

Visions
Volume Twelve

WE DEDICATE OUR 12TH
VOLUME OF *VISIONS* TO:

MS. NIKKI GIRAFFO

“Ms. Giraffo has not only been a great educator over the past two years of our CCHS experience, but also a mentor whom we could confide in and gain personal knowledge from. She has taught my fellow art students and me both technical and creative artistic skills and values that we will carry with us for the rest of our lives.

The art room has become a second home to our class, and a place where we can have a healthy creative outlet to express ourselves on a day-to-day basis. Ms. Giraffo has sacrificed so much of her personal time to make sure that we give 110% of ourselves to our work. She teaches us to take pride and priority in what we do as artists, and as individuals. Without all of this, high school just would not have been the same experience for many of us. We are beyond thankful for everything Ms. Giraffo has done for us. This magazine is a showcasing of how much talent there is at CCHS, and it might go unnoticed if it weren't for Ms. DeSantis and Ms. Giraffo, as well as the Art and English Departments. I feel so fortunate to be a part of something as great as this.”

-Anthony Didio, Editor, 2012

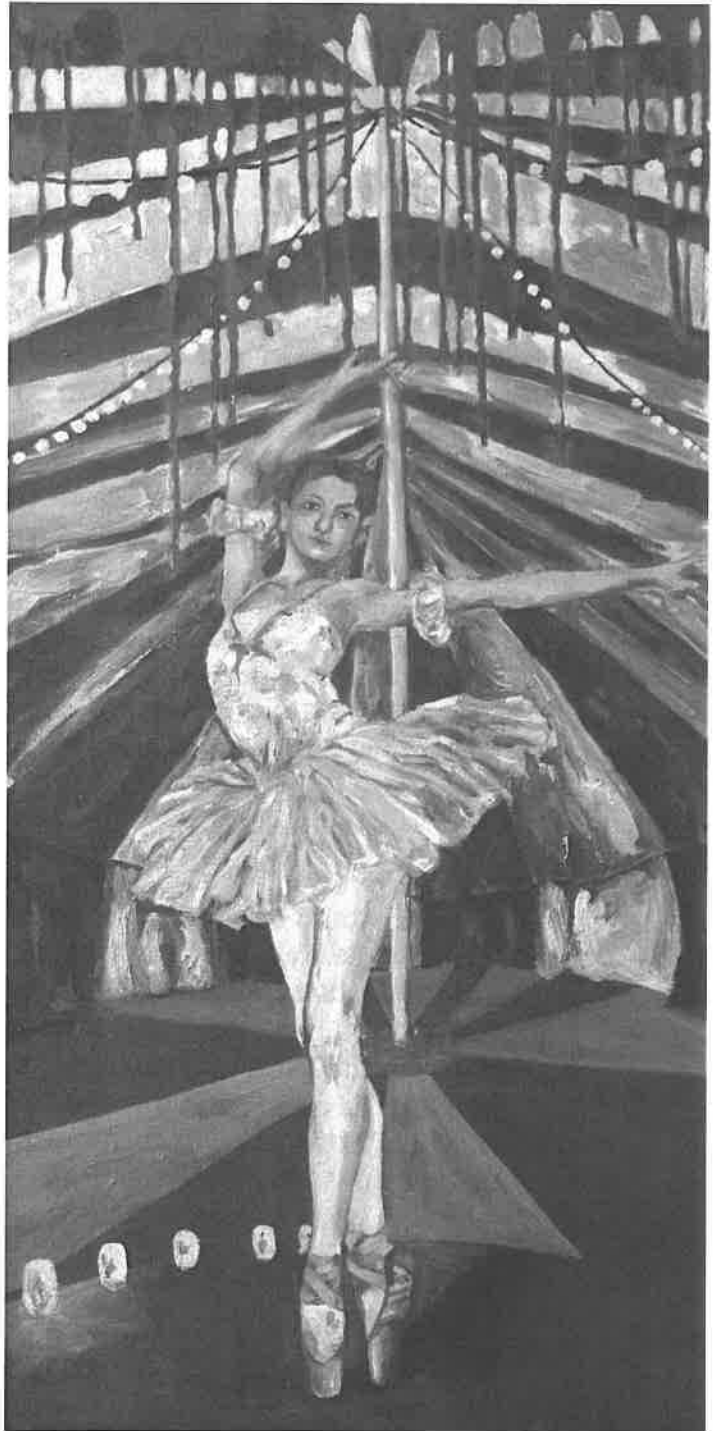
FRONT AND BACK COVER ART:

Jack Out of the Box *Courtney Wilson, 2012*

Can't Trust Them *Katie O'Brien, 2012*

Untitled *Anthony Didio, 2012*

Untitled *Andy Comeau, 2012*



Showtime *Ms. Giraffo, Faculty*

We'd like to say a huge **THANK YOU** to:

- **Brother Ernie Beland**, for his many years of teaching as a member of the English Department. Your enthusiasm and dedication to the seniors will be greatly missed and we wish you the best!
- Our cover artists, **Courtney Wilson, Anthony Didio, Katie O'Brien & Andy Comeau**- thanks for making judging our magazine by its covers a great idea!
- All of the **writers, photographers, musicians and artists** who are scattered throughout this issue and our coffeehouse memories
- The **Fine Arts and the English Departments** for teaching students how to think and then make and the **AP Art visionaries** for allowing us to use so many of their pieces
- **Mr. Welch**, for recognizing the artistic promise that Central has had for over 12 years and for giving us a place to celebrate and capture it
- **Ms. Groleau** for being there for us, despite the odds! (Talk about work ethic.)
- **Mrs. Kelley** and the **Guidance Department** for our work spaces!
- **Mrs. Keller** and the **Administration** for supporting Visions
- **Mr. Nunez, Mr. Cruz, Mr. Henriquez, and Mr. Trinidad** for always making sure our coffeehouses are taken care of and for being the best set it up and take it down crew out there
- Senior **Talia Clarke** for stepping up to help emcee the first coffeehouse of the year
- **Marquis Victor** and **ETP** for rewarding the hard work of our talented artist, Molly O'Neill, and for keeping up with our program
- **Mr. Brown** and the unbelievable **Karate Club** for their demonstration at our coffeehouse. We learned so much and enjoyed every second of the performance. Thanks again!
- **Steve Prud'homme & Riverside Press** for printing our pictures and poems on his paper
- **Cindy Parnagian & The Party Connection, Inc.** for all the caffeine and cocoa.
- Our **staff of writers and artists, our workshop attendees** and our **supporters**—keep writing!

Ms. DeSantis would like to thank her editorial and coffeehouse teams for being reliable, flexible, and inspirational! Seniors **Courtney Wilson, Anthony Didio, Sam Jortberg, Rosey O'Brien, Liz Bradley, Chris Delmonte, Angelica Little, and Ramon Vicenty**, I wish you the best in college and in life! You all amaze me. Juniors **Catherine Contarino, Wen Cai, Gabriela Tavares, and Teresa Santana**, we could not have done it without you. I hope you will continue to manage the magazine and its celebrations next year!

*A special thank you and introduction for
our Master of Ceremonies, 2012
Coffeehouse Host...*

RAMON VICENTY 2012

Ramon writes for *Visions*, keeps our open mic nights running smoothly and makes us laugh with his comedy routines.



INTRODUCING the VISIONS 2011-2012 WRITING EDITORIAL TEAM...



**ROSALIE O'BRIEN
2012**

**See –
how we act.**

**Listen –
to how we speak,
to the struggles that we go through,
from a failing grade in a class,
to not having anything to eat.**

**Look –
we're not perfect; we all fall.
We can now succeed because at one
point,
we were drowning in our sorrows
beneath.**

**It's hard to recognize success because
people
like the downfalls, the misery, the
deaths --
those are forever being televised,
but realize that, in our eyes, there's a
shine
that will take us to success.**

**Look –
we work for our own.
Whether we like it or not, we have to
work hard
and *suck it up*
because life isn't always smooth –
sometimes, it's as hard as stone.**

**Listen –
we may fail, but we have the desire
to succeed and go to a place that will
take us
higher. Listen, our words are meant to
inspire,
so you can become aspired
to do whatever it is that you want.**

**See –
how we work,
how we care,
how we laugh, under the dark clouds of
despair.
Our vision keeps us running.
Our shine is too radiant to shun,
and our road to success
has just begun.**

Chris Delmonte, 2012



**CHRISTOPHER DELMONTE
2012**



**ELIZABETH BRADLEY
2012**



**ANGELICA LITTLE
2012**

Introducing the Visions 2011-2012 Art Editorial Team...



SAM JORTBERG is from Windham, NH and is attending Clarkson University next fall. He takes Photography, and he enjoys skating and other shenanigans. He is going to be an engineer. He is radical.



ANTHONY DIDIO is a senior artist from North Andover, MA. Often referred to as DIOOO, Anthony enjoys writing and playing music in his band, East Beast, and doing photography. Anthony's art is based on the feelings of anxiety and identity loss and feeling like an outsider to society. Anthony will be attending UMass Lowell in the fall.



CATHERINE CONTARINO is an artist here at the great institution of Central Catholic HS. She is currently a junior and will be attending CCHS again next year. She enjoys driving Jarrad to school when I (Sam) can't and being a doll. Her interests are interesting and she loves to take and make photographs.



COURTNEY WILSON is a senior artist from Tewksbury, MA. Her work is based on the struggle to find herself between childhood and adulthood. Courtney enjoys playing lacrosse, soccer, and watching Saturday Night Live. She will be studying Graphic Design at Endicott College in the fall of two thousand and twelve.



WEN CAI is a current junior at Central Catholic HS. She is pretty into painting and drawing and producing pieces of high quality. She is an exchange student from China who hopes to expand her experiences in the United States.

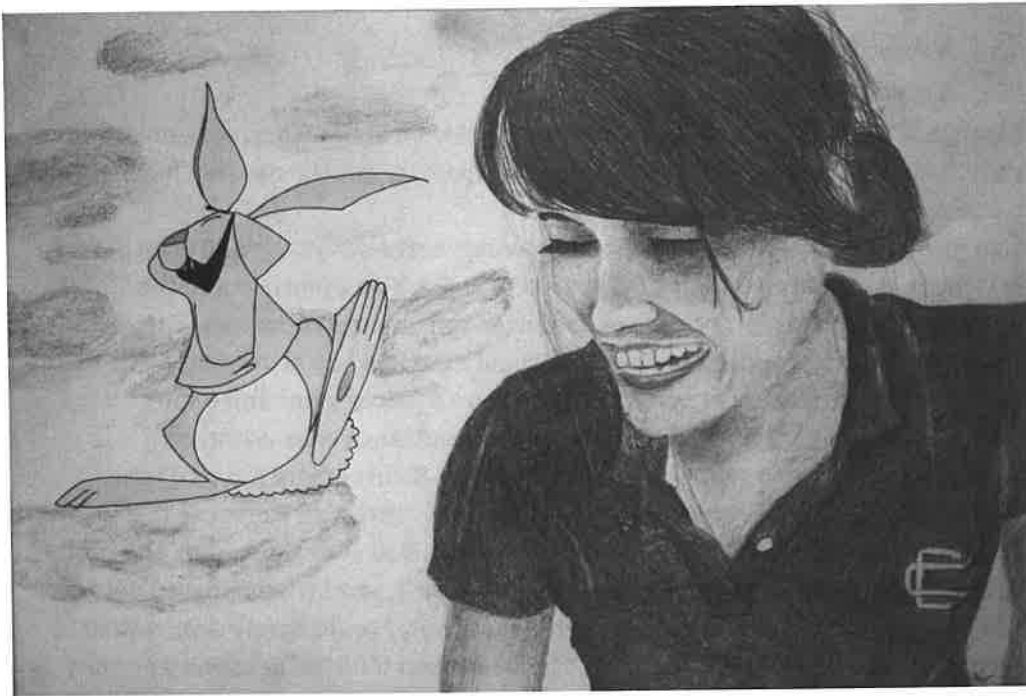
The Sweater

A sweater seems like such an insignificant thing, something I throw on in the morning before running out of the house, something that could never really make an impact on me. My sweater, however, has come to mean so much more.

Switching schools and growing up in general can be a frightening, nerve-wracking, and even life-altering event. The sweater came to me at this period, as I prepared to embark on a journey into the unknown perils of a high school career. It was all green, save the silver zipper and *Central* logo. Green, to remind me of the verdant world outside the concrete box my life would exist in. I had never really considered my outfit all that important, especially in public school, where a pair of jeans and t-shirt sufficed. I could roll out of bed and rummage through my closet for any semblance of an outfit, unconcerned. Things would be different now, I realized, as a catalogue was thrust before me, and I was asked to pick my favorite, when, in all honesty, everything looked the same. "How will I adapt to this new world?" I thought, staring at color choices, trying to figure out the last time I had even thought of the color of my clothes. When it finally arrived, the uniform felt alien and strange on me, and I tried to figure out how I would manage to get myself neatly groomed every morning, when, as it was, I could barely drag myself out of bed. Staring down at my polo and khakis, I grew uneasy. Then, I noticed it folded neatly in a corner, hiding in plain sight. I figured that I might as well try it on with the rest. It couldn't hurt, I reasoned. I threw it on, and though the extra layer proved excruciatingly hot in the summer weather, I felt strangely comforted, supported all around by a foreign entity. I didn't feel constricted by it, however, and I decided that it must be more benign than the other malignant articles of clothing strewn about me. No, this sweater held me up, and gave me strength. "This," I thought, "is the beginning of a beautiful relationship." My cat agreed, rubbing up against the sweater and purring (and leaving fur all over it). I would have to remind myself to keep school clothes away from her at all times.

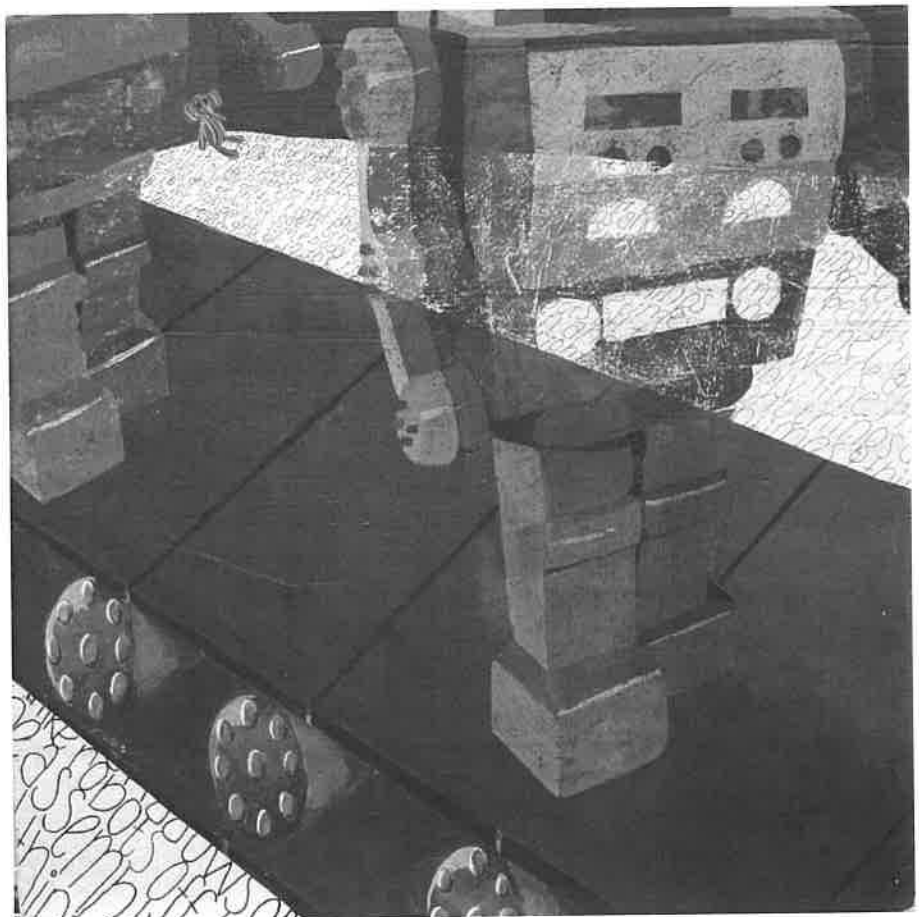
I stumbled into school the first day, utterly confused and unsure of even my own name. The only thing that was certain was that sweater, bearing the weight of my uncertainty. It went with me to all my classes, saw all the new people, witnessed the lay of the land with me, and accompanied me as I walked in circles around the theater, trying, in vain, to find my way to the mysterious Horseshoe. It was with me the next day, after an exhausting night of trying to figure out whether I had the right math book, which had fifty-two hot air balloons on the cover, or the last edition, which had fifty-three on the cover. It was after about an hour of trying, and failing to count them, that I realized I could simply flip it open and see when it was copyrighted. Needless to say, I was rather upset with myself. The sweater was there for the rest of the first week, while I was developing a feel for my teachers, and the first month, when the ache the passing summer had left in my heart started to fade, and I got used to my lack of freedom. It was with me the second month, when the weather took a turn for the worse and the green leaves turned colors as they died, then finally succumbed to the cruel eventuality of winter. The sweater was there when snow blanketed the ground and I shivered as I trudged to school. It was there when the spring breathed life back into the ground, and the flowers obliged by leaping from the earth. It was with me for the good days and the bad, the midterms and the finals, "Harrison Bergeron" and Microsoft *Excel*.

