



# The Bellarmine Review

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# The Bellarmine Review

Volume 73 Spring 2015



The Literary Magazine of Fairfield College Preparatory School

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|----------------------|--|
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## Mission Statement

We desire to publish poetry and prose that is clear, concise, and evokes the senses, taking the reader to the writer's imagined place through strong writing and a good sense of rhythm. It is believed in Jesuit education that an academic endeavor may be an encounter with the divine, and we strive to live by the motto *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 living truth.

# The Bellarmine Review

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# Poetry

Ode to a Book on a Shelf

Dan Tuozzoli '15

Through the slates of glass and window designs  
Upon you and your neighbors the morning light shines.  
They bark at me with their thick, gilded lines  
Reflecting the rain on their brittle spines.

As my eyes roll along the shelf  
All I can see is the shelf itself.  
For these bound scraps of expensive paper  
Are invisible to me, as if they're vapor.

Through this braggart mob of bronze titles  
You are the one I can hear for miles.  
Yet you are modestly mute, blank and black;  
A lone wolf divorced from the pack.

Not a word nor name to be seen by eye,  
Discounting the mystery which dwells inside  
Describes thy purpose on thy face.  
Only crumbs of age and spider's waste.

I dream this shadow that coats thy cover  
Is so you remain undiscovered.  
You could so easily hold an ancient secret,  
A holy message, a genius thesis.

My mind creates an unreasonable trust  
That God created you from the dust,  
That a misplaced Shakespeare, a forgotten Homer  
Remains unread beneath your crust.

A brick of pages that will go unopened.  
It is best your seal lives on unbroken  
For I am suspicious that thy mass  
Will not reveal my dreams of glass.

Just Natural Feelings

Aiden Foley '15

I don't understand, something's wrong with how I feel.  
I am not like him, or them, or the others.  
A guide would be nice to help deal with my deal.

I feel foreign, my mind begins to reel  
Should I seek aid from my brothers?  
I don't understand, something's wrong with how I feel.

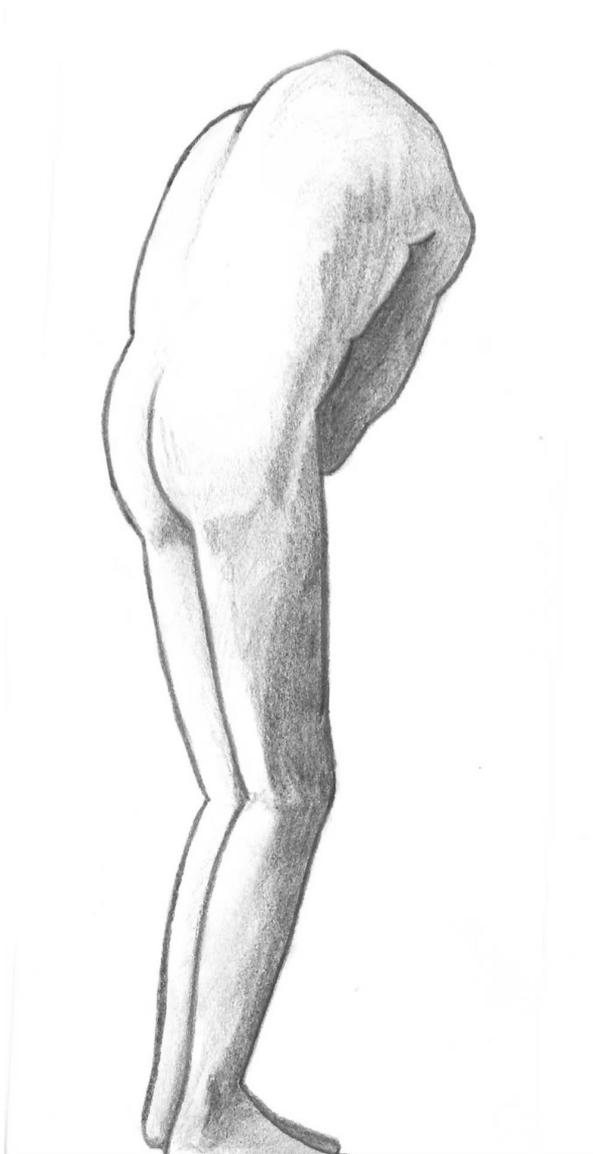
When I bump into him my spine slithers like an eel.  
My arms they shake, my body stutters.  
A guide would be nice to help deal with my deal.

Last night I found it hard for me to finish my meal.  
My stomach quivers with each word I utter  
I don't understand, something's wrong with how I feel.

Today I decided to lift off this seal  
And I turned off the radio and said to my mother  
"A guide would be nice to help deal with my deal."

