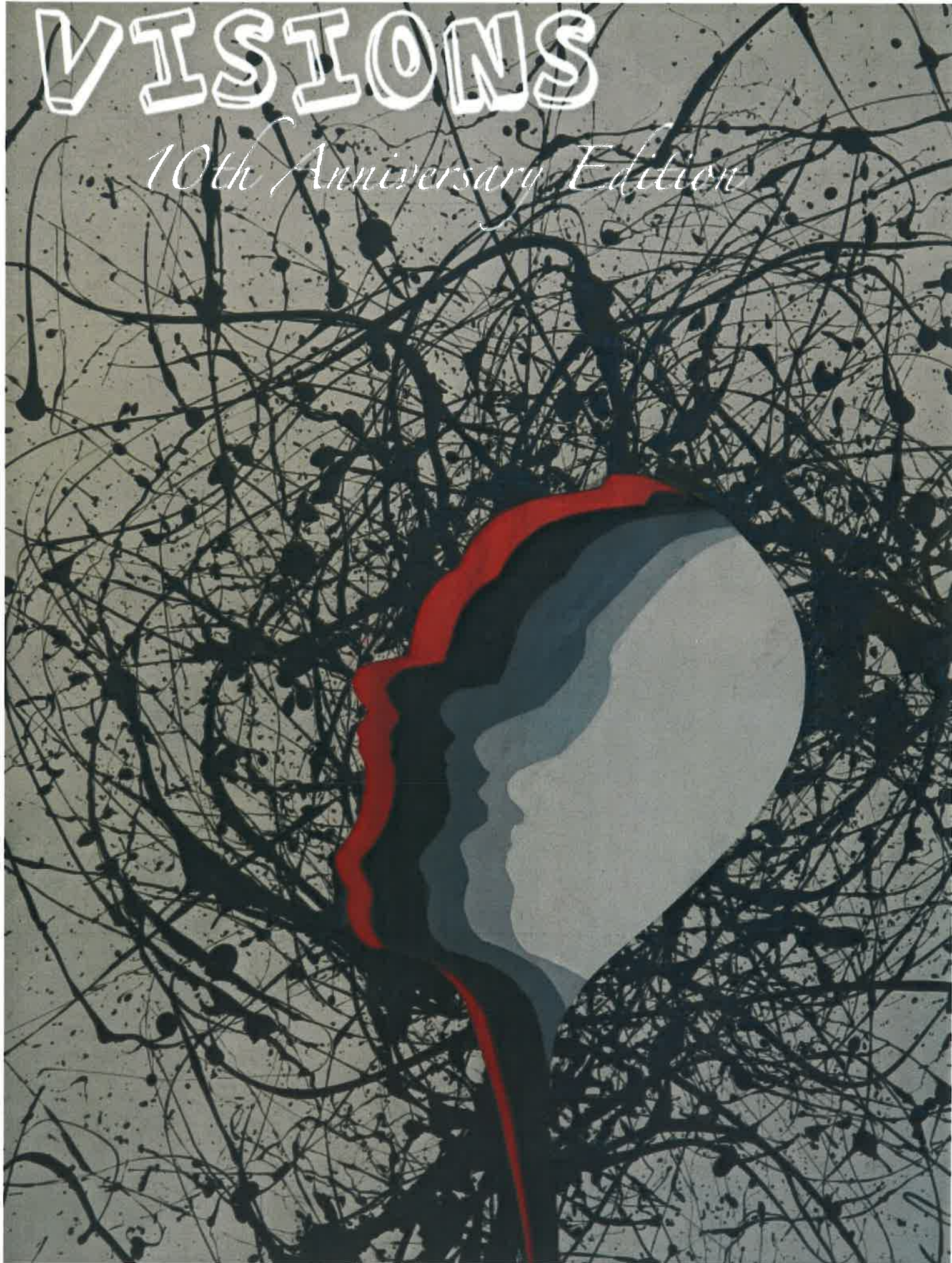


VISIONS

10th Anniversary Edition



WE DEDICATE THIS 10TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION OF *VISIONS* TO:

MR. DEFILLIPPO

IN RECOGNITION OF HIS TIME AS THE LEADER OF OUR SECOND HOME AND FAMILY, CCHS

MR. WELCH

**WHO, 10 YEARS AGO, BEGAN A LITTLE MAGAZINE THAT HAS GIVEN COUNTLESS OPPORTUNITIES
FOR STUDENTS TO BE SEEN AND HEARD**

& THE

"CENTRAL CRAZIES"

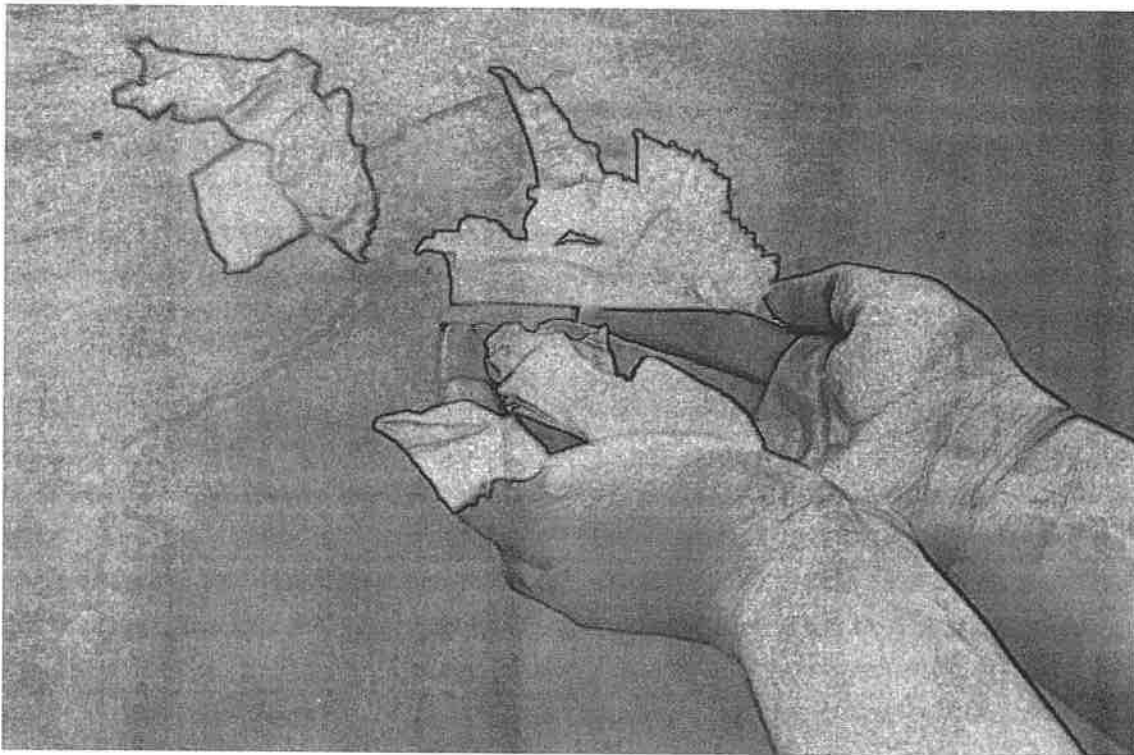
**WHO BROUGHT THEIR CENTRAL PRIDE (WITH AN ABUNDANCE OF SPIRIT AND GOOD HUMOR) TO OUR
COFFEEHOUSES AND OUR PAGES**

TO YOU, 2010!

FRONT & BACK COVER ART BY ALEXIS CRISTALDI, 2010

In life, there are many things that get on peoples' nerves. For me, there is one thing that I have realized I really hate—having to wipe my nose with a napkin, or a rough paper towel. By a show of hands, who has ever been in a situation that forced you to clean your nose with one of these items? If you haven't, consider yourself lucky. For those of you who have, here are some of the horrible things you may have experienced. One of the first side effects you may have been faced with is what I call, "raw nose." This is when the roughness of the material used has irritated the nostrils, and has led you to resemble Rudolph. Another side effect, possibly the worst one, is avoiding blowing your nose altogether, sometimes for over an hour. Your nose becomes so hot and hurt that every time you go to wipe your nose it is extremely painful. To leave all of you with some advice in regards to this issue, never feel pressured or trapped when it comes to blowing your nose. You don't need to use a paper towel or napkin. Seek alternative routes; no one will be impressed if you use the rougher materials. Tissues are made for a reason, and if at any point during your day they are unavailable, I would advise that your buy a travel-size package of tissues, or possibly begin carrying a handkerchief.

Jimmy Abdallah, '10



Kaila Lawrence, '10

ValiANT

I'm proud to say that I experienced the most disgusting moment of my life and the most disturbing moment of my life simultaneously and at the ripe age of eight.

My mom pulled into the packed dirt parking lot of Wally's, a Polish food store and one of several farm stands on our stretch of Route 110. The competition between these markets is vicious. I wish I were kidding. My mother was getting late-season corn but was generous enough to give me the fifty cents needed to buy one of the thirty thousand Tootsie Roll Pops sitting in an orange box on the counter. I'll never know whether this was out of pure philanthropy or as a way of stopping me up. The forthcoming events allowed me to commit little else to memory.

I've heard that people feel like they move in slow motion when they get into car accidents - their movements seem suspended in water. Like Keanu Reeves in *The Matrix*; I felt the same way as I pulled off the wrapper of my grape lollipop. Grasping the bottom corner of the candy's cover. The subtle brush of wax paper against crystallized sugar. Sweet anticipation. The slight saliva build-up as I prepared to suck the delicious...

Out of a little hollow in the lollipop crawled an ant. No, not a sugar ant, which would seem mildly probable given the locale. And no, not one of those bulbous carpenter ants whose thorax is the size of a pencil eraser. But it was, I assure you, a decent-sized ant. One of those average specimens. Out it crawled from a little tunnel in the dark blue candy, scuttling down the grape-flavored sphere towards my grasping fingers.

I convulsed in horror and shrieked. I shrieked and shrieked and shrieked - an unending wail that wrenched my mother away from her transaction. The pop lay forgotten on the floor.

The two factors jarred in my eight-year-old mind. Lollipop? Yes. Ant? No! All I wanted was my lolly. Lolly rhymed with Molly. An ant? That close to one's face? An unwelcome ANTibody lodged in something familiar and comforting. It was perverse. It was traumatizing. The pop was contaminated.

As an eighteen-year-old, I've finally mustered up the confidence to face these insurmountable traumas and confront my sordid past objectively. By all that I mean that I wanted to know how the hell that ant got in there. How was it alive? It couldn't have dug that cavern itself! It couldn't have crawled in; the twisted base of the wrapper clung tightly to the stick, as is the case with every sucker. Could an ant egg have been planted in the hollow during pop production? Could every Tootsie Roll Pop have a hopeful organism on the inside, failed in every case but mine? Perhaps a slight defect in manufacturing created...

A perfect habitat for life to begin.

I know the revulsion that I felt while witnessing the ant's first exposure to the world, but imagine how it must have felt. All it knew was white and purple; the blank underside of the wrapper and the translucent violet cliffs. Then suddenly, with abrupt and eager movement, it was jolted out of all it knew. What came next was a cacophony and a splay of pink - Molly's throbbing uvula as she screamed. What else to do but scuttle? Neither of us was to blame. We were both shocked by our startling experiences, more frightened by the presence of something uncommon than we were by one another.

I'd like to be able to end with some profound extreme. "And so, never again have I laid eyes or tongue on another Tootsie Roll Pop." My sweet tooth overcame that aversion soon enough. But although I'm as curious as any layman about the number of licks it takes to get to the center, I will forevermore pull off the wax paper with trepidation.

Molly Rokasz, '10

Without a Paddle

The storm has come and gone.
What remains of the river are speedier currents and an extra two inches of water.

My feet submerge into the icy black abyss, and I can't feel the bottom.
The strength of the current pushes my feet.
My heart pumps faster as I get into the raft.
Without a moment to think, the raft hurdles down the river.
I forgot my paddle!

The rapid current steers me left, then right, then left again.
My raft is like a blind man without his walking stick.
The waves could overturn me, bringing me into the water's depths.

I'm not afraid!
The paddle has always been there, yet I can't see it.
I call it Father.

My destination is irrelevant, for I know that the paddle will always bring me home.
Optimism may fade.
Obstacles will increase.
My path may seem far, but my paddle will be there in my palms—waiting to steer me in the right direction.

