

The Bellarmine Review

Spring 2011, Volume 69



The Literary Magazine of Fairfield College Preparatory School

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We desire to publish poetry and prose that is clear, concise, and evokes the senses, taking the audience to the writer's imagined place through strong images, and a good sense of rhythm. It is believed in Jesuit education that an academic endeavor may be an encounter with the divine: *Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam*. That is to say that in the authenticity of our written thoughts we may unknowingly stumble on truth. Our intent is to give our students' words a place to land, serving as an accomplished venue to acknowledge their lived truth. Send submissions of poetry and prose between September and March to jchesbro@fairfieldprep.org

Colophon

The text of this book is composed in Footlight MT Light, with accented text in italicized Times New Roman. The typeface used for the cover is Perpetua.

Editor's Notes

As I write these lines small mounds of dirt covered snow sit on the muddy corner next to the Brissette Athletic Center, reminding us all of the long winter we've endured. There is a palpable buzz in the moments before students can settle into class. I can hear the enthusiasm in their voices about the upcoming state tournament championship games for both the basketball and hockey teams.

The Bomb Squad has rebounded from their temporary disbanding and is now bellowing out chants in full force, once again. I'm a particular fan of the "I Believe We Will Win" chant. It echoes in my mind for days after a game. It's a sort of call and response where one guy yells out a phrase and the Bomb Squad repeats it. Maybe it lingers in your mind after a game too. Perhaps you've seen our students enact it on YouTube. It reaches my ears as a unified eruption of hope, a collective statement of faith.

Our editorial staff hopes that some of the pieces in this volume will remind you of some memorable events from 2010, and 2011. For example, Henry Burbank writes about the young people of Egypt protesting for their freedom in his poem "We Be Youth," and Traug Keller reflects on the impact of LeBron James' decision to "take his talents to South Beach" rather than to New York in his personal essay "Quitness."

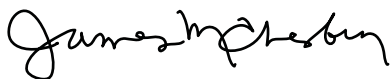
We regret the dreadful experience of turning down submissions, which we have to do, mostly due to subject matter or lack of space in the magazine. We do want to encourage the counter-cultural act of creative writing. I say counter-cultural because our students lead full lives. They play on teams, lead clubs, have jobs, and participate in demanding service projects, which doesn't even mention the time and energy needed for homework, but you know all this.

Creative writing and the process of writing for publication is demanding and often times frustrating. In an effort to honor our student writers we've placed all the contributor's names on the back cover. If you'd like to join our staff, please see me in the fall. We are an inclusive bunch. Sometimes we order pizza.

If you'd like some prompts to get you going over the summer check out this page from *Poets & Writers*: pw.org/writing-prompts-exercises. If you want to submit your work to contests take a look at this page devoted to young writers: newpages.com/npguides/young_authors_guide.htm.

All the names in the masthead deserve your attention for bringing this volume into print. I'm especially grateful to Ryan Gardella and Chris Starchurski for completing the tedious process of laying out the magazine. Thank you, Jack Atkins for your stunning photography and graphic design work on the cover.

We hope that our magazine might find its way onto the tables in your kitchen and living rooms and the words on the page bring forth the memorable voices of our young writers. We hope you will re-read them, that the voices may echo in your mind.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "James M. Chesbro". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "James" being more prominent and the last name "Chesbro" following in a similar style.

James M. Chesbro
Faculty Editor

The Bellarmine Review

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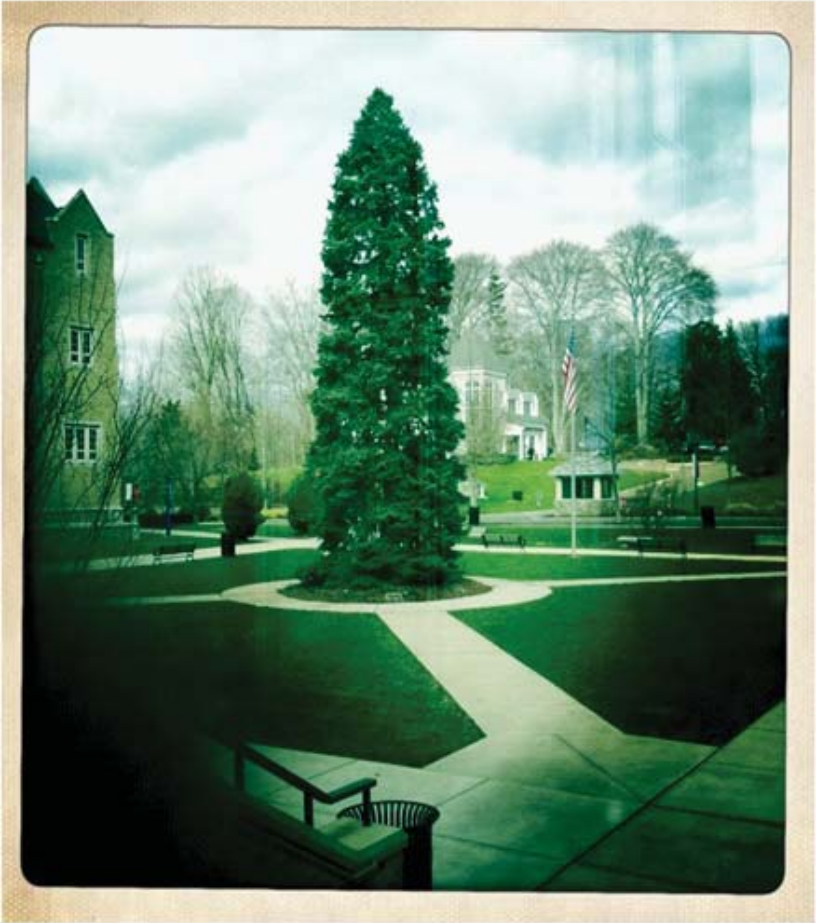
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Poetry



Matt Connelly '12

The Race

Chris Stachurski '12

After preparing ourselves for what lied ahead,
We all crowded together for the challenge we dread.
At the line we could see, how many were there,
Runners from every school with the colors they wear.

Once everyone is in place and they're ready to go,
Everyone takes a few steps up, nice and slow.
And then off to the side, a man holds his gun,
And fires off a shot that reveals the race has begun.

After the shot, it's a solo race,
And everyone adjusts to set their own pace.
And what was once a neat, organized rainbow,
Soon turned to chaos in the painter's studio.

After the first mile, things begin to settle down,
As each number starts to cover his or her own ground.
But after two miles, things begin to change,
When each runner starts to show his true game.

As I make the last turn out of the woods to the field,
I can see the finish line, but do not start to yield.
It is in the last stretch where the true person is seen,
Using everything they have to reach their own dream.

And with the cross of the finish line, everyone takes a breath,
For the effort they put in will earn them their success.
And as I learn of my performance, I can't help but think,
"Next year will be better," as I step onto the rink.

I Wrote This Just Today

Tyler Stankye '12

I have written
this poem
on the day
it was due

The poem which
you most likely
wanted a great
reflection on

Forgive me though
for I enjoyed the snow
but my thoughts
did not grow

This poem mimics William Carlos Williams' "This Is Just to Say."

Final Thoughts

Ryan Hurley '13

A soldier lies shot on the battle field on a rainy day,
Choking on his own blood, he begins to pray,
A bullet to his spine preventing him to walk,
A bullet to his spine confining him to thoughts.

He's told his team will save him,
But the battle's looking grim,
The enemies already won,
So he starts to ponder on his soon to be fatherless son.

How will my wife make enough money?
To fill my little boy's growing tummy?
Or put him through school,
So he won't become some business' pack mule?

How will he picture me, his father?
The one who abandoned him, rather,
A dusty, empty shelf,
Just some old fool who couldn't even save himself.
No, when he thinks of me I want him to remember

When he hugged me goodbye in early December,
How I bravely gave my life for my country,
To ensure the protection of him and the rest of my family.

How I celebrated when I watched him start to walk,
How much fun we had when he first started to talk,
How I planned for him to go to a great college,
And never have to face war and its carnage.

As my blood continues to drain,
It is the thought of him that keeps me sane,
The last words that I manage to gurgle,
Are “God keep him safe and help him over every hurdle”.

My hope and dream is that he’ll grow up strong
And be happy all life long,
That he will create his own loving family,
And always remember how proud he’s made me.

As I close my eyes forever,
An enemy passes by,
I finish my endeavor,
As he puts a bullet between my eyes.