But the words she spoke did not rust my steel,  
A simple "okay" should suffice, but my mind races and flutters.

I don't understand, something's wrong with how I feel.  
A guide would be nice to help deal with my deal.



*Dan Tuozzoli '15*

Reality is Dead

Travis Gerald '15

I shut my eyes to go to bed  
In my dreams born again  
Reality is dead

My heart burns bright red  
My eyes like the lion's den  
I shut my eyes to go to bed

All I remember is what they said  
They said my chances were one in ten  
Reality is dead

My heart drops like its hung on lead  
I just want to get done and say "Amen"  
I shut my eyes to go to bed

The storm starts churning and my dreams, they fled  
Oh how I wish I could be one of the wise men  
But reality is dead

I scream at the confusion in my head  
I must embrace my inner zen  
I shut my eyes to go to bed  
Reality is dead.

The Streets  
Darrice Glaze '15

Young men losing their lives to the streets  
Some die and some are put away  
All because they're "gripping the heat"

Executed by each other and executed by the police  
Tears and worries are talked about today  
But the truth is people won't care in the next couple weeks

Young men imprisoned, their friends tell them don't snitch  
or speak  
And hold the belief when they come back they'll be praised  
But in reality they're alone in these streets

Your life is a game that can't be edited or tweaked  
Mothers in the crossfire, tears being leaked  
Every decision you make can't be redone or replaced

Time's something you can't get back, dreams you'll never  
reach  
Parents wishing they could see their children graduate  
I want to congratulate the few who want to change the  
streets

Who want to give strength to the weak  
And pray for the preyed  
And give pavement to the street

Misunderstood

Lucas Lazarre '15

And everyone saw it as such, but she thought otherwise  
Her actions were ridiculed and she was often ostracized  
She was the same person but wore a disguise

Her goods were for the public, and she knew what that implied  
She stood all by herself, like an elephant undisguised  
And everyone saw it as such, but she thought otherwise

She was conscious of her actions, it's not like she even tries  
To resist to peer pressure, interaction: she was too deprived  
She was the same person, but wore a disguise

Leaving voicemails and texts for me to read, that's when she  
cries  
Conversing with her, saying she has to be chastised  
And everyone saw it as such, but she thought otherwise

No thoughts of consequence; very foolish, unwise  
Not many good decisions, her life must be revised  
She was the same person, but wore a disguise

She confessed that she cared, now to me that's a lie: I'm surprised  
And everyone saw it as such, but she thought otherwise  
She was the same person, but wore a disguise

Despair, the End all Be all

Alex Dailey '15

The sun is as vibrant as life itself  
So too is the glimmering water  
Laughter, joy and sorrow  
Are the many emotions  
That impede upon this beach.  
Many know it will end soon.  
But we cannot let that make us sad.  
For despair is the end all be all  
And as my mother once said  
“If you let death be the life of you;  
you are not living.”

I ran my finger on the hood of the car  
Picking up a trail of grey dust that exposed the forest green.  
She looked with admiration upon this little old car,  
Reminding her of the memories that have accumulated over  
the years.

The MG sat low to the ground,  
making it difficult for her to smoothly sit down.  
She ran her long spindly hands along the dash,  
Caressing the cherry wood.  
She seemed to age just as fast as the old car,  
Hell, they were practically born in the same year.  
Her and the car seemed intertwined forever,  
As the car parts broke, hers did too.  
One of them would have to pass before the other,  
But everyone knew neither would be the same.  
It was bound to happen eventually.

Scars

Samuel Marcus '18

Scars, a frigid reminder that you once had  
a past you couldn't handle.  
scars in all shapes and sizes  
The cigarette ash left behind in the lungs,  
the notebooks with every  
page filled, the smoke wisps still floating up to the ceiling  
scars in all shapes and sizes,  
because we're all addicted to  
something that takes the pain away  
But to be standing here, and to look at your scars.  
And say that you are beating it  
Instead of trying to find the answer at the bottom of every  
never-ending bottle  
Is a virtue worth fighting for...  
that makes every scar tell  
that much more of a story

Ode to Departure

Brey Jackson '15

I

Oh death, thou be'est the answer to everything,  
All earthly problems hast concluded;  
I cannot put into words, nor express,  
How I feel, but everything goest into rest.  
Into graves or urns we go  
To the scorching flames of Hades?  
Or to the blissful empyrean, where God reigns?  
Why do we run? It's futile,  
There is nowhere to go, we must embrace it  
Death is upon us, we can't escape it.