Jeremy Gameau, '12



Kaila Lawrence, '10



Olivia Stanislas, '11



Kaila Lawrence, '10

How to Shoot a Basketball

Find a leather basketball with a nice grip
Before you go to the gym, unless you want the worn-down outdoor balls.
Energized by your previous meal and motivated with hopes of success,
Believe you can shoot a ball.
Put on your socks by pulling them
Gingerly over your toes and make sure there aren't any wrinkles
Because that's how you get blisters. Next put on your shoes and
Tie the laces tight so there is no chance of them
Coming undone while you play.
Wear a tank top, that way sleeves won't get
In your way when you shoot, and make sure it isn't too baggy,
Because then you'll look ridiculous.
Also, wear shorts that are about knee length—
Too short makes you look non-athletic and
Too long makes you look like you're wearing Capris.

You look like a true player now, and you're finally
Ready to learn how to shoot.
Pick up the ball and
Walk out to the half court line, and throw it at the hoop, trying to make it in.
It's out of your system; do not shoot that shot again.
Because you don't shoot shots
You wouldn't shoot in a game.
Next, grab the ball with the fingertips of your dominant hand
And make sure the seams are horizontal when you look at it.
Bring the ball up with one hand above, just a bit
Above your forehead, and balance it there with your other hand.
Square your entire body so that it is facing the basket.
Then, bend your knees to about a ninety-degree angle.
In order to release the ball you'll have to be
Somewhat closer to the basket, so move closer...
And even closer—you're just learning.
To complete your shot have your knees bent and the ball
A bit above your forehead and, all in one motion,
Extend your knees to a natural standing position while flicking the
Ball with your wrist in the direction of the basket.
Don't be surprised if the ball lands just a few feet in front of you,
Because it takes a lot of practice to get the technique and timing down.

Now go and retrieve the ball like a dog playing fetch.
Bring it back to where you started
And do the whole process over again,
For you have a lot of work to do.

Shawn McCoy, '12

The Effects of Monotony

How many of you have ever moved? How many of you have ever gone to an overnight camp in the summer? Or been encouraged to see the world or even attend a college outside Massachusetts? I haven't had these experiences. My life has been cradled and sheltered. 365 Appleton Street, North Andover MA has been my home for the past seventeen years. The stagnation of my upbringing has inspired me to travel, to attend an impressive college, and to get as far away from a suburban town as I possibly can.

My parents bring the word overbearing to a new level. I was one of the first people in our age group to get a cell phone, but not because they were fun to have-- because with one, my parents could keep track of me at all times. "Where are you going?" "Who's going to be there?" "What time will you be home?" "Tonight your curfew is 11:30." "Are you having fun?" While love serves as the backbone for their actions, they have smothered me and have made me want to do the opposite of whatever they intended. My childhood does not consist of bad memories by any means. North Andover has given me a stable background through my exposure to a typical suburban middle class neighborhood. My father is a conservative, devout Catholic who believes his family is an extension of his own image. Every Sunday, for the entirety of my youth, I had to attend Mass in an appropriate skirt or dress pants. Every winter my family went on vacation. Starting when I was three years old, every year my family has gone to Disney World. I have been to Disney World fifteen times. We're fortunate enough to be able to go on vacation, but we're also dull enough to go to Disney World every single year that we do.

In my house the golden rule is: "Never move far from daddy." Looking for colleges hasn't been as difficult as I expected it to be, because my father has allowed me to search within a two hour radius of my house. According to him, if the college is more than two hours away from 365

Appleton Street—he's not paying. My mom alleviates the college location issue by supporting my decision to apply to schools outside New England, but I'm not sure who will have the final say. Every limitation to new experiences my parents have put on me has become a personal glass ceiling.

How does my lackluster upbringing transpire into my future plans? I'm going to take risks when I grow up. I will live in the city and experience bright lights, bustling traffic, and people with diverse back rounds. Traveling abroad is also on my agenda. I attend to major in communications and, I plan on finding any excuse I can to leave the country. On my travels I will meet new and interesting people who can't tell me who won the latest reality TV show. I am going to try foods that haven't been cooked in a microwave oven. I am going to see sights that make me want to get out a canvas and paint. As soon as I move out of my house, going to Church will cease to be a weekly event. Disney World will be only a memory. The golden rule will become tarnished and obsolete. Words such as "unconventional," "spontaneous," and "remarkable" will describe my life.

I may not have been able to sleep in on Sundays, or go anywhere without calling my parents when I got there *and* when I left. Vacations may have gotten slightly repetitive and Boston might be the *only* city where I can go to college. But my childhood—my sheltered, uneventful, typical, childhood has made me who you see right now. I would not be as motivated, as eager, and or as ready for life outside my home if things hadn't happened the way that they did. My parents gave me limits growing up, and they did the best they could to instill their values in me, but I am finally leaving the nest to become my own person.

Amber Blum, '10

Kaleidoscope

Look in the Kaleidoscope and what do you see?

Watch the colors dance and sparkle in the light.

It's all really pretty 'til you see what's outside of it—

Do you see what I see?

See the children starving and dying by the things that we have done?

See the families torn apart by bloodshed?

See the people killed by ignorance?

I do, but you don't.

Grow up, and put down the kaleidoscope.

It's just a toy that hides the truth behind a few colorful lies.

Screens

We sit behind a digital screen for hours on end

Living pretend lives with our perfect little pretend people

We laugh and smile and pretend like it's all real

We place such value on them

Creating a perfect us

But when we look in the mirror we see nothing but wasted lives and husks of what was

It doesn't matter because soon we'll be in our perfect little pretend world again

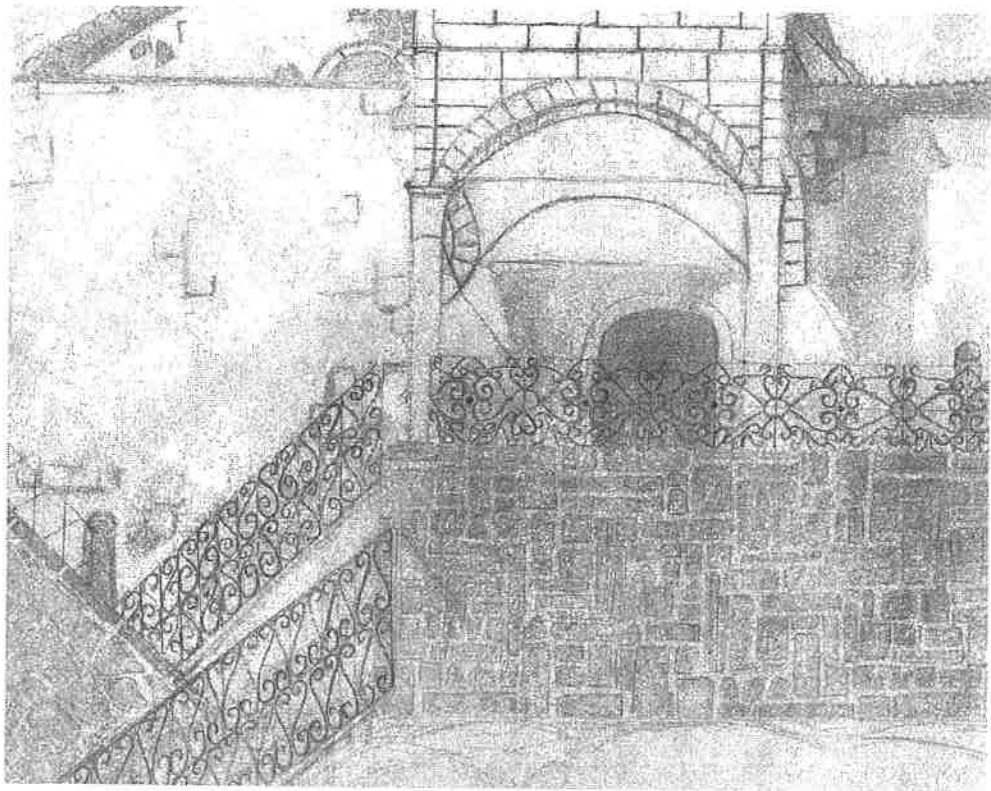
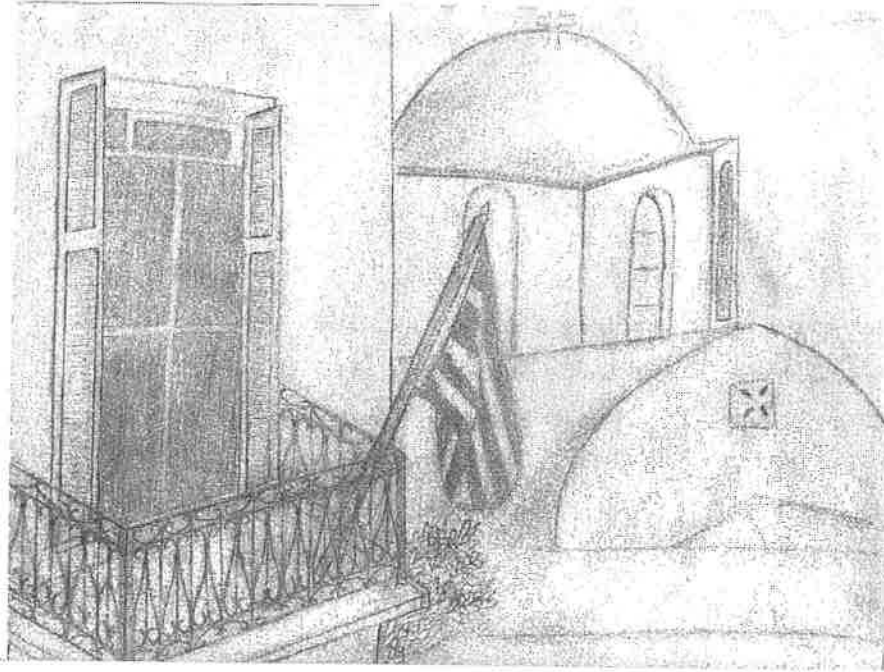
The technological age has reversed us back to cave men

But we're too busy living our digital lives to notice

Who cares

Our perfect little people are doing just fine

Ramon Vicenty, '12



ALEXANDRA DRAKOULAS, '10

Teacher to Student

Sign the syllabus and return it tomorrow; you will follow the rules of the classroom; homework is 40% of your grade, tests are 30%, and quizzes are 100%; Yes, that adds up to 170% but I don't care because this is MY classroom; There is no extra credit in this class; Extra credit does not exist in MY classroom; If you fail to pass in homework you will get a zero; Do you know what a zero will do to your grade? Four missed homeworks will result in an "F" for the quarter; We will have a quiz everyday; If you do not study it is impossible to get better than a "C"; This is the most important class you will ever take; I am the most important teacher you will ever have; We will write many papers in this class; If you fail to pass in a paper on time, you will receive an instant zero; Do you know what a zero will do to your grade? Conduct is important; Show up on time, behave in class, respect your classmates; Don't be afraid to participate if you have something intelligent to say, otherwise, don't bother; If you have a question, raise your hand; You will not speak unless called upon; My word is final; I am judge, jury, and executioner; This is not a democracy, this is a dictatorship; If you are late for class you will receive a detention; If you are out of dress code, you will receive two detentions; If you chew gum, you will receive...*Excuse me, Ms., let me guess, we will receive three detentions for gum chewing?*; Correct; If you do other homework in class you will receive a detention; If you stand when I say sit and if you sit when I say stand you will receive a detention; *Is this fair, Ms. Teacher?* Remove the word "fair" from your vocabulary, Mr., because in here, I decide what is fair and unfair; If you miss a day of school, you have one day to make up work, after that assignments missed will be a zero; Do you understand, yet, what a zero will do to your grade! When the year is over and the summer is growing closer, if you have followed all of these rules, listened to my methods, and taken all that I say as gospel, then you will still have a lot of work to do.