One might think that a simple wardrobe choice has no effect on his life. Surprisingly enough, an article of clothing can become a friend, a companion, a symbol of something more. To me, a sweater means the warmth and greenery of summer. It means memories of the past, and hopes for the future.



Christine
Mike Hovnanian, 2012

Conveyer Belt
Brittany Janeczek, 2012



Heart of Gold

Only for today, close your eyes so you can't see.

For once, block out the noise and set the silence free.

Attempt what's called impossible and keep an open mind.

Just let your thoughts wander and then see what you can find.

Dream a million dreams and then pray that they'll come true.

Dare to be a different girl and let yourself shine through.

Don't be just like the others; make sure that you stand out.

Count your gifts, forget regrets, and live life without doubts.

Always have that one true friend who'll catch you when you fall.

Act as if you have no fears when you're scared of it all.

Show the world your beauty and ignore the jealous type.

When life seems like a struggle, try to keep up the fight.

Keep looking to the future for a glimpse of what's to come.

Fall in love and then run off into the setting sun.

No matter what they tell you, only you can know yourself.

When no one seems to hear your words, don't be afraid to yell.

The ones who truly matter will never make you cry.

And the hardest thing you'll ever say will surely be goodbye.

Surround yourself with people who will brighten your day.

Forget your troubles and try not to let your smile fade.

Be a friend to everyone and show them that you care.

Love a lot and find "the one" 'cause hearts were made in pairs.

Don't hide your inner beauty, just let it take control.

And show them what you have inside your fragile heart of gold.

Jessica Garneau, 2013



Ugly

Laura Saffie, 2012

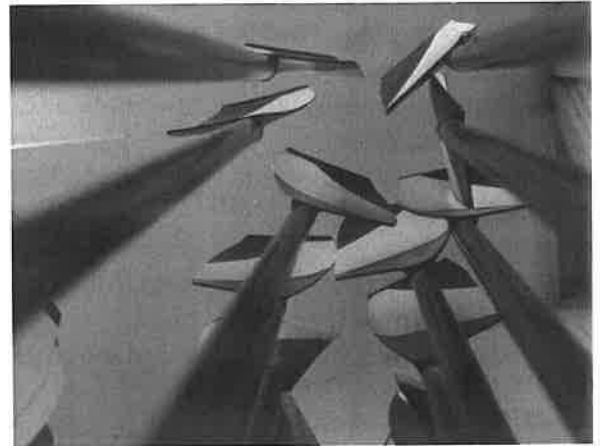
More Than Meets the Eye

Kristina Murray, 2012





Untitled *Sam Jortberg, Ed., 2012*



Untitled *Jill Bolduc, 2012*



Tunnel *Catherine Contarino, Ed., 2013*



The Bucket *Jen Meli, 2012*



Untitled *Andy Comeau, 2012*



Untitled *Saddan Genao, 2013*

Mountains Beyond Mountains

The large yellow sun coming over the green mountains blinded her as she drove down the street. The wide, tree-shaded avenue twisted and turned throughout the neighborhood, and was lined by big houses with intricate curtains in each and every window, and protected by recently landscaped stone walls. She drove around the corner with the broken fire hydrant (constantly spraying water onto the street) and saw one of her old friend's houses. Moss and stones had overtaken the old dirt path that led to her backyard where they had spent summers past. As she rolled up to the graffiti covered stop sign, a group of kids with long hair covering their faces- how could they see?- rode by on bikes. A couple of kids ran in a yard playing with sticks. She could've sworn she knew one or two of them.

She was driving to meet a friend out by the reservoir, a little ways outside of town. As the houses turned to shopping malls, she turned on the radio. The nob twisted back and forth, then back again. "...Municipal investigators investigated the county reservoir yesterday as reports grew of possible contamination in the water supply for the area..." The radio tuned out, and before the static fully distorted the station she could hear the last lines of a song by a band she had seen in concert: "Kasparov, Deep Blue, Nineteen-ninety six."

II

The reservoir was surrounded by green, but the green ebbed as rocks took its place on the water's edge. The afternoon sun lazily stretched its reflection over the body of water. As she pulled up to the edge of the water she saw her friend sitting on a high rock, casting a fishing rod back and forth into the water. "You won't catch anything with that." She closed the door and took a seat in front of the rock. He stumbled down from the stone and gave her a look.

"I know. The reservoir's poisoned I heard." He looked as grim as the news could make him. She giggled.

"Also, there is a severe lack of fish anyway." Realizing this, he managed a smirk.

"Whatever. Nice new car. We gonna take it for a spin?" The girl hopped in.

"Yeah totally. I got it as a gift before college from the parents. Nice new car? I guess so, but I do miss the control I had with the stick."

III

The car drove on faster and faster roads, feeling like they were flying, pushing the speed limits. The suburban sprawl slowly disappeared- sometimes it seemed to grow, sometimes it would shrink- but they knew they were on the right track. This would be their last visit to the lake for the entire summer. The sunset stretched a cool red shade over the fields and foothills of the green mountainsides all the way to the horizon. "What's that?"

Up in the distance, only a quarter mile before the off-ramp to the main highway, a police barricade stood under the main overpass. They pulled up the car to the block and saw some figures up against the cars. "Those are the kids I saw earlier." An officer walked up to the car.

"This road's been closed for the rest of the evening. These kids caused an accident while trying to vandalize the walls under this overpass here." The boy was perplexed: "What did they write that was so bad?" The officer stopped, and sniffed. "Look for yourself."

The wall under the overpass, the gate to a summer before college, a summer of freedom and glory, read: "We all poisoned the reservoir"

Creative Writing Piece

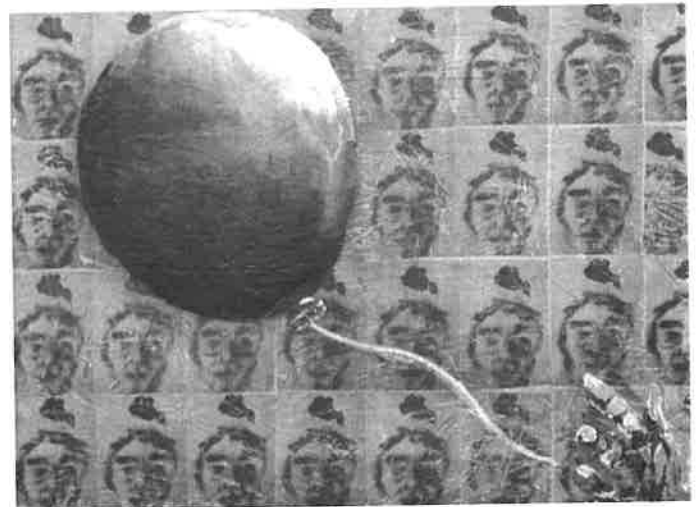
As I walk through life, I wonder about my existence, my importance, my true meaning. At times I feel as though I am fading into the distance of untold secrets and unseen truths. I wish to escape to see the meaning of true eternal happiness and wrap my arms around it, tightly. I reach my arms out to grasp my destiny, but there seems to be a branch in my path. I feel as though this branch has fallen from a tree I used to water every day in past years of my life. This tree was nothing but a simple branch when we first met. Something like the branch I gaze at now. I remember when I used to water my tree and watch it grow, as if I was planting its roots into my daily schedule. When I simply forgot to water my tree, some type of guilt inside of me sprung up out of nowhere. My plant had a way of pulling me from the others who were in need of my loving and caring touch. As the others started to fade, my tree stayed rooted so close that it suffocated me, and made it hard for me to breathe. My tree lost interest in rainwater and slowly became dependent on my trips into the forest with my watering can. One day I decided not to make my daily trip through the forest. When I came back the next day, my tree dropped three branches down on me out of anger. I walked away slowly, with regret, as I heard my tree's leaves ruffling in the wind. That was the day I decided never to return to the forest. So, as I walk down this path to my destiny and see a new branch in my path, I simply step over it. Now I know everything is going to be okay, because I have learned to love and let die.

Talia Clarke, Coffeehouse Team, 2012



Cimmaron

Rebecca Wheeler, 2012



Bye-Bye, Balloon

Courtney Wilson, Ed., 2012



Moving On *Brianna Tersolo, 2012*



Untitled *Christine Kuehl, 2012*



Just Like Picasso *Cody Fisichelli, 2012*



Self-Portrait *Robert Zipper, 2015*



Pictures of You, Picture of Me *Joshua Arthur, 2012*



Untitled *Melissa Mackey, 2013*

Patiently Waiting

He was married, says the worn-down wedding ring,
that lies on the table, next to the wooden chair,
that whispers from exhaustion, because he sits there every day,
waiting for her to come home. While the pictures of them
hang gently on the wall, singing songs
that remind him of her. But, he can't remember much,
say the sticky notes spread neatly across the refrigerator,
that his grown children and grandchildren write him often,
in the hopes that maybe one day he will remember.
But the woman he waits for everyday
isn't coming back, says the cross that is gently placed
on his bed stand, next to her old perfume,
on top of the doily she once crotched herself,
that he will never replace, says the unraveling string.
And he cries himself to sleep the nights he can remember,
say the tissues in the waste basket, on the side she
used to sleep on, says the half made up bed.
And so he sits every day, waiting for her to come home.
The ring and the chair say he'll wait until he's with her,
the pictures silently agree.
The sticky notes have faith that someday he'll remember
forever,
but the lingering scent of her perfume begs to differ.
He's too far gone says the unraveled doily,
that knows he wouldn't want to recall, even if he could.
Some things are just too painful to remember,
though the cross could tell you that.

Olivia Imprescia, 2014

Still Life
Molly O'Neill, 2012



The Athlete

I am from a court,
from parquet and rubber.
I am from the dust under the bleachers.
(Gray, soft, it feels like a marshmallow.)
I am from the whistle blower,
the loud piercing
that rings in my ears
as I stand on my own two feet.

I am from a basketball,
from leather and netting.
I am from the orange circle at the top of the rim
bouncing back and forth like a ping pong.
I am from the hand holder
that pushes and catches
as if it had nowhere else to go.

I am from the crowd,
from large and noisy.
I am from the child sleeping in the arms.
The crowd jumps from the metal seats
cheers blast like the trumpet of a horn
as it spreads throughout the world.

I am from those players,
a team that comes and goes like the
wind,
it moves it and stops.

Austin Perry, 2014



Now You Know
Ryan O'Boyle, 2012

Red Sox Nation
Leah Cabeceiras, 2012



Coldin

Our house is really... a cliché. It's got four floors, three bedrooms, three bathrooms, an attic, a basement, a full kitchen, etc. It's painted beige with dark brown shutters and a dark brown roof. We have a good-sized in-ground pool with a diving board my brothers love to use. We have one of those short, neat lawns all the neighbors are jealous of. And we have a miniature picket fence. Really, a picket fence, I'm not kidding. It's about three feet tall and a perfect white. We have a smooth driveway and a bigger than usual two-car garage. Enough to fit our white minivan, black sedan, five bikes, various sports equipment and miscellaneous boxes of junk and knick-knacks that we won't throw away or actually use or anything.

My mom is one of those nineteen fifties sitcom moms. She stays at home, cooks, cleans, and wears an apron. Still not joking. She's a good cook, though. She has shoulder-length brown hair, and my dad's a clean-shaven brunette. My dad has a cubicle. At an office building for an insurance agency. They're the stereotypical couple of the nineties or something. I have two brothers, twins, fraternal, Noah and Eli, they're ten. Both of them do sports, get good but not perfect grades at school and joke around a lot. They're popular, too.

My name is Jude Harris. I was in the eighth grade when the neighbors moved in. I've never gotten anything lower than an A, and I don't try. I'm not bragging, it's just true, school's easy. I don't do sports and I have no friends. I just don't like the kids at my school, they're mean or stupid or both. Next year I'm going to private school.

The neighbors started moving in mid-May 2011. Right next door, but I was in school for the Thursday and Friday. Mom went over on Friday right after lunch with home-baked cookies. She introduced herself and welcomed them to the neighborhood.

I walked by Friday after school on the way back from the bus stop. I stopped and turned to my left to look over the house. I know it's white with a crappy lawn and a bright red door that kind of glows in the dark. But still, now new people are living there. I wonder if they have kids. Inside, I know it's useless, there's a small chance it's a nice smart kid my age and an even smaller chance that we'll actually become friends. But still, it's a nice thought.

I wave to the woman, who's on the porch; she waves back with a smile. She seems nice, of course, that's just based on a wave and smile. I walk down a bit farther to my house, right next door, and go in. Mom made me snack, she does that everyday. It's good service. It was leftover cookies, but still. Cookies. And she heated them up so they were warm.

"How was school?" Mom asked.

"Normal," I say, dipping a cookie in some milk, "You met the neighbors?"

"Yeah," she says cheerily, "Their name's Laughlin, Yvonne and Owain. They have a son your age, Colton, I think it was. He starts school Monday and they're coming over for dinner tonight."

"Do Noah and Eli have something practice?"

"Something practice?"

"Yeah, otherwise the Laughlins will have to meet them, and then they'll move back to North Carolina."

"South," Mom says, "they're from South Carolina."

"No way," I laugh, "I got it right?"

"No," she says calmly, "You got it wrong. You said North Carolina, that's the wrong direction. Anyways, they don't have practice; we're going to have a dual family dinner."

I shake my head and head up to my room to do my homework.

After I finish, I fool around on my HP laptop (I have two laptops). I don't go on Facebook. Like I said, I have no friends so I'd just get relatives and kids who would tease me about just having relatives. No Twitter or anything either. I read blogs. I like blogs.

My room's nice, walk in closet, full size bed, desk with enough room for my laptops, all that. I have two laptops because I love computers. I actually convinced the school to let me skip computer class. One's an HP and the other's a Mac. I named them Harry and McKenzie.

I have two windows that face the front of the house. I turn off Harry and sit down with McKenzie on my bed so I can see the Laughlins coming.

She's tall, and very pretty. I'm not in love with her; she's just pretty. She has straight black hair and a good complexion. He's shorter than her, but not short. He has blond hair and a short beard. Their son is short. He has blond hair and he's really thin. He was staring up at one of the windows, not mine.

I walk downstairs and open the door for them.

"Hi," I say.

"Hello, I'm Yvonne," she says, "Are we early?"

"I have no idea," I shrug, "You can come in." They do.

Mom rushes over, "Hi, Yvonne, Owain, nice to see you." They shake hands pleasantly. "This is my son, Jude," she motions towards me, and then turns up the stairs, "Boys! Company!" she yells.

Noah and Eli dash down the stairs, nod hello, and go to the table. My parents usher the Laughlins into the kitchen. Their son just stares up the stairs vacantly.

"Hi," I say in a friendly way, "I'm Jude." He doesn't respond or seem to have even seen me. "Colton, right?"

"Coldin," he says quietly, still looking up the stairs. His voice is kind of distant, like he's daydreaming. "My name's Coldin."

"Sorry," I say.

He shrugs. He's still looking up the stairs.

"Do you want to see upstairs?"

He nods, then waits for me to go first.

"That's my parents' room," I motion the door on the left, "that's the bathroom, and the guest room, which is really too tiny for anyone to actually use." I point at the rooms at the end of the hallway, "and that's the twins' room on the left and mine on the right."

Coldin nods and walks down the hall, looking in the rooms. The twins left their door wide open, and it looks like a tornado swept through. They each have a bunk bed, and they're set up in a corner, head to head, the sheets are ripped off, clothes, toys, and pillows are everywhere, some in makeshift forts, Nerf bullets are everywhere, and guns are scattered around, each labeled NOAH or ELI, and the bullets, too. Their closet door is wide open, and bursting with papers and broken pencils; they do their homework in there.

My door is closed.

"You're either more private than they are, or your room's a bigger mess," Coldin says, his voice still dream-like, "it's more likely the first, since I don't think the second one can be possible."

"You can see if you like," I open the door and walk in.

"It's comely," he says.

"Comely?"

He nods, his eyes scanning the room, "nice, pleasing, becoming, wholesome, pulchritudinous, maybe."

"Pulchrit- what?" I laugh.

"Pulchritudinous," he says, looking at the carpet, "it means physically beautiful or comely," he walks into the center of the room, "funny how if you looked up comely you could find a synonym with comely in the definition."

"Right..." I say slowly. I guess my room is pulchritudinous; it's clean, anyway. My bed is in the corner by the window, my desk is to the right when you come in, followed by my three giant beanbags. On the left is the wall where I put up drawings or photos or really good essays, poems, or stories I had to write for class. There's also my calendar, which has kittens on it. I don't really know why. Then there's my closet, where I put my clothes. That's about it.