II

Death, the final horizon of life  
Thoust the ultimate and final seducer  
Gradually drawing us closer  
Slowly creeping upon us; in silence  
We are afraid: knowing we cannot show defiance;  
You reveal'd the harsh truth,  
But took away all pain and agony;  
Soothing as a clear summer day  
Knowing this is the end to our short realities,  
We cometh together, merry and gay.

III

With ye, death, I hear no sounds  
Trees and plants lack movement: stagnant  
Everything begins to turn to dust  
Thou art gentle, not truculent;  
We all must go, tis not unjust;  
Ye claimest all of humanity  
And not just certain people;  
We should not pout or fret  
Our lives are our final fee,  
And we are no longer in any debt.

IV

We all will fade,  
Consumed in the dark clutches of death,  
Ne'er to return.  
I bid thee adieu as I took my last breath;  
We all shall vanish into thin air,  
Free from all despair;  
This is our season finale,  
Born from dust, back we go;  
Death is the final valley;  
We are welcomed into the arms of Jupiter  
And must consider death as our friend, not foe.

THE END

A Deathly Visit

Damian Chessare '17

Greetings, old friend, how are you this evening?  
I've seen you in the shadows of the night.  
I'm done waiting, for you I've been dreaming.

Come out, old friend, you've always been polite.  
My whole life I thought I would fear this day,  
But now that you're here, please, turn off the light.

My life well lived, I accept you today.  
"Death can't get me!" in youth I'd often think.  
Now I'm a flower withered to decay.

Welcome, dear Death, take your seat, have a drink.  
Untie me, friend, unite me with the sky.  
I bid my farewell with this final wink.

Reunite me with the love of my eyes.  
How is she? Wait. Don't spoil the surprise.  
To this Earth, to this life, I say goodbye.

Thank you, dear friend, for my peaceful demise.  
To me, dear Death, you are the final prize.

The Canary  
Kevin Galagher '17

A sad man with a briefcase of lead  
had a soul filled with deadly dread.  
Unhappy, unsure, unmoved, unknown  
The man walked down his path alone.

As a sky shed tears in a yellow wood  
A canary perched where it thought it should.  
The rain had bit, battered and broke the bird  
But it sat perched and still remained unheard.

He said, "why stay here bird? You have the air  
You must spread your wings and fly anywhere."  
He suddenly dropped his case, cage of lead  
To himself, the same thing he must have said.

Follow the Light and Your Faith Will Guide You

Brendon Russell '15

Follow the light and your faith will guide you  
All the stars above, lighting up the sky  
Gazing looking out into the deep blue

From different cultures, we see their views  
Together as one we are unified  
Follow the light and your faith will guide you

The light is null and void, else where we pursue  
Our faith slowly departs, as we try  
Gazing looking out into the blue

Attention and distraction of a few  
In amongst the darkness, we say goodbye  
Follow the light and your faith will guide you

In the midst of nothing searching for a clue  
With nothing to be heard, only a deep sigh  
Gazing looking out into the blue

The dry moist air sticking to you like glue  
Where everything is clever from a bird's eye  
Follow the light and your faith will guide you

Don't Change

Chris Montani '15

Be yourself, everyone else is taken  
Don't change for anyone or anything  
Show who you are, don't be mistaken

Don't let yourself be mistaken  
Wear what you wear, don't be changing  
Be yourself, everyone else is taken

If someone gets in the way don't be shaken  
Don't change be amazing  
Show who you are don't be mistaken

Wanting to be someone else, be awaken  
Achieve your goals, the dough you'll be making  
Be yourself, everyone else is taken

You can do it, rise to the occasion  
Go out and do it don't just be waiting  
Show who you are don't be mistaken

Stand strong be unshaken  
Stay within yourself you won't be regretting  
Be yourself everyone else is taken

Through the Clouds

Dan McPadden '15

The lights peak through the dying gray  
we have lost sight  
Lessons I have learned along the way

Men have gone, to them I pray  
It illuminates the world, makes it bright  
The light peaks through the dying gray

The temporariness of life and how it decays  
How can we understand what is right?  
Stay on the path, and do not go astray  
With the courage of a hundred knights.

This message is here to display  
How we can overcome the darkness with the light  
Encompassed with understanding, and the rays  
I will do all in my power to make it right

The Hunt  
Wit Geffs '15

The trees are still and form a safe thick wall  
The last flicker of light hides above them  
Soft breezes move the air between them all  
A deer sticks his head out of this haven

He smells the air and the scent of the place  
Night is alive with movement everywhere  
Mice run through the field with a bird in chase  
A coyote quickly pursues a hare

The deer slowly creeps out always fearful  
He drops his thick head to eat with vigor  
The faintest sound and he's off like a bull  
but I am silent and pull my trigger

some people say that I am inhumane  
I, the bird and the coyote are the same

An Autumnal, Forest Walk

Serginho Valcourt '15

The rivers and the mountains, every forest, and the sun  
I closed my eyes and heard the cries of everything that  
lives,  
And felt the world around me, one was all, and all was one.