Jayson Martin, '10

The Sun to a Flower

Stand up straight; dance when you feel the wind—it's your song; bees might flirt with you, just give them what they want; don't fade; drink the rain, it'll enhance your growth; hold your breath if you smell dirty air, it'll stunt your growth; close your eyes if you hear footsteps; always look your best—you never know who's painting you; be not confused if the human celebrates after he picks your petals, for she loves him; don't feel bad if the human cries after he picks your petals, for she loves him not; *what if it hurts?* Still, do not complain, for he whom she does not love hurts more; bloom this way to congratulate a wedding; this way to welcome a newborn; this way to grieve a death; and this way to celebrate a mother; look at me when I shine on you; be nice to Moon when it is his time; take no offense if the humans sneeze at your pollen—they're odd creatures; this is how the ecosystem thrives; and this is how the ecosystem dies; kiss me back; don't brag if you're sitting at the top of the hill—you're just as important as those on the bottom; check the thumb on the approaching hand, green means good; that gardener with the spray is the rain; hug that girl's wrist in the pretty dress; land in the hands of a desperate woman if you are thrown backward; look vibrant on February 14th; don't resent sunflowers—I don't pick favorites; laugh at your plastic imposters; stay put in her swaying Hawaiian hair; dig deeply into the dirt; don't be frightened if the lightning severs the sky, enjoy the view from the open field; fret not when Winter sticks out its icy tongue; *but what if I die?* then plant your seed.

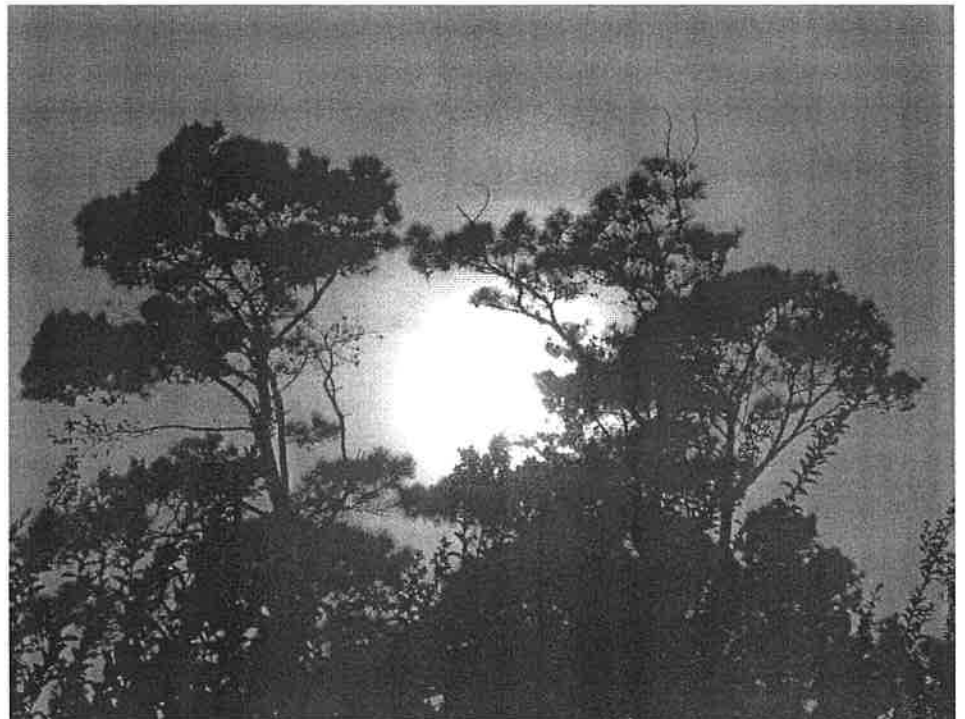
Cassandra Hebert, '10

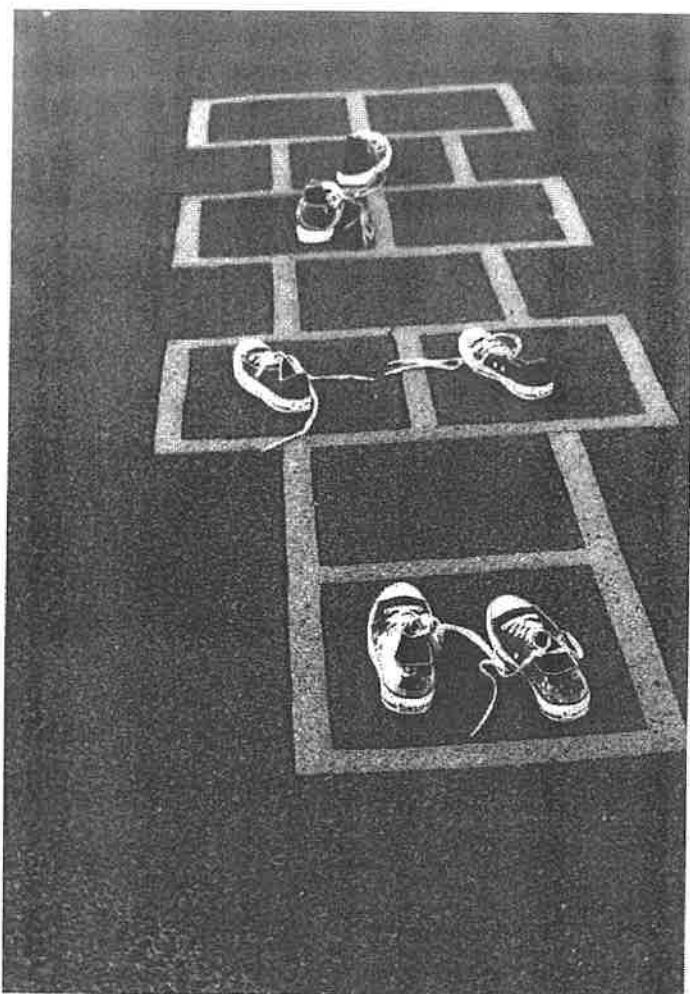
Moving On

In the center of our street is a row of dogwood trees.
Each year they grow, some faster than others,
but that is only because the slowest ones
will be the most beautiful in the end.
Sometimes their branches overlap each other
and interfere with another tree's growth, so the branches are cut and they are told to keep their hands to themselves.

Each season they change like a teenager's wardrobe.
In the winter they are brittle and lonely,
nothing but bare branches to keep them company.
In the spring they start fresh, excited and ready for
a new season of sunshine and summer.
During the summer months they flourish and bloom,
attracting bugs and bees.
Yet in the autumn, in the autumn
they wear beautiful multicolored coats just like Joseph's Dreamcoat.
Their wonder causes everyone to stop and stare, asking,
"Are those really the same trees as last year? Why,
they've grown so fast!" And shaking their branches and
laughing, the trees won't respond. Instead, they will grow
straight and proud, enjoying their last few years under the stars.

Deanna Marion, '11





Kaila Lawrence, '10



Leanne Cash, '10

Thank You

Since day one, she's been here. She's been here and hasn't left my side. Since the day in the delivery room to this very day. 'Til the day that we pass away, she'll be here.

Thank you for never leaving, even on my brattiest days. Thank you for guiding me. Thank you for being the role model whom I need, the inspiration that I need. Thank you for not judging me. Thank you for listening to my problems and my silly stories. Thank you for all the times you woke up in the middle of the night to bring me to the bathroom. Thank you for letting me hang out with you and your friends when I had no one. Thank you for being my mom, because Mami is never home. Thank you for being my lifelong friend.

One day I will be able to pay you back. One day you'll be proud of me. You'll say, yeah that's my little sister! Maybe one day I'll be able to show you how grateful I truly am. One day, in the future, I'll make you swollen with pride.

Kaylee Cortes, '12

A Wretched Geranium

The sun had started to peek through the smog that already covered the demanding manufacturing town. A little girl, resting against the windowsill, looked with interest as the town began to wake up. There wasn't a morning where Sylvia didn't examine the dirty streets and its people, though each dawn was similar. Awe had held the little grey-eyed child each time the small figures followed an invisible command to go about life. It had seemed magical to her, the way the people knew exactly where to go and what to do.

Sylvia had drawn out those moments of looking out the window, shifting from one foot to the other as each started to go numb. She recalled, as an old man across the street opened his store, a time she had gone with her mother and three siblings to the butcher shop. Traffic was rushing through the squalor of the town, so they all waited at the corner for the traffic to slow. It was by a jewelry store, and Sylvia went to the window to look at all the sparkling necklaces and bracelets like she had seen her mother do many times. Who could blame a child for wanting to be like her mother? But when the opportunity had come to cross the street, her family rushed over to the other side without her. Sylvia was caught in the mob of people going about the sidewalk and couldn't reach the road in time. People pressed against her from all sides. She seldom felt so meaningless and lost. It seemed as if the town from her window in her family's skinny, leaning apartment building and the one she was standing in were completely different.

"Get up!" her mother opened the door to the bedroom Sylvia shared with her two sisters. Her mother already looked worn, her brown hair flecked with grey. "Sylvy, you're already up?" Sylvia turned from the window and nodded. "Wake your sisters," she had said and then left the room. The small girl glanced over her elder sisters sleeping forms. Sylvia often felt that she was the only one who would help their mother with her siblings, cooking and chores. She had wondered if that was why much of the time she felt like the eldest of her brother and sisters. It was a good feeling, but also a lonely one.

"This Sunday's going to be all about getting everything ready for the week," her mother remarked, while she made eggs and toast. "Your grandmother is visiting on Thursday and everything should be running smoothly."

Sylvia knew the routine quite well already. It was her duty to go to the store and pick up the many things the family would need over the week. There wasn't much for the child to complain about though, as being sent on errands meant that no one would miss her right away. It was a great pleasure for Sylvia to go to the town pond to watch the ducks or climb the many trees the town had to be explored. Sylvia struck off on her journey as soon as possible after inhaling a small breakfast.

Suddenly, the day had gone by. It had passed too quickly for her and she wondered if she had perhaps taken too much time dawdling. Summer-like heat had beaten down, even though it was spring, through the smog produced by the buildings her mother worked at during the week. On these days especially, Sylvia loved to watch flocks of birds fly to and fro, fighting over food scraps. Something about the little, light creatures made her wish she had wings too.

Sunlight faded as the concerned girl rushed home. "Do you think you could sweep Sylvy, dear?" mother held a broom out to the little girl as she entered the apartment. "I'm feeling faint again, I need to go to sleep." Sylvia quietly put down her bags and began to clean. "Thank you, Sylvy. Don't forget you have school tomorrow, though!" Her mother swooped down to give her a kiss and then disappeared into the dim hallway. Sylvia could hear the click of her mother's bedroom door and then silence as the rest of her family settled in for the night.

All night, Sylvia listened to the slurred yells and crashes of bottles upon the street. She drifted to sleep finally and awoke early to supervise the awakening of the town.

At school, she was quiet and didn't dare look at people too boldly. The slight girl had tried to be herself when she started school, but Sylvia had quickly learned that there was no one like her there. It was better to blend into the background than stand out. There was one boy, a big and ruddy faced boy, who took any chance he could to intimidate the girl though. He had to have been 12 or 13. And even though he was much older, he made a point to come to the younger children's free time and "talk" to Sylvia.

Even the day before, as Sylvia exited a store, that boy frightened her. “What d’you have in the bag, huh?” he enthusiastically grabbed at what she held in her pale, trembling hands. Sylvy moved back from the boy’s reaching limbs. This was a mistake that both the girl and boy had realized immediately. He snarled, reminiscent of a dog’s guttural noises and pushed her back with two hands. “You think you’re better than me? You don’t move away from me!” Before he could do more, the owner of the shop Sylvia had just left propelled through the door and stepped between the two. Sylvia took flight from the scene as it happened; something had taken over her and carried her away. She walked the streets, fumbling to remove the mad look of the boy’s eyes from her mind. She stumbled to the edge of the pond and lifted her head to watch the ducks take to the air. Sylvia’s emotions settled and her heart beat consistently.

She didn’t grieve as she had made her way to school, for the innocent nature of the child didn’t divine that there was the possibility of a sequel to the previous day. But, as free time came, her heart suffered a stab of fear that came along with realization. That red faced boy lumbered toward her with steps akin to the fall of timber. The time it took for him to cross over to her had seemed to lengthen itself out into centuries.

The bully paid no attention to any of the other children around her. “You thought you could get away from me?” he drawled. The calm he managed to hold on to signaled a storm under his expression. Then, when he was no more than a foot from her, he spoke again. “Just because that old man made me stop then, doesn’t mean he can protect you now.”

Sylvia had closed her eyes and struggled to breathe. She didn’t know how to deal with him, she didn’t know what to do and there was no one to help her. There was nothing else.

“Look at me!” his voice cracked – he had cracked. What irrational anger in a human! He pushed her back harder than he ever had before. The girl collapsed to the ground and finally opened her eyes. The bully hastened to continue his abuse. “Why do you think you’re better, huh?”

A barrage of words fell from his mouth and onto Sylvia as he pulled her up only to push her down again. None of his words were making sense anymore – it was just noise. She could feel the ground beneath her in amazing detail and, as quickly as the boy had snapped, it ended.