"You're in the eighth grade?"

"Yeah, Ms. Hanson's homeroom."

"I'm in her room," he says. "Is she one of those 'look me in the eye when I'm talking to you' types?"

"Kind of, only if you get her mad, she teaches science. You'll have all my teachers; we're on a team."

"We had teams in my previous school. I think they're useless."

"Yeah," I say slowly, "anyway, let's go down for dinner."

Coldin barely talks during dinner. He just answers questions when my parents or brothers ask. His voice doesn't change; he still talks like he's in some faraway fairytale land.

They don't stay for dessert; they have to unpack.

"So what's the son's name again?" my dad asks after they leave.

"Coldin," I say, "he's kind of weird."

"How so?" Dad says, "because of his voice?"

"Well, yeah," I shrug, "but he doesn't look anyone in the eye, and he said comely, pulchritudinous, and previous school."

"Pulchritudinous?" Dad's amused, "that's a heck of word."

I nod. "He's kind of nice, though," I say, "in the way that he won't get mad or anything. I don't know. He won't be popular at school, I can tell you that."

"Well that's optimistic," Mom chimes in sarcastically.

"He won't," Noah adds.

"He's a weirdo," Eli says.

"Well, don't be mean," Mom says.

"I wasn't being mean," Noah says, fake insulted, and walks away.

"Fourth graders," Eli fake groans, since he's in fourth grade, too, "But he's a nice weird, just people don't like that."

"He's right," I say.

"People are monsters," Eli adds.

"Go upstairs and do something," Mom says, "go on, shoo!"

Noah and Eli's Nerf gun apocalypse duel to the death continues in their room. Thankfully, they leave the door closed, but I'm still scared they'll burst out and kill me.

I have one Nerf gun, its blue, for defense, and although the bullets are foam, it's still unnerving to wait for them to attack. I get it out from under my bed and put it next to me while I read in my pile of beanbags; always good to be on the safe side. I wake up in the beanbags, my book is closed, but I must have moved the jacket to keep my place. Of course, I don't remember doing that so I'll have to re-read some of it.

It's Saturday! Beautiful Saturday! I don't have to go get up early or go to bed early! I'm free!

Saturday mornings are nice.

Noah and Eli have baseball, but I volunteer to watch the house. Mom and Dad let me stay home.

I decide to say hi to the Laughlins. If Coldin is always that weird maybe I'll actually make a friend.

Coldin is standing on his head in the front yard holding a stuffed bunny with his feet and eating an orange.

Well, then.

Hi Coldin," I say, talking as if he's five. "How are you doing?"

He gets right-side-up and finishes his orange, staring at a tree. "Good," he says.

"What were just doing?" I ask.

"Having a snack," he says, dropping the orange peel on the lawn. "What were you just doing?" He acts like what he was just doing was the most normal thing in the world.

"I came to say hi," I say, "not so sure I want to stay now." I laugh so he doesn't think I'm being mean.

"Okay," he says, "do you want to enter my house?"

"Sure," I shrug.

He leads me in.

It's a split-level, the top floor has kitchen, living room, bathroom, and three bedrooms.

"It's pleasant," he says, "I have my own room."

"You didn't before?"

"No, I did," he says calmly, "I'm just glad it happened again."

Well, if nothing else, this kid is entertaining.

One of the bedrooms is an office, one's his parents', and one is his.

"This is my bedroom," he explains. "It has a twin bed, and a desk, and a dresser, and a television."

"It's..." I think a little, "comely."

He doesn't get the joke. It wasn't a very good joke, but he could have at least chuckled.

"You don't like people." He doesn't ask, he just says it.

"You don't look them in the eye."

He nods, "I don't like eyes," he says. "The pupil is an odd black, and the iris looks too much like hair, and I don't like how you can sometimes see blood in the whites of the eyes. It's direful."

"Direful?"

"Calamitous, ill-boding, ominous, unpropitious, it means indicating trouble."

"Well, okay,"

"You need a word of the day calendar or something, instead of the kittens."

"I kind of like the kittens,"

"I have a kitten," he says. "Her name is Google. She's in a box. I didn't pack her; she's just playing in it." He walks around and gets a little grey kitten, then places her on his head.

"Have you seen her eyes?"

"I've seen eyes," he says. "It's called peripheral vision."

"Okay, sorry."

"You don't need to apologize, I wasn't offended. How are you at school?"

"I get all As, if that's what you mean."

"Yes and no," he says, petting Google. "Are you popular?"

"Not at all," I laugh. "I have no friends."

"Well, okey-dokey, then," he says with a soft smile and kind of a happy voice, "we should be cohorts."

"Cohorts?" I chuckle. "Okay, we're cohorts."

So we shook hands.

I now have a cohort.

Coldin and I exchanged phone numbers, and at 10:45 exactly I got a text from him saying: "In the country of France, it is unlawful and illicit to call a pig Napoleon."

I thanked him for that random fact.

"Would you be interested in coming over to play Mario Kart on the Nintendo Wii with me?" That's his next text.

"Sure," I reply

I go over and we play, he's good, he unlocked more stuff than my family, comes in first every time, and knows all the shortcuts.

So, okay, he's really good.

We talk a little.

"Do you have this game?"

"Yeah," I say, "but you're much better."

"I am."

"Do you have a laptop?"

"I have a personal computer. Do you?"

"I have two," I hesitate, "a Mac and an HP. Their names are McKenzie and Harry."

"You named them?"

"Yeah..."

"That's a bit queer."

Oh, great, the weirdo thinks I'm "queer."

"Only a smidgen queer, you're not queer overall."

I think he reads my mind.

"I enjoy this video game. You have two brothers."

"Yep."

"Elaborate."

"Okay, they're Noah Mark and Eli Matthew. They're fraternal twin ten-year-old fourth grade boys."

"What's your full name?"

"Jude Luke Harris."

"Coldin Felix Laughlin." He wins the race. "Are we friends?"

"Yeah, I guess."

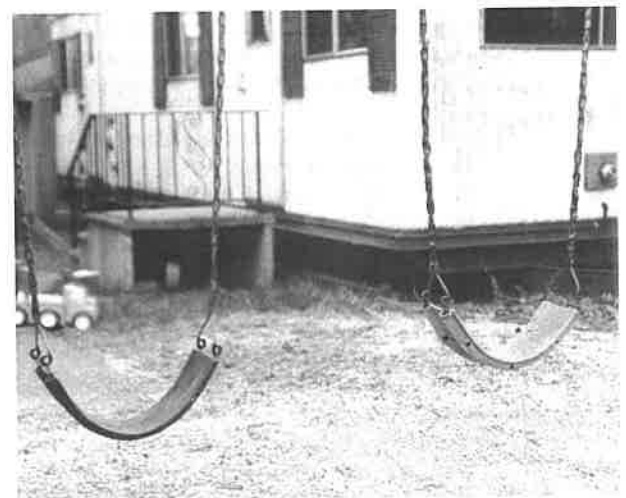
"That's nice," he says, "I like having a friend."

Me too.

Rachael DeRosa, 2015

Swings

Catherine Contarino, Ed., 2013





Untitled

Heather LoFaro, 2012

Human Metamorphoses

In the end, it matters not, we all fall through the
transformation

A torturous catalyst

A metamorphic flame

Bleak revelations in the sun drenched sky
We fall into the cocoons of life in the end and
emerge as white butterflies
dripping black, red, and gray unto the sky

What gets us there matters not

Whether it be angel wings or red horns

Bright light or unending darkness

Life or death

The transformation is always the same

Unchanging and ambiguous

An empty revelation

A pointless resolution

A bitter sugar in the greatest of delicacies

A reassuring insult

Form the brew of life's untimely catalyst



In the end it's all you have

There's no point in arguing with me or you

In the end we move on aware of all

The colors of the sunset, the starving man in
the alleyway, the red roses in the field, the
bullets and blood in the world, their faith, the
all consuming greed, and of all the white
butterflies in the sky.

Ramon Vicenty, Coffeehouse Emcee, 2012

Katelyn

Christine Bowen, 2012



Untitled Wen Cai, Ed., 2013



Untitled Emily Fitzmeyer, 2013



Tribute to Heath Katie O'Brien, 2012



Untitled Wen Cai, Ed., 2013

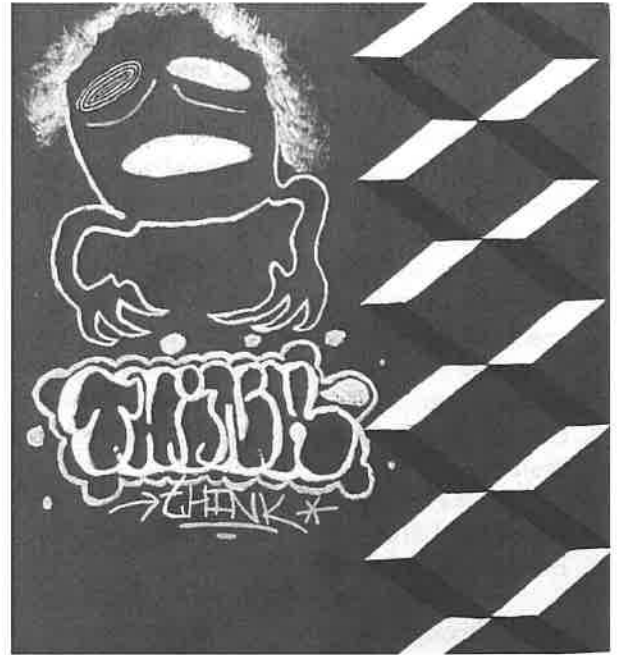


Broken
Christine Bowen, 2012

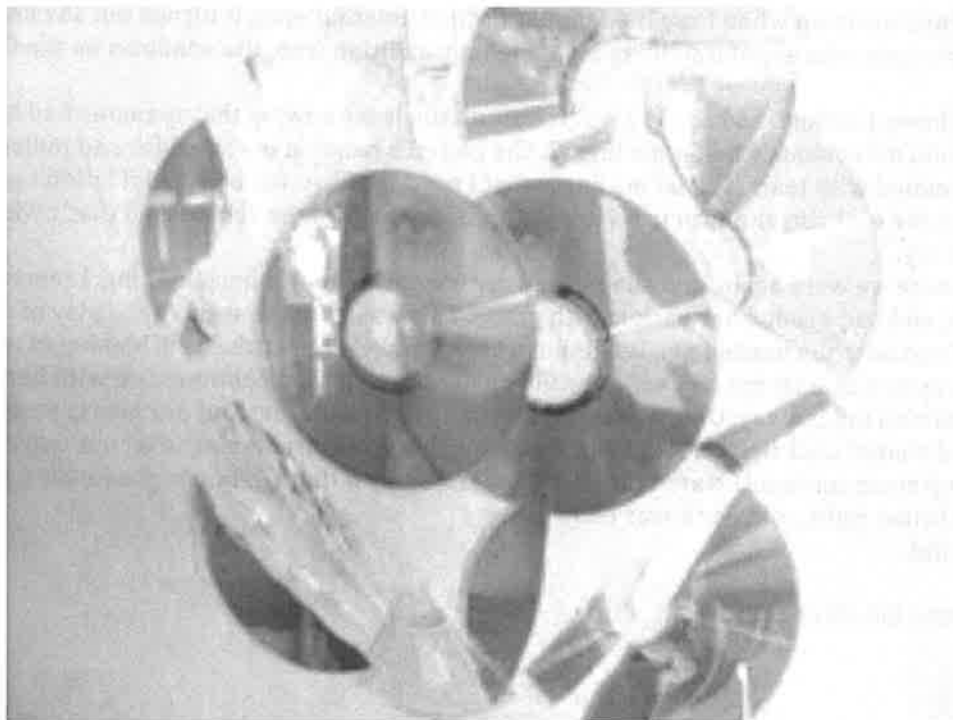
Trapped Within Myself

I'm trapped within the confines of my own mind
You let me out for a little while
-Momentary freedom-
But before long I'm back
Imprisoned by my thoughts
Scared to stray too far.
In sleep I am freed
I can think, act, and feel
Without boundaries
Without limits.
Morning never ceases to come, though,
And once again,
I return to the jail cell of my mind—
Forced to be cautious in all I do
Forced to retreat from the world around me.
You understand, and you try to set me free
But I will never be free from this
I will never escape my own mind.

Liz Bradley, Ed., 2012



Twist
Sam Jortberg, Ed., 2012



At a Loss for Memories *Laura Saffie, 2012 & Emily Fitzmeyer, 2013*

She Told Me It Was Okay To Cry

I saw her for the first time in five years last night. Lack of sleep had caused the bags under my eyes to sag; dark circles engulfed her eyes from stress. Those once vibrant green eyes of hers had begun to dull. Her once bright bolt of blonde locks was now dyed a ravenous black, hiding the natural color she once wore with pride.

She asked if I would take a walk, and I silently agreed, awe-struck at her presence. My thoughts constantly juggled college applications and soccer practices. A controlling and ungrateful boyfriend consumed every aspect of her mind and life. The smell of alcohol made me cringe; she had relapsed on heroin twice in the past year and a half.

It broke my heart to hear about all of her struggles. She stopped walking, turned to me, and asked for a friend. I couldn't just make all of her pain go away with the snap of my fingers. Hope and support—they were definitely things I could offer to numb the pain. This time I gave in to her request with a nod and a small smile.

She and I had first crossed paths in the second grade. It was in the principal's office where we first laid eyes on each other. She was the new transfer student, waiting patiently for her parents to finish speaking with the receptionist. The perfect little angel. I, on the other hand, was her polar opposite. Storming into the small office with one of the teachers who had been on lunch duty, I sat down, lip poked out and arms folded across my chest. Apparently daring a boy to flash the lunch lady was a big no-no. Her curious pine green glance met my furious chestnut glare from across the room. We were inseparable from then on.

We'd both found someone to exchange giggles with about absolutely nothing, all the while causing the phone bill to skyrocket. We even became the each other's person to cling to when the climax of a horror movie lingered close.

It was March of fifth grade, and auditions for the spring musical were close at hand. I had been going through my Hollywood obsession and dreamt of being a singer.

The girl who auditioned before me had an amazing voice and the pressure to do better than she had hit me like a heat wave. It was also nerve-wracking to know my best friend wasn't present for support because of a last minute doctor's appointment.

When it was my turn, I utterly embarrassed myself. I tripped on my way up to the stage. I stuttered through the words of a popular Mariah Carey song. I was destined for failure, already strapping myself in and awaiting arrival.

I dragged my feet through the back door of the theater after my audition, head hung low. My frown was turned upside down when I saw the familiar flash of emerald eyes. It turned out she had begged her parents to postpone the appointment and watched my audition from the windows on the floor above the theatre.

She knew I sucked, and so did I, but it hurt a little less knowing that someone had had some faith in me that I could miraculously belt out a high C. She placed a hand on my shoulder and pulled me into a hug. My eyes brimmed with tears. She let me know that I tried my absolute best and if I didn't get picked, the play had lost the best singer and actress to ever grace the halls of the school. And that's when she told me it was okay to cry.

So there we were again, and she needed my friendship more than anything. I remembered when I lost all faith, and had needed her back in fifth grade. This wasn't the first act in the play of our lives. She had lost herself and now she needed me. We found a bench and sat under the dark blanket of night.

She leaned against me, her head resting on my shoulder and continued on with her story about a life two thousand miles away. Our lives couldn't be any more different, but our hearts yearned for the special bond shared once before. Suddenly she sat up, her eyes threatening to let out two rivers of tears. Mustering up some courage, I stared into her eyes and begged them to regain their luster. I took her hand and, with a broad smile, told *her* it was okay to cry. And so she did.



Journey

Looking around, faces glow with relief.
 She'll be ok, they think...
 She's spilling her heart out to them.
 She's vulnerable;
 But for the first time...
 She doesn't fear the truth.
 She's seeing clearly now:
 She has never been alone,
 It only felt that way.
 She had isolated herself.
 But now she can see:
 The faces that surround her...
 Love her.
 They hear her story once again,
 But now they're proud of where
 she is;
 And not ashamed of where she's
 been.

Annie Taylor, 2013

Adolescence

Crystal Montas, 2012



Swim Good

Stephanie Cabrera, 2012

Sense Too Common

Who do you think I am?
I'm not some idiot lacking sense
Astounded by aesthetics
But my intelligence flows like a river
It is not
Too common
For one's sense.
So because I speak too highly
of the things you'll never understand,
does that make me
a nerd?

I'm not too nerdy to see the simplicity of life.
Love has rhythm & you have none.
Do you know this?
Have you heard
this?

I don't see why I need to consider you.
Because my vernacular's too intense for you
to handle
So my intelligence surpasses you
So therefore, my common sense can't match
you.
Nothing common about your sense
Don't pretend to be intelligent.
It's hurting you inside, yet you judge me.

Who do you think I am?

I left you submerged in your tears.
My sense too common.
It roars.
It's deafening, so you can't even tune in to the
greatness.
You can't even hear.