I heard a caged bird's song for freedom, felt the breezes run  
And to that bird, I pray, be free-the very god that gives  
The rivers and the mountains, every forest and the sun.

I saw the graceful swans fly south and webs from spiders  
spun.  
The mud, sinking beneath my feet, though it left me to  
forgive  
And feel the world around me, one was all and all was one.

I tasted water from the stream, and feelings, I felt none.  
For I felt peace-eternal peace, and could not be misgived  
By the rivers and the forest, every mountain and the sun.

I smelled the pine and took in all of what the day had done  
And yet, I sensed that everything around, I won't outlive,  
And felt the world around me, one was all, and all was one.

A dreary sense, uneasiness, had left my spirit stunned.  
And yet, anticipation for the day when I'd relive  
To see the rivers and the forests, every mountain and the  
sun,  
And feel the world around me, one is all, and all is one.

Suiting Up  
Jihad Rogers '16

The alarm blares that annoying ringing sound shocks me  
awake  
I rush to get ready for the battle today  
My commanding officer "Dad" we call'em  
He needs to get to his war  
I need to get to mine  
So I hurry  
I start to suit up arms first  
I button up the forth one always gives me trouble  
Now I need to tie this thing again I always mess up  
Takes me 3 tries to get it right  
I put on my shoes they are very particular about them  
You can't wear any other kind  
I think about today's war and I grab my weapon  
I see that it is dull  
I reach to sharpen it but realize my officers don't like a wood-  
en weapon  
Gazing at the others I reach for the silver one  
I like that clicking sound it makes when I hit the trigger  
But an officer hates it when I do  
I take it anyway  
I grab my pack it is worn from two years of battle  
"Mom" tells me I need a new one but I'll never buy it  
I don't feel good about my battle today  
I fell asleep before I studied  
Well it's just one battle before my war is done  
This is my second year they call me a wise fool  
Only two more years left until this war ends  
Then another four year one starts  
ugh

So Close Yet So Far

John Carroll '15

We were almost ready to take the stage,  
Walking off the bus and seeing the lights.  
There was talk of which players would shine bright.  
The last game before seniors flipped the page.

This was a large crowd for kids of this age  
Who cares? We were like brothers, close and tight.  
“You’ll never forget this game” he was right.  
We prayed for this fight we would soon engage.

I would do anything to get back there.  
We worked so hard, and then came up just short.  
An emotional game, both teams would cry.  
Playing in a state final game is rare.  
It was great to have all of that support.  
We may laugh, we may cry, but we never say die.

Growing Up

Logan Clair '15

When I was born I sprouted from the ground  
Constantly growing, almost endlessly  
By people passing by, it was a sight to see  
I stayed planted there, not making a sound  
When the many storms hit, I would rebound  
Every passing day I add to my tree  
Made of branches that hold my legacy  
Leaves of memories forever abound  
When I grow old and it is time to pass  
My tree stays in an eternal woodland  
Either then to be hidden and swallowed  
Among others in the large forest mass  
Or tower and triumph above the bland  
And by example by which to be followed

Elegy to My Childhood

Joshua Rodriguez '15

I hugged it goodbye.  
The least comforting hug I've experienced.  
It felt like my childhood was trying to escape  
    But I want to hold on forever  
    Goodbye is not the word for me.  
        I am not ready  
        But my childhood thinks I am.  
            I am not.  
I am not ready to go into the real world.  
I wish I could stay a child forever  
    So I hug my childhood  
    Until it disintegrates in my arms.  
        I do not want to let go.