The next time Sylvia awoke was in her bed in that skinny, leaning apartment. “She’s awake!” someone shouted, followed by earnest footsteps coming toward her room. All of her siblings had crowded around Ann’s bed on the far side of the room as if Sylvia had a sickness that could be caught. Her mother burst in, an affectionate smile on her face.

“Thank the Lord,” she rushed to sit on the side of the bed. What had happened? Who had taken her home?

“Mother,” Sylvia began. Her mind still at school but also rushing ahead to the present.

“It’s okay now, darling. Don’t even speak. We’ve taken care of that awfully red faced boy... Just rest a while – we don’t need to talk about this now... Drink some water and I’ll make you soup later,” she added after a minute pause. With a kiss, her mother reluctantly stepped from the room, followed by the rest of the kids. Later, her mother had told Sylvia that she was knocked out upon the impact of her head on the ground.

Sylvia exhaled and looked out the window. It’s already dark and a small crash can be heard as the night life begins. Suddenly her confusion and desperate need to find out what had happened, faded to be replaced by exhaustion. She shut her eyes and let sleep overtake her small frame.

The two days that followed were filled with unshakable sadness punctured by deep thought. All Sylvia did was sit in bed or look out the window. She did not understand why such a feeling would plague her now and was even more saddened by her lack of explanation for it. It seemed as if the very things she had done everyday – the very thought of them made her tired. The view from her window didn’t look as magical as it had once been and gave her a feeling akin to the one she had when she was lost among the crowd.

The girl could tell her sudden change in mood had scared her family. No matter how much it bothered her though, she couldn’t get herself to snap out of it. The most she did was humor their efforts to rehabilitate her. Though this was a loving mission, it consisted of trying to get her outside which only amounted in getting her as far as the neighboring apartment. The elderly lady who lived there was good company and she didn’t pry or force Sylvia to talk. Among the few things they did talk about though, was the geranium she had been trying to grow for two years. “Someday, it’ll bloom,” the

lady's surprisingly strong voice had said, "and I'll have you see it. The poor thing just isn't gettin' 'nough sunlight in this apartment, is all. When I find out just where to put it, this'll have the most beautiful blossoms." The wretched, heartbroken plant had no chance, but that old lady either didn't know it or wouldn't admit it.

Although the times Sylvia spent with this lady were relaxing, it didn't stop the sadness from coming back when she left the apartment. Her heart would pound with dread when she would hear the open and close of the lady's front door. That noise meant it was time to go back to her room and her thoughts—a place she was never ready to return to. But on Thursday afternoon, as Sylvia sat demurely at the windowsill where the geranium was pitifully trying to grow, there came footsteps and a voice that made life pass through her veins once again.

"Where'd she hide herself? Sylvy!" the distinct voice of Mrs. Tilley, Sylvia's grandmother, exclaimed.

The little girl kept a silence of anticipation until the form of the woman came into view. "Grandmother!" she responded, running to the older woman and flinging her arms about her. There was no force in the world that might be able to pry the girl from her grandmother's torso. Sylvia felt her sadness mightn't come back if she stayed by this woman's side forever.

"You're somethin' else, y'know that?" her grandmother continued, softly pushing back the girl's hair with one hand and holding the two close with the other. The girl didn't even notice as her grandmother bade the apartment neighbor a silent goodbye and made their way back to their apartment.

"Oh, you got her," the little girl's mother met them halfway through the door of the home. "I should've known," she gave a small smile.

By the end of the night, her grandmother had announced her need for help in Maine and her choice of Sylvia from the others. "She needs t' get away right now and I need some help at the farm. I think it's best if Sylvia just stay with me." The look on her mother's face had been sick with disapproval – yet at the same time, understanding. "And even though I'd love to be with all of you longer, I should probably g' back up there." Each member of the family looked to Sylvia at this point, who was intently staring at her grandmother's skirt, a small smile spread across her face.

The couple made their dark way back up to Maine that night. The girl didn't want to take any of her belongings with her and her grandmother thought it was just as well, for it was less to carry. They didn't get far down the hallway before Sylvia had asked to visit her neighbor. Her mother acquiesced with tears budding in her eyes, even though the old woman was probably asleep.

"Thank you for letting me visit you, ma'am," Sylvia eagerly said when her knock was answered. The sadness in her heart was virtually obliterated with the promise of a new home. "But I'm going to live with my grandmother now." The neighbor nodded and smiled.

Opening the front door more, the girl could see the geranium had been moved one windowsill over. "You inspired me to move it over there," the lady nodded back to the plant. "Even though it's dark now, I have a good feeling about it. It'll grow in the light."

Sylvia agreed this time, honestly believing in those words. From there, her grandmother took her small hand in her own, turned around and walked on. She had found a new feeling in her heart, one that lifted her up on wings and spirited her to the place she would call home.

Dear childhood that was encouraged from the moment her grandmother visited her home! She would follow that woman to the ends of the earth – whatever she called home would be Sylvia's. The heart of a child beat with hope for the many days to truly be a child ahead. Not once had the girl looked back or hoped to return home. Sylvia had found her wings and was not willing to give them up. The treasures of growing up were lost to this child for now – and she did not care! Whatever childish dreams and feelings you have, remember! Take those things and give them to this child!

Liz Lyons, '11

My Grandmother

She was there,
Taking me shopping,
Giving me advice,
Reminiscing,
Telling me stories,
Just laughing,
And having heart to hearts.

Finally I start
To feel complete again.

But then
I hear the daily noises
Around the house.

I finally come to
And realize
That it was just a dream—
Since 1997.

Laura Tretter, '11

One last leaf
Hopes it can survive
Alone
- and -
Abandoned
Somehow, it still finds
Courage to hang on tight.

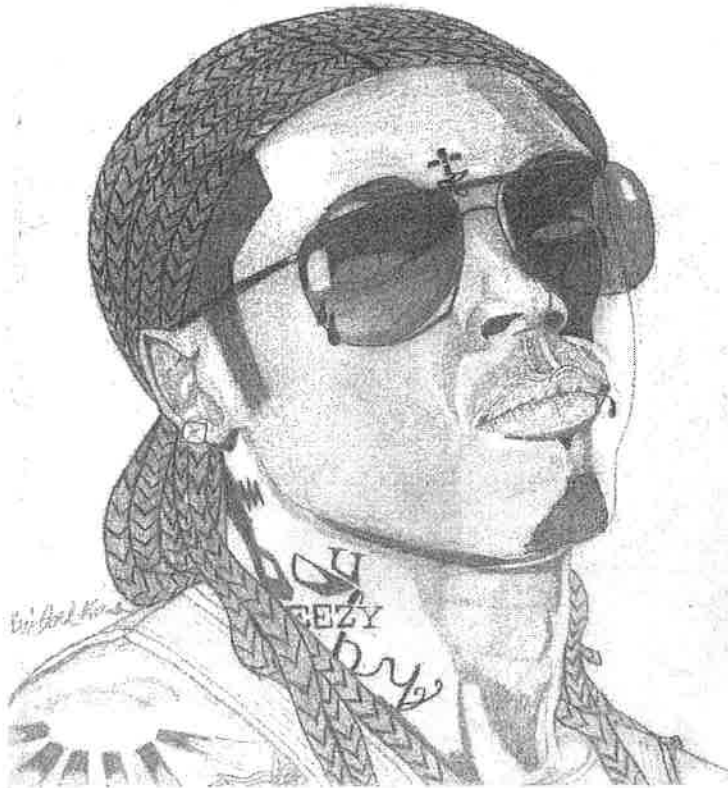
Little golden leaf
Though the winds come
And the birds peck at you
The squirrels shake you
You don't give in.
You don't let go.

You're barely hanging on now
You've had a rough day
You've been beaten by rain
And clobbered by wind
Yet still you find the strength
To hold fast to your branch

Dear little leaf,
Today,
You are
Stronger
Than
Me
Elizabeth Bradley, '12p



Joel Rosta, '13



A Man. A Store. A Girl.

A man walks into a store.

Big hands,
Un-kempt hair,
And a face showing traces of far gone happiness,
Trampled with weary wrinkles,

A man walks into a store.

They don't know him,
Don't know his story,
To them he is profit,
A reliable income.
They don't care about his story,
He meets their needs as long as they meet his,
And they do,
Time and time again,
They do.

A man walks out of the store,
He's gotten what he needs,
Possessed by the plights of life,
He picks the poison,
Time and time again,
He picks the poison.

Over HER,
A man picks the poison over HER,
Abandoning her,
Abusing her,
Rejecting her,
A choice that becomes easier with each visit to
the store,
Her?
Or the bottle?
A man picks the bottle every time.

A little girl dreams,
Dreams of a world where there are no stores,
No stores to steal from her.
While other girls dream of fairytale princesses,
This one dreams of a world of peace,
A world without stores.

The little girl grows,
She hides the poison,
But the store never seems to run out.
The store's the enemy.
Not the Man.
The store's the enemy.
Not the man.

But is it the store that throws the dishes at her?
Is it the store neglecting to put food on the table?
Is it the store that rants and raves?
Does the store throw the punches?

Each night a little girl repeats,
The store's the enemy.
Not the Man.
The store's the enemy.
Not the man.
Comfort is found,
And a little girl is enveloped by sleep.

To a man a store provides.
To a store a man provides.
To herself a little girl cries.

The store knows not the story of the man,
The man knows not the story of the girl,
The little girl knows,
Knows the truth,
Yet every night she says,
The store's the enemy.
Not the Man.
The store's the enemy.

Not the man.

Colleen Hanley, '12

Parallel Intersections

You are a wild hurricane
blowing over homes, yet thrilling eyes of witnesses.
You are an extravagant burst of lightening
and also a booming crack of thunder.
But I am a calm breeze
blowing on a spring day
and I, not you, am a soft mist
falling in the forest.

You are the flexible acrobat
and I am the ring leader.
You are a fine, colorful piece of art
perched over a window overlooking the ocean.
You are also a Hawaiian shirt
but you will never be numbers
I am numbers, but you are clearly not.
You are wild, flowing river.
And you are a roaring lion
While I am an eagle,
gazing over the world from a cliff.

I am a still pond and a white hat.
You are a stone wall outside a kingdom,
but certainly not a brick wall.
You are a dazzling crystal ball
but you are just not numbers.
You're the orange flag on the front lines
of a huge battle.
I am a parrot sitting in a cage.

You are not a clock because a clock has numbers
And I am numbers.

I am a sunrise, a breathtaking sunrise
However, you, my friend, are a shooting star.
Matt Consoli,'10

Mario

As a kid I was definitely a tom-boy and I had an obsession with playing video games and leading Mario through precarious adventures. I memorized the catchy theme song and was as fanatical for Mario as a Star Wars fan is for Luke Skywalker. I played Baby Mario, Paper Mario, Super Mario, Doctor Mario. Mario, Mario, Mario!

At the age of ten I was definitely a professional at video games. Although I enjoyed most games, Mario was definitely my favorite because I never liked gory war games with blood and guts flying everywhere. I owned virtually every Mario game for every gaming system from Nintendo 64 to Gamecube. While most girls my age were accessorizing their Malibu Barbies, I was schooling the boys in loud and obnoxious video games. Instead of asking for new clothes, I begged my parents for the newest Mario games. Rather than having tea parties with all my dolls, I was helping Mario defeat the viruses in Doctor Mario, and go after his arch-rival, Bowser, in Super Mario.

Although I can still crush my brother in these vivid, virtual, video games, I have emerged from that phase as someone other than that ten-year-old tomboy. I believe that this love for video games has kept me grounded and has stopped me from drifting down the pink, "girly girly" lane that many young girls fall subject to. I have learned to mix both beauty and brawn to be a feminine, young woman with a tough, down-to-earth, boyish side. I am not the kind of girl who has learned from Cinderella to wait for her prince-charming to rescue her. I have learned to fight my own battles and stick up for myself, and I am proud to say that this mindset can be accredited to those days I spent punishing Bowser and rescuing Princess Peach.