Looking at the Future

Brandon Marquis '12

“Do you ever picture your future?” she asked.

“Ever think of what you want to do?”

I shook my head at the comment,

Because I didn’t have a clue.

I thought of writing books all day

But in the back of my head I knew,

That I would get bored

Before the day was through.

Next came the idea of working with animals

I could work at a farm or zoo

But I couldn’t last long because

Of the smells that came with “Neigh” or “Moo”.

But maybe there was more, I hoped,

I could be a priest, officer, or doctor, too.

But I’d have no time for anything

Especially video games and fads anew.

She smiled and told me,

“I just wanna be happy, don’t you?”

I was shocked at the comment,

Because I knew my want for the same was absolutely true.

The Steel Beast

Chris Stachurski '12

Every day, I am devoured into the belly of the beast. But on most occasions, I embrace that leap into the ever changing, constantly moving brute, mostly because it offers shelter from the sweltering heat or frigid breeze outside. But despite the unknown with whatever foul stench that seep out of its mouth each bite, I do not fight it, for it is the survival of the fittest... or perhaps the cleverest?

And as I stumble (partially to his amusement) down the sometimes crowded, sometimes barren chambers, it begins to move again, from crawl, to trot, to a mighty sprint, only to stop again. And at each stop he devours more people standing on the plate, thinking their only danger is the void that lies ahead, and fuels the needs of both himself to and his masters with each soul that is ingested.

Along the pre-determined road hewn from the land on which the beast travels, he is always going forward no matter what direction. I look left and right and see a mass of people, all different in every shape and size; all of us together where no outside position benefit the struggle for a ride of comfort.

But at a certain point, I rise, and any spot I had is taken by the vultures the beast had swallowed whole. There comes a point where enough is enough and my interface with the creature has reached its limits. And I depart the beast, for I am tired of him and he is tired of me. And he keeps going, without a thought, for I am just a grain of rice in the fields.

Alpha and Omega

Nick Pedalino '12

I am Alpha and Omega,
the beginning and the ending.
Translations and analyses
have destroyed this form from doctrine;
Its meaning distorted in time.

The dimension I have designed;
The dimension constantly changed
The dimension your set path lies;
Your past and future on planned path;
like a slave who pushes a cart,
along the rusty track it rolls,
from the depths of darkness within
a sweltering, musky coal mine;
tenuous velocity change
in the burden he is pushing,
given to him by his master.

The dimension which good and bad
stroll through the meadow hand in hand;
Further, further, until reaching
an indiscernible distance
to meld together as one.

The dimension which can answer
your ultimate moral mys'try
by looking through its own reverse:
A lion is only evil
when devouring the rabbit.

Only when witnessed in reverse,
through the perspective of a god,
does the lion act in goodness
by regurgitating new life.
I am Alpha and Omega:
The misinterpreted message,
misconstrued by its own reader,
worn away by its own meaning.

Dreams

Sunny Patel '11

They are ambitions, and aspirations.
Whether day or night, they always occur,
With them comes perfection, frustration;
you, alone, relaxing with your chauffeur.

There are no worries, there are no white lies.
There are no murders, there isn't stealing.
Everything is magnetized, big in size.
Everything is seductive, appealing.

Many forget them, and others remember,
but no matter what, they are always there.
They flicker in your mind like an ember,
or vanish forever into thin air.

Dreams are like heaven, salvation for you.
Dreams are specific, specific for you.

Shadows

Sunny Patel '11

They are always there, no matter what time
of day, they are behind every small rock,
mysterious, blunt, and scary, just like a war crime.
They're rude and sharp; they come like the taste of bock.

Some children are scared, and some adults
are too, they cannot seem to fathom them
but they never ask, never to consult,
never wondering what lies inside the khem.

They move around but do not even speak.
They are monsters, all around us, evil.
You don't want to look, but you have to peek!
They're annoying little things, like weevils.

But just go turn the light on, and they will go
away, turning them into a friend, not foe.

Introduction to Music

John Pavia '12

I ask those daring individuals to take an instrument
any instrument
and hold it proudly for all to see.
I want them to visualize every fret, drum, or keyboard
as a bridge crossing over into a beautiful work of art.

Or to press their ear against an amplifier
And hear that first echo of sound
be released from its confinement and travel into the world
for all to hear.

I say let your fingers flow
and drums pound,
witness the sound journey
far and wide, greeting everyone it encounters with open arms.

If nothing else, I want them only to smile
and enjoy the freedom that is music.
I want them to create a blank canvass on which
anything can be written or heard
and exclaim their triumph to the world.

But all they want to do
is to perfect, to strangle and choke
a piece of music until it
breaks into their mind
and robs every other essence of their being.

This poem mimics Billy Collins' "Introduction to Poetry."

They listen only to a sheet of paper
rather than listening to what their hearts have to tell them

We Be Youth

Henry Burbank '12

We be youth. We
speak truth. We

know what we want. We
get shot. We

want our rights. We
keep up the fight. We

don't back down. We
march downtown. We

won't barter. We
soon be martyrs.

This poem mimics Gwendolyn Brooks' "We Real Cool."

The Knicks

Brett Young '12

I saw a tremendous game
and witnessed the upset
from my seat, with my rally towel
waving in my hand.

The game was a fight.
The Garden was sight.
There roared numerous chants,
exciting and vociferous
and exuberating.

Here and there
fans cried screams of joy
as if it were playoff time:
shirts of blue and orange
matched the banners hanging aloft.

Camera flashes speckled through the crowd,
bright white flashes
with shot after shot,
and after two or three
shouts of joy echoed through the Garden.

While the Knicks hit shots in
clutch fashion
the exciting atmosphere
fresh and glorious with happy fans,
that love their team so much.

This poem mimics Elizabeth Bishop's "The Fish."

I thought of the Knicks historic tradition
packed with big wins,
the clutch plays and championships
the dramatic shots and magical moments
that took place in The Garden,
and the memories die-hard fans
would not forget.

I looked at the court
which was so close to me
but yet so far away
the front row packed
with celebrities
seen on TV as
iconic figures and music stars
they would smile and wave, but
could not see
It was like they were legends
right under the court's light.

I admired their style,
and the swag they showed,
and then I saw
from my seat
if you could call him an icon
Kanye West
relaxed, nonchalant, and focused,
sitting right by the Knick bench
or six or seven seats away
with that straight face of his,
showing toughness and firmly on his face.

A gold bracelet, covered his wrist
where he gave a peace sign, two fingers up.
And a nod of respect
still on camera shown from the scoreboard
the crowd broke out in roars.

Like moments that'll last forever
exciting and awe inspiring,
a four-quarter game of thrills
once trailing but now up by five.
I shouted and shouted
and victory filled up MSG.

Lot

Ryan Gardella '11

Quarter turn and the rumble stops,
another click and the lights go out, the pavement in front of me
goes black.

Now, a blank canvas with no paint to adorn its high empty ceiling.

There's no traffic to watch, no birds, no calls
no insects singing the song of dusk, no music, no words
no people to please, no headlines or deadlines
or clocks or ties

only the steady, beating rhythm
of pings and pa's, the call of rain
throwing itself on sheetmetal.

The dimpled steering wheel begs my input, existing to obey,
but the pedals are as dead as the rubber they are made from.

Prose



Daniel Welch '12

More Than Just A Treehouse

Justin Hill '11

“Dad, let’s build a tree house,” is a statement fathers might expect to hear when their child is young, when imagination and spouts of creativity are common. Coming from the mouth of a teenager, however, it might catch a parent off guard. My interest in tree houses had only been sparked a few hours prior, after reading an article in *The New York Times Magazine* about the world’s most elaborate tree houses. When I approached my Dad with this idea, his engineer personality immediately took over and he replied, “Have you picked a tree yet?” I can still remember my grin at that moment. Later that afternoon we metaphorically broke ground by nailing a few two-by-fours to a maple tree in the backyard to form a makeshift ladder. Without an outline or blueprint of any sort, we let our imaginations run wild while we raced to catch up, scribbling notes about various floor plans and entry way designs on whatever pieces of paper happened to be nearby.

During the last days of the summer of 2009, we tried to agree on a design that was both unique and affordable. I argued for an all out mansion in a tree, with two floors and a crow’s nest that extended through the canopy of the tree itself. My Dad took a more realistic approach by suggesting a one floor, one room box shaped design. After much debate, we agreed on an open floor plan in the shape of a pentagon with a spiral staircase leading to the main door. I used free 3-D modeling software from Google to virtually create the tree house, allowing us to see that building a second floor would have been almost impossible without cutting limbs from the tree, which we were opposed to because it provides shade for our yard.