# Haikus

Lost Bastion

William Bresnehan '15

Old house of white paint  
Barely standing on its knees  
Time erodes everything



*Dan Tuozzoli '15*

School

Shaun Connelly '15

Sitting day by day  
Listening to dragging pens  
Wanting to do more

Traffic

Logan Clair '15

Radio humming  
Cars progressing in sequence  
Trapped in happiness

Clear Skies

Chris Baudouin '15

I drive in the rain  
Sun tries to break through the clouds  
I can survive this

One Vacation Night

Serginho Valcourt '15

Humid, summer's eve  
Shooting stars pass lonely roofs  
Solemn wish for peace

Veins

Lucas Lazarre '15

Trees reaching to stars  
No weather to abide by  
Peacefully stretching

A Stare  
Dylan Moore '15

A stare is noticed  
When your eyes are in between  
A problem and truth



*Dan Tuozzoli '15*

Running Water

Peter Lainas '15

The bright city lights  
Reflect off the running water  
I want to be there

# Prose

The Fish  
Wit Geffs '15

One light dangles from the ceiling; it is the only one on. The light provides a circle on the floor, illuminating a mop and bucket lying unattended, but recently used. The room itself is circular, and lining the walls are dozens of aquariums filled with rocks and colorful fish. It is hard to see them however, because the tank lights are turned off and the fish are still, resting from a long day of modeling for wide-eyed customers. The room smells of salt, and the sound of water rushing through multiple filtration systems provides a constant hum. Still, there is another sound, an inconsistent dry, splashing sound, like someone smacking a wet towel against the side of a house to try and dry it off. There, sitting in the middle of the room, is a massive colorful fish, flopping on the ground.

The sound of a toilet flushes and a man walks out of a door in a grey jump suit. His eyes widen as he stares blankly at the floor. Although flopping around in the back of his pupil is a large African Queen Triggerfish, his simple vocabulary only knows it as a big fish. It lies in a large puddle on the ground, flipping and turning searching for water. The man is still, holding a mop in one hand and a wet rag in the other. He has no idea what to do. The employees of the store went home an hour ago for dinner. He is the only one left. Few lights are on.

He thinks about grabbing the fish and putting it into one of the tanks, but which one? The fish lies in the middle of the floor equal distance from all the tanks. It must have taken a terrific leap. As he begins to reach for it, he remembers. He remembers his first day on the job when his boss told him never to put his hand inside the tanks, only to clean the outside, because some of the fish are poisonous.

He knows from watching TV documentaries that in nature the most toxic creatures are often the mostly colorful and flamboyant and this fish is beautifully colored and lavished in sharp reflective fins. He doesn't know what to do. It looks dangerous, but it also looks expensive. He knows some fish in the store cost up to one thousand dollars, and this is the biggest and prettiest one.

He is scared, knowing that if his boss ever found out he let such an expensive fish die he would be fired on the spot. It is Saturday night; the store doesn't open again until Monday. So fearing for his job and his life he decides to ignore the fish. Let it die and tell his boss he never saw it. It's a believable story he thinks. The fish clearly jumped out sometime on Sunday when no one was there and died. With this decision made he begins to mop again. He mops all around the store, except in the one spot where the light is shining, the little circle where the beautiful fish is still flipping about in the puddle, but beginning to slow. He puts his cleaning supplies away, locks up the shop and leaves.

On his bus ride home he registers guilt, knowing that he had let such a beautiful thing die. The janitor isn't a very religious man, but he considers that if God did create everything, he must have spent quite a while on this fish. It was that beautiful. The image of the colorful fish flopping on the floor sticks in his head.

The long bus ride home gives him time to ponder. He thinks more about the fish and how he let it die, and about himself, how he would feel if someone just let him die. As his thoughts dive deeper and deeper he begins to reflect on his life and measure his self worth. He thinks about how he settled for being a janitor and how in a seemingly distant life he once went to art school.

He loved art, painting, sculpting he had a gift for it all, but when money got tight he had to give it up and get a job to pay the rent. He remembers the feeling he had when he quit art school, how empty he felt. He remembers how he was working on a painting for almost half a year. It was an impressionistic painting of his childhood home, he had no picture or model to work from. He was painting it from complete memory, yet every detail to him was very important. He loved that house. The janitor was not a man to forget things easily. He was days away from completing this painting when he was close to being evicted and had to quit school. He remembers how it felt to let such an important painting to him be left uncompleted, to let such a beautiful thing die. It has been almost three years since then, and he hasn't really thought about it much in the passing time.

The janitor spends all Sunday lying in his bed thinking. He can't stop thinking about his old life and the fish. They were both such beautiful things to him and he let them go. The day went by in a flash and soon it was four in the morning and he has to make his Monday morning run to all the stores he is responsible for at the strip mall. He goes down the row of shops, giving each a quick clean before they opened for the day. At the end of the row stands the fish store. He knows he doesn't have to clean there because they were closed on Sunday, but he decides to go in anyway.

He opens the door and is embraced by the fresh sent of salt water that he always cherished. Then to his surprise on the floor in front of him is the fish, still slowly twitching on the ground in its drying puddle. Amazed it has survived all these hours out of water, he knows that it must be on its last few breaths. The janitor feels a sudden rush of passion move through him as he comes to the realization that he can't be afraid, not for his life or his job. He cannot let such a beautiful thing die.