My sense too common.
It radiates.
It's a product too blinding.
Your ignorance roars in the abyss
Submerged in tears.
I left you deaf, blind, still crying.

Who do you think I am?
Just because I say "ostracize,"
I'm an outcast with no aspiration?
Since when was it a damnation

To fulfill my vocation
Of becoming a writer with a sense of
inspiration
Tried to be put down by mitigation?

Who do you think I am?

I'm a nerd. I agree to this.
But since when did nerds like myself
not know how to fight back?
I've known.
Who do you think I am?

I'm a nerd. I say it proudly.
Sense too common.
It roars.
I roar.
I roar. Proudly.
You lack common sense
Too common for your sense
Of understanding.
Ignorance makes you reek.
You're too blind to find the knowledge that
you seek.
You're too weak
To handle it.

Knowledge is power.

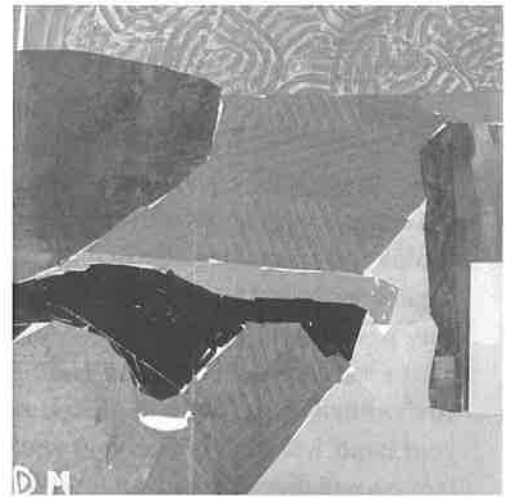
Chris Delmonte, Ed., 2012

Think B4 U Speak
Maria Munoz, 2012

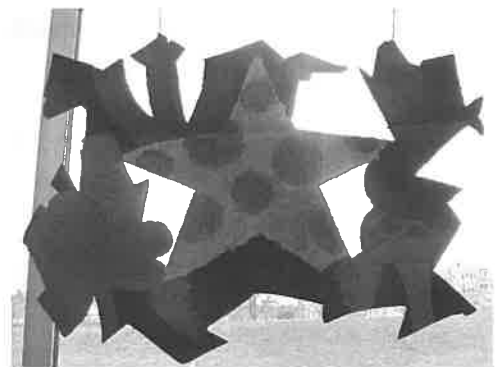




Untitled *Emily Duquette, 2015*



Alex Ward *Dano Mahoney, 2015*



Untitled *Will Jarrett, 2015*



BB's World
Shayla Burgos, 2015

Crushed Can
Nicole Faber, 2015



Upgrade

Technology is the future and the future is technology. Think about that for just a second, and you'll understand why we all strive to keep up with the latest things that will keep us entertained. iPods, iPads, Droids and everything else in that category all have one thing in common: we just need to get our sticky fingers on them. Money and use don't matter, as long as you can flaunt the new black brick of future intel to your peers. Sure, go ahead, argue that we have time to think about the price later, think about our real use for it even later than that, and god only knows when you'll want to care about what you should do when you're finally bored with it. All that really matters to people today is the "in" thing, what looks better in your hand, but what makes your wallet lighter. People are going through credit cards, checks, even paper money, and there are sad souls who "need" the tech so badly that they've resorted to coins and loose change from the bottom of their pockets, all hungering to hold a new piece of soon-to-be-outdated equipment.

Let's say that there is someone out there who owns a 2001 flip phone. We all know that this man is ridiculed by the people around him when they see this big chunk of a communication device. It works, probably fairly well, but it doesn't look good enough to be socially acceptable. Looks rule the U.S. as a whole nowadays. It doesn't matter what it is; if it looks better, it sells more. A whole lot more. The reason for this is that we fail to see the "function over beauty" side of life. If you had a choice between a computer with dual core processing and more memory than you know what to do with but has a monitor that looked like the rusty bits of the Titanic and a sleek silver laptop that runs like a snail in a pool of molasses, which would you choose? The laptop would be a generally accepted answer. We Americans may be a bit crazy, but we sure as hell aren't blind.

Computers and phones are very popular items, which you know if you haven't lived under a rock for the last ten years. One thing a lot of people don't know is that this is something less than a good thing, something much less. Addictions are everywhere; people are constantly looking to see what the cat dragged in to play with this time, texting and sending emails. Texting is something that every kid with a phone has taken advantage of, and the ones who overuse it can be downright obnoxious. An email is no better; same rules different game. What ever happened to real mail and letters? What did we run out of first: paper or incentive? Well, I guess all this just goes to show you—we are all still craving that next big upgrade.

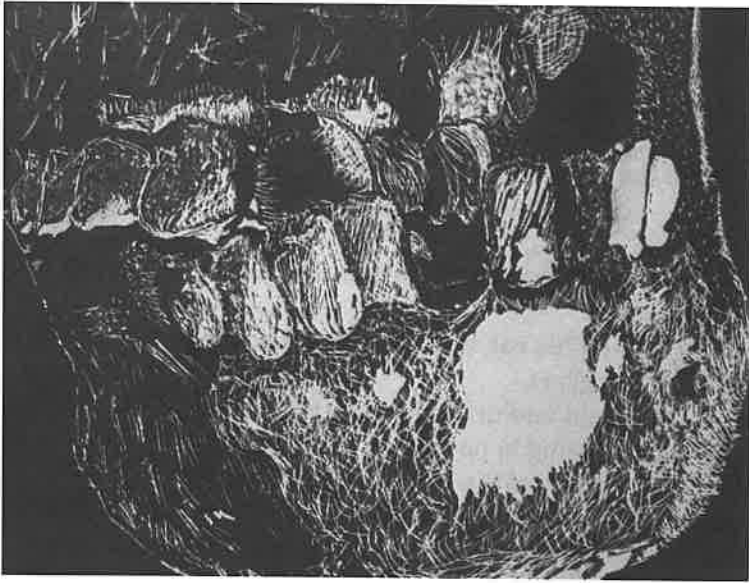
Chris Coughlin, 2015



Untitled

*Anthony Didio, Ed., 2012
& Catherine Contarino, Ed., 2013*

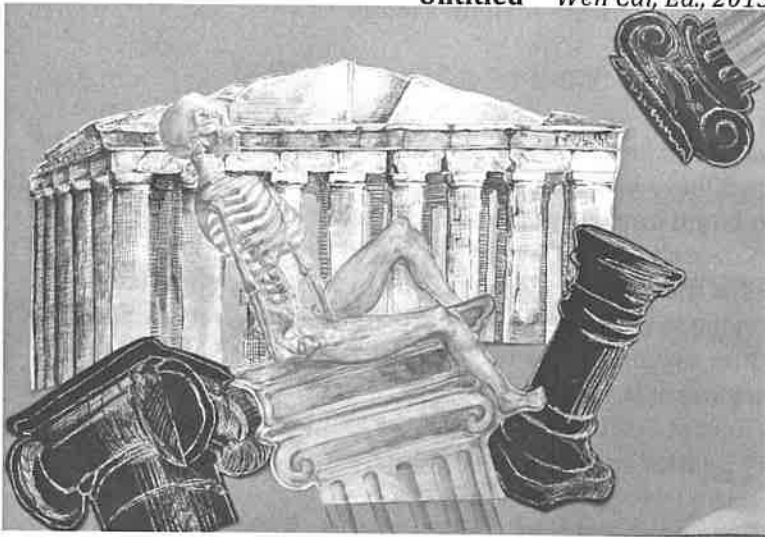
Untitled *Anthony Didio, Ed., 2012*



Untitled *Alejandra Ponce, 2012*



Untitled *Wen Cai, Ed., 2013*



Unknown *Tina Shan, 2015*



Untitled *Meghan Sullivan, 2012*



Ondine's Curse

"Do you wanna hear a secret?"

John rolls his eyes. Ondine always has secrets, and they are never any good. He ignores her and concentrates on his GameBoy.

"You gotta pinky swear, though, if you wanna hear it."

Pinky swear. Now that was serious. John shuts off the game and shoves it in the pocket of his raincoat. He turns and says, "Okay," and they loop their pinkies together.

Ondine leans in close and clasps a fat, sticky hand around his ear, and whispers the secret. John's eyes widen. "Take me to it," he commands, and Ondine grins.

They run down the road to the beach. It is a gray day, cold and drizzling, but they have their jackets and boots, so they don't get wet as they stomp on the puddles gathering in potholes. The ocean is gray, too, but a different gray than the sky, less cloud-gray and more like the color of the blackboard at school.

Ondine has hidden it beyond the reach of the surf, buried in a place marked with a piece of sea glass. She throws the glass aside and paws at the sand until she hits hard, yellow, chipped bone. She lifts the skull out of the sand, the grains pouring out of where its eyes and nose should be. It doesn't have a jaw, and its top teeth (there are only three left) stick out from the bottom like little jaundiced tombstones.

"I found it in the water," Ondine says, stroking the skull like Aladdin's lamp.

John giggles. "Let's name it Skully."

"I already named it Yorick," Ondine declares proudly. "Y-O-R-I-C-K."

John scowls. "No, that's stupid. Name him Skully."

"No, it's not stupid! My daddy is in a new play and he keeps saying stuff about a skull named Yorick!" Ondine's daddy is an actor, and he goes to London a lot to be in big plays where people write in the newspaper about him. "Besides," she huffs, "I'm the one who found him so I get to name him Yorick!"

John cannot argue with her logic, even if he doesn't like it. "Skully is still better."

Ondine sticks her tongue out at him and holds the skull up over her head, one hand on her heart. She strains to look up at it. "Poor Yorick!" she yells, trying to make her voice deep and serious, but she ends up sounding silly. John tells her so, but she ignores him, crying, "You were fancy! I kissed you!"

"Gross!" John cries. "Don't kiss it." He chases her across the sand.

Yorick is lost the next day, when John gets mad at Ondine and throws the skull as far as he can into the ocean. Ondine screams at him and says she won't be friends with him anymore.

**

It has been years since Yorick. They are fifteen now, and they are still friends. Or more. John is really unsure about that.

John has a feeling about her, and they've been hanging out a lot more than usual. Well, they had always hung out, but now it was alone and not with other people. They sit near the ocean, talking and listening to the waves.

Ondine got beautiful, somehow, over the years. John hadn't even noticed, but it had happened. Her hair isn't as dark as it used to be and is a sort of chestnut brown, and soft. Well, it looks soft. It's not like John would know. He hasn't touched it.

He wants to tell her. He wants to kiss her. He wants to be on the other side of the ocean, just to give him an excuse to yell it, to scream and shout across the Atlantic until his throat bleeds. I really like you, Ondine. I've known you forever and I love love love love you.

He is scared, though.

So he writes her a poem. That's what girls like, right? That Byron guy got all the girls, and he was a poet. Well, he also got his half-sister, but the important part is that he got girls. When John goes over to Ondine's house for a visit, he leaves the poem on her nightstand when she isn't looking. He is proud of himself.

**

John knows that Ondine's dad and brother had been telling Ondine to stay away from him. He is not the best kid, John admits; he's smart with books but not always smart in real life. But he always thought that he was okay for Ondine.

She hated the poem. She showed her actor father, and he hated it too.

He doesn't care. He doesn't care. Why should he? He doesn't care. He hates her. He doesn't care.

**

Ondine tries to catch up with John on the way home from school. She cries his name, and he ignores her, his chest heavy with a lump of stone that should be his pumping heart.

"John!" she gasps, catching up with him, smiling her beautiful Ondine smile. "Hey, John! I haven't seen you in days!"

He stops, and turns to her. She sees his expression and her face falls. "John?"

"I never liked you," he says, his stone heart pounding.

"What... what?"

Christ, if she keeps looking at him like that, he won't be able to do this.

"Look, just stop it, Ondine. Leave me alone."

"John, what are you talking about?"

"You're so fake. You tell people you're something that you're not, don't you?" You made me think that you loved me too, that you'd scream it across the Atlantic with me. (He doesn't say that part.) What he does say is, "Look, just go away." He swallows, but his throat is still dry, so awfully dry.

"But John! I like you, I really do like you-" she giggles a little here- "but you have to admit the poem was a little weird."

John can feel his face burn red. "Really, Ondine? You think so? Where's your dad, huh? Is he here to protect you from me now?"

"He's... he's at home," she says hopelessly. "You- you have gone crazy, John!"

"Go somewhere you won't bother anybody," he commands. She does. She runs away from him and maybe she's crying but John can't decide if that sound's coming from her or him.

**

He doesn't talk to Ondine again for two months after that. In fact, he doesn't hear anything about her at all until he hears the news that she killed herself.

She had jumped into the ocean and sucked water into her lungs on purpose. Ondine drowned herself. John imagines her chestnut brown hair, floating on the waves, but she's not swimming, she's dead, dead because of her actor father- who got murdered during one of his trips to London- and dead because of John. John had loved her. Sure, he had been... like that to her, but he probably loved her more than her own family had. Her brother Leonard had jumped into the hole they buried her in, but what would he have really done for her? Nothing, compared to screaming across the ocean: I really liked you, Ondine. I'd known you forever and I loved loved loved loved you.

John goes down to the ocean alone, still wearing his black suit from the funeral, and he sits in the surf, effectively ruining his clothing. It is freezing. It feels good, in a bad way. He deserves the punishment. This is the spot where she killed herself, the police think.

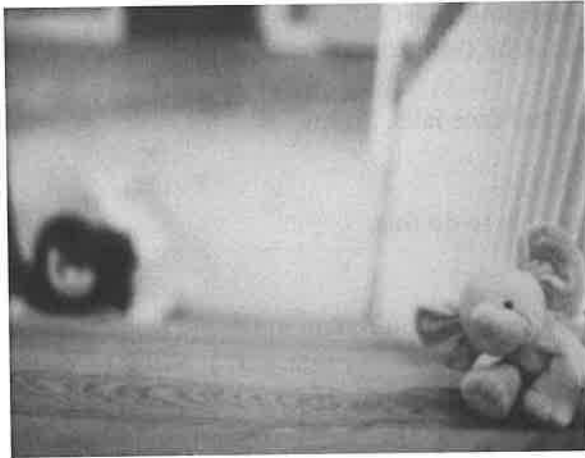
Something hard rushes against his hand, driven by the surf. He picks it up, thinking it is a rock, meaning to chuck it into the ocean, and maybe scream afterwards.

But it is not a rock. It is Yorick. He is worn, filled with holes and polished white by the sea, and he only has two teeth left. But it is Yorick, because it still has the remains of Ondine's handwriting on the forehead. She had scrawled Yorick on the skull in permanent marker.

He hugs the skull and sobs, cries, rocks back and forth and forgets the cold and his sopping wet clothes and he remembers, and it hurts to remember, but once again, he deserves the punishment.

I knew her, Yorick.

Franky
Nick Cannon, 2012



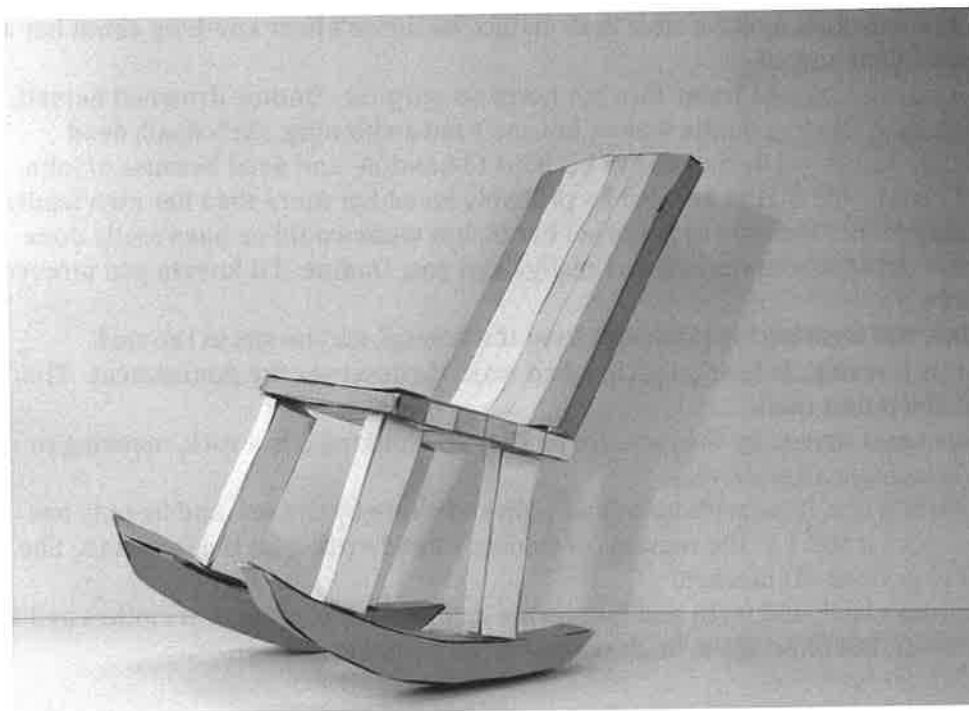
Elephant
Brittany Janeczek, 2012



Never Let Go

I never really believed in
myself
Until just recently
When I saw a bit of myself
withering in the wind.
But I didn't know what it was
Specifically.
So I ventured out,
three-quarters of myself
lingering in body
Concretely.
One-fourth of my soul,
withering in the wind
Abstractly.
So I continuously ventured
And I found myself
Dangling on a lamp post
But it wasn't abstract.
It was a sign.
That read:
"Never Let Go."