After two years of working nights and weekends, we finished the roof this past summer and screened in all four large windows. We even bent and fastened a six foot by three foot piece of plexiglass across the opening that looks over the spiral staircase from inside the tree house. After all this work, the tree house has become something of a neighborhood landmark. In fact, when filling out our address at a local car rental company, the cashier saw our street address and asked, “You guys anywhere by that massive tree house?” All we could do was to exchange glances and say, “Yeah, we’re around that area.” The construction of the “tree mansion”, as it was described by our neighbors, was surprisingly not the most challenging aspect of our project. Instead most of our problems stemmed from trying to schedule such a time consuming task. While this might seem like an obvious issue, it was a breakthrough to me as I saw I had been impatient and over eager and I realized I had to find a time that would work for my Dad. During the course of two years working together, I came to the realization that different people bring different skill sets to the table. While physical labor wasn’t my strongest quality, my natural instincts to plan and organize my work were in stark contrast to my father’s. We had different approaches to beginning our day’s work. I would lay out all of my tools and materials to assure that I had the necessary ones for the day’s tasks. My Dad would fly by the seat of his pants, starting a project and running back and forth between the job site and the garage to get what he needed. Often, we would have to stop midway and make trips to Home Depot after he discovered we were missing the correct nails or we needed a different hinge. These experiences helped me to understand what a manager needs to do to better organize a work day.

There is, without a doubt, symbolism in the fact that the never finished tree house so adequately fits how my person is

continually developing. Nobody's perfect, and part of growing up is accepting this fact. The story of the tree house mirrors the development of my character. My tree house and I are both structurally complete; that is we can survive at a basic level. However, we are both still evolving and becoming better. In my case, I am learning new things every day and every experience helps to shape a better, more conscious person. The tree house is constantly being improved from the addition of more décor and minor adjustments, which make it unique. While my fully decorated tree mansion and a square box with Spartan decorations are still both rooms, the more furnished one will be the more pleasant. This applies to people as well, for a person with vibrant stories and memories to share is a more approachable individual who people are attracted to.

If someone was to have told me two years ago that building a large tree house was the ideal way for me to discover myself, I would have never believed them. These past two years have proved me wrong, however, and I am now blessed with a much stronger understanding about the qualities that make a person unique. When we started the tree house, I was spontaneous and curious and now I have a calmer demeanor and evaluate a situation before acting on my impulses. The same house also helped me to understand qualities that are unique about me, and how to better implement those qualities in my everyday life. Learning to respect different people's work ethics helped me to better relate to people and to shape a new side of me, one that I would have thought impossible just a few years ago. To think, all of these lessons began with six simple words, "Dad, let's build a tree house".

Capuchin Mirror

Dan Welch '12

So this dame walks into my office.
Stop me if you've heard this one before.
I heard her walking down the hall before anything else, each click
of her heels like a hammer being pulled back on a revolver. Or an
empty gun trying it's hardest to fire.

I realize that I don't have much time to get the place ready, so
I work fast. I kill the lamp, pull down the blinds, then open them
a bit so that zebra stripes of light shine in. Setting the mood is
probably the most important thing about this job. I prop my feet
up on my desk and tap a cigarette out of its carton. I wasn't quick
enough, though: She opens the door before I'm able to arrange
Joe Camel's hot date. The result is me looking like an idiot. A total
clown. But maybe that's owing more to the greasepaint.

Without invitation or greeting or pause, she weaves me a
tale of suspense and intrigue. A web of lies and infidelity. My
mind starts to wander, so I open my notepad. I see a crow. Some
matches of tic-tac-toe I played against myself. Lines of text that
would only seem funny to me, shaped like hearts or spirals or
stars. The "ravings of a madman" you would call them. Look like
they were drawn on the wall of a prison cell.

Sooner or later, I come to the page I always come to when I
flip through this thing; it says, "Me and this lady'd make a funny-
looking couple: She's one heck of a looker, and I'm a pretty funny
guy!" It's still a good one. Came to me when I was unpacking my
placard. It says: "Bogey, Private Eye". The Clown Detective.

After she leaves, I go out to stretch my legs. What I've
gathered from her story is that she's suspected her husband of

adultering for a good time now, but thought it was “imprudent” to bring it up. Her words. Then came the threatening phone calls and thuggish looking guys skulking around their building. The knuckle-draggers said they wanted money. Blackmail, obviously. The lovebirds come home one night to find their apartment trashed and ladybird said that was it. Been staying in separate hotels ever since, and she wants me to find out what’s going on. “Investigate,”... also her words. It loosely translates to, “solve all my problems for me.” “Make the bad men go away.” I never wind up just following leads and taking pictures. There’s always a twist ending to a job like this, and I just have to play along until I figure it out. Until I do, I’m gonna fall for the client, get roughed up by some goons, and then find out that she’s probably been double-crossing me all along.

When you’ve been at this as long as I have, you just learn to go with the formula. Tell you the truth, I wouldn’t have it any other way.

I decide to go over to “investigate” the suite this guy’s staying at. Maybe find some clues. When I get to his door, though, the thing’s busted wide open. Wouldja believe that? Broken inwards, by the look of it. I take out my pistol and look around a bit, but I’m alone... not counting the stuff behind the red velvet drapes. I pull them back. It’s a caucasian male; that much I can tell. He’s got dark hair and a bare patch of skin in a perfect circle at the summit of his skull. His face is just... well, a hole is really the only way to say it. A black hole where he was scratched out of existence. I try so hard to think, “Ha-ha, that’s one for the funny books!” , or something like that, but what comes to mind is more like, ‘That’s not how it’s supposed to look... that’s not how it’s supposed to look...”

I double over and get that feeling in my gut like I’m about to

start heaving, but then I notice something. The guy's got bullet-holes on his hands. This guy, it looks like... like he threw his hands in front of his face when he got shot. Like that would stop it! Like a kid hidin' from monsters under a blanket! The bubbling starts in my diaphragm, like a witch's gumbo pot. I try to tell my nerves to fight back, but the bubbles hit my windpipe and the race is over. From there on out to the end, my voice box jerks and contorts every which way but loose, and I sound like a sax solo.

I'm laughing. Real hard. I'm on the floor, convulsing, howling like a jackal, tears streaming down my rubbery cheeks. They won't stretch anymore, and it's hurting my face. I can hardly breathe, I'm hacking away so much. I wish I would cut it out. Ha.

I start out with these two dogs and it was just this image like a photograph of a close-up of this one dog with the others tail in its mouth and it is not trying to bite it off or anything it was just sort of there and I am only seeing this close-up but I just had this feeling this state of knowing that it is not really two dogs it was just the dog and its body loops around up in the air like one of those little toy car tracks so much that it was making a circle but I don't think the dog even knew about it and then one of us started giggling.

I was in one of those miniature houses that the little kids played in the ones you can open up and it has a kitchen and a phone but instead of being inside where children will play with it it was far far away from the house in this backyard that stretches on for miles and miles and I was trapped inside and I realize that there were all sorts of spiders and dirt and filth and I start kicking screaming clawing my way out until I was lying on the frozen dirt and it cracks under me.

I saw the house and I think that it sort of looked like my old

house the one I grow up in as a kid but it is kind of different too. Some parts were more stretched out than they should be or in a different place or missing. I walked up to it but I am not really walking and go through down the hole kinda like a lamb that leads to the basement but instead I was in the kitchen and I see my parents sharing a bowl of spaghetti but they were not using forks they were using their mouths and they were trying to be delicate. But they are just making a mess and then they started picking out strands of spaghetti and put each end in each other's mouth. They just look like idiots and I noticed that they have each other on leashes like that wooden puppet that wants to be a boy.

I am in the comedy club and it was really dark in there and scary too and I watch myself walking up to the microphone and I started telling a joke and it just goes on and on and built up like a tidal wave and I am sitting there holding on to my boogie board and I felt it about to crash down around my ears like a tidal wave but then I said he is not so shaggy and the wave disappears and it all felt so meaningless like I could just die and then I do die.



They say if you die in your dreams, you die in real life. Guess not. I wake up and step on a broken bottle getting out of bed. Is this what made my head go screwy? I squint the eyes that I know must be red so that I can read the label. It says... Seltzer. Huh.