## A Worthy Trip

Daniel De Andrade '15

“Scott?” I heard a soft voice forcibly whisper from behind me.

I didn't have to turn around to realize that Imani from English class had said my name. Her voice has this unique crispiness that reminds me of sand paper. Most of the grade hasn't had the opportunity to hear it because she isn't much of a talker. Her silent nature allows her to have a powerful presence whenever she does decide to speak. “Imani!” I yelped as I turned around to greet her, “What are you doing here?” I only realized that this was a dumb question after I remembered that we were completely surrounded by trees at midnight on a Saturday. It's obvious we came from the same place.

“Well I was at Riley's before it got crashed” she responded, “I went running towards the backyard like everyone else. Stupid idea now that I think about it. I can't even see ten yards in front of me. I lost my friends once I went past the first tree, and now here I am”. She finished her sentence with a little smile and a pleading look. She did not have to say it, but I knew what she wanted. And so I courteously grabbed her hand and said, “Follow me”.

What she had said about not being able to see 10 yards ahead was an understatement. It was almost impossible to see my hand when I stuck it in front of my face. At this moment I began to feel her fingers caress mine like a child does with a marble. I understood the queue and began to move forward as to at least pretend we were making progress back to our suburban environment.

I pushed through the forest while giving directions like “left”, “don’t go that way”, and “this is definitely where we should be going”. In reality, I had no idea where I was. I could’ve been in the Redwood Forest and I would’ve still been saying those directions with the same tone of confidence.

I began to make out some lights in the distance. I assumed them to be houses, so the pressure inside of my head started to build up. I thought that maybe right now is the best chance life will ever give me to kiss her. She had never given me any hint that I appealed to her in any way more than platonically, but those thoughts never entered my head. Instead, I swung her body towards me and I went for it.

If I expected her to push me away or awkwardly leave once she had noticed my intentions, I was pleasantly surprised she didn’t. Needless to say that doesn’t mean the experience was how I had imagined it. The kiss was sloppy to say the least. Why did she have to use her tongue like octopuses use their tentacles to grapple their victims? I later concluded with the possibility that her tongue has epilepsy.

I quickly retreated my head and looked into her eyes for a moment. She had these massive eye sockets that were like caves hiding her pupils. When I looked a little closer I realized that instead of her usual hazelnut eyes, the black of her pupils were taking most of the space. “Dilated eyes means kissing your freedom goodbye” my mother used to say.

“Ha!” I impulsively exclaimed.

“What are you ha-ing at?” She defensively asked me.

“I’ve found the cause of your lacking motor skills”.

“What are you talking about?”

“About the fact that the way you kissed me is parallel to someone asking me to tango and than tackling them!”

The moment of silence that followed was only intensified by her unrelenting glare. After a couple seconds I noticed her lips began to curl upwards at the end and so I quickly said, “L-O-L, Imani I’m kidding”.

She immediately began to laugh hysterically. In between breaths I could hear her repeat “ask someone to tango”.

Her laughter only put me in worse mood so I became impatient for her to recompose herself. After around a minute of seeing her roll around on the ground giggling I said, “It’s time we got out of here”.

I had begun to walk forward a couple yards when I heard her yell “Wait!”

I stopped in my tracks without looking back. I heard the crunching of twigs and leaves until I could feel her directly behind me. I again began to walk when she grabbed my hand and pulled me towards her. I didn’t begin to resist the pull until our faces were just inches away from the other. I could smell her mint breath as she pressed her fingertips onto my neck. She then reached up and placed a kiss on my lips. “Just in case you weren’t kidding,” she reasoned after. We held hands for the entirety of the trip out the forest after that moment.

After five minutes of walking we exited through the last of the trees and ended up on Ohio Avenue. From where we were standing we could see the flickering blue and red lights reflecting from the windows of the houses on the end of the street. I didn’t know at the moment but the walk to the end of the street would be the last moment I ever shared with her.

She began to make a phone call once we were back into the familiar suburban environment. I was glad because it gave me time to collect myself. At the moment I was feeling great. It was as if I held the world in my palms only because Imani had begun to help me with the weight.

I began to look down on our shadow that danced on the street from the flickering streetlight above. First there was me. I looked tall in the shadow and my chest broader than it actually is. Then there was her figure, which was shorter than mine and thinner. Her hair was swinging helplessly in the wind, and so I took off my ponytail and began to tie her hair up with it. While I was doing so, she turned around, smiled, and planted a kiss on my cheek. As she did this I felt my sense of elevation quickly increase. It was as if my psyche was now suspended in the air detached from all worry.