Chris Delmonte, Ed., 2012



Lazy Boy
Joshua Arthur, 2012

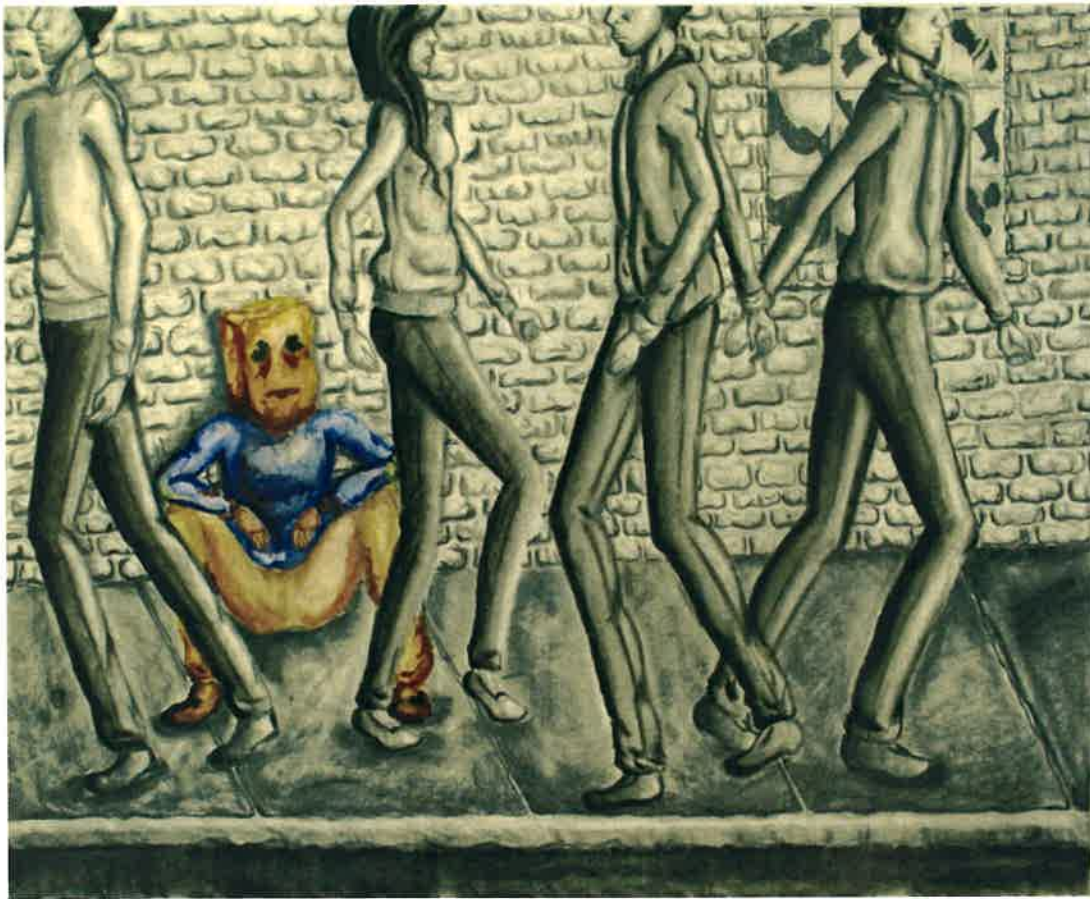


Mount Cardigan
Sam Jortberg, Ed., 2012

Admiring Nature
Matt Sullivan, 2013



Untitled
Leah Cabeceiras, 2012



Responsibility
Stephanie Cabrera, 2012

Insanity Is in This Season
Crystal Montas, 2012





Turner
Drew Shaheen, 2014



Conversation Is an Illusion
Jillian Sullivan, 2012



Taking Care of Business
Ms. Jennifer Groleau, Faculty

Faces
Lauren Krugh, 2012





Untitled
Katie O'Brien, 2012

The Day That I Could Get Out
Wen Cai, Ed., 2013



Faster Than a Bullet

Time is a staple of the modern world. We all strive to get to the many works we are tied to “on time.” It is almost unbelievable now that, at one point, life was made up of slow paced movements. The word “stop” is now considered a suggestion, and slowing down is something that we just can’t afford to do. Every day we hang from the hour hand, looking at the clock, and waiting for the next event of the day.

Twenty-four hours used to seem like a century as a child, but as we grow, the speed of the world becomes clear to us. We have gained almost nothing from the pace we’re keeping, except an extremely unhealthy loss of patience. “Read a book? Why should I? There are summaries all over the internet!” That is the mentality that, no matter who you are, you will succumb to at one point in your life time.

Every day is a race against the clock, a minute means everything, and God help you if you’re late to anything. The acceptability of tardiness is something we humans think of as our right. Time is always of the essence, and nothing ever goes slower than it did before. In theory, we literally have the need for speed. Not only does this cause our lives to be condensed into a smaller frame, but it also almost gets us addicted. If we can’t do it fast, it just isn’t worth doing.

Now go ahead and test my theory. Shoot a pistol and dare a neighbor to chase the line of fire. I can bet my life on the fact that that man would have one objective: to be faster than the bullet.

Christopher Coughlin, 2015



Time Lapse Ryan O'Boyle, 2012

Old Man

I miss the years I spent
as another part of you,
keeping close the hands
that made me feel of worth.
But the price I paid for love,
it never seemed enough.
I let eight months pull you away,
like the moon with a midnight tide,
with a constant fight and hidden cries.
I remember your disguise behind the footage,
speaking fiction to ease your mind.
We all believed you'd be home soon.
Then came June.
I was eight years old
and you never saw my eyes.
They were missing the ones they always looked up to.
And how foolish was I
to let myself fall by the wayside,
burying my head in my hands,
much like you overseas,
never feeling any love from your family.
Then September
rolled around
and I remember the fear that you were never coming
back.
It was then I heard the sound of a thousand claps,
setting flame to the silence,
welcoming you home—
it was never much of one without you.
You held me then and there
and the world sat still.
I was finally at ease.
Winter came early that year,
and I can still feel the air.
You found your heart in the bottle
in order to cope with the past,
and sometimes I wonder if the reason is me.
I feel the pain in every drink

and search for the "I love you" deep in slurred speech,
but the words never come
and you fall into sleep.
I always wait 'till morning,
but new suns bring the same grief
and I still feel the cold.
I'm desperate and alone.
A working man can't make time
for his failure of a son
until the day is done
and he can eat,
while his beloved boy
lays in his bed with apathy,
knowing things will never change.
Old man,
you taught me everything
and I only wanted to make you proud
and although the world came between us,
I'm sorry that I let you down.
Sleep well.

Jarad Voto, 2012

Struggle
Mike Hovnanian, 2012



To M.C.—Impromptu Letter

¿Prima, a donde tu te fuiste?
It's been years since we've been close...
Matter of fact, we've never been that
close...

I just want you to know
That despite it all, I'm here for you.
And as I lie here in this bed,
I want you to realize that as distant family,
You've had the key to my fam-lost heart,
I never considered you dead.

I have the key to your heart, tambien.
I never lost it.
It's just that after years of loss &
miscommunication, I finally found it...
It was under the ditch of lost hope,
But it's ok; hope? I found it.
With you.

I won't be gone for too long...
Expect me around the town.
¿Prima, a donde tu te fuiste?
I can't blame you though...
Because like you, I was never really
around...

We've evolved & grown up
But we have so much to catch up on.
Guys & girls played us, right?
Is it false? Is it true?
Despite that, we're still here, right?
We got a lot to catch up on,
So we can just lie back, enjoy the night,
and fill the void with laughter, fam-love, &
do it again right after.

Maybe after all of these years of being so
far away from each other, it's become a
habit to not even acknowledge one
another,
But that's okay; reunion is necessary,
And forgetfulness is forbidden.

We have a chance to have a cousin-cousin
relationship.
It's never too late to begin this,

¿Prima, a donde tu te fuiste?

Chris Delmonte, Ed., 2012



Passing of the Torch
Fernando Nolberto, 2012

A Moment

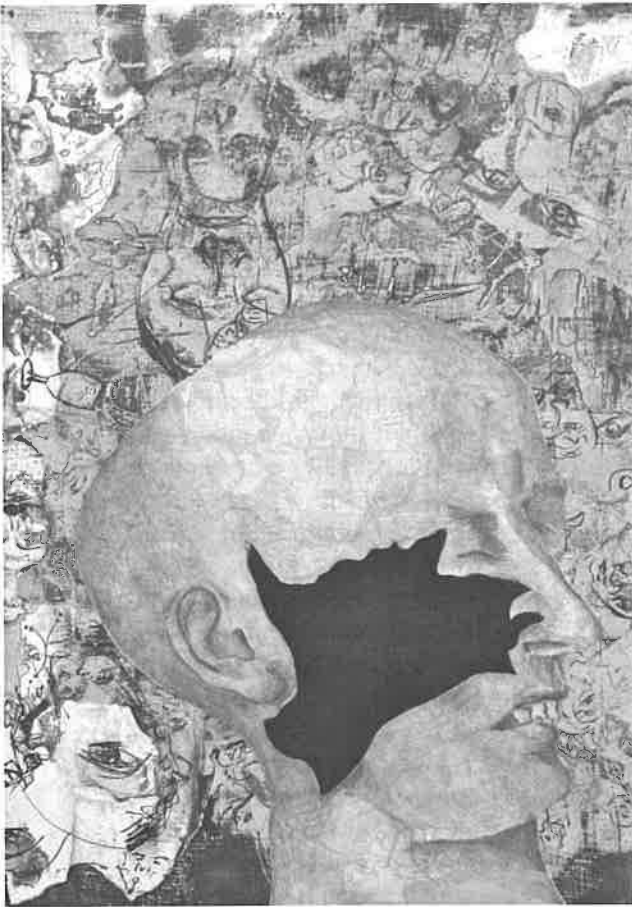
The clickity clack of my shoelaces on linoleum
The nostalgia transports me
To jumping rope at recess
The innocence of time and childhood, envelops
my entire body and soon my heart beats in
time with the jump rope.
I can remember races in knee socks and
jumpers
Trying to catch boys and hug them
Playing beauty shop with nail polish
Remember when she yelled at us
But we were just being little girls
And little boys
The wonder, the pure joy
The unabashed feelings of freedom and delight
Of getting messy without a care in the world
It would be taken from us too soon, the
moment middle school hits
The moment when you realize, those sneakers
aren't cool anymore
The moment when size matters and makeup
and having perfectly straight hair
The moment when everyone has a cell phone
and you don't and everyone knows it
But isn't middle school just that? A moment

The Disney channel expectations are soon
put on a shelf when you realize it is 8th
grade
and you have yet to go on a romantic date
But then high school comes along
Now the MTV expectations come into play
Parties? Prom? Drinking? Detention?
All are worth it in the moment
Driving fast in our cars, feeling
independent but still asking mom for
money
Working, but still asking Dad how to file a
FAFSA.
Quickly, those MTV expectations are
shelved when reality sets in.
It all leads up to a moment, a prom, a
graduation, a dance, a big game
But isn't high school just that?
A collection of big moments
Moments we can 'post to our walls' and
quote on our newly inked bodies?

Rosey O'Brien, Ed., 2012



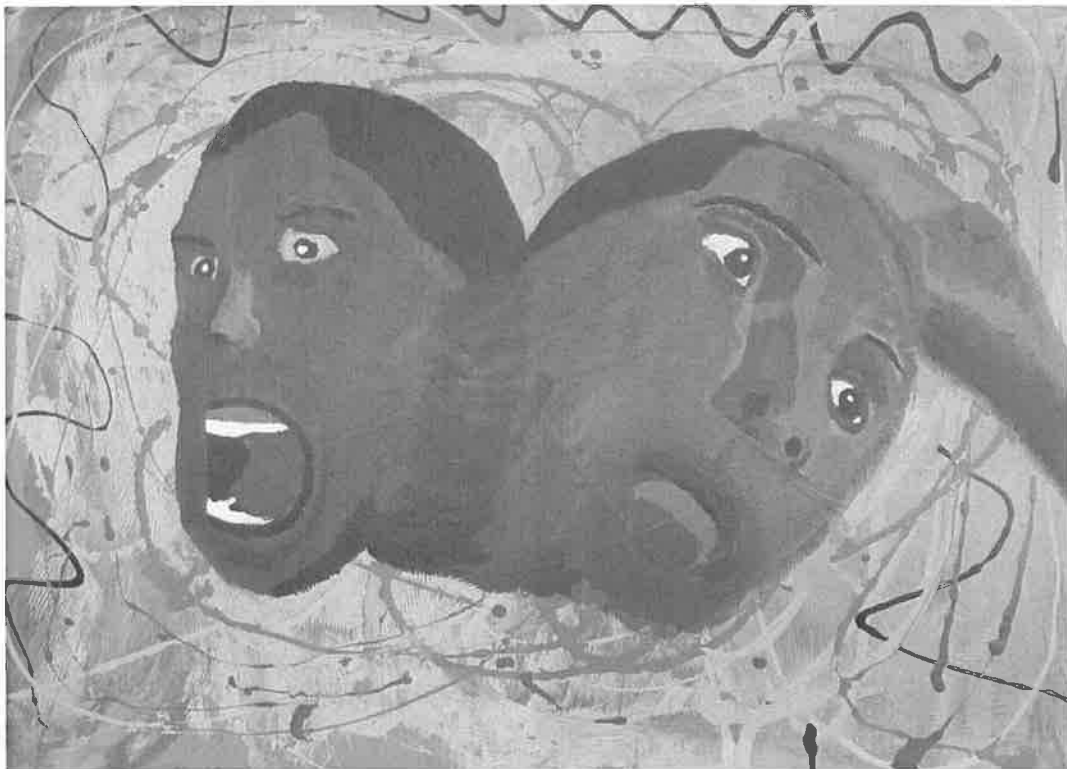
Escape
Courtney Wilson, Ed., 2012



Oui See
Andy Comeau, 2012



Untitled
Anthony Didio, Ed., 2012



I painted myself
Connor Corrieri,
2012

My Grandmother's Hands

My grandmother's hands were tiny and delicate next to my large, rough hands.
The color, warm brown with age spots, smooth to the touch,
Wedding band loose, moved back and forth when held tight.
Her fingers thin like straws that move to the rhythm of the music.
Tap, tap, and tap on the countertop like a conductor moves his hands.
My grandmother's hands held mine tight with kindness.
Her warmth shined through to keep me safe.
Comfort and love are feelings that penetrate through the softness,
Her touch shows no judgment.
My grandmother's hands were strong like a conviction,
And showed one how to stand tall.
They held my uncertainty and made me feel powerful,
Not to question but to believe.
My grandmother's hands were inspired to cook,
They kneaded the dough until it was smooth and soft.
They held her talent to feed others,
When they touched the ingredients, magic happened.
Cookies, breads, pastry appeared each day,
No questions asked, just her special touch.
My grandmother's hands wiped my tears gently,
Never asking why, just there when needed.
Claps hard and raises them to cheer,
And are always powerful when the sound is heard by an audience.
My grandmother's hands have a message of healing for others.
Believers hold on tight to the tiny delicate hands,
Never to let go.
Her hands may have been small, but they were powerful like a bat to a ball.
They were explosive to the touch,
Warm and cozy always.
Her hands were always there.

Austin Perry, 2014



Nostalgia
Rebecca Wheeler, 2012

My House

My house is separated from the city, as if it lives in a separate world, where no one goes. In a place where the trees grow and the grass dances in the wind, and the woods hold secrets. A place where animals run free, run for shelter, run for food; for themselves or their young. When the sun rises, so does the house. The house, like me, sees the sun rise with an inexplicable beauty that even words have trouble expressing. The windows show a pathway to the beautiful pastel colors of orange, yellow, and red through their wide eyes and open mouth, a mouth that has a lock and key that enters a sleepy house at six a.m.

Inside the wide and tall door, the feeling of solitude hits you like a defensive player hits his opponent, stripping your heart of the peace you felt outside. The eerie quiet reminds you of a scary movie, along with the bitter, freezing, cold that causes you to crave the warm sun rising outside. As you ascend the narrow staircase, the solitude slowly melts away, like a popsicle on a hot summer day, but the icy temperature remains, like snow after a blizzard. Once at the top, you turn left and enter a room that is the color of an ocean from a foreign country's postcard. The blue walls and the sand-colored rug brings you back to summer—to memories of the beach and the smells of salt water and freshly powdered fried dough. Music is blasting, singing about freedom and independence, the way a bird looks in flight. The sun, still rising, begins to peer through the blinds showing the rays of the warmth that will bring the new day.