I make sure to write down in my notebook not to drink it before bed anymore.

Then I toss some rubbing alcohol and a bandage onto my foot so I can go grab a newspaper. I bring it back to my apartment and read through the whole thing before I notice the date. Today isn't Sunday. I grab yesterday's paper from the trash, only to find out that yesterday wasn't yesterday at all. Friday. Huh. Asleep that long...

I get properly dressed so I can get some answers. I grab a banana too. For the Potassium. O.K. So the place I'm headed is this dive downtown where my guy is. Every detective's gotta have a "guy" they get information from. An informant. A sleazy sorta guy, usually a booze-hound. This guy's got to be so deep in the dirt that when you dig him up, he drags up... dirt clods? Should work on that one. The main thing is that it's sort of like a father-son kinda deal.

What makes a plain old good detective a plain old great detective is natural curiosity. Like a cat. That's most of the trade right there. Take right now: I'm so wound up about this case, I'm starting to forget how it started. I'm even forgetting that this whole thing is probably a set-up job. I just gotta do this because it feels like the thing to do. Not the right thing, necessarily, but the thing. It's like I'm the burning end of a dynamite fuse... I'm just following the trail I got to follow until I blow. Ha.

So I can pull myself together again, I run into an alley and nearly break my neck tripping over a bum. I'm about to start barking at him over my sore foot when I see that he's all bound up. Hog-tied to a stick, like he's about to be cooked. My stomach drops to my feet until my rage fills it up like a hot air balloon. Some guy likes tying up defenseless bums and leaving them to the

elements, and nobody's going to do anything about it? Not on my watch. I'm gonna get to the bottom of this.

This is why I became a detective. To find just a shred of justice in this crazy world. Hand shaking with fury, I write the facts down in my note-book: "Elderle mail. Grae hare end lon beerd. Warein maleman hat. Saylor shurt ses, 'I Yam What I Yam'. Filthe bum." Taking good notes is really half the work, truth be told. I'm going off to find more clues when I hear the lid on the dumpster shake. I thought I saw a little pair of eyes... like a child's eyes... I can never know. But it's like there's a cherub in the garbage, looking at me, waiting for his... fate... to gulp him down whole. I hear a whimper. No. No, you see, there – there's an order to things... there's got to be... I start walking. I got a ways to go before I get to the dive.

A man walks into a bar and says, "Ouch". Favorite of mine. I push open the saloon doors like a cowboy and break the joke out for the occasion. What I do is (because delivery is crucial) is that I start by first saying the set-up real loud, so it goes along with the surprise of the doors slamming open. Then I stroll up behind my guy and whisper the punch-line in his ear. Intimidation. Humor. I solve more crimes with a few well-placed quips than anything.

The guy's name is Shemp. Halfway through me saying, "and says..." he grabs my shoulder and he says, "Look, Artie, let's go talk up on the roof, all right?" Some of the barflies look at us funny. I agree.

We walk up past the rooms above the bar, all the way up to the top. We stand there for a minute while I eat my banana. Then I start to explain the situation, but Shemp tells me mush is coming out of my mouth, and he can't hear a word I'm saying. I finish chewing and toss the peel away. Then I start again, covering the

whole deal with the dame and the extortion when he stops me again.

“What are you doing here?”

I ask him what he means.

“What I mean is why did you just come barging in like that? You just blew my cover, man!”

I tell him he’s a pretty funny guy.

“I’m a cop, Artie. A detective. Come on, you know this! Now all the guys downstairs know it too, and I really didn’t want that. What’s more, I have no idea what you’re talking about with this woman asking you for help. The address you just gave me is a fleabag motel. It doesn’t have any swanky rooms with velvet drapes...”

He keeps calling me Arthur. I don’t like that. I want to vomit again. I keep it down (I just keep it all down) and ask him just what in the heck he’s talking about.

“Are you kidding me? Art, I’ve seen you every day for, I dunno, months. You’re one of those street performers. You had a little monkey. A – uh—a whattayacallit, a... capuchin! A little capuchin monkey and you juggled and did stuff like that for money. Why are you acting like this?” I stop listening. Honest, I really do.

“I really don’t know what all this is about. Where have you been for the past few days? Why are you dressed like... like Sam Spade or someone, Artie? Why do you keep calling me Shemp?” There’s a ringing in my ears, and it’s no ring at all.

“Come on, it’s getting cloudy. Let’s get you somewhere warm and we can talk.” This isn’t how it ends. “Come on man, its okay.” Honest, it’s not “I can help.” This isn’t the end of the line.

My hand darts into my coat like a mamba and comes back out with a friend. The gun fits in my hand like a special purpose. He gets this confused look on his face, and then he starts blubbering.

“Oh man,” he says. “Oh Dear..., no.” My lips curl up from over my yellow teeth, like a flower saying top o’ tha mornin’ to old falcon-head himself. With the wrath of burning in my chest, I stick the muzzle in his face and pull the trigger. Bang!

The little flag pops out and then I lose it completely. Catharsis. I double over, laughing, wheezing and spitting until the crash registers. He’s not there anymore.

Funny... I didn’t know Shemp was a magician. I look over the edge of the roof and I see his body twisted around like a Picasso, broken on the fire-escape. His arms aren’t spread-eagle, or... My holey, bleeding foot hurts more than it did before. I lift my over-sized shoe to reveal a banana peel.

I don’t laugh for one second.

I stand there for what feels like seconds, but it’s probably more like hours. It’s like the entire world is buzzing and I still can’t get this ringing out of my ears. And then I get into the groove. The groove where you fall into a track and get a free sample of Why.

Where it doesn’t matter, it just feels right. And thoughts and images start invading and you feel like you’re just a vessel; your skin is just a stretchy latex suit they inhabit for a while. You’re

just a robot programmed to obey. It's that feeling you get like you're on the beach, just up to your belly in water, and you're letting the waves hit you. You just let them come, and they enter you and they push you this way and that until you're flying through space that's not there. And it's like life is like one big who-dunnit and the answer is anybody. And when you lean over and take a big whiff of the clues you found, they all just smell like red-herrings. They're indistinguishable.

How far you get in the case entirely depends on how much you're willing to get roughed up. How much blood you can spit out and wipe off your chin while you flash Goliath your dirty red smile. What pieces of yourself you're willing to jettison. And there aren't that many. No, not many at all. Me and you, we're falling down a rabbit hole that never ended. You just go down and down and down for eternity, and even if you fell ahead of everyone else, you're still nowhere in the sheer infinity of it all. There is no quantity. No magnitude. The Cheshire cats and canaries reach out and they can't feel those things. Ha-Ha-Ha. You can't tell if they're laughing or crying because you're falling too fast and too slow. You're hovering like a genie let out of his bottle. You tricked them you dirty liar. "I'm sorry, the correct answer was that the only thing defining you is that you are an entity instead of a non-entity. You are a one instead of a zero in the binary of the universe, and I bet you're not even sure of that, you putz."

I'm asleep in the womb of the world begging for five more minutes. I'm a suffocating rubber chicken and I don't want my audience to see me like that. And the tiny rooster heart goes , "Muh-muh, muh-muh, muh-metamorphose." I lose the beak and now I'm a kitten in a box of poison. I gasp for air.

I look up to the sky and see a maybe. Catch a falling god. The

future is so bright, it's blinding me. And for that instant, wrapped up in all the world, it felt so good that I just wanted to punch right through it. Whump-Whump-Whump-Whump. Catch a falling god. They say some people are afraid of clowns. I say: Ha.

He awakens staring into the dead pearl mirrors embedded in the man in the Popeye t-shirt. They've been waiting for him a long time now. Maybe all of it. They show him a face melting off into the pavement to mix with the rain. A large dog sits patiently in a small box, taking shelter from the downpour as it waits for the red rubber ball to roll its way. It would laugh a laugh of joy if a dog could only do such a thing.

He rolls onto his back. He can see the sky now. As each droplet falls on his face, his eyes make it a brother. No one should be alone. Not today. The world isn't a monochrome city out to kill him. Not anymore. His gaze goes up and up into the clouds and he no longer sees a trope suspended over moments in his life. Hello Maybe, he might be thinking.

It'll rain until it doesn't, and then it will be beautiful for a while. And then it'll rain again. Just for now, he crawls, then walks, into the dumpster. There in the dark, the smile that comes hurts, just a little bit, but it is good. It's made of flesh, not greasepaint, after all.