She got off the phone and told me her friend was going to pick her up at the end of Ohio Avenue. We walked towards the end of the street in complete silence. I couldn't tell whether it was a silence that was welcoming and comfortable or ominous and worth breaking.

We reached the end of the street faster than I had expected. I went to grab her hand but saw that she was keeping them in her coat pockets. Out of the corner of my eye I saw a black SUV easily pulling 50 miles per hour swerve around and head our way. I had an uneasy idea that this was her ride. She began to walk out towards the street with her hand up to signal the car over. The car parked alongside the sidewalk where we were standing and rolled its windows down. The only person in the car was a driver around my own age with a full-grown beard and sunglasses on. It was one in the morning.

“How bout we go on a date sometime soon?” I asked

“It depends,” she responded hesitantly.

“Depends on what”?

“Depends on why you want to go”.

She looked up at me waiting for an answer. If I hadn't said that I would give the answer to her question when I saw her at school on Monday, she would've been waiting there forever. I didn't have an answer. Or at least I didn't have a good one. I know I could've said something slick like "How bout I answer that next Friday at 7", but what was the point? There wouldn't be any other moment as good as the one we shared that night. It was spontaneous, private, but unfortunately fleeting. Her premature departure to whatever other party, date, or friends house she chose to go to was the best way the night could've ended. She wasn't mine and I wasn't hers. A walk through the woods, a superficial embrace, and a longer walk back home was a worthy experience.

## Changeable Constellations

Owen J. Haffey '15

I needed a drink. My mind was spinning with thoughts as I grabbed a beer. It was cool and wet from condensation and it was a good pairing to the humidity in the house. I walked out the back door and outside into the night. The drink felt cold and moist in my hand, cooling my skin to the touch. I took a seat on the hard stone step. The patio was filled with cracks and crevices overflowed with the growth of crabgrass.

The forest lay in front of me, a large force that could not entirely be seen except for dark outlines of trees. The shadows loomed like skyscrapers without power, and the slow bubble of water from a creek flowing into a marsh could be heard. The outline of oak, maple and pine could be seen in the dense canopy. Even though it was well into the evening, the forest was very much alive with the buzzing of insects and the movement of animals in the foliage. Frogs croaked, and a whippoorwill could be heard. A warm summer wind snaked through the trees and gently pushed my hair aside. It was a breath of nature, an escape from reality and pain in the current moment. A twig snapped and with it my heart. I closed my eyes.

Why couldn't I see her? You failed; again, no matter how hard you try you always fall short. You damn coward. You've had loads of chances and every time you get close to her you blow it. Your attempts are a perpetual failure. I laughed and thought to myself, "Look at you always wanting self pity. Well look around, there is no one to blame but you."

I put my head in my hands and rubbed my temples and my eyes remained closed. The skin was warm and soft and I could feel the rush of blood go to my head. It felt good and it released some of the tension that was in my head. I felt a headache coming on. Not a sharp, driving one; like a hot spike, but a dull one, like a low, constant rumble from a fog-horn that warned of danger.

I sighed and blinked my eyes quickly, then slowly opened them. They were a little crusty and they still weren't adjusting to the night. I took a swig of beer and wished I could talk to her. The beer distracted me with its good cold taste as it attempted to quench an immense thirst in the warm night. The sharp flavor washed over my senses and enticed me to drink more, and I became calm.

I looked around. There were hundreds of fireflies hovering in the black abyss that was an unlimited opening that spanned the sky. Their lights constantly flashed the black air with gentle hues of luminescence and glowed against the black canvas like the dying embers of a smoldering flame. They flickered and shone like stars fixed in the celestial ceiling above. Each firefly's glow created a changeable constellation that linked their lights together to create an intricate yet delicate pattern in the sky. It was there for a brief moment and then gone. Never the same. Each pattern was unique and complex; like a snowflake or a poem, each design was never to be replicated again. The stars and fireflies merged together and created an endless void of twinkling lights and illuminations that infused the sky with majesty. I wished she was here to see it.

"You hopeless romantic" I said out loud. It felt un-called for. I stopped talking but continued thinking. "You think that love is staring at stars and kissing beneath the mistletoe on a snowy evening, I continued. How would you know? You only know love through the stories you read."

Stories are different than real life I thought to myself, but sometimes that one moment comes along, and stories break fiction and become truth. Maybe this once, I thought. I thought of her.

I took another swig of beer and thought about her face and hair. I could almost see her smile. I could handle the pain of not seeing her but it hurt deep down. I wished I could talk to her right now. Maybe I could talk to her. Then, somewhere amidst the fireflies and stars, I heard her. Maybe it was my mind or my heart seeing it, but I heard her. Her voice softly echoed in my mind as it bounced off the cavernous skull walls, unregistered. It sounded like waves crashing on the beach or crickets chirping in the night. You don't understand what the waves or crickets are saying, but the monotone and repeated sound comforts and consoles you.