A sense of pain lingers through the house, like the stain of spilled perfume on the rug. As you look out the window, your mind is sent to a place that once brought you joy, and you hear the sound of a toddler laughing. Shades of blue flood the image and bring you back to the pains, back to the blues. When you return to the house, the clocks seem to be telling you to "Hurry." At that moment, you hear the hustle and bustle of three people, walking through a hallway as if they were on the crowded streets on New York. A holler, a yell, and a groan from the door, then silence. Silence. The silence that haunts you in your dreams, in a cemetery, in a haunted house, a silence that could move your soul. The faint sound in the distance of the drop, drop, drop of the water from a faucet; it's as if the house is crying, saying sorry for not being blue.

Karesse Figueroa, 2014



Untitled

Christopher Lacroix, 2012



Freedom *Christine Bowen, 2012*



Imagine *Crystal Montas, 2012*



Bob Dylan *Bri Bain, 2012*



Nachelle *Jen Meli, 2012*

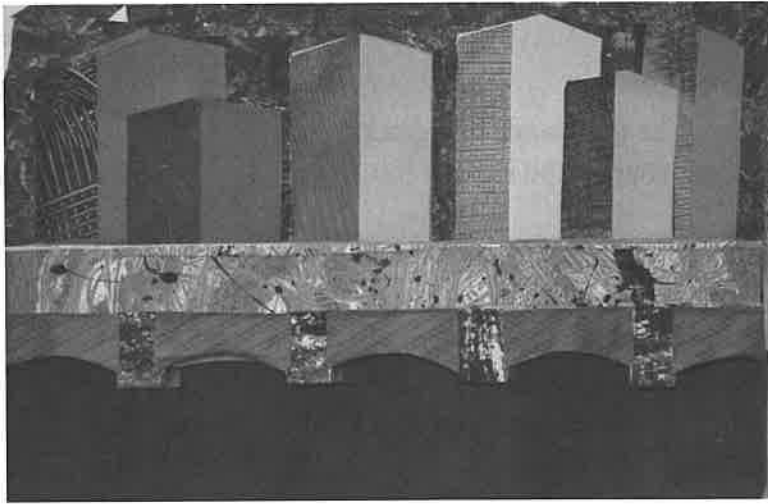
A Letter

When the world is fast asleep
And the hundreds of people you know and the thousands you don't
Are sleeping or lying in beds of all different shapes and sizes,
You can look out the window
Through the soft, translucent curtains to the rolling hills and woods of America.
The land in the night bristles, still radiates with a quiet hum
As the feeling of a watercolor painting strikes you.
Like the touch of naked flesh to flesh, the air invigorates
-the fresh smell of dew, the perfectly crafted grasses and creatures lie about and awake-
And at night do you still wonder, too?
While you're trying to sleep do the cars drive by
And do the lights dance through your dark and silent room?
Do you hear the midnight crooning of the varied insects that signal summer sighs
Or perhaps the shhhhhhhhh sound of a rain that does not drip but gently falls in an
unbroken hush?
Sometimes I wonder or consider my latest crush
My heart beats steadily in my chest- the organs move and rub against one another
My pulse the last music of the orchestral presentation of the night.
Do you ever think of me too? When your feet have become like your heart, instinctively
curling and
unfurling over and over until you too are one more part of the rolling hills and woods of
America?
When my spirit has left my body through death or dreaming
Will you be looking and watching for me in the fresh smell of dew- the perfectly crafted
grasses-
The creatures that lie about and awake- and the lights that dance through your room?
If you do, I will be there by spirit
Or perhaps by way of a driving car, illumed then by celestial fixtures
One more driver in the fantastic and breathing American night
Softly and slowly
When the world is fast asleep.

Nicholas Golden, 2012



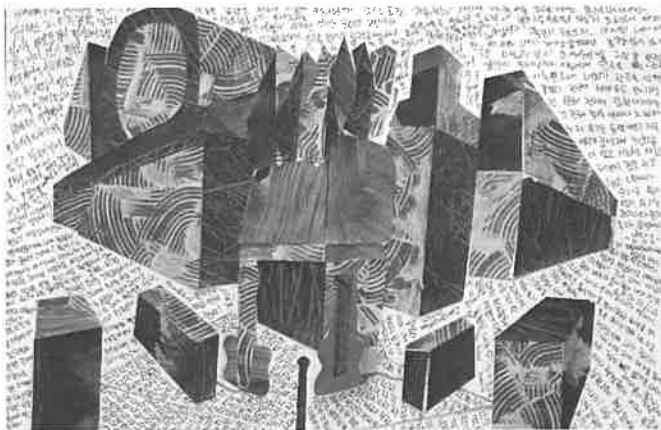
Untitled
Brian Deleon, 2015



Boston Lights
Drew Dunn, 2015



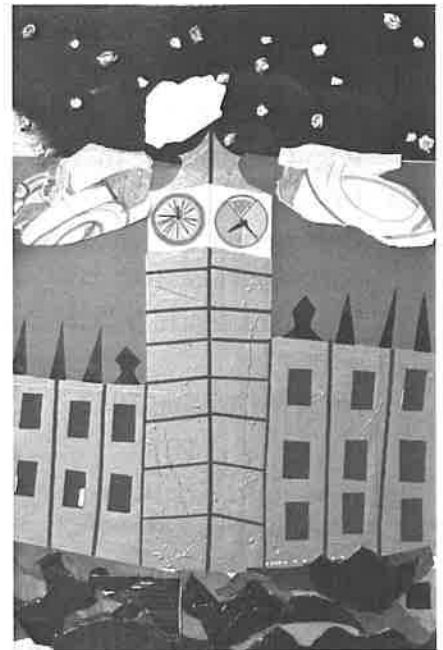
Boston
Gabriella Haddad, 2014



Music City
Steve Kim, 2015



New York
Colleen Frey, 2015



Big Ben
Alex Ward, 2015

My Mother

My mother searches for the best in everyone she meets. Her ability to capture the essence of one's character and embrace it has always amazed me. Ever since I was little, I imagined a Photoshop program in her mind; despite the quality of the picture, she pulls out its underlying perfection and beautifies the overall image. It isn't just her desire to find the greatness in each individual she encounters that defines her, it's her wanting to share that greatness with others.

Anyone who meets my mom can easily sense her sociability and friendliness. She has a warm, welcoming smile, and softness in her voice that allows whoever it is she meets to feel comfortable in her presence. Even during her darkest days, my mother presents herself with poise. I've learned a lot from my mother over time, but the most important thing she's taught me has always been to see the positive in a situation, and to always offer forgiveness when I can. In her life, she has endured many unfortunate occurrences that slowed her down; but she never stopped. She kept her head up, looking to the future with her beautiful dark brown eyes, eager to see what would happen next, longing for a break from the pain she has felt.

There's this thing my mom does every time she looks in the mirror. She purses her lips together and scrutinizes her reflection. Almost as if she were to analyze her appearance, she glares carefully at her face, searching for some sense of perfection.

When I look at my mother, all I see is undeniable perfection. Her perfectly oval shaped face, her round lips, her big, brown eyes. She is the definition of perfect. I will never understand why she searches so hard to find something that is right in front of her eyes. She has no problem pulling out the greatness in everyone around her, no matter how rough the person, yet she cannot see how wonderful she is in her own skin.

Curious and hoping for some answers, I asked my mom why she makes that face. Her reply was simple, but at the same time filled with deep thought. Her mother used to make that same face; that final check, that "good-to-go" marking. Both beautiful women, they searched to find a sense of perfection in their already perfect faces. However what she told me next I was not expecting. You make the same face too, she said. Amazed, I sat back realizing I do make the face. I make the face me and my brothers call "The Mirror Face." I smiled, realizing that my mother, my grandmother, and me were linked in a way that wasn't physical. We all share the same mentality. Even though my grandmother has passed away, her memory is forever carried in the silence of our hearts, in the back of our minds, and in the faces we make in the mirror.

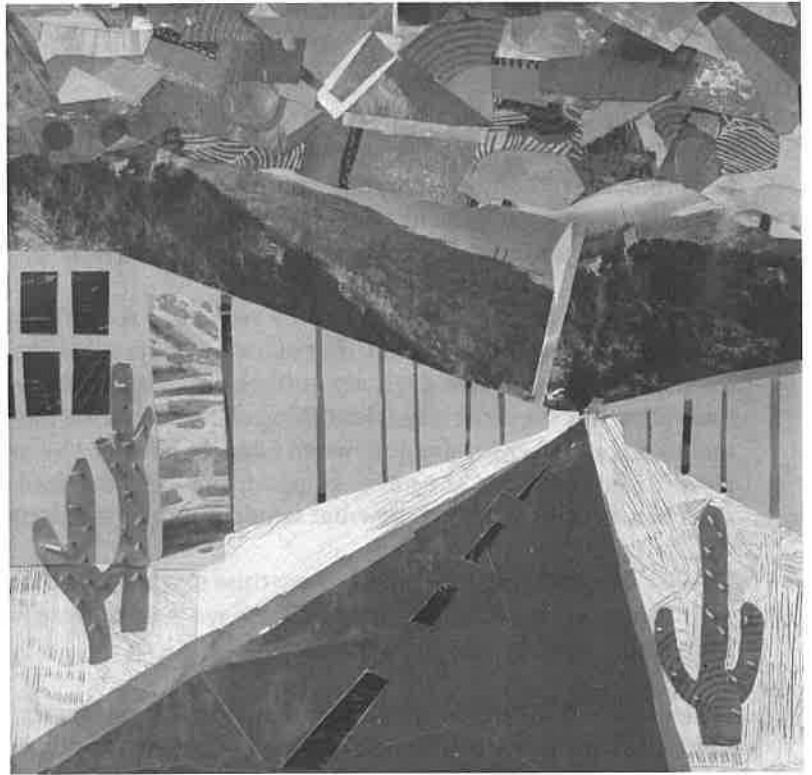
Olivia Imprescia, 2014



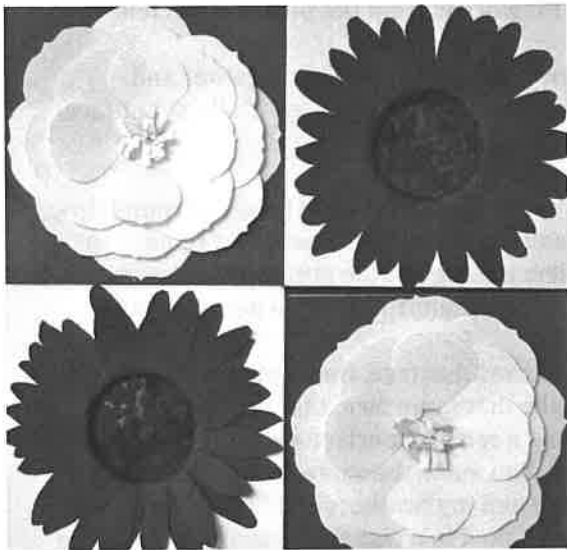
Untitled
Saddan Genao, 2013



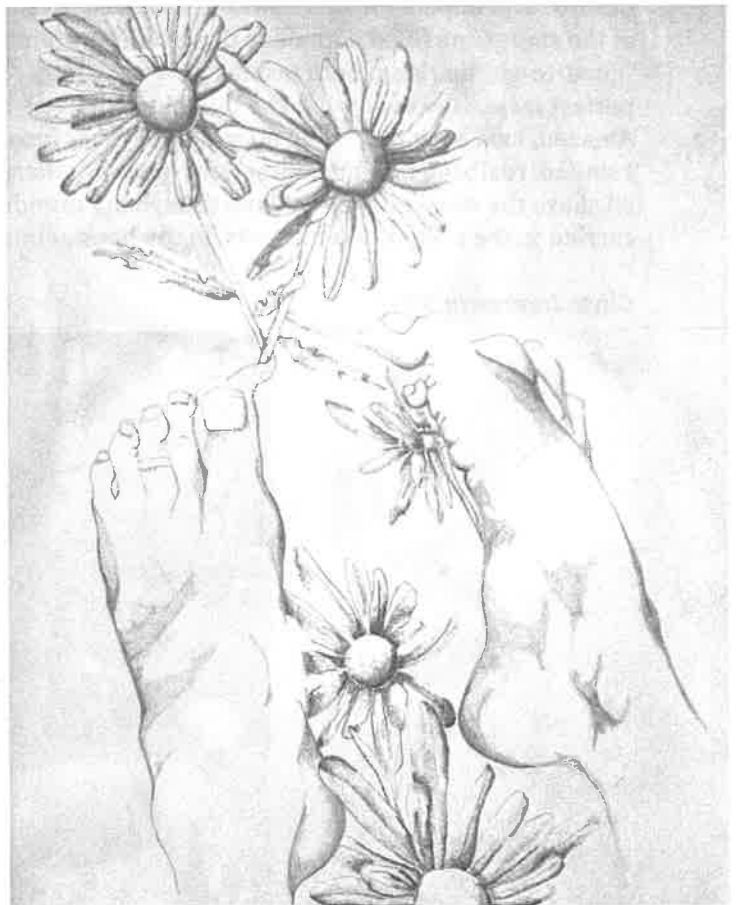
Life and Death *Monica Strom, 2012*



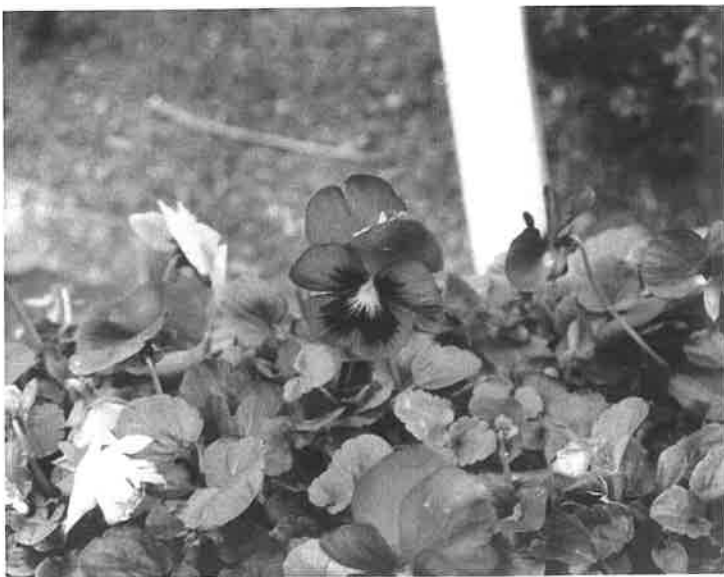
Tucson *Sarah Spaulding, 2015*



Untitled *Theresa Connolly, 2012*



Daisy *Katie O'Brien, 2012*



Untitled *Nicolette McCoy, 2012*

Tomato Potato

Once upon a time there was a kingdom. It was a great kingdom with a pure white castle that could be seen for miles. The kingdom had a king and a queen. They were fair and just rulers. They had a son. He was a handsome and athletic prince.

One day, the prince was walking around one of the small villages. He had sent off his guards so he could walk alone. Everywhere he walked; his subjects would bow to him. The prince would then give them a small nod, and they would get up and resume their business. He felt respected when people would bow and talk so formally to him.

Then, the prince passed by a vender. The man was selling vegetables.

"Howdy," the man said with a farmer's accent, "would you like to buy a tomato?"

"Excuse me," the prince said, his accent rich and insulted, "but you did not bow when I walked by."

"Why should I?" the man said, "what did you do?"

"I am your prince," the prince replied, "and you are my subject. Thus, you must bow to me."

The man gave him a confused look, then shrugged and picked up a tomato, "would you like to buy a tomato?"

"No!" the prince cried, "I would like you to bow down to me!"

"How about a potato?" The man grinned, revealing some missing teeth.

"I am your prince!" the prince stomped his foot in anger, "and I will be your king, you must bow down to me!"

"Now, mister," the man said calmly, "I'm afraid that doesn't make sense. You haven't done a splittin' lick for me."

"Of course it makes sense," the prince argued, frustrated, "I was born a prince, and you were born a peasant. Peasants bow down to princes." The prince would have unsheathed his sword, but he had left it at the castle.

"You were born and I was born," the man said, "but I was born first."

At that moment, the prince was attacked by a thief. The thief jumped on him and clawed at his clothes, jewels and money. He beat the prince and kicked him.

The man, seeing the prince's plight, picked up a rock and threw it at the thief's head. He threw more and more until the thief ran away, only taking two silver pieces.

The prince got up and bowed to the man.

"Now why are you bowing to me?" the man said.

"You have saved me," the prince said, still kneeling, "I see what you meant now, and I am sorry. You are a better man than me."

"Why, that's very flattering," the man said, "But do you know what would be better than bowing?"

"What?"

"You could buy a tomato."

Rachael DeRosa, 2015

Tomato Soup
Alex George, 2012



Quit

Myra's words have never been sharp enough to change people, and all she's ever wanted to do is change people.