Pick Your Poison

Aaron Huang '13

“You kids quit hangin’ out around here!” the old man yelled menacingly from the window of his run-down house. Specializing in the poison trade and owning quite a bit of property in Dullstone City, Angus was quite antisocial and stingy. And for that he was awfully lonely. It had been this way for many years, since he was an only child and his parents moved out long ago, leaving Angus with nothing but a rusty mansion and the sinister trade of poison. Although Angus never really liked to be around people, he loved his hound, Max. The old man’s love for animals began in his childhood.

As a child, Angus was terrible at making friends. He was loathed by other children because of his parents’ business. “How can you make a living off of the deaths of other beings!?” the children at his school would demand. It was known that his family sold poison in Dullstone for the past century, and his peers (correctly) assumed that he would take on the business of selling the fatal liquids as well. Frequently pestered by his peers, Angus resorted to befriending animals at the local pet shelter. Out of all of the different types of animals, though, his favorite type of beast was the dog.

Recently, though, Angus had been dismayed. Max, who had put up with the horrible odor Angus’ house consistently emitted, had enough. The dog decided that it would not live here where all the foul merchandise was kept. After inhaling this putrid scent of poison for about a year with the enhanced sense of smell a dog naturally has, Max fled.

As Angus’ days went on, he became increasingly saddened and worrisome when he had not received a single call regarding his

dog after putting “Missing” posters up. He could always just adopt another pet, but he had a strong attachment to Max and was not about to give up on finding him so easily. Angus recalled the time he met Max for the first time, and the collar he got for him. Although it was grey, it shined in the light and had the letters “MAX” engraved onto it in red. Angus had remembered exactly what it looked like, and the vision made him think of Max. The weary man was worried even more now, whilst in his shack where he sells his wares. “Get a hold of yourself,” Angus thought to himself. “You’re at work right now. You need to focus so you can maximize your profits for the day...”

But he could not bring himself to it. Eventually, the irritable old man got to the point where he could not take it anymore and decided to sacrifice his profits in order to bring his beloved pet back. He recalled the children’s words at the school, as they muttered about him. “Look at him, he’s going to grow up like his parents: stingy and money-loving and preferring it over everything else.” Finally, after so long, Angus wanted to go against this accusation of the past. He finally realized how he had been too money-hungry his entire life. The time had come to get rid of his selfish side and finally think about something else: Max.

With his new idea, Angus reassured himself that he was going to retrieve Max. He would get rid of the toxic smell of his house by quickly selling all of the poison he owned for half of the value, and with the funds he would hire as many people possible to look for his dog. The old man had found, in the local newspaper one day, a company, Pesttermination, to sell his wares to. This organization specialized in pest control and boasted the slogan “You name the bother, we kill it.” Afterwards, Angus would post local signs requesting for help, desperately offering, in advance, a generous sum of money as a reward for helping in the search; even if they couldn’t find the dog.

After the transaction was made with the Pestertmination, the organization was beyond content, and Angus began distributing the posters for the formation of the search party. Gossip spread, and although people were interested due to the monetary rewards, they still had their doubts. It was unusual for someone like Angus to come out of his solitude to beg for help, and moreover no one would ever suspect that his stingy personality would ever let him make such an offer.

“Old man Angus is offering up a ridiculous amount of money to look for that stupid dog of his.”

“Yeah, but I wouldn’t be surprised if it had a catch to it. I wouldn’t trust that old man any day.”

It took around a week but eventually, one morning, around twenty people, who felt sorry for Angus, were gathered at the old man’s house and a well-known, favored man, named Travis, was appointed the leader of the party. He would be in charge of distributing the party members evenly throughout town to search for Max. Details of the dog were given by Angus and with that the search party left to do their job.

Countless hours of searching went by, and by the time night fell, Max had not been found and not a single clue had been discovered. “That’s that,” said one of the members of the search party. “We tried our best and couldn’t find him. We’ll just have to try again tomorrow, and if we can’t find the hound, we’ll just have to give up and tell Angus that he’s out of luck.” Everyone else agreed, and started to head home, until Travis suddenly remembered something important.

“Wait guys,” Travis told his fellow searchers, “I recall two people talking about a dog they saw around their neighborhood the other day.”

“What’re the chances it could be Max?” someone from the party blurted out. “Well, one of the two guys, Billy, did mention the dog having a collar that was bright in the light despite it being grey. I think I know where his house is located. Should we make an attempt to question him about Max?” The rest of the search party replied positively, and made their way over to Billy’s house.

“What do you want? Oh, it’s you, Travis. What business do you have here at this hour?” Billy asked after opening the door.

“We’ve come to search for something,” Travis replied.

“Oh. Well, what is it? Make it quick, I haven’t had much sleep in the past few nights due to all that barking.”

“Barking? It couldn’t have been a dog could it? Did it have a grey collar?” Travis asked, excited.

“Come to think of it, I recall seeing a flash of red on its collar as well!”

“Oh! Well, where’s the barking now? Is the dog gone? Did it move out of the neighborhood?”

“Not quite,” Billy replied.

“Where is it now then?” Travis curiously asked.

“Well, you see, tonight may be the first night in about a month that I’ll get a good night’s rest!” Billy happily replied.

“What’d you do?!” Travis questioned, furiously.

“I called Pestertmination.”

The Immortality of Ink

Connor Ryan '11

Writing has been the most comfortable and artistic way I have found to communicate. Naked words, vulnerable and bold, show one's honest voice; and stripped of confusing colloquialisms that often plague our ears, writing offers a rare clarity and permanence in a confusing and temporary world. I have come to feel at home when I'm writing; a time to quietly be alone with my reality and my imagination enabling a wonderfully intrinsic contrast.

I have come to discover my greatest passion through a series of twists and turns in my life. Expression through writing, the power it holds and the beauty it can articulate, has allowed me to define my voice. My grandfather, the first man I ever really understood, died of pancreatic cancer several years ago and it wasn't until his death that I realized through heartbreak, the inspiration of love and the power of the written word.

From as early as I can remember, my Grandfather was there; hidden softly in the background marked by his gentle humor and occasional anecdote. I can vividly remember the frequent visits he and my Nana would make, packing their car to the brim with toys and smiles that only genuine love could produce. I was a typical toddler, excited for their visits, not necessarily for their company, but instead to see what new toy car I would be adding to my tremendous collection. It went on for years, until one weekend, in the brisk April air of 2005, it all stopped.

My father quickened me into his car as the two of us made the trek up to my grandparent's home on Long Island. I knew my grandfather was sick, but for some reason I insisted on masking

it with a naïve optimism, no doubt a subconscious mechanism to get my mind off of the grim truth. The very last time I saw my grandfather breathing life was that weekend. I was twelve years old. He was sitting in his favorite red reading chair, the whites of his eyes polluted with shots of yellow-green as his body began to raise the flag of surrender. I extended my hand out and he shook it wearing that soft, mysterious smile as he always did. I turned and my father closed the door.

Two years went by, I was fourteen now and it was Christmas Eve – I had already begun my high school career, and while everyone around me was smiling I felt utterly lost. My family and I went to my Nana’s house for the holidays, a place I hadn’t been in some time, which I came to find featured two distinct parties. In one room, the adults drinking cocktails and hobnobbing, discussing politics and matters that I had no interest in and in the other, screaming, crying, resilient infants. I headed downstairs to be alone for a bit and collect myself. I was looking at the walls filled with old pictures of my father along with some articles my grandfather had written. He was a journalist, a profession I had deemed humdrum and uninspiring (for reasons I can’t recall). However, looking at the number of articles he published I thought to myself how busy and talented he must have been. Just as I began to leave, a big-framed article entitled, “The Day I Forgot To Hug My Grandson,” caught my eye. I paused to read it. It was about me, my Baptism to be more specific.

The article began as most do, a general synopsis of the event and details about how beautiful the occasion was, but the bulk of the piece was his unique experience at the reception afterwards. Tucked away in a small T.V. den, he was charged with the task of watching me and, inevitably, the Giants game. The story emerged from his guilt — here he was watching television and saying a

quick hello to the infrequent visitor (presumably someone over the age of forty who darted in to grab a pretzel and then slink out) then quickly getting back to the game — all the while forgetting me. The truth is, he never forgot to give me a hug; he hugs me every time I read the article.

The piece hit me in a way that he or anyone else ever did; he was a natural journalist, a man who most effectively spoke his mind with a pen. That day when I first discovered the article, I finally understood his soft smile.

