I could stay at home with my friends? My mother assured me that there were plenty of things to do in Lebanon and that I better appreciate our trip because my father had paid two thousand dollars for each ticket. She was right. The weather was so warm that I would constantly fight my cousins for a turn to sleep on the balcony. Every day we would walk to the local ice cream parlor and buy a cone for sixty-seven cents; the employees would always give us extra scoops simply because they were good people. All of the neighbors in my father's small town of Bickfaya came to know me as Mounier's daughter and respected me because they knew my father and his father before him. These strangers who I befriended over the summer helped me realize that I was proud to be part of the Lebanese culture, one where everyone values kindness, family, and hospitality.

Patricia Letayf (College Essay)
Class of 2007

America???

Believe it or not, nowhere can be paradise. You would have to walk thousands and thousands of miles to find it. Leaving my country in a hurry. I felt so insecure to stay. Hearing sounds of shots like someone was knocking on your head. I had enough of that. My mother was sick and couldn't stand it anymore. At the airport and finally on the plane. I had the feeling that an angel was watching over my family, and me. First we landed at Yaoundé, Cameroon. The only thing that was so remarkable was the red sand. More red than blood. I met a lot of people. Some of them with whom I became friends. Like people say friends become family forever. Life over there was different from my country. Day by day, I started to regain the sweet taste of life. Life was a routine, like a day that started over and over and over. I was waking up each day feeling like it was yesterday. Again on the plane, toward the United States of America. My siblings and I were so excited, not only to see America, but also mostly to see our father. We hadn't seen each other for a while. A big family reunion, a lot of smiles were showing up on faces, lights were on everywhere. I said to myself this is the world in colors. As the days go on and on, I realized that I was wrong. What was I thinking? Life isn't easy; it's the same thing everywhere. The same cruelty and violence. People's hearts are rocks, nothing can penetrate. I felt like a broken angel. My family had to start their lives all over, at point zero. To adapt to a new environment, not a piece of cake. To have a better life full of greatness, have to work for it, to be determined.

Kaja Mbiye
Class of 2009

My Amazing Hands

Looking down at my paws, claws, but they call them hands
I see my fingerprints that make me different from anyone else,
the wrinkles as if I was an old man,
the beauty mark on my little finger fading away,
the veins that shoot with blood, like a river's mouth,
the different streams that emerge from one to another
A handful of uneven fingernails as if someone has bitten them
over and over and over again
And, Oh! Right There! (a small hand)
Little fingers begin to form

Oh lovely hand, I have never seen you before
Little fingers from my hand, whence did you come from?
Continue to write, wave, catch, and throw with your twin
How will I bear to see you wrinkled up,
curled into a fist, and placed at your sides
But how can I stop this from happening?
I can't see as the season changes outside your house,
When the children laugh and run in the yard
The moon begins to come out early, and you can see yourself breathe.
I begin to feel the cold that gives me shivers down my spine

As I put my hand over the warm fire
As if I were a child doing so on a cold winter night
I am already staring down at these hands of mine –
The scaly knuckles, tiny patches of hair, the vein filled hand!
The shaking gets intense, the little voice in my head tells me to: Open!
Close! Open!
(Now it isn't so cold, and I come back)
But ah, the wrinkly, scaly hand, looking like snake skin
I lift them high; turn them this way at that
They are my own, hands that are going to make me different

Jimmy Nguyen
Class of 2009

Maggie Who Swims with Swans on Fieldtrips

I remember it good, real good, because it just happened-- in second grade. Me and my class took a field trip into the greatest and prettiest city in the whole wide world, yup, Boston. Atkinson is such a small town that a trip to even Worcester got me excited, but Boston that was a real treat. My teacher, Mrs. McDougall, said we were going there to ride the swans. This puzzled me. I always thought of swans as really, really big birds as white as Santa's beard at Christmas time. Mama said, Just wait and see; it'll all make sense.

I'd always loved Boston ever since I can remember. Daddy always tells me that we have so much history in our backyard and one day he took me there and proved it to me. I saw where Paul Revere lived and the Bunker Hill Monument and even Quincy Market—they sold really good tomatoes there. I remember.

When me and Maggie, my best friend since I can even remember, stepped off the bright yellow school bus onto the streets of Boston, there were all kinds of different people. Skinny and fat, tall and short, some with brown hair, one with green. For lunch we sat under the biggest willow tree I'd ever seen-- bigger than my house and even the all glass business building across the street. That's where I finally saw the swans we were going to ride. Not actually swans, but boats, red and green, with a carved wooden swan head on the front. There were lots of them, probably twenty. All around with their delicate frames floated hundreds of swans, real ones, their tall necks dipping into the water to get the piece of bread a kid dropped off his homemade sandwich. But there weren't just swans. Mama, me, and Maggie walked over to see them. Mama said there were geese, ducks, and even some sea gulls. Whenever Maggie saw the boy drop that piece of bread in, she darted back and got the bag of cheez-its her mom packed for the trip.

One, two, three. Nothing too exciting. A swan here, a goose there. Until something caught my eye, something that stuck out. A HUGE splash as big as Texas, then a frenzy of birds. The once majestic animals gone crazy. I couldn't quite see what they were going crazy about so I turned around for Maggie's reaction, but she was no where in sight. It wasn't until then that I figured out she was the one who had fallen into the water! The birds were attacking her! Water splashing everywhere, I even got wet. Poor Maggie, being practically molested by the animals over a lousy cheez-it. Before I could even say anything, Mama pushed me out of the way and hoisted Maggie out of the pond, like a wet puppy out of a tub.