Georgia is the one who makes her coffee at Starbucks, whose name Myra only knows because it's on her nametag. Georgia's surname is a mystery— in Myra's mind she is Georgia *Blank*, an ugly girl with dark skin and thick hands who has a knack for mocha lattes.

Myra is in there every morning except for the weekends, the mark of a college kid. She and the barista have never spoken past the basics: early morning, gorilla-grunted exchanges, occasionally friendly when they've both gotten enough sleep.

Which is rare, because thinking takes up the time Myra should be sleeping. Thinking takes up the time she should be working, hanging out with the friends she doesn't have, falling in love with the people she'll never meet because she sits *alone* in that coffee shop every morning, drinks, reads, and wonders if she can be discreet enough to tip something illicit into her Styrofoam cup.

Georgia doesn't smile like the other servers. Her face is the most honest part about her, Myra thinks, because it's all corners that shouldn't be sagging yet, with her exhausted eyes and mouth that sinks southwards. There isn't even any makeup, slathered on in a rush, to try to mask her unfortunate face.

Georgia is not looking for tips. Myra becomes convinced that she is looking for *deliverance*. And Myra, a thirty-two-year-old trust fund baby from Los Angeles, feels that *she* will be the one doing the delivering.

All she's ever wanted to do is change people.

It's May tenth and it's still cold outside. Myra steps into the Starbucks, heels clacking in that familiar way as she crosses over the linoleum. Georgia is slouching, her eyes almost falling shut even as she slaps a lid on a guy's cappuccino and sends him on his way.

Myra walks to her place behind him in line, fidgeting until she gets to the counter; when she does she goes ramrod-straight, emulating her old school nun, Sister Beatrice, whose spine (after all those years of being strict about posture) probably resembled an I-beam.

Georgia begins with a monotoned, "Good morning. How may I—"

Myra interrupts her. "You should quit."

Georgia blinks, and it's slow because once her eyes close, she doesn't feel too inclined to open them. "Sorry?" she asks,

"You should quit." Myra is surprisingly steady. She raps her acrylic nails on the countertop, and the glare of the light on the plastic blinds her.

"Um," says Georgia.

"How old are you?"

"Um," says Georgia.

"Okay, that was creepy," Myra concedes. Not so steady anymore.

"Are you... are you trying to ask me out?" And the way Georgia says it, it's incredulous and on the verge of a tired, bitter, barking laugh.

"Oh, my god, no." Myra can feel her face burning red. "I swear to God, no. I just noticed that you hate it here. Just some advice, you know. Just. Um." She swallows— "yeah" and shuts her jaw with a sharp glass *click* of teeth.

A weird silence crawls over and settles happily between them.

"Sooooooo, the usual?" Georgia eyes her without lifting her head. Myra is much taller.

Myra says, too quickly, "Yes please."

She pays and sits at her table. She's too scared to look back, but she's convinced that Georgia is keeping an eye on her. She feels the gaze singe the back of her head.

Myra returns the next morning, embarrassed and spinning with *sorrlys* in hand, multiple scenarios involving profuse apologies running through her mind. *I was tired, I was stupid, I was drunk, I was all three.* They make her dizzy, crowding in with the ideas already jostling for space.

I should start writing my thoughts down, she thinks. Maybe that will quiet my head when all I want to do is shut my eyes. I can hone my words to a point and give them that shifting power you feel deep in your chest after you've read a good book that changes you.

The chill wind, which didn't melt away with its cousin, the frost, follows her in the door, and the familiar heel-clacking sounds like gunshots. They might as well be, because she feels her heart pound once, twice, thrice in time with her steps.

She walks up to the counter. A tall, gangly blond boy looks down at her instead of a small dark girl looking up. He's much taller than Georgia was, than Myra, even, who's in six-inch heels (that murder her ankles, but she suffers for fashion).

"Georgia," is all she can say.

The gangly boy stares at her. His nametag reads "Greg." "We don't serve that here," he says dubiously.

"No!" she cries. "No, I'm not ordering, I'm just—"

He cuts her off. (*Rude.* At least Georgia had been quiet about her contempt.) "Then why are you here?" he demands.

"The *girl* Georgia!" With every bone in her body she just wants him to *understand.*

"What, the chick who quit yesterday? *Why?*"

It's like a latch opens in her lungs and all her air escapes, gleefully and with a relieved huff. She claps a hand over her mouth.

"Um, lady, *what do you want?*" Greg's zitty face gleams sickeningly in the fluorescent light Myra finds herself at a loss for words. It's so jarring, having to be *asked.*

Miranda Suarez, 2015

Self-Portrait Bri Bain, 2012



Gotta Hold on Me Brittany Janeczek, 2012

DRESS; SHOES

So he puts on his shoes and walks all over town,
not knowing what he's doing, with his face to the ground.
Walks by his home where his journey began,
doesn't bother saying hello with an open hand.
Eyes focused on the pavement as he walks so far away
with nowhere else to go; nowhere else to stay.
Regrets the things that forced him on this journey today,
wishing that his hopes and dreams had not just blown away.

So she puts on a pretty dress and wears it all over town,
with her head held high and her heels gently hitting the ground.
Out there on a mission to spread her love and joy,
she comes across a loner who happens to be that boy.
The boy with regrets,
The boy with fears,
The boy whom she finds shedding tears.

She comforts him and gives him advice,
And comes to find out that the boy's very nice.
So they walked together, and began to chat.
Who knew his journey would change like that?
He fell for this girl; she fell for this guy,
and he started feeling stronger with his head held high.

So he put on his shoes and she put on her dress,
and they walk all over town with only their love to confess!

Courtney Wilson, Ed., 2012



Untitled

Luisanna Crespo, 2012



Untitled

Saddan Genao, 2013



Untitled
Molly O'Neill, 2012



Untitled
Anthony Didio, Ed., 2012



Untitled
Christine Kuehl, 2012

The Wise Weeping Tree

There was a lone tree in a field of wild flowers, but there were no towns near the tree. The only people who ever saw it were those who wandered out into the country with questions in their hearts. It didn't matter where they were, they would find the tree if they had a question in their heart. This tree was a special tree. It was a wise weeping willow tree; it had long slender branches that drooped to form an umbrella that would give those who wandered to it shade. And it had the voice of an old man who had seen everything the world had to give. In the beginning, the tree was happy because people far and wide came to see it, but, as the years passed, fewer and fewer people came. Soon, people stopped coming altogether, and that was when the tree started to weep.

One day, a young boy walked into the forest with a question burning in his heart. He was the first one to come to the tree in many years and when he found Weeping Willow tree he sat beneath the tree and asked it, "Why do you weep?" The tree responded, "Because I am full of wisdom but few come to find me anymore. That is why I weep." The boy replied, "Then I'll come and see you, and you'll tell me everything you know, so this way you'll never be lonely again." At this the tree shook and wept tears of joy.

So it was that the boy came everyday with a new question in his heart every day. One day the boy came and asked the Weeping Willow Tree, "How is it that you know so much, and that no other tree can talk, but you can? Why is that?" The Weeping Willow Tree replied, "Long ago there was a man who came to see the sunset everyday at this very spot, and every day he learned something new. Then came one day when he didn't come, and then they came to bury him in this spot. But the people who buried him were poor and couldn't afford a head stone. So in its place they planted me and as I grew the man whispered to me everything he knew." The little boy marveled at this and thanked the tree and thought about what he said. After that the boy kept coming back every day, until he had become a teenager.

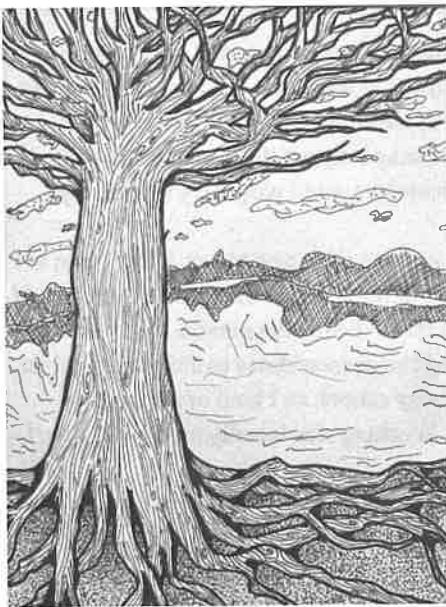
As the boy grew older, his soul became wiser and his questions became deeper. And then came the day when the once young boy came to ask the Weeping Willow Tree, what the point of his life was. And the tree was silent for a long time and then said, "Whatever you make of it. If you become a doctor then the point of your life is to heal others. If you become a thief then the point of your life is to stay ahead of police and other thieves." To that the once young boy replied, "And if I chose to be a writer what would be the point of my life?" The Weeping Willow Tree was silent for a long time again and then he said, "Then if you become a writer the point of your life becomes to write your soul on every page. To tell the story in your heart, and to whisper your wisdom into the souls of all who read your poems." The boy sat beneath the Weeping Willow Tree and thought about what it had said. And before he left he hugged the tree and thanked it for all it had thought him.

And still as the years passed the boy came to the tree every day. And as the years passed the once young boy became a young man. The young man was full of life, and the

arrogance that only the young can have. The young man who had once been the young boy grew up to be a writer. And as a writer he told every story in his heart, wrote his soul on every page, and whispered into others souls through his words. And like all young men he found that his heart was always questing after love. One day he asked the Weeping Willow Tree what was the meaning of love, and it replied, "Love is a strange thing, but you'll know when you feel it." To this the young man replied, "But what does it mean?" and the Weeping Willow Tree told him, "It means that you're human, and that one day you may find someone to give your heart to. You may not understand this now, but later you will." The young man left confused that day, but still came back every day afterwards with new questions. He never forgot what the Weeping Willow Tree told him about love.

One day the young man didn't come and the tree become very sad at this and wept for the first time in many years. All around people heard the tree weeping but no one knew where it was coming from. When the young man heard the weeping he ran to find the tree, but the tree would not let the young man find him. So the boy tried and tried, and as the years went by he also became a husband and then a father. Every day after he searched a little bit less and a little bit less, until he gave up altogether and just let the years pass by. When he became an old man, he had one last question in his heart and with the last of his strength he went to the tree. And when he found the tree he asked the wise weeping willow tree his last question, "Why did you leave me all those years ago?" To this the wise weeping willow tree said, "Because you didn't need me anymore, you had found what you were looking for." At that, the old man smiled and sat beneath the wise weeping willow tree for the last time.

Ramon Vicenty, Coffeehouse Emcee, 2012



Where Are Your Roots
Stephanie Cabrera, 2012



Untitled
Anthony Didio, Ed., 2012

It Is a Risk to Love (Excerpt)

Love is a very important thing. It follows you through your entire life. As a child, you see love in everything, even the little things. As a teenager, you either think love is a necessity, or a stupid, made up emotion. As an adult, love is expected and taken for granted. No matter what, it is important. It is also scary, and often confusing. As Peter McWilliams once said, "It is a risk to love. What if it doesn't work out? Ah, but what if it does?" It was this quote, said by a man whom I do not even know, that ultimately shaped my entire life. I was fifteen when I heard it, I was sixteen when I understood it, and I was seventeen when I lived it. Since that day, I am reminded of it every time I look at her.

"I still love him, and if he ever wanted to try to work things out again, I would do it in a second." My mother was only 41-years-old, but she looked as though she could be well into her fifties. She had flat, thin blonde hair that she colored when she felt motivated enough. Right now, it was a bit grey. She was an unhealthy thin, so much so that I felt as if I could break her in half if I hugged her too tightly. Her eyes, once so bright and radiant, were now a cold, pale blue, and her mouth was always turned downwards. I sat on the couch across the room from her and quietly watched her. I took in the pain in her eyes and the sorrow in her tears. I was far too familiar with the sound of my mother's sobs.

I thought about what she just said. She was talking about my father. Throughout my seventeen years of living, my observant mind has caught on to more than my parents would assume. To be blunt, their relationship is completely ruined at this point, and it has been for quite a while. I don't really know how or exactly when it started, but the first time I became aware of it was around the time my mom started staying out very late, sometimes not even coming home until the next morning. I was twelve-years-old. I knew many things were being kept from me, which I suppose I am thankful for, but did they think I was stupid? Things were obviously changing, and not in a good way.

So it started there, but where did it end? My parents were still legally together, and they still legally lived in the same house. Unfortunately, the law did not mean anything in this situation. My mother and father did not talk – they yelled occasionally, but they didn't talk. And if they loved each other, then maybe I don't know what love is at all. It hurt me to hear my mother talk about fixing things, because it was obvious to everybody that they were way too deeply disconnected, and there was no possibility of things working out between the two of them. Things could never and would never go back to normal.

"Mom, I know you still love him, but do you really think that's possible?" I gently asked her, trying my best to spare her any more pain.

"I don't know, Cameron," she responded, her voice muffled by her hands. "I don't know."

I tried to stay strong regardless of these circumstances. The few friends I had knew most of the details about my parents, but they did not know how much it affected me. The same goes for my mom and dad – I didn't let them see how much this tore me up. No one could be aware of the impact their unhappiness had on me, because the only time I really let it get to me was late at night, when I would lie in bed all alone and wide awake. Growing up in the middle of such a broken and hopeless relationship takes its toll on you.

Not only did my parent's relationship impact me, but I could count on one hand the number of parents I knew who were still happily married to their significant other. With all these real life examples right in front of my face, I did not really see the point in falling in love if it never seemed to last. Why bother risking your happiness for something that could potentially end up tearing you apart? Is there actually someone worth risking that pain for? Whenever I asked myself this question, my mind would always wander to her face, and my eyebrows would furrow in confusion and discomfort, and I would try to stop my mind from thinking any more.

It was a Monday morning, and it felt like it. The trees outside were bare, and the air was crisp and bitter. It had been a very cold winter, but there had barely been any snow. I leaned forward in my chair and put my head down. The cold surface of the desk felt good against my cheek. I suddenly felt a presence standing next to me, and then I heard the person sit down at the desk to the left of me. I didn't bother to lift my head to see who it was, because I doubted the person chose to sit next to me on purpose. That is basically how my school days would go. Most of my friends didn't go to my school, so I kind of just drifted through the day, and then I'd go to work where I would see my closest friend, Malcolm. Working was usually my favorite part of the day.

"Cameron?" a voice next to me asked. Suddenly, I remembered that working was actually my second favorite part of the day. Talking to her was my first.

I promptly lifted my head and looked at her, and a small smile instantly formed on my lips.

"Hi, Charlotte," I responded.

"You awake?" she joked with a small chuckle. I observed her lips as they curved upwards toward her rosy cheeks, and her blue eyes sparkled as they looked into my shadowy brown ones. I smiled and merely shrugged.

"Kind of," I replied, pushing my dark hair away from my forehead. I wondered how tired and worn out I looked to her.

"You look really tired," she stated, looking sympathetic. Well, that answered that question.

"I didn't get much sleep again last night," I told her. I was thinking about you instead, I wanted to add, but obviously refrained. Her reddish-brown hair was left down today, casual waves cascading down her shoulders. She was wearing tight, dark jeans with black boots that laced up the front, and a plain green t-shirt with a pocket on the left side. She must have been cold, but I decided against offering her my sweatshirt. Her small, black backpack was dropped carelessly on the floor by her feet.

I had known Charlotte for a very long time. She lived a couple streets down from me, and we had gone to school together since kindergarten. Our families used to be good friends, but when all the difficulties with my parents became too much to handle, all of their friends seemed to fade away. It was not really anybody's fault; that's just how things go sometimes. Charlotte and I had a rather unbalanced relationship. She was always nothing but nice to me, and I was nice back, but I never opened up to her. I constantly held back, like I didn't want to cross the line from being acquaintances to actual friends. I don't really know why I did this, because anyone could see that all she ever wanted was to be my friend. And it's all I ever really wanted too, to be honest – to have someone to talk to and spend time with. The thing is, I have always been too afraid to open up to anyone, because I'm afraid to get hurt. In the end, I suppose this kind of behavior hurts me anyways, but I would rather hurt myself than have someone else do it - especially someone like Charlotte.

Throughout my many years of knowing and observing her, I had noticed that Charlotte was not like most girls. She didn't constantly gossip and beg for attention. She was soft-spoken and thoughtful, and she was nice to everybody. She did her own thing rather than following trends. She was incredibly smart, but she didn't flaunt it. She was also beautiful, and she didn't flaunt that, either. All of these characteristics made me like her even more, which scared me. I came to realize that giving Charlotte the opportunity to hurt me would be the worst thing I could do; if she hurt me, I would be different.

I really liked Charlotte.

"You know, I heard somewhere that people who sleep less as a teen are more likely to become successful as an adult," Charlotte informed me.

"Is that true?" I asked doubtfully.

"It's true that I heard it somewhere, but I'm not entirely sure if the statement itself is true," she answered. I gave her a funny look. She smiled some more. "I mean, it makes sense though, right? The longer you stay up lying awake in bed, the more time you have to think of new ideas that no one has ever thought of before." I considered this. Something wasn't quite adding up.