That cold Christmas Eve night, two years after his death, my grandfather taught me more than anyone else has. His writing is so clear and so innovative that his voice lives on and it always will. I have found myself to be inspired by him; to take risks, and not be afraid to explore my thoughts and write them down. There is a magic to the inked word, and while we live in a technologically advancing world, the truth is that like the framed articles on my Grandfather's wall, words on paper will always last. It is my hope that, like my grandfather, I too, will write.

“Quitness”

Traug Keller ‘11

There is a shirt that hangs in the back of my closet. It’s not very nice, just a black tee-shirt with some white lettering on the front that says “Quitness”. The shirt means a lot to me, it symbolizes four wasted years of pouring my heart into the Knicks. I can understand if that seems a little extreme, but I’m fanatical about the Knicks.

Lebron James led me and thousands of others on for four years with very indiscreet promises about bringing basketball greatness to the mecca of the sport, Madison Square Garden. I spent the years of 2003 to 2009 watching the Knicks with players as poor as Eddy Curry. It was so painful to watch him haphazardly struggle down the court to play defense. It all changed around 2008 though, when Donnie Walsh started to strip the team apart to make room for the big free agency summer that was two years away. It was enough to give us Knick fans hope.

“King” James seemed to be just biding his time in Cleveland and waiting to come to New York and shake the core of the N.B.A world. The fans waited and waited and we were assured by N.B.A. analysts on a weekly basis that LBJ was coming to New York. Then Donnie made the Tracy McGrady trade to clear the final cap space and signing Lebron to the Knicks seemed imminent. He was spotted at a Yankee playoff game in a Yankees hat. He released a style of sneaker that he dubbed the “Big Apples”.

July 8th 2010. I was in my living room. I watched the ten minute montage of Lebron James’s highlights and it hit me like a Nick Downing slap shot to the chest. It’s not going to happen. He is going to another team. The hope was gone as was my respect towards him as a person and basketball player. I had ignored the speculation the entire summer and was ready to hear the news I had been waiting to hear since 2003. The terrible interview started and he decided to

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take his talents to South Beach, Miami.

In many movies when something traumatic happens to the main character he spends the next morning lying awake in bed staring at the ceiling. This is what many mornings felt like for a while.

Lebron James was a hero of mine, a freak of nature on the basketball court and, for a while, a beacon of hope for the Knicks. Now he was my least favorite professional everything. I hated him more than Charlie Sheen hates his ex-producer of *Two and a Half Men*. The free agency market was closed for business and the Knicks came up with Amar'e? I was furious, I coped with the loss as any true Knicks fan would, by watching N.B.A.'s hardwood classics with the Knick versus Heat games that dominated the 90's. I am often asked why I hate him so much. Oh Lebron, why do I hate thee so? Let me count the ways.

Number one has to be because of his choice from the decision. I doubt people would be this mad at him if he had chosen a team in which he would still have to build a little to win. Like if he stayed in Cleveland; or if he had gone to Chicago where he would have had D-Rose but there would still be that sense of team that exists in every locker room in the N.B.A except for the Heat's. The Miami Heat is not a team. They are three individuals with some N.B.A skeletons on the bench (Mike Bibby? Give me a break). Their head coach is a mindless puppet who is most certainly mocked and clowning on in the locker room. I wish the Heat the worst of luck in their season and can only dream that they lose every game for the rest of their careers.

The next reason to boo James is "The Big Three" coming out party-stupidest- thing-I-have-ever-seen-parade. Lebrick, D-Whine, and Bosh Spice got on a stage and basically guaranteed many titles to come. A minor detail they forgot was that there are 28 other teams in the league with a similar goal (the Nets main goal is to have people care about them). Seeing this event must have made David Stern sick to his stomach, as a league that already has a

problem with larger than life personalities. This didn't help with winning over those fans that already prefer the NCAA basketball game exclusively over the N.B.A.'s. Also this is a message to the city of Miami: when the Knicks get Carmelo Anthony and they come to play you in Florida how are you not at the game until the second half? Worst basketball fans in the league.

If you've seen the "What should I do?" commercial, you'll understand when I say, "Hey Lebron, what you have just said is one of the most insanely idiotic things I have ever heard. At no point in your rambling, incoherent response were you even close to anything that could be considered a rational thought. Everyone in this room is now dumber for having listened to it. I award you no points, and may God have mercy on your soul" (Billy Madison). Harsh, but necessary, you bum.

Lastly, the documentary "More than a Game" is a film that encompasses Lebron James's young career as he moves from the streets of Akron to the national stage of basketball stardom. It has been called by many as a heartwarming story of rags to riches and the movie is actually somewhat enjoyable from a basketball perspective. If this movie was about anyone else I probably would have loved it, but it was about Lebron, so I hated it. How must the people of Akron and Ohioans in general feel about it?

My furious passion to boo Lebron James burns. He left me waiting for years and failed to fulfill his subtle promises of coming to New York and being a hero to so many people; instead he sold out and now plays in front of a crowd that leaves at half time to hit the clubs.

The shirt is still in my closet. I doubt I will ever wear it. It resembles the jersey I could have worn this season but never will. Maybe he figured he wouldn't be able to handle the pressure here? I hoped he could have been an icon, a savior to the franchise and somebody I could have looked up to. And now he's a tee-shirt in the back of my closet.

Duty Calls

Coleman Clancy '11

I was idly lying on the dew-covered grass, counting the clouds of the early morning when he approached me. Little did I suspect that my brother was about to utter the last sentences that would ever flow from his mouth. He had this way of speaking that soothed you, regardless of the subject matter, and for this reason I had always found solace in his wise, wise words. When he approached me, he had taken me by surprise, but I was far from scared - his gentle demeanor was distinctly recognizable.

"My taxi should be here soon."

Reluctant to turn around, I was encapsulated by the blue beauty that engulfed the horizons. In particular, my eyes were fixated on a cloud shaped in such a way that I couldn't easily relate it to anything else. It was as if the cloud was still figuring out what it was supposed to be.

"Joey?"

"I heard what you said. I just don't want it to be true."

Without turning around, I heard an uneasy sigh escape into the quiet air. It echoed within my eardrums before finding its final resting place in my memory.

There's no way I can forget this sound, and oh, how I wish there were. He was the bravest and smartest person in my life, and he always knew what to do. This situation was the only exception.

"That's understandable, but I really need you to listen to me." He said in such a professional manner.

Fighting the tears in my eyes, I rolled onto my stomach in

one awkward, yet fluid motion. He knelt down, and whispered to me. His exact words escape me, and I'd do him no justice by trying to quote them. In about a minute, he made me the world's strongest, most responsible boy. He enlisted me as the man and sole protector of the house. He put me in charge of taking care of mom.

As scary as this was, this is exactly what I wanted him to do. In this empty, treeless neighborhood, it was easy to see the taxi rolling in our direction from about a half mile away. This was one of the most solemn moments of my life, and so I wished and wished and wished that the license plate said "FRESH" and there were dice in the mirror. Sadly, neither of these things presented themselves. Instead, the only visual distinction of this automobile was a thick black cloud of smog emitted from the battered muffler.

The jalopy pathetically put-put-puttered its way down my street before coming to an anticlimactic stop at the end of my driveway. Suddenly overwhelmed by a surge of anger and denial I sprinted toward the car. I was going to beat the daylights out of the driver for whisking my brother away from his loving family and home.

How could he possibly do such a thing? Doesn't he know people die in war? How can he live with himself?

I gritted my teeth and clenched my fists on my mad dash and I knew that I could take on whoever it may be that was sitting in the driver's seat. But then I stopped and noticed that my mother was also running toward the taxi. In arrant bewilderment, my jaw dropped and I witnessed my mother run to the driver's door. It seemed that she had the same intentions that I did.

Flailing and screaming I saw her face turn as red as her

lipstick as she spat obscenities at the poor man. I began running toward the car again, but for a different reason this time. I saw the floodgates of her eyes open up as rivers of tears flowed down her intensely sad face. I flung my puny arms around her leg and futilely tried with all my might to pull her from the undeserving victim.

In fact, I felt a great sense of sorrow for the driver. Clad in a tattered, black plaid sweater, this man meant no harm. His skin was incredibly pale – almost a sickly color. His chapped lips fumbled around a half burnt cigarette as he had difficulty trying to find the right words to say.