Michelle Abou-Raad, '12

Meghan Caveney, '11



I Have Life

I'm tired, now, of the burning taste of
words
Building up behind closed lips.
I feel like one day, they'll explode
On the tip of a red-hot tongue.
I'm tired, now, of the discomfort—
Of boundaries, arbitrary conventions—
Tired of waiting for a dream to float by
And carry me away in a kaleidoscope ocean.
No—I begin to move right now.
I'm progressing, trudging, sprinting through
This cumbersome process they call
"growing up,"
Beyond these lines in the mud,
Drawn when I was a child, afraid
That the universe beyond was empty
And I might sink away forever
In the depths of change.
I'm ready, now, for an adventure
I want to sing out, walk a thousand miles
To a town where nobody knows me
And shake hands with every shopkeeper,
Widow, child, and homeless man in the
alley.
I want to dance, cry, laugh, play, smile,
Finally admit that I love you,
And seize every chance I have to be alive.
This is my one story—I hold the pen.
As I go on, writing, I know my hand will
cramp;
Ink will spill, blot out cherished moments,
Swallow these words in murky depths,
But there will be spaces in the margins for
laughter.
I have blank sheets ahead, a canvas
On which to paint that ocean dream.
As long as I hold this pen, I have second
chances.
I have liberty. I have love.
I have life.

Joy Silvey, '11

A Midnight Tragedy: A Midnight Tragedy: Prequel to William Dean Howells' "A Romance of Real Life"

The stars in the midnight sky flickered despondently as Julia Tinker watched them from her second story bedroom window. Her tired eyes appeared to droop as she sat on the window seat pressed to the cool, smooth glass in what could easily have been perceived as a very hopeless scene. The young girl, after all, sat grimly wondering what her father was doing.

Jonathan Tinker was a hardworking, weathered man, aged well beyond his years. His occupation could most accurately be described as second mate aboard various ships. An adventurous man of the world, he was willing to set sail next to almost any captain that would have him. He was so very often away at sea that Julia and her siblings regarded him as more or less a frequent visitor to their home, who rarely overstayed his welcome and never failed to return with fascinating tales of the world beyond the Atlantic. Many a night Julia sat at that very same window seat pondering what her father could be doing on his current adventure. Was his ship caught in the torrents of a treacherous storm, one that the elders of the town always seemed to worry about? Or was he celebrating the success of his latest voyage with the captain in Hong Kong? Was it possible that his boat may be on its way back at this very instant with Jonathan waiting eagerly to bring souvenirs back to his anxious and expectant children? She dreamt about the different scenarios until he arrived safely at the dock once more, only to sally out with another crew days later, thus continuing the Tinker children's perception of normality.

However, tonight was not an ordinary night, and Julia did not sit pressed to the window pane fantasizing about her heroic father, who was far too important to the world to stay at home for any extended period of time. No, tonight Julia was worrying, each flickering star was a hope or dream of hers, flashing uncertainly before her eyes just as everything else in her life had these past few weeks. Instead of imagining her father's face shining in the moonlight and reflecting off of the crystal waters below as his boat sailed into the distance, she sat conjuring up an image of her father's gaunt and guilty face staring dejectedly through the bars of a cell which now served as his temporary home.

As she always did when presented with an overwhelming situation, Julia took the news of his crime silently but courageously, comforting her mother and shielding her innocent and curious younger siblings. They were the questioning sort, as are most children of that age, and they longed to know what made mother weep so, and where father's vessel was headed next. Julia expertly evaded each question, a skill that comes from years of holding the role of eldest child—responsible for keeping the younger children safe, whether it be from physical danger or from any knowledge that would threaten their naivety.

Now, as Julia sat wondering and gazing despairingly into the night sky, she heard a violent gasp, unmistakably another product of her mother's grief, which as the hours dragged into days and the days into weeks, had only grown more raw and searing. Julia sat down the book she had been intending to read and crept quietly down the stairs, making comforting sounds intended to quiet her mother so that her siblings would not be aroused from their sleep.

"Mother," Julia whispered, turning the corner into the sitting room where all of the sewing and knitting for the family was done, and where Rebecca Tinker chose to spend most of her free time even if it was only spent sobbing in despair at her husband's lack of candor. "Mother, are you all right?" The frantic girl attempted to speak calmly despite the fact she was feeling tremendously helpless.

The only response that resonated from the sitting room was the sound of deep, hoarse breathing and a steady groan of obvious discomfort.

"Mother," Julia tried once more, "please answer me. You don't sound well. Can I get you a glass of tea to soothe your throat?"

"No, Julia, darling," Rebecca answered between sobs, "I am quite all right. Sit beside me and see that I am fine and then go off to bed." She laughed dryly, "I am very sorry to be the one to wake you."

"I was reading, Mother. No need to feel badly." Julia smiled at her mother, whose frail body sat curled up in a corner of the sofa. Just as Julia was reminded of her father by the painting of a boat which was mounted upon the wall, her mother let out a shriek of pain. Her small and pale hand, which Julia clenched in her own, went rigidly tense and then fell limp for a moment before Rebecca returned from her momentary lapse into the depths of eternity.

Under these same circumstances it would be written that Rebecca stayed alive to fulfill her purpose in life and so as not to die in the hands of her daughter, who at a mere twelve years of age had yet to even reach the promises of womanhood. However, the truth is that, though it may be argued, sometimes extraordinary events happen to ordinary people. There was nothing beautiful or magnificent in the way Rebecca wept and moaned, a small and unquestionably pretty woman. She was weak in more ways than one, and pregnant with her sixth child, though not for a couple of months. Nothing wonderful could be observed in Julia's sprint down the street to the Hapford's house or in her stoic expression as Mrs. Hapford held her by the hand while they walked anxiously back to the Tinker house. Mr. Hapford ran ahead, with every second feeling of dire importance as Rebecca fought for her life alone on the sitting room sofa. As she fought, she longed for the days when she had a husband, and not only that, a husband who was exclusively hers, whom she did not unknowingly share with a European beauty who undoubtedly felt the same betrayal from the man they both had once held in such high esteem. Rebecca's spirit, as well as her pride, had been mortally wounded so much so that all the penitence in the world could not win her forgiveness.

As Rebecca sobbed uncontrollably, Mr. Hapford ran through the front door followed by a very nervous Julia and Mrs. Hapford. Julia had an intuitive feeling as to the fate of her mother, but, even through her sense of the fatality of the situation; her brave face was not set aside.

Mr. Hapford made Rebecca comfortable and reduced her sobs to whimpers. The crisis on hand had subsided substantially, but Rebecca's next cryptic words reminded Julia that only in fairy tales do dreams come true and happy endings materialize out of the shards of an irreversible mistake.

"Please," Rebecca spoke timidly but with a defiant voice, for the anger she had towards Jonathan was beginning to outweigh the sorrow she had over losing a life partner to bigamy, "keep the children away from Jon. They are my children and no one else's. You must not keep them together and most certainly not in this house, for he will be released eventually and once he is, it will be much easier for him to track down my children if they are together. Then, he will do what he does best and take advantage of their innocence, only to break their hearts again. So you see, they cannot possibly stay together. Also, you mustn't tell the young ones tales of him. It is better to forget than to have them live with the pain of their childhood every day for the rest of their lives. And Julia," she cupped her daughter's face and her fair eyes welled with the tears of a thousand words left unsaid. Julia returned this gesture with a smile that was filled with all the love and gratitude she felt towards her mother.

Mrs. Hapford's soft, warm eyes rested upon Julia from behind her glasses and Julia thanked the couple once again and exited the room to climb the stairs to her bed chamber. She entered to find that her brothers Todd, Mark, and George were waiting for her quite perplexedly by the window seat. Todd, who was never known to keep still or remain quiet, was suddenly able to do both as he stood waiting for Julia to ascend the stairwell. The eldest son, he had always considered

himself to be the protégé of his talented father, but, in light of the recent unsettling circumstances his entire future had suddenly become uncertain, thus evoking the somber stare he bestowed upon his sister as she approached.

For once, George wore no sly grin and his toothless smile and friendly dimples were nowhere to be found on his unusually solemn face. Mark, the youngest of the boys, now displayed an even greater innocence than was usually visible upon his round face, plump with youth. Even Sarah, whose childish prattling could be counted on to fill the house from dawn to dusk with chatter and laughter, was sound asleep in Todd's thin arms, blissfully undisturbed by the cloud of doom that could be felt hovering over the Tinker children. Julia silently climbed into her bed and her siblings proceeded to crawl in as well. They all drifted to sleep, knowing full well what the morning would bring.

As the dawn began and the sun rose in the sky, the Tinker children were awakened to a torturous silence. They quietly dressed as Julia contemplated how to say goodbye to the brothers and sister she cherished so much, and had anticipated watching grow older. They made their way down the stairs with the feeling that is inherent in human nature to know of an incident before it is presented, but to put up an ignorant façade in order to avoid facing what is already known to be true. This is what Julia felt as she led the way down to the kitchen where Mr. and Mrs. Hapford sat looking exhausted and with eyes full of pity and despair.

As they broke the news to the Tinker children, Julia could no longer shield her siblings from their problems, as death is so powerful it cannot be hidden, and yet it is the most unifying force known to man. After all, when else do people come together so effectively and so passionately, but after a great tragedy? And when do the world's greatest tragedies not include death?

As Julia felt Sarah's hot breath on her neck, she realized that her sister, presently a mere three years of age, would not have a mother as she grew. She remembered the countless stories she had gone over as an avid reader and could not remember a single one that had not blathered on about romances and happily-ever-afters. Romance was as good as dead to her, as she bade goodbye to her brothers who were staying indefinitely at the house of a friend of her mother's, of whom Jonathan Tinker had never heard.

Not only did she lose her mother to a broken heart, she lost the new baby her mother had been pregnant with, and to some degree she lost her brothers and her father. More than these tangible affections, Julia lost her faith in everything that she had supposed was parallel to her romantic ideals of love and of life.

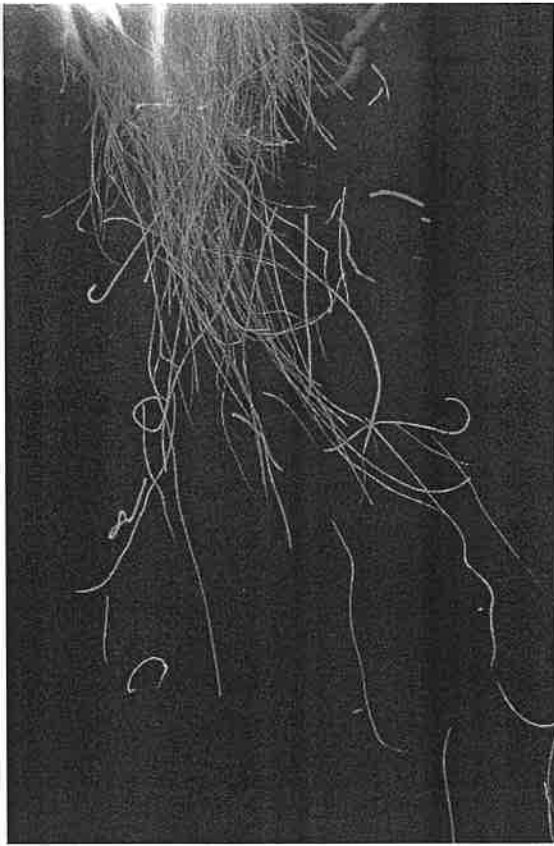
As Julia Tinker sat perched on the unfamiliar window seat of her new bedroom at the Hapford's house later that morning, clutching her baby sister to her chest, she stared once again at the sky, which she now perceived to be gray and angry. As drops of rain trickled from the sky so did her tears, and for once she did not try to picture the face of her father, but instead wished to never again meet the acquaintance of the man she had once loved and respected so much. Julia let this moment pass and vowed, as is the tradition of human condition, to forget the moment that had allowed her to let her emotions get the better of her and from then on, never did her lips quaver or her chin tremble in the face of difficulty. That is to say, Julia Tinker continued her life as strong and stoic as she had ever been before.