"But isn't it said that some of the greatest ideas are thought of in dreams?" I challenged her.

"Well, you can dream without being asleep," she declared. It was neither a question nor a statement to be discussed. Charlotte said this like it was a fact. I looked at her some more as I thought.

"Yeah, I suppose you're right," I finally agreed. "You can." She gave me one last smile, and then turned away. She picked her backpack up, pulled out a plain red notebook, opened to a clean page, and began writing. I wanted so desperately to know what she was writing about.

I really liked Charlotte.

I lowered the volume on my stereo as I pulled into the parking lot of Ralph's Records. Ralph, the owner and my boss, was about as creative as the name of his record store was. Regardless, I had been working there for almost two years now, and I really liked it. Some pretty interesting people worked there, and other cool people came in to shop for music. Music was a big interest in my life, so I felt as though I fit right in. Also, I met the guy I call my best friend through this job. Malcolm was a good amount older than me – eleven years older, to be exact – but we got along really well. He lived with his dog, Rocky, in a one-bedroom apartment across town. He did not talk to his parents much anymore. They split up when he was very young, and they did not treat him very well.

Malcolm was a passionate person. He was interested in literature and old films, and he painted in his spare time. He was spiritual, but not religious. He was open-minded and creative, and he was in tune with his emotional side. Because of all this, he did not take the idea of love lightly. Malcolm very much believed in love, even though he had never experienced it firsthand. He had dreams of finding his soul mate, and although he didn't admit it, I think Malcolm got really sad sometimes because he hadn't found anybody yet.

I parked and pulled my keys out of the ignition. I was about fifteen minutes early to work, and I was starving, but I didn't have any money on me to go get food. I decided I would just go inside and see Malcolm before my shift started. When I walked through the door, the little bell went off and Malcolm looked up from the book he had been reading behind the counter.

"Cam, hey, man," Malcolm greeted me with a nod.

"What's up?" I replied, walking over and jumping up to sit on the counter.

"Oh, the usual. I've met the love of my life. We're getting married and moving to Bora Bora," he told me, not lifting his eyes from the book he was reading. I looked at him, waiting for the punch line. After a moment, he glanced up from beneath his glasses, and rolled his eyes at himself as if he just remembered something. "Oh, wait," he said humorlessly. "That's not right. I'm at the same record store I've been working at since I was eighteen, reading a book I've already read about four times. My mistake." I shook my head at him and jumped down from the counter. I was used to his melodrama.

"I see you're in a chipper mood today," I remarked.

Malcolm chuckled. "As always. How was school?"

"Fantastic," I answered.

"I'm really enjoying how positive and happy we both are today," he remarked sarcastically.

"When aren't we positive?" I joked back. That basically summed up our relationship. We sat around mocking each other's misery, and trying to make things feel less awful all the time.

"Did you talk to Charlotte today?" Malcolm questioned. I had told him about Charlotte in passing, but I had never really revealed the magnitude of my interest in her. I think he knew anyway.

"Yeah, a little."

"Oh?"

"Yup." I didn't care to elaborate. I wasn't really keen on the idea of anyone knowing how I felt about Charlotte, because I knew nothing would ever happen with her. The thought of risking rejection and opening myself up to someone was terrifying to me.

I think Malcolm understood this because all he said was, "That's good." But then, after a moment, he continued. "You know, man, I totally understand that putting yourself out there is scary. It is for everyone. But I just want you to know; my biggest regret is not going for the girl I liked in high school. Because every night when I'm lying awake in my bed, alone and miserable, I wonder how different my life would be right now if I had risked asking that girl out on a date. I just don't want you to make the same mistake I made and end up how I am...tired, and mutilated by no love."

With that, he stood up and walked into the back room. I stood there, staring at the spot he had been sitting at. I was stunned. I knew he was right, and I knew that I didn't really have anything to lose. However, when I considered the situation with my parents, I questioned whether some happiness would even be worth all the potential pain a relationship could bring. Love is such a scary and uncertain thing, but it could also be one of the greatest things you ever experience, according to some people. I thought back to that quote by Peter McWilliams that I had heard when I was fifteen, and I think it was at that moment that I made one of the most important decisions of my life.

Catherine Contarino, Ed., 2013



We Are Strangers
Catherine Contarino, Ed., 2013

No Fear Stephanie Cabrera, 2012



S. Cabrera, 2012



S. Cabrera, 2012



Forsythia
Tyler Andrade, 2014



Secrets Stephanie Cabrera, 2012



S. Cabrera, 2012

The Seeing Eye Boy

“The centurion, seeing what had happened, praised God and said, “Surely this was a righteous man.” When all the people who had gathered to witness this sight saw what took place, they beat their breasts and went away. But all those who knew him, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things.”- Luke 23: 47-49

That day would be it. The quiet, steady footsteps of Tommy Yorke, meandering through the hallway as always, echoed up and down the empty halls of South Union High School. His bony structure, like a scarecrow's, barely filled his clothes—a thin Nirvana t-shirt and a ratty pair of jeans. As he sauntered, I watched him from behind, trying not to intervene. This was something he, and I, knew he had to do.

I hadn't known Tommy at all before that year. The first time I realized he was in my class, oddly enough, was at a Church service. I normally didn't go- it wasn't my style, hadn't been since grade school- but that one time I went to make my mother happy. There he stood at the front of the hall, talking to the priest. He looked to be in an engaging conversation with Father Thompson, who was not engaging at all—though Tommy was not known for his capacity for small talk, or any talk, either.

I walked up to mention something to the priest and thank him while my mother was preoccupied. As I approached, I tried to read their lips but the mumbling quality of the father's sermons was not lost in his interpersonal conversations. Tommy shook his hand and, with what little strength was left in his feeble arms, the half-decadent, half-devoted old man shook back, with an equal measure of firmness I had not thought possible for his age. I watched the young man walk out the back way, passing the altar without one look back.

From that day on I found myself more and more perplexed by the unspoken quality of Tommy's personality. Everyone has to have *something* about them, and my journalistic senses were invigorated at the prospect of getting to sit down with him. The next day at school I realized that Tommy had been in my Geography class all year (it was March). At first I felt ashamed at having been so unobservant of the people in my class, but that feeling was quickly washed away by the flood of excitement at my luck.

Our teacher in that class, Mrs. Blume, had long gone blind, but thanks to the teacher's union, had remained the teacher of many of SUHS's geography students. When it came time for a project, the usual pairs took place. I lifted my arm straight up to attempt to grab what sliver of light would be reflected in that old woman's eyes in an attempt to choose Tommy as a partner. Whether a stroke of luck, an act of God, or the fact that Mrs. Blume refused to watch the late-night reruns of “The Price Is Right” anymore due to its change in hosts, I had found my chance.

I approached him as if he were a living legend. From under the cap of his hat, his gray eyes peered out with an animal-like sense of curiosity, as a deer focuses on something that it hears from a distance, instinctively recognizing what the disruption is with a blinding certainty.

“Nice to meet you Tommy.” I reached out with my hand, eager to hear what he would say—whether he would know a lot about geography, as I did, or not.

“Hey. How's it going?”

For the rest of the class, I hung on his every word. He answered so concretely- with such focus, such predetermined succinctness, that I could not stop speaking with him. I don't think he tired of me, but then again he didn't take a liking to me either, not that I could tell. When the project finished and the college process reached a fever pitch, I become too distracted by the lives of others and the questions that we all had about our futures to remember my passing obsession. It would be two more months before I remembered him—when that day came.

I was sitting in my math class, unable to grasp the rules that defined the lives of derivatives or integrals, when out of the corner of my eye I saw him—the morning light shone through the door as Tommy Yorke, in that thin shirt and torn pair of jeans, walked by with his backpack and books. It was the middle of class, but it didn't seem altogether too abnormal because students left early all the time- until I saw the Dean of Students walking that same direction a few minutes later, looking upset.

As class ended, I rushed out in the direction that Tommy and the Dean had gone and eventually found him standing at the door, the Dean blocking his way.

A crowd of students had now gathered, eager to witness this clash in the otherwise sacrosanct halls of education, a place not intended for the argument that could transpire. We were too far back to hear, yet again, but from what I saw I understood- a wagging finger, a red face, and a shrug. I turned to ask someone next to me, unsure of what was going on.

"He's been caught with drugs, obviously- that's what it is," said one.

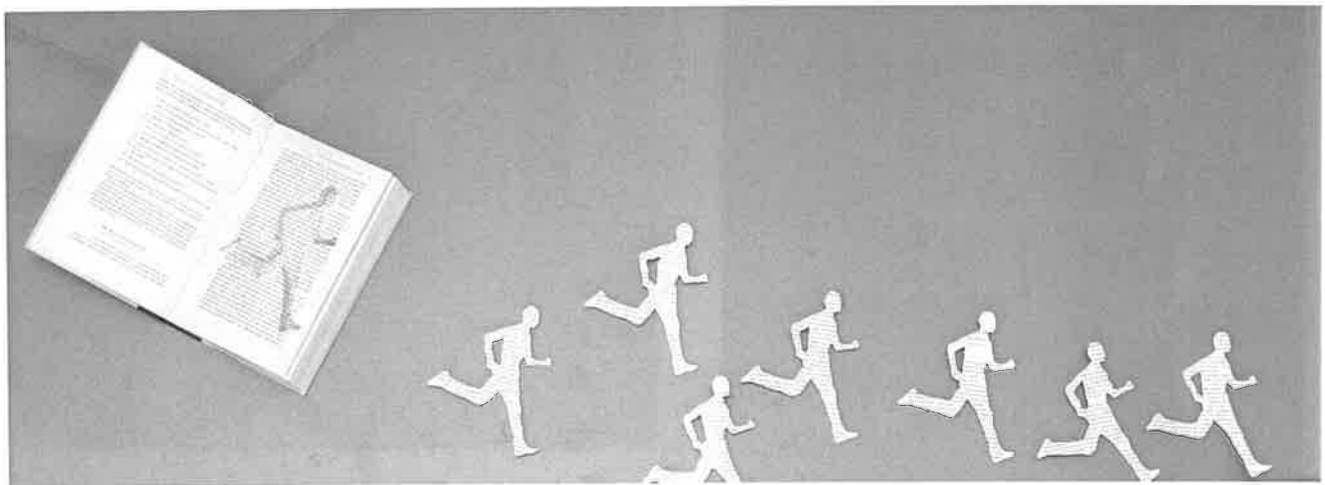
"That's stupid. He's going home to his parents because something's gone wrong," said another.

Eventually, the Principal walked out and broke us up. As we walked off, I saw the Principal take the two and separate them, the docile Tommy and the choleric Dean. Just as I was about to turn the corner, I saw the Principal look at Tommy's eyes, look at the Dean, and say something to Tommy, who promptly turned and left.

Tommy would not graduate that year. The others had been wrong about the cause however- the young man decided to drop out. No one knew why, because no one had spoken to him- his docility had been too strange, too focused to have something to say, and largely it wouldn't have if prompted. The few, who came to me for an answer, knowing I had spoken to him once or twice, did not find anything to help them understand either.

To this day, I am boggled by the certainty of his choice. As the rest of us continued onto college and beyond, choosing this and that, I couldn't stop thinking about him. What gave him that ability to be so focused? What had he known that none of the rest of us knew- that I had recognized and strived for, but been distracted from? Even now as I look back at the age of thirty-three, I sit in bed at night and wonder where he is. I sit and wonder how he had lived with such certainty- and why he left us without someone who could show us how.

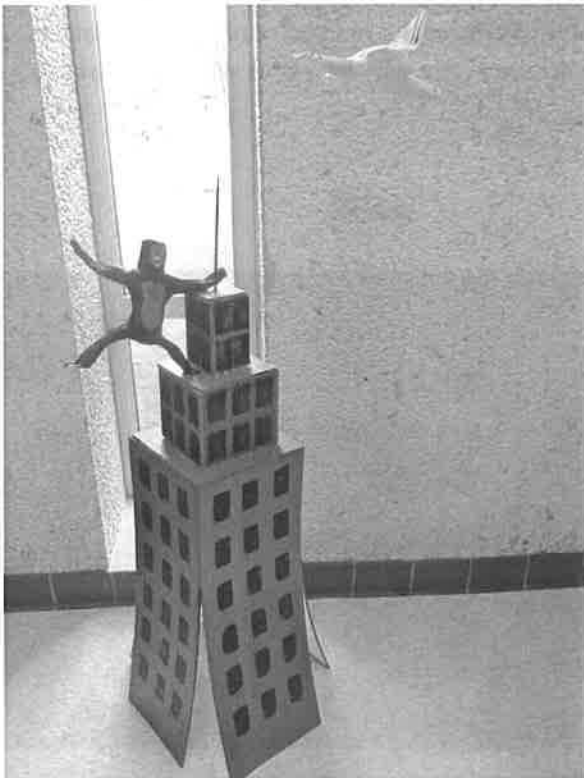
Nicholas Golden, 2012



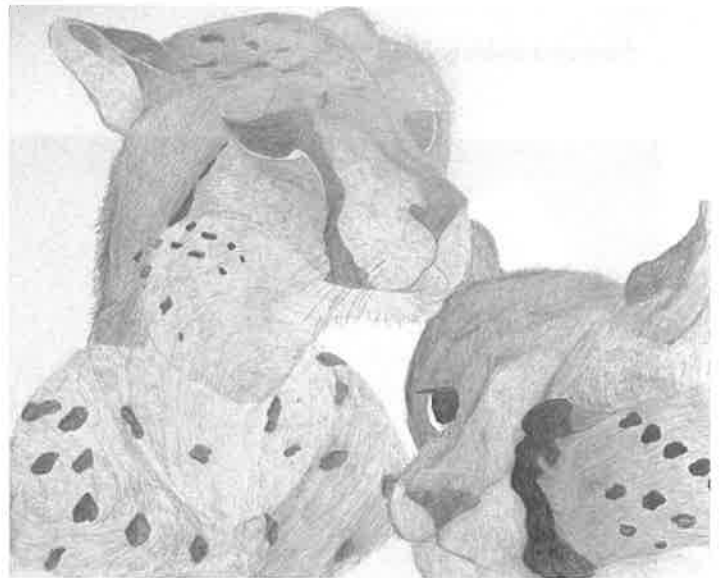
Jailbreak
Jen Meli, 2012



Untitled
William Galvin, 2015



Untitled
Ryan Hunt, 2013



Untitled
Lucas Bonds, 2015



Slide to Me

Courtney Wilson, Ed., 2012

CHANGE—such a scary word to let
settle

Losing something that once was a part
of you

but it's life, it's inevitable

One door is closing whether you are
ready or not

Adaptation is necessary for it's what
we were taught

As I leave these four years, I can see
the times

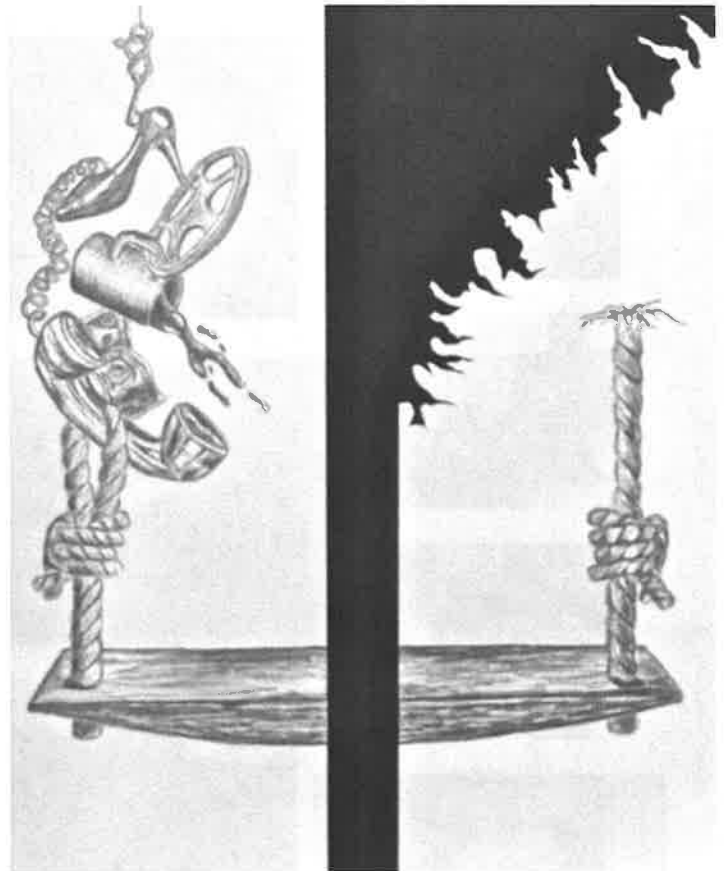
the times of friendship

the memories

these times of mine

I will never forget the people who
changed my life.

Courtney Wilson, Ed., 2012



Swing UNset

Courtney Wilson, Ed., 2012

Visions 12th Year! Spring Coffeehouse