I helped him close the taxi door, and prevented my mother from causing any further emotional damage this morning. Flustered, the man adjusted his black leather driving gloves and gripped the wheel with what seemed like all the force he had.

Then my gaze was drawn from his window to the rear window, and my brother was already inside the car. He mouthed the words, "Thanks, kid," before the taxi put-put-puttered on its way.

I stood in the middle of the street with my mother standing on my tiptoes to hug her waist, providing all the comfort my small body could, and we watched taxi, closely followed by a cloud of smog, exit the warm womb of suburbia.

On the Merits of Latin

Andrew Passarelli '11

It was first period, on my first day as a high school student and I hurried to get to my classroom on time. The door closed and my teacher, Mr. Bernier, surveyed his nine young “recruits” approvingly and said, “Welcome to Latin I.” Nervously, I opened the textbook and I found inscribed on the inside cover, a reflection by a “recruit” from a prior year, which read:

“Latin is a dead language,
It’s plain enough to see.
First it killed the Romans,
And now it’s killing me.”

Great! What did I get myself into? It was my decision. With an awful French accent and a desire to try something different and challenging, I opted for Latin. Now, I wasn’t entirely certain that Latin was a good decision especially as the world seemed to be getting “flatter”!

That was four years ago. Today, I can say without hesitation that I have found the study of Latin to be highly fulfilling and rewarding beyond my wildest expectations. Latin has had a significant impact on my life, by igniting my intellectual curiosity and producing an insatiable thirst for learning beyond the classics to the various structures of modern languages; kindling within me a passion for literature and sparking a keen interest in rhetoric.

Latin has proved to be an indispensable key to unlocking gateways to opportunities, enabling me to delve more deeply into various academic areas of interest rather than just scratch their

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surfaces. Latin has provided me with the ability to go beyond the facts to discern their true meaning. It is a privilege to study the language of the thinkers and writers of the world's greatest empire. I feel a sense of wonder and honor as I study the works of Catallus and Ovid, and Virgil's Aeneid, in their original forms. The ancient world comes alive as I amble through the Classics galleries at New York City's Metropolitan Museum of Art and stumble upon old friends, such as Augustus, or the mischievous Eros. Latin has provided me with much more than the solitary pleasure of translating ancient texts; it has developed within me a better understanding of grammar, the art of rhetoric, a more versatile vocabulary, and a finely honed ability to analyze and interpret literature.

Through Latin, I have discovered my passion for literature. My knowledge of Latin and the classical civilizations has allowed me to better appreciate literature and its many allusions to the ancient world. Shakespeare's tragedy, *Romeo and Juliet*, depicts the fundamental issue of love and the human condition, rooted in the allusion to the ancient myth of Pyramus and Thisbe, in which two forbidden lovers take their lives. Similarly, literature enables me to travel on a journey, hear a trial, and explore both inwardly and outwardly with each turn of the page. Latin provides the medium for experiencing the examined life on a deeper level. Latin enables me to digest, argue, and analyze arguments, theories, tales, and contradictions as if I were physically present at the Roman Forum, the Salem Witch Trials, or the back streets of London.

As Latin is the foundation for the romance languages, it has afforded me the opportunity to shorten the learning curve in my study of Spanish. In this era of globalization and the "flattening" of the world, the necessity for fluency in other languages has

never been greater. Latin is a powerful springboard to acquiring fluency in the romance languages, and I look forward to achieving greater fluency through my undergraduate studies.

While Latin has sparked my intellectual curiosity, it has provided me with a solid foundation and challenged my ability to write, interpret and think critically. As Socrates once said, “the unexamined life is not worth living.” Studying Latin has engendered in me a desire to question, to go beyond the surface, to seek the truth, in order to obtain a deeper understanding of life and the world that I live in. Over the last four years, I have discovered *Lingua Latina non mortua est quod eam loquimur*. “Latin is not dead, because we speak it.” Latin’s legacy endures and I plan to continue to leverage Latin in my academic career and beyond!

Darling

Nick Awad '11

The City buzzes and glows still late at night, but it's bright enough to be day. I
can't tell if what I'm exhaling is smoke or my misted breath. It's just so
cold out. My jacket barely helps, but then again, I can't honestly remember a
time where I truly felt warmth. I try to recall, but it never helps this constant
shiver I've had since... oh God, how long has it been?

From the sidewalk I can hear the steady tide of the interstate. On and on the
drumming of feet around me begins to lull me to sleep. But I don't give in,
fearing waking up in an even stranger place, if I even wake at all. But with a
sigh I try to forget.

Forget all those looks of disgust

Forget that day I left home

Forget that voice in the back of my mind telling me I should have stayed
The change dropped into my cup reverberates in my ears and heart with the
beauty of wedding bells. The hope rising in my soul mirrors the sun bringing
a new day on the city's horizon. I finally have enough for food.

As I look up, I see that old woman who has saved me from my regrets. I stare
into the eyes of this guardian angel, standing under her street-lamp halo.

I don't know her name and she doesn't know mine. All she says is, "Be safe
Darling", and continues on her own way. Already this cold air begins to feel
much more bearable.

Darling...

It might as well be my name.

My cup is full and will soon help do the same for my stomach.

Where will this new day find me? Who knows? But I worry not.

For I know now that there are angels on this Earth who will always watch
over me,
their Darling.

Death of a Bullfighter

Nick Martinez '13

The bullfighter's dying moments, the two minutes that elapsed between when the horn pierced his diaphragm and when he let out the strained gurgling noise that signaled his demise were strangely peaceful. He staggered about for a moment as the bull dislodged its horn from his torso and then fell hard to the clay ground beneath him. The audience's cheers transformed into shrieks and screams as the cloud of dust the bull kicked up over the matador slowly settled around him, revealing for all to see the crumpled limp figure of the fallen matador lying on the ground. Chaos erupted in the stands as large men rushed into the bullring to subdue the beast who, in fear and confusion, had begun to charge about violently. Doctors ran out to where the bullfighter now lay as his life force gushed out of him through a gash below his ribcage.

Despite being the focus of the frenzy of activity that surrounded him, the bullfighter was calm. He did not scream, nor did he plead for salvation. He showed no signs of fear. Even his body, now a collapsed wreck in the center of the bullring, reflected his inner fortitude. It lay still and did not give into the convulsions that physical shock often induces. The matador had about his broken frame an aura of tranquility. He heard in the distance the sounds of the men wrestling the bull to the ground. He was thankful that he had gone down smoother than the beast would.

The ground had been welcoming to him and his fall had been painless. The thick dust that now settled over his body felt like a light blanket gently laid on him by a beneficent caretaker. He felt no pain—only the numbness that had overtaken his body

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moments after the initial shock of the injury. His eyesight was blurred and every movement he made brought bright blinding stars into his vision. But still, he felt no pain.

Even his thoughts did not reflect the discord that had engulfed the scene around him. Rather, they were calm and clear. He thought not of his imminent death, nor of the misstep he made that brought him to this fate. No, he had seen many an experienced matador meet his end in much the same way as he now met his. He had been a witness to the very scene he was now the center of many times before. He knew the way the crowd screamed in horror, the way one could hear the cries of children echoing from the rafters, cries that seemed to continue echoing for hours after the building was evacuated. He was familiar with the way the doctors rushed to the fallen matador yet stood around him helplessly as he slowly faded away, unable to do anything to stop the heavy bleeding. He knew the scene well, as if he had lived it himself a thousand times over. He wasted no energy thinking of the scene around him. In this moment, as his body grew weaker and his vision grew dim, the bullfighter thought only of the bull.

The bull—the immense, majestic, ferociously strong beast that had just dealt him the blow that would end his life—was the only thing that crossed his mind as he lay dying. There was no creature, and in truth, no man for that matter, who inspired in him the awe and respect he held for the bull. From the time he was a boy traveling with his father from their farm in Morelos to watch the bullfights in Mexico City's Plaza de toros Mexico, the very bullring in which he now lay dying, he had always admired the bull. He admired its strength and beauty. He admired its strong will to live even in its very last moments. But most of all, he admired the bravery with which it faced inevitable death. He

loved the bull, for in the ring they were brothers, equals. Outside they were man and beast, but once they stepped in the ring they became partners in a sacred dance. And today, the matador had danced his last. The bull had provided for his livelihood for many years, and now it was only fitting that a bull should take his life away.