Stephanie Fronduto, '11

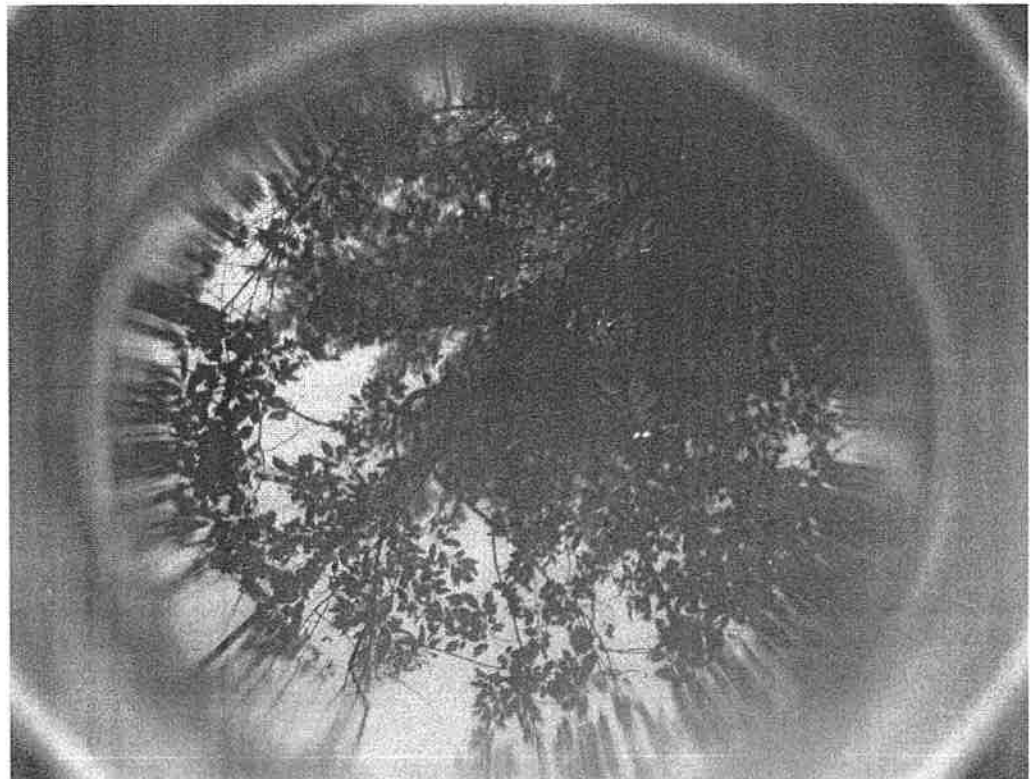
The Sun and the Moon

I am the morning and you are the night; as I shine, you must reflect; as I provide warmth, you provide breeze; I will soak up the dew as long as you lay it down; show up as much as possible; *but what about clouds?* You must be aware of the clouds; as I provide light, you will light the darkness; watch over the stars so they stay aligned; the stars bedazzle the sky while you illuminate it; you have teamed with the North Star and other constellations to help essential figures in history; I will soak up the dew as long as you lay it down; I'm responsible for the entire galaxy, you only worry about Earth; you must provide a force to keep the poles in line and control the oceans; *I know that I can't control the water;* Yes, but you must be reminded to pay attention to the tides; you also control the climate and the seasons; when one side is winter, the other is summer; make sure the Earth stays at an angle, do not ruin the rotation; I will soak up the dew as long as you lay it down; sometimes you will be only a half or a quarter or even just a crescent; on nights when you are a new moon you will not appear at all; sometimes you will even be blue, but not often at all; you are involved with famous phenomena, such as the aurora borealis and the great eclipse; luna, nebula, there are many names for you, but moon is the most common; not all of your functions are scientific; remember to smile because people do notice your face; you are the theme of thousands of stories, especially those told by bonfire; you have inspired creatures such as werewolves and zombies, but nighttime doesn't always bring evil; it is the only time to go stargazing or see you elucidate the ocean waters; you must oversee the Earth's nighttime activities, especially in the summer; *why in the summer?* Because that is when people need you the most; I will soak up the dew as long as you lay it down; remember you are natural, not manmade; people do take advantage of you; they actually figured out a way to walk on you, but don't let them walk all over you; you must follow my lead and stand your ground; *but, you're so much bigger than me!* You are as large as you want to be, as long as you fulfill your jobs; you know, they used to believe they could reach you (and me) by boat; those were the days when our job was easy, the days when the Earth was flat; the time when I revolved around the Earth; for awhile people actually believed that you were made out of cheese; *why would they ever think that?* I don't know, but those times are long gone; other planets have multiple moons, but Earth only has you, so you must do your job well; and when the night is over and the sounds of this satellite sing "you'll come back to me, not swallowed in the sea."

Adrienne Retelle, '10



Carolyn Springford, '11



Why Are You Here?

Clark rubs the back of his neck, looking out of the corner of his eye at the obnoxious splash of shapes and primary colors that the seats of the train are coated in. With a small cough, he sits on one of the offending seats; he is too worn out from the day's events to stand any more.

Over the course of his 23 years, Clark had generally followed the rules. He ate the vegetables that would make him grow big and strong. Not once had he crossed the road without looking twice. He thought he had become the kind of guy he had been raised to be, but couldn't help but wonder, *What good was all that good, without purpose?*

That question was the hamster wheel his mind had been stuck in for the past week. Clark's onslaught of deep, soul searching thoughts had been exhausting. He kept unsuccessfully looking for his purpose in life. In an effort to end the soul searching, Clark had taken to reading autobiographies. The authors who had come to a deep understanding of life only left him flailing in the same questions. Instead of alleviating his confusion, all the books did was emphasize his lack of productive, meaningful thought.

Clark got off at his usual stop and walked the last few blocks to his apartment. The streetlights hadn't come on and the sun had already set. He picked up the pace as the winter wind began to pierce his coat.

The key to the front door was so cold, it hurt. Clark rushed in and let the door slam shut. The hallway was small, but warm. Sniffing the air, he took off his coat and hung it up thinking, *Why does it smell like hot chocolate?*

"Is that you?" a voice sang from the small kitchen down the hall. Saige poked her head out from the doorframe, and the rest of her followed. She rushed through the hall, and turned on the light. As she went to close the remaining foot between them with a hug, Saige hesitated. "What's the matter?"

"Why are you here?" he answered with another question. His eyebrows were scrunched together in confusion. Clark had been looking forward to just lazing around, not entertaining his girlfriend.

"You told me to come over after you were done with work," she replied softly, laughing more out of uncertainty than humor and stepped away. "You were the one who texted me last night, remember?"

"Oh. Oh, right. Sorry," Clark nodded, realizing his mistake. "So... What were you doing?"

"Making cocoa. There's some for you too," Saige takes his hand in hers and led him to the kitchen. He marvelled at the heat radiating from her small hand into his. "But really Clark, something else is bothering you."

"I've just had a lot to think about," he slouched into the closest chair.

"Pssht," she set a full mug in front of him. "You haven't been laughing. It had better be a pretty big something." Saige's firm belief in laughter had been one of the things that had drawn Clark to her. Everything about her was so alive

and wise. Her eyes studied his, not letting the topic drop while she bit on the end of a pink and white straw.

After sipping some of the cocoa, he finally spoke. "I just keep thinking about the same, annoying stuff. Day after day. It's like I can't enjoy anything."

"Stuff?"

He sighed and looked away for a moment. "I just can't see what I'm supposed to be doing in life. Sure, I can just live, but what am I giving back to the people I care about? To anyone?"

Saige pursed her lips and then sat in the closest chair. "The most obvious answer is love."

He snorted, took a gulp of his drink, and leaned back in the chair.

"But I know you want something more than that. It's too simple of an answer and it's one that can't be proven easily."

Clark leaned forward again. She was right. "H-how..."

"I'm not going to say that love isn't a valid answer. But to find what I think you're looking for... A physical purpose? It's not going to just happen. I think it's something you find out along the way. You might not know until late in your life. I don't know yet," Saige got up to pour herself more cocoa. "All I can do is live the best way that I can," she smiled, lightening the mood, "and laugh a lot."

Clark got up and shuffled toward the cabinet. While seriously thinking, he brought an open bag of marshmallows back to his seat. After offering Saige some, he put two in his drink. "What you say makes sense... But really, how can you stand not knowing if what you believe is true? It could be a lie! At the end of time, everyone could've accomplished what they were supposed to and you didn't."

She chewed on a marshmallow and nodded. "Of course it *could* be like that. But I really believe in finding a balance between distrust and hope." She looked pointedly at Clark and said, "That will lead you to what your life is about. I don't just trust that everything will work out. A little curiosity is healthy. Maybe it's everyone's purpose to exist in the best way they possibly can. Who knows?"

"I sure don't," he rested his cheek on his palm. "I just wish I knew everything."

"It's probably more fun this way though. More fulfilling - once you find the answer to the great puzzle." She stood and put her empty mug in the sink. "You done?"

"Yeah... I think I am," Clark handed her his mug. "Thanks... Things make a little more sense now." He hugged her, gently swaying from side to side. Chuckling, he murmured, "I knew there was a reason why I liked you so much."

He could hear the smile in her response, "It's good to hear you laugh."

Liz Lyons, '11

The Test

Oh no... go! A B A B A B A

This test is really hard.

I'd rather fly to Mars.

I need to stop my dreaming

From taking me over.

A B A B A B A

Is it true, or is it false?

Is it yay or is it nay?

Is it right or is it wrong?

A B A B A B A

Now there are four instead of two—

I'm not going to the loo.

Time to answer something new.

A B C D A B C D A B C D C D A

Time is coming to an end.

Is there more time to lend

For me to set a brand, new trend?

Words words words words words

Words words words words words

Words words words words words.

Done. Here you go.

Reggie Kwok, '10



Molly McColgan, '12



Joel Rosa, '13

It was early summer when I found out my Uncle Steven was diagnosed with ALS, more commonly known as Lou Gehrig's disease. Emotions swarmed my body like a tornado during hurricane season. Anger, sadness and confusion were all too much to handle at once. How could my uncle be diagnosed with a disease that had no cure? Why Steven? Why my godfather? Why my dad's best friend? I had so many questions that seemed to have only one answer. I was told over and over again that life is unfair and Steven got the raw end of the deal. ALS is a disease that affects people at random and there is still no biological reason for it. I couldn't understand how my forty-five year old uncle could be infected with this deadly disease. Over the next few months as I watched Steven deteriorate, I became aware of the gut-wrenching reality that life is too short. Steven's battle ended six months after his diagnosis. What hurt me the most about Steven passing away is that he had no way of preventing it. I still wonder to this day if Steven had any regrets about his life. Was there anything he would have changed? Did he live his life to the fullest potential? Most importantly, was he happy with his life? Through my difficult experience, I learned that your life is way too valuable to waste.

Before Steven's diagnosis, I considered myself an average student. I never worried about the future and I did what I could to get by in school. I didn't fully challenge my mental ability, and I thought I could not be as smart as a majority of my classmates. To make myself feel better, I would just reassure myself that they were born with the natural gift of knowledge. When I saw how fast someone's life could change, my mind started to think differently. ALS or any type of disease could affect any person at any moment. I don't know if it was fear or inspiration but I was determined to be more than average. If I found out I had six months to live, I would want to look back and be proud of everything I accomplished. Steven taught me to never take anything for granted. I have one life to live; why not live it to my fullest potential? From then on out, I pushed myself to the furthest possible limits. Not only did I start putting in hours of quality study time, I also managed to maintain two jobs. By having the means to work twenty hours a week and do well in school, I started to build confidence in my ability to succeed. When my grades started to improve, I realized knowledge comes from effort. I use to dread exams because I was never familiar with the material in front of me. Now, I go into exams with the assurance that I will get the grade I rightfully deserve. Steven influenced me to be the best student I can be. With this realization, I am determined more than ever to make my future filled with achievement and self-satisfaction.

People always say "life is too short," but I never truly comprehended the phrase until Steven's passing. Steven was diagnosed with ALS and in a blink of an eye, he was gone. I do not think I will truly accept the fact he was taken so soon. What I will accept is that you never know what the future holds. Therefore, you should enjoy every moment you have on Earth. I now am more aware of the beauty around me. I have a loving family, friends, and a fortunate life. I take notice to the magnificence of the snow-topped mountains, crisp foliage, thundering ocean waves, and the glimmer of the sparkling stars at night. I only have one life and I want experience what the world has to offer. I plan to travel the world, backpack throughout Europe, devour real Chinese food, and hopefully join the Peace Corps to help people in need. This life changing event in my life truly changed my outlook on life. I need to soak up everything I possibly can before my time comes.

Though Steven's death was heartbreaking for my family and me, I truly changed as a person because of it. Steven's struggles opened my eyes to the world. Life is what you make it. You can choose to live your life complaining from day to day, or you can be happy you have something to complain about. I have learned to be happy, be the best person I can be and believe in myself, all because of the greatest uncle ever.