Christie Mastriano
Class of 2009

Superman Way Up High

There it was. A massive red serpent with a Mount Everest peak, slithering and looping in the distant. Already I could hear the high pitched screams of so many that were tightly strapped onto its belly as it twisted around the letter S on its beckoning tracks. Were we really going on?

Superman. This was easily the highlight of my vacation in New York. The rollercoaster almost as legendary as the hero himself. Tall and steep like the Empire State Building. Red like the words passion and fury. Here we were. There it was. This was it.

I was brave. I always had been. But of course people says that's because I spent my time hanging out with older boys. I like to think I was born with my bravery. And now it would show. Superman. A structure so tall that it spoke with the clouds.

We sprinted into the line where the tangy smell of metal and the dizziness of anxiety swept over us like a heat wave. Our turn didn't come fast enough. We practically threw ourselves into the seats that smelled of sweaty palms and faded leather. The crammed seats only brought back memories of the microscopic overcrowded room that awaited me at home. Yet, that couldn't affect me now. Me and Mikey were ready as ever in the front. And Matty, shaking like a sizzling piece of frying chicken, sat with Dad in the back. Off we go.

The car lurched in a slow creep, then began cranking up the notorious slope. The tracks groaned and moaned as if they had a painful backache. Up, up, up we went for what seemed like light-years, stretching our necks like giraffes to see if we made it to the top. 200 feet of up-ness, and we made it. Way up high. Now the fun part.

Curling lazily over the top, our car shot down to earth like a falling angel. Hair flying, skin tingling. I was as light as foam. From a solid to a gas, I was one with the wind. Nonexistent. Turning and looping, flipping and scooping. Smiles for the camera, jerk to a stop, and it was over. I must have been screaming because my voice sounded like sandpaper on wood when I spoke. I'd been waiting so long for that one minute ride, and it was so worth it. Riding it 100 times more wouldn't fill my need.

I wanted to be like Superman. Soaring through the sky, leaving worries behind. Your only company being the butterflies in your tummy and the wind on your face. Flying. With my goals and my dreams on my back I would fly. And I would never stop flying. Higher and higher. I would be somebody. No one could bring me down. Break out. It's my time to shine.

Emily Gaudiano
Class of 2009

Untitled

Within me resides not the lullaby of chirping birds,
nor the howl of a coyote before a chase; no –
Instead, I find a desert of ice
where glaciers melt and then refreeze
as the winds whip through bright blue sky
and rip clouds from their perch above,

and in those clouds, hail rains down
the frosted peaks of the desert's core –
a mountain that shoots out volleys
of both fire and ice as the polar bears,
fattened by an abundance of fish,
suffer the consequence of self-disgust
in the face of prosperity's laziness.

But the mountain of my desert also
basks in the sun's vague light, razing
ice to touch tendrils of brief warmth.
The birds hover over its highest peak
and in summer, dwell in its hidden depths,
its ice-glazed caves, its broken mouth.
Yet recent days feel birds upon the
mountain's back in both spring and autumn –
their beaks slowly pecking off
the ice it so adores until one day
the mountain finds the desert gone,
the fire vanquished, and deep within,
a spring gurgling, flowers blooming,
and a patch of grass just beginning
to sprout.

Marilee Goad
Class of 2008

**SUBMIT.
DO IT...YOU WON'T.**

Merci Beaucoup....

- * To Riverside Press in Methuen, MA for bringing us to life!
- * To Jane England at England's MicroCreamery in Haverhill, MA, for allowing us to couple our creativity with ice cream at Open Mic Nights.
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- * To the English Department, for encouraging imaginative expression and fostering the literary growth of their students.
- * To Mr. Welch for his willingness to help us with that for which he is no longer responsible—the submissions, the editing, and any predicaments in between.☺
- * To our readers, for loving us and letting our voices be heard.
- * And finally, to our submitters— you, yes, you! — who fill the pages that complete our vision.

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The English Department and all of the Faculty who encourage students to write, to submit, to create and to have faith in themselves and their work. Also, to the Faculty who submit themselves and who attend our open mic nights—your presence is noticed and deeply valued by everyone who participates in and reads our magazine.

To all of the students who keep *Visions* going. You are the heart of the magazine and the school. I look forward to working with all of you!

I hope you enjoyed our first issue. If you'd like to get involved, just let us know.

Thanks again for such a warm welcome and promising beginning,

Ms. Kristin DeSantis

A Note on Mentor Texts

While reading this issue, you may have noticed that the style, voice, and language used in some of the student work are reminiscent of the authors studied at the high school level. Some of the pieces were inspired by “mentor texts”. Mentor texts are pieces of literature or poetry chosen and used by teachers or the individual student to enthuse, motivate, and provoke creativity and confidence within or stemming from an existing literary structure. The pieces chosen exemplify quality self-determining work and a freshness that is strictly the student-author’s own.

*To see these and other submissions on the internet,
please check out the student work section of Central Catholic's
web page in the upcoming weeks:*

http://www.centralcatholic.net/acad_student_work.html

and our Edline Activities Page:

https://www.edline.net/pages/Central_Catholic_HS/Activities/Visions

You can submit to our next issue by email:

visions@centralcatholic.net

via Ms. DeSantis or the *Visions* Editorial Staff or

by placing a hard copy in the envelopes we've placed in each HR.