Faintly, as if coming from a mile away, he heard his bull roar. He knew, although he did not have the strength left within him to turn his head and see for himself, that somewhere across the bullring, someone had stabbed his bull in the heart, as was common practice at the end of every bullfight. He felt a cool sensation on his forehead as one of the doctors pressed a damp cloth against his face. The matador, feeling in his bones that the life was now leaving him, looked up at the doctor and whispered, “You know, my friend, I am honored to die with him,” The doctor nodded and the bullfighter breathed his last. He thought only of the bull.

10 Things I Learned in High School

John Galiani '11

1.

I was sitting on top of the dresser in my parent's room. I was trying not to zone out. My mom and dad were talking. Apparently I hadn't gotten the message that I wouldn't be with all my friends at Trumbull High. "John," My mom said, "We want you to go to Fairfield Prep."

At the time it wasn't that I was against Fairfield Prep, I just had never really seriously considered it as an option, but when that hypothetical suddenly became reality, let's just say I was not excited. But my protests and pleas were not enabled. That fall I tied my half Windsor knot and shined my new uncomfortable shoes.

2.

One friend from my home town told me to, "Just fail out dude. Your parents won't have a choice and you can be back here by second quarter. Definitely worth it." My hometown friends considered it child abuse that my parents were making me attend an all boys school in the foreign town of Fairfield. But little did I know, the all boys part was probably the least of my worries. I had to face a tough curriculum surrounded by complete strangers. For the first few weeks I began to hate school, and I just sat in each desk of each class feeling miserable.

My steady middle school grades that consisted of mostly A's plummeted to D's and F's. I wasn't trying to take my friends' advice and escape Prep; it was just happening. I wasn't interested and couldn't bear coming in every day. Little did I know, things would only get worse.

I was desperate to improve my grades before my report card

revealed to my parents just how much I was struggling. I was willing to do anything to stabilize my grades. That desperation backfired and I found myself sitting in Mr. Brennan's office, explaining how it's possible that my classmate and I from French class could have answered a question with the same word, (even though it doesn't exist in the language) without copying off his quiz. My poor grades weren't the big issue anymore; it was Academic Probation and a series of JUG's.

3.

I had as close to an epiphany as any 14 year-old kid could have. I could become a punk, or start working harder, and maybe I would actually enjoy my high school experience. Maybe I could make a reputation for myself that I could be proud of.

Then, one of the more fortunate things that could ever happen to me occurred: I made the JV hockey team. Playing on a team gave me a chance to really get close to a few kids, and it also gave me confidence in myself not just as an athlete, but as a person. I wasn't just a student, but a student athlete. I was finally looking forward to going to school to see some of the guys and I didn't even mind the early practices. I was beginning to wake up.

4.

At Fairfield Prep, the month of March traditionally consists of a long playoff run and a pair of games at "The Yale Whale." But for me, my first March on the hockey team started off with a partially amputated right index finger that I somehow managed to suffer in warm-ups of our second to last regular season game. Just as I never in a million years could have predicted how severely I could get injured as a third-string goaltender, no one in Connecticut could have seen the rapid demise of the two-time defending champion Fairfield Prep Hockey coming. I hadn't really considered that I was still vulnerable to injury regardless of my non-apparent playing time, the same way that the team never

stopped to think that maybe we were infallible or that we could lose. Nobody, myself included, had any respect for just how difficult winning a championship was because after the last two years' successes, winning the championship was almost a given. That is why in this game, I guess you can say I learned the hard way. Never again would I make the mistake of underestimating what it means to earn the title of champion.

5.

Nineteen hours after I earned my driving permit did I earn something else for the first time- an accident write up and a ticket for "unsafe backing." I never wanted to drive again. But at my mom's urging I got back behind the wheel, and over time slowly began to regain my confidence. After a tedious four months of driving school, it was finally time for me to take my license test, and I found myself back at the DMV, just as nervous as my last visit. Once again I was able to make it through the test with few mistakes, and within an hour I was dropping my mom off at home so I could drive around freely. Wherever I wanted to go, I could, nothing was stopping me.

6.

It was seven o'clock on a freezing Saturday morning in June the first day I dragged my lethargic body to Aspetuck Valley Country Club for my training to become a caddy. Although I was excited to finally start making some real money to pay for all my new driving expenses, (McDonald's and gas) fatigue and nerves canceled out my enthusiasm and I couldn't think of anything except going home to finish my night's sleep.

My new boss explained the club's expectations of its employees, and that's when I knew I was in, and committed to doing this new job. After my first few rounds at Aspetuck I slowly started to adjust to hauling around bags, racing up and down hills

in search of stray tee-shots, and memorizing members' names. Sure it wasn't fun, but no one ever said work was supposed to be fun and I knew deep down I was lucky to have the job that I did. I mean after all I was only working a few hours at a time, always outside on a beautiful golf course, getting good exercise, and on top of all that, I was making more money than any of my friends.

7.

Similar to my sophomore year, junior year was once again highlighted by hockey, however for entirely different reasons. While sophomore year still brings back memories of disappointment and frustration, I will always remember my second varsity season as perhaps the most fun I have ever had on any hockey team. We were an entirely different team than the year before, losing the majority of our team to not only graduation, but transfers as well. From the outside looking in many critics and fans alike took the losses as a major setback. But the few guys who were returning knew that this was a chance at a fresh start to try and improve our team chemistry, which quite honestly, was not very strong the year before and was no doubt a contributing factor in our early departure from the playoffs. By the time final cuts were made guys were already beginning to bond and by the time our first game had arrived, we had already determined that our team motto for the year would be ELE, (Everybody Love Everybody) which originated in the Will Ferrell movie "Semi-Pro," but was more than appropriate for our own use. Hockey gave all of us a basis for many friendships that have now become so strong they will no doubt keep us bonded together forever. Suddenly walking down the hallway was filled with high fives and head nods as opposed to the hallways full of strangers my freshman year.

After a long, hard fought season, the dust had cleared and we had finally earned our chance to play in the state

championship against of all teams, our recently formed rivals, Hamden High School, who we had already beaten twice that year. Unfortunately for us the excitement ended at the buzzer, and our best efforts had left us just one goal short, as we sat there in tears and watched Hamden celebrate their 6-5 victory and second consecutive state championship. It was as devastating a loss as I had ever experienced in my hockey career, and I didn't even play. To this day I still can't imagine the pain my teammates must have felt after leaving their hearts and souls out there on the ice and in returning getting a loss. The only thing that could console a loss like that was to look back and appreciate just how much fun that whole season was, and that win or lose none of us would ever forget how much we accomplished together. But other than that, for the returning guys, the countdown began that night for next season.

8.

A few weeks after our state championship loss, I took a trip up to Boston with one of my teammates to visit his girlfriend who lives there. I was "set up" with one of her friends. We hit it off and I enjoyed the day with her.

We both wanted to stay in touch, but neither of us had ever attempted a long distance thing, so we swapped numbers and figured we'd take it from there. Boy did that not work out. We ended text conversations randomly and had trouble picking another date to meet. Boston began to feel as if it were on a different continent.

9.

I visited Pennsylvania in the fall, took a tour, and got the chance to go to a home football game, which easily stole the show from anything else I had experiencing visiting other colleges. I returned home desperate to get my decision from Penn State,

however I also was realistic in knowing that my grades were a little lower than what it usually takes to get into PSU, so I coined it my “reach” school and waited patiently as I steadily began to hear back from schools. I entered the winter with acceptances to other schools, but still no word from Penn State.

More and more time passed, and I began to give up my hopes of getting into PSU, until I got the best news that I can ever remember. As I unexpectedly checked my email inbox in between Xbox games, I immediately recognized an email from the PSU Office of Admissions and opened it, preparing for the worst. With low expectations I started to read, “Dear John, Congratulations on your acceptance to Penn State! I am pleased to offer you admission...”

10.

Hanging from the shelf attached to my bedroom wall are 10 medals all in a row that I have earned since I was little. Of these, the unquestionably “featured” item actually appears to be the smallest and cheapest to the superficial eye. However none of the other awards can even compare to the large significance this minuscule medal holds. If you were to read the engraving it reads “CIAC Division 1 State Champions,” and I’m sure to my 22 teammates it means just that. But to me, it stands for something so much bigger that no medal of any size or material could ever embody. When I see that medal I am reminded of all I have gone through over the years and the great effort I have put in to truly earn that medal. And I can’t help but wonder, would I be the same person if I should have gotten my way and never became a Fairfiled Prep Jesuit?