Catherine Coates, '10

Words to a Writer

Crash into me and give me infinity; you are free to use me as you please; delve into my vast possibilities; feel the eternal effect I can have on a person, a community, a country, an entire world; I have the capability to change lives for better or for worse; what will you do with me now? Turn me into a novel hundreds of pages long; construct a plot with twists and turns, love and betrayal, action and suspense, good and evil; don't forget to put a comma there; get lost in a fantasy world with twists and turns, love and betrayal, action and suspense, good and evil; don't forget to put a comma in there; get lost in a fantasy world with mythical creatures and magical powers; tell the story of a broken soldier who fought countless battles in World War I and faced death more times than you can say you've thought about it; create a tragedy so heart-wrenching that tears run down the faces of all who lay eyes on me; but wait, I am a fragment so make sure you fix me; this is how to use a gerund phrase as the subject of a sentence; this is how to combine two sentences to make one; this is how to capture the reader's attention in the opening paragraph; this is how to make that sentence sound better; this is how to use a semicolon; you are free to use me as you please; what will you do with me now? Turn me into a beautiful poem full of soothing, angelic, and eloquent words; find a rhythm and create emotions through me; I am the colors of the rainbow after and April shower; I am chaos and I am tranquility; I am the gentle fluttering wings of a Monarch butterfly with wondrous intentions of waking up the world; I am the stone that we climb on two by two; turn me into the lyrics of a song; allow the melody to flow through me like the water between your toes as it comes up through your ankles to your head to your soul; don't forget to use literary devices; this is how to use alliteration, antithesis, allusions, metaphors, repetition, and rhyme; this is how to transform someone else's work into your own; this is how to create an original piece of work; this is how to write a haiku; this is how to make a stanza; this is how to choose the perfect word; but this is not how to make a poem, for a poem can be whatever you imagine it to be; there is no specific way to arrange me because I do not need to be controlled; I am limited nothing but your own imagination; you are free to use me as you please ; what will you do with me now? The options are infinite; create an article, a piece of art, a short story, an essay, a religious text, a dictionary, an advertisement, a banner, the possibilities go on and on; what will you do now? *I will take a deep breath and put my pen to the paper.*

Zac Borrelli, '10

Backstabber

Hey backstabber, remember when you said I could trust you, and that we'd be best friends forever?

Remember when you changed your name to Benedict? Why'd you become such a backstabber?

You must be bored, when you decided to throw everything away and become my malicious hunter. Am I the hunted?

Guess you didn't think that soon you'd be all alone. Remember when you lied about everything?

Excuse me, I think you need to get that checked out; your big mouth doesn't stop talking.

Talk, talk, talk, talk...blah, blah, blah. You run your mouth like an Olympic track champion.

Shut your mouth...you never shut your mouth, backstabber.

Look at what we all found out? You got a set of free lips, and everyone knows it.

Did it feel good to cut me down at the knees?

SNAP! Did you hear that? My heart just broke.

Contorting secrets into lies, all because you're jealous?

Talk, talk, talk, talk, there you go again! Backstabber, you look like an idiot.

Your little conversations got around, now I know what you're all about.

I think it's funny how you waste your breath talking about me, now I kind of feel special.

Backstabber, all these slandering words wrapped around you like a poisonous weed.

Does it feel good to lose someone's trust?

It probably feels like dropping 400 LBs. Congratulations, you feel weightless, don't you?

I hope you know, what doesn't kill me only makes me stronger.

My skin is so thick; it's like the Great Wall of China. All because of your distorted, crystallized, predator attitude.

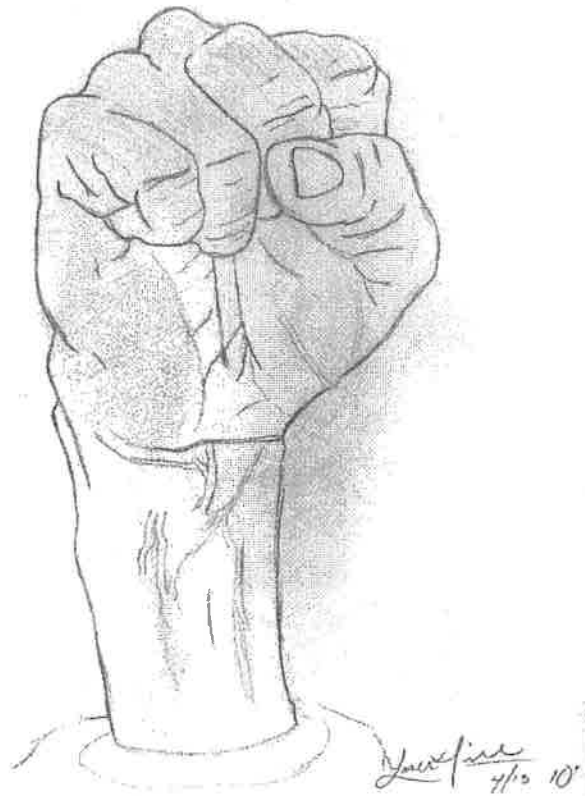
Backstabber, thank you for making me stronger. Thank you, backstabber.

Lizzy Garafola, '12



Amy Whitney-Perry. '11





IT HAD ALL COME DOWN TO THIS. YEARS OF TRAINING, CONDITIONING, AND PRACTICING WERE ABOUT TO PAY OFF. I WIPED THE SWEAT FROM MY BROW UNDERNEATH MY HEADGEAR, OPENED MY EYES AND LOOKED...DOWN? THIS WAS THE PERSON I HAD BEEN HOPING AND DREAMING SOMEDAY TO MEET? A FOUR FOOT NOTHING GIRL WAS MY OPPONENT IN THE CHAMPION SPARRING MATCH? THIS WAS THE WORLD MARTIAL ARTS FEDERATION, WHERE STUDENTS FROM ALL OVER NEW ENGLAND CAME TOGETHER TO COMPETE, AND THIS WAS THE BEST NEW ENGLAND HAD TO OFFER IN MY DIVISION? I COULD ALREADY FEEL THE THREE FOOT TROPHY IN MY HANDS.

SHE NEVER TOOK HER EYES OFF OF ME. EVEN AN HOUR BEFORE, WHILE I WAS SPARRING MY BEST JUST SO I COULD BE WHERE I STOOD NOW, SHE WATCHED ME. I COULD FEEL HER EVALUATING EYES BORING INTO MY BACK, JUDGING MY EVERY MOVE, ANALYZING MY TECHNIQUES. NOW THAT WE STOOD FACE TO FACE, MOTIONLESS, THOSE SAME EYES STARED UNBLINKING INTO MINE, ONLY LEAVING MY GAZE WHEN THE JUDGE ASKED US TO BOW. WE BENT INTO OUR READY STANCE, AND WAITED LIKE STATUES FOR THE SIGNAL.

"FIGHT!"

WE BOUNCED ON OUR TOES AND CIRCLED ONE ANOTHER, EACH DARING THE OTHER WITH HARD EYES TO MAKE THE FIRST MOVE. SHE ACCEPTED THE CHALLENGE, AND QUICKLY BARRAGED ME IN A HAIL OF PUNCHES FOLLOWED BY THE FIRST POINT WINNING KICK. AT THAT MOMENT, I REALIZED SHE WAS NOT GOING DOWN WITHOUT GIVING HER BEST. HER ENERGY AND DESIRE TO WIN ONLY FUELED MY HUNGER FOR VICTORY. THAT CHAMPIONSHIP MATCH WAS THE LONGEST SPARRING MATCH OF MY LIFE. TOWARD THE END, I WAS SWEATING, WINDED, AND I HAD ONLY ONE POINT TO GO BEFORE THE TITLE WAS MINE. BUT SHE WASN'T ABOUT TO BACK DOWN.

ALTHOUGH I DIDN'T REALIZE IT THEN, LATER I WOULD COME TO ADMIRE THAT GIRL. I WAS SO MUCH BIGGER THAN SHE WAS, AND EVEN A BELT LEVEL HIGHER, BUT STILL SHE SHOWED NO SIGN OF FEAR. THE FAITH SHE HAD IN HERSELF NEVER FALTERED, AND IN THOSE TEN MINUTES SHE NEVER GAVE IN. I LOOKED DOWN UPON HER, AND MISTAKENLY UNDERESTIMATED HER BECAUSE OF HER SIZE. THROUGH HER, I REALIZED THAT PERSEVERANCE AND DETERMINATION WILL ALWAYS OUTWEIGH FEAR AND DOUBT. SHE WAS SO SMALL AND ALL ALONE ON THAT FLOOR, AND YET SHE DIDN'T NEED ANYONE ELSE TO REASSURE HER THAT SHE HAD A CHANCE. I LEARNED THAT IT IS ACCEPTABLE, ADMIRABLE EVEN, TO HAVE CONFIDENCE IN MY THOUGHTS AND BELIEFS, AND TO NOT BE AFRAID THAT OTHERS MAY NOT AGREE. SHE BELIEVED IN HERSELF ENOUGH TO GIVE HER BEST EFFORT, EVEN WHEN SHE WAS LOSING. THAT IS WHAT MAKES A TRUE CHAMPION. THAT GIRL INSPIRED ME TO START HAVING CONFIDENCE IN MY ABILITIES IN ALL ASPECTS OF MY LIFE. SHE TAUGHT ME THAT IN THE FACE OF FEAR, YOU ARE YOUR OWN GREATEST ALLY. THE ONLY WAY TO OVERCOME OBSTACLES IN LIFE IS TO FACE THEM HEAD-ON, AND THE ONLY WAY TO GET OVER SOMETHING IS TO GO THROUGH IT.

BECAUSE OF HER, I STRONGLY BELIEVE IN MY OPINIONS AND MY IDEAS, AND I'M NOT AFRAID TO SHARE MY THOUGHTS AND BELIEFS. AFTER THE CLOUD OF THE COMPETITION HAD LEFT MY EYES, SHE SEEMED MORE HUMAN TO ME, WHEREAS BEFORE SHE WAS JUST SOMETHING STANDING IN THE WAY OF A LARGE PIECE OF PLASTIC. HONESTLY, A LARGE PIECE OF PLASTIC IS WHAT I WORKED YEARS FOR AND DREAMED OF HOLDING. A LARGE PIECE OF PLASTIC THAT NOW SITS ON A SHELF AND COLLECTS DUST. I REALIZE NOW THAT A PERSON'S CHARACTER WILL ALWAYS BE MORE IMPORTANT THAN ANY AWARD OR TITLE, WHICH IS WHY I BELIEVE THAT SHE WAS THE TRUE CHAMPION THAT DAY. WHILE THE PIECE OF PLASTIC NOW HAS NO PURPOSE, HER INADVERTENT LESSONS CHANGED ME FOR THE BETTER. SOMEDAY I'LL THROW THE TROPHY OUT, AND ANOTHER SOMEDAY FORGET ALL ABOUT IT. BUT I'LL NEVER FORGET HER AND THE IMPACT THAT SHE HAD ON ME.

KAILA LAWRENCE, '10

I Am

Who am I?
I truly don't know.
A heart and vessels, lungs and brain, muscles and flesh— yes.
But what truly makes me, me?

God created me—that I believe.
But why here and now,
What purpose did I receive?

I don't know my future,
And I hardly know my present.
But hints can be found in my past,
In where I've come from:

I am from a house on the line between two cities
From a neighborhood with loud music and some crime.
I am from chirping birds and beautiful trees
From roaming cats and life being a jungle at times.

I am from hard work and no laziness,
From sometimes having to make corrections.
I am from never being perfect
But always striving for the best with no exceptions.

I am from loving cookie dough ice cream,
From always wanting more animals.
I am from my favorite food being simple macaroni,
From being intrigued by the Asian symbolism attached to each
mammal.

I am from wondering what lies ahead of me
From when? How? And why?
I am from looking beyond what the eyes can see
From not always being able to, but willing to try.

I am from a Spiritual influence that only true believers
understand
From a top-notch high school that teaches success.
I am from learning to be independent and taking command
From building confidence in my character, yet still having that
shy excess.

I am from two siblings who always have my back
From friends who love me, and mentors who care.
I am from being proud of a brother who became a marine,
From a tight-knit family that will always be there.

These experiences are a part of my past and, some, my present.
They show I am a normal individual.
They reveal nothing extraordinary.
So then, what makes me different than the rest?

I did not build the first civilization on Earth, nor did I conquer
Rome.
I did not slay Goliath with a rock, nor the Philistines with a
donkey's bone.
I did not invent the printing press nor the light bulb; nor did I
bring the Nobel Peace prize home.

Super strength?
I have none.
Heat vision, telepathy, and invisibility?
I can do not one.

I'm not the girl who goes out of her way to talk to everyone.
But I am the one who listens.
I'm not the one to have fifty friends.
But I am the girl to have ten good ones.

I'm not the one to take all AP classes.
But I am the girl to take at least one.
I am not the girl to have the best handwriting.
But I am the one who loves to write.

I'm not the girl who plans five months before,
But I am the one who gets it done.
I'm not even the girl who drinks tea.
But I am the one to drink coffee
Because that's what I like—it's what makes me, me.

Alice Childress,
a famous African American Actress,
said, "Each human is uniquely different. Like snowflakes, the
human pattern is never cast twice."
Guess that is why I am, for better or for worse,
The best me that can be.

Phoebe Carmichael, '10

Walking Contradiction

You are the muddy boots in the corner,
making a mess of the world.

You are the bug on my windshield,
The bird droppings on the wipers.

You aren't the lumpy, expired milk in the
fridge,

But rather, the stench that lingers.

(At least the carton can be thrown away,
discarded.)

You are the pen with no ink,

And the rock in my shoe.

The bee that won't stop buzzing,

And the fly I cannot swat.

You are the knife that stabs the back;

The lie that takes a life.

You are the function without the purpose,

Like the eraser on a marker, or the lock
without a key.

You're the room filled with secrets that have
already been set free.

You're the walking contradiction, and of no
use to me.

You're the disease that just keeps fighting,

The glitch in the system that can't be fixed.

You're the problem, the undesired, and the
unwanted.

You are the scum of the earth.

You are the freshly printed stack

Of faulty money in the briefcase.

You look as though you're worth a million
bucks,

When, in reality, you're worthless.

Yes, you are the muddy boots, the ones
making a mess of the world—

And I am the sponge forced to follow your
muddy footsteps,

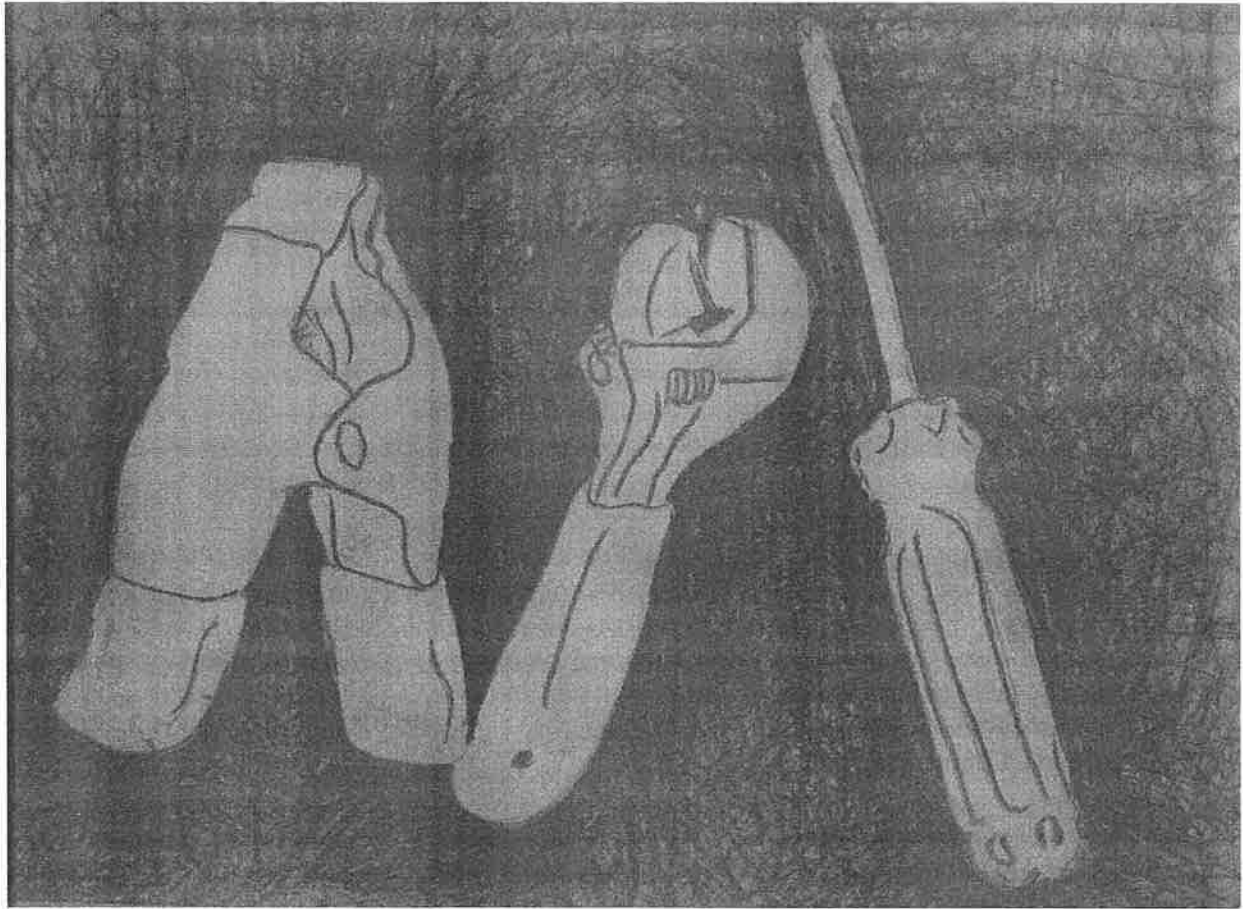
And clean up your muddy mess.

Eleni Nikitas, '11

Incomplete

Days are folding over night with the creases of a map,
Traveling my sun to your window,
In a casual 'good morning.'
I wonder what you see when you stop dreaming.
I long to rest my head, but the heaviness of time
Has set itself atop my crown,
Burying its hands into my brow.
This distance ahead of me is static and uncertain.
I'm less afraid of the distance and more afraid
of being forgotten, really.
There was once a time I was left by the back door,
Wondering how I'd changed so nonchalantly. Being left
Alone is only half of what happens when a love is jilted.
The rest moves silently and slowly through your body,
Until at last: you want to leave yourself for the same
Reasons he left you...
Tonight my hands are open, not in attempts
To grasp something I know is not in front of me.
They're open, rather, just in patience...
Waiting to see if you'll take them.
I'm waiting to see if you'll remember me.
The sky is a captor of all things released.
I have lived in its awning since I last knew comfort,
And now my feet are asking to touch the ground again.
They want to run closer to where you live and breathe,
Gathering the soil where you once stood.
I'm afraid to leave the stars and the moon,
Whose company has kept me so long
This velvet cocoon is all I can feel with my lonely hands.
What happens when I run to where you are,
And find you still untouchable?
My darkness yawns in the small hours,
Stretching its limbs to the edge of your waking moments.
Somewhere in the middle, our exposures collide
And create dusk over a timeless field.
Will you meet me there?
Today has folded over night entirely,
with the readiness of tomorrow sending my sun
from your sill in a boldly spoken 'good morning.'
I wonder who you see when you stop dreaming.

Roselly Genao, '11



Victoria Pham, '10

Simplicity

Simplicity is the foggy color of your breath in winter
Simplicity is the sound of the chorus in church, and the jingle of change in the beggar's cup
Simplicity is *Our Town*, and yours
The cool feel of sunscreen applied on your back in the midst of a hot summer's day
The afternoons spent rolling down the hill, as a child with grassy green knees
Simplicity is the eyebrows on the *Mona Lisa*
The sturdy mule dutifully carrying the farmer's load
The plain white daisy on the side of the dirt road
The crisp tender taste of the first bite from the sweet apple plucked from the tree
The barren northern beach in January
Simplicity is the beauty of a snow angel
Simplicity is rough, hardened hands calloused from a long day's work
Simplicity is the happy groggy morning feeling right before you open your eyes

Jessica Hajjar, '10

The Passive Passion of Yesterday

Through the passage of time I've seen you grow
Although you'll surely never know
To what extent I loved you so.
It grew stronger every day.

We smiled on the sacred land
And woke in piles of smoke and sand.
Every day I held your hand,
But I guess it didn't matter.

You pulled me in and cut me down
Hacked at my trunk 'til I struck the ground
And yes this betrayal did resound.
It echoed for the birds to hear.

Here I stood, brokenhearted
But suddenly I up-started,
Dropped my shield and stood unguarded.
That was when I drew my sword.

Pity, shame—pathetic it was to do what you did to me.
I drowned your embers, heard you cry, and hap'ly killed your memory.
Forget me, please forget me before I make a crude mistake and
Smother all we had with that subtle, subtle wink.

That is for another day, another badly written poem
When you can lose yourself again and see you're all alone
Because your pain to me is pleasure, it tastes good on my tongue
It's bad to say, but I feel so gay when I see you have no home.

May you receive the blessings of every kind there be.
My back is turned; I'll walk away, because you're dead to me.

Just Another Kid

In my short, life, I have witnessed things that have astonished me. I have witnessed deaths of friends and family, struggles in and out of the classroom, and the difficulty of finding who I really am as a person. My safe haven from my struggles is flying. It gives me a new outlook on the world and it gives me the unlimited freedom to soar above the Earth and be one with the birds and the breeze. It give me the once in a lifetime chance to feel that I am the “King of the World.”

I’ve always loved flying. It has always been a way for me to challenge my senses. It gives me a new image of the world. Ever since I can remember, I have always had a passion for flight as well as an astonishment for planes. I would always nag my father, a pilot and avid plane lover, to go to the airport to watch the planes fly. My favorite childhood memory is sitting on the lawn at Lawrence Airport watching what looked like giant metal birds gracefully make their way to the skies. This was the moment that I knew I wanted to fly. I wanted to be like the great pilots in history. I wanted to shatter the accomplishments of Amelia Earhart, Charles Lindbergh, and Orville and Wilbur Wright. I wanted to be like them, and better. I wanted to accomplish more in the air than I ever could from the ground.

In a poem by John Gillespie Magee, a WWII fighter pilot, called “High Flight,” Magee states that:

Oh! I have slipped the surly bonds of Earth
And danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings;
Sunward I've climbed, and joined the tumbling mirth
Of sun-split clouds, — and done a hundred things
You have not dreamed of — wheeled and soared and swung
High in the sunlit silence. Hov'ring there,
I've chased the shouting wind along, and flung
My eager craft through footless halls of air. (1-8)

Magee’s vivid imagery and beautiful flow of words only drew me closer to my passion. All I could think about was the view and the excitement of flying. It was soon made a reality when my dad earned his pilot’s license and took me flying for the first time. I couldn’t believe what I saw. The small earth moved below us. The tiny cars and miniscule people moved about slowly. It was an amazing event in my life and one I will never forget. From that moment on I would go flying whenever I could get the opportunity. Like Magee, I, too, “have slipped the surly bonds of Earth.” I, too, have “danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings.” I have witnessed my passion grow to the point of me wanting to become a commercial pilot and to enter college to study aviation as a career.

I have witnessed many things that my friends have not. I have seen a passion grow from a small dream to a reality. In the last few months, I have worked at Lawrence Airport and I have taken a few flying lessons. I have only wanted so much in my life. I have always wanted to experience college life, and I have always wanted to continue to grow into the pilot I dream of becoming. I want to be the sky, the birds, and the breeze and to embrace the beauty within and beyond Mother Earth.

Daniel Bergeron, '10

Never Forgotten

*The rain fell and the tears welled up in my eyes
Because I don't know why you had to leave us so early and die
It wasn't your time to leave
When I saw you lying there, oh, I couldn't bear it
Because I knew I'd never see you again
The pain hurt too much
It wasn't your time to leave
I kissed your casket as we left that dark and dreary place
I prayed it was all a dream, as if you would call me the next day
Telling me that everything was ok
But now I'm here stuck in this reality
It wasn't your time to leave
Now time has passed and hearts have healed, but I still can't deal with the
pain
When will this heartache go away?
Can I have one more moment to tell you that I love you?
One more second, if just to hug you?
The unanswered questions will always tug at my heart
It wasn't your time to leave
As time goes on, I miss seeing you everyday
As the days pass, I miss hearing your voice
But I'm trying my hardest to hold back these tears
I'm trying, honest, but I feel like it's not enough
I can't accept it, I'm still in denial
I wish you were here
Because it was undoubtedly, without question, not your time to leave.*

Monika Thornhill, '10

The Editorial Staff would like to take the time to thank several individuals who have made this 10th Anniversary edition of *Visions* that much better.

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