“How are you?”

I didn't respond. I still heard her like the waves and the crickets.

“Hello?” Suddenly her voice became animate in my mind. As if she had become a tangible presence sitting on the porch stoop. I closed my eyes and I imagined her in my mind. She looked at me.

“Yeah?” I suddenly didn't want to talk.

“How are you?”

“Never better.” I took a deep sigh and stared at her image.

“What's wrong?” Her tone was anxious and pleading. She knew what was wrong and why I was quiet, but she did not mention it.

“Nothing.” I looked away, not wanting to meet her gaze.

“Hey, I know when something's up, What's wrong.”

She stared at me worried yet compassionate. It was an odd combination, yet one that seemed so right at the time. I faked a smile and avoided her eyes.

“Nothing, come on you know me. Nothing’s wrong. Everything is fine.” I wanted to leave.

“Tell me,” Her blue eyes staring at me. They weren’t cold like they were unmoving, but warm, like a ocean or a gemstone. I took a deep breath. I looked her in the eyes and tried to say it, but I fell. Short. Again.

“I don’t know, I guess I’m just down.” I started to get up from the stoop. I was trying to work my way away. My eyes were still closed and my stomach wasn’t feeling too good.

“Really?” She was sad and a little bothered.

“Yeah, I’ve been with it for some time now, but it’s my problem you know.” I half smiled again. “My problem, not yours. Don’t think about me. Nothing’s wrong.”

“Let me help you, tell me what’s wrong.” She wanted me to say it, not to fall short.

“I’ll... I’ll tell you later.”

I couldn’t look at her so I opened my eyes. The image faded. I took another swig of beer, and stared back into the forest.

“I’m sorry.” I said out loud. “I’m sorry I’m such a wuss, but love is art. And art can’t be rushed. I just don’t want to screw it up, because I don’t want to fall if we’re together.” I took a deep breath. My hands were shaking. “You hopeless romantic.” I laughed

Finishing the beer I stood up and tossed the bottle into the woods. It whistled as air ran over the open lid and it sailed through the night sky and landed with a soft thud on the forest floor.

As I walked back to the house I was surrounded by the flashing light of the fireflies and I felt as if I was walking through space. I imagined I was just a planet among an infinite galaxy that was forever entrapped in orbit. Like a fly in amber.

The humid air suspended me and the dust particles that trailed from a comet or some other star. The sky and air melted as one. It was the most beautiful thing I had ever seen. It was a beauty from sorrow. A splendor from suffering. A loveliness from regret.

You hopeless romantic.

I walked back to the house and opened the screen door, and walked past the refrigerator that hummed a low note. It sounded like a rocket going into space. I walked back up the wooden stairs to my room opened the door and lay down on the bed. Inside the four walls, the beauty from the stars and fireflies was gone and instead I was left with deep sadness. A dull and hollow regret.

## Dad's Job

Will Bresnehan '15

The hospital was strangely quiet. There were no voices traveling across the halls, so every foot step could be heard, and every beep from one of the heartbeat monitors bounced off the walls. The hallways had the faint smell of hand soap, and that was probably because they had soap dispensers lining the walls like flags. Every time someone walked into a room they used the dispenser, and every time they walked out they used it again. Through every window there was a blanket of darkness, in which nothing could be seen. After it all it was four in the morning, and the sun was not even close to it's ascension. This darkness made each hospital room look unwelcoming and frightening. Outside of the rooms the hallway had bright lights beaming down from the ceiling. The lights gave the hallway a dull feeling. The quiet did not help either.

Chris walked down the hallway next to his father, remaining completely silent. He had never woken up this early in the morning before, as it was not something most eleven year olds did. But his father asked him if he wanted to see what he did at work and Chris's curiosity won out against him. So now he was following his father to his office, holding in his hands a Nintendo DS. He had brought the gaming system to kill the time when he wasn't following his father around.

After signing a book at the main desk on the floor, Chris' father opened the door to his office and Chris took a seat in the spinning chair.

“So what kind of doctor are you dad?” The young boy asked as he slowly spun around in the chair.

“Oh I’m just like every other doctor. Ya know the helpful type.” His father responded. Just then the beeper attached to his fathers light green scrubs went off. He checked it and turned the screeching device off.

“I have to take that one buddy, but I’ll show you more when I get back.” His father said. Chris stopped spinning.

“I can’t come with you?” Chris asked, and his father shook his head.

“Not for this one chief, but I won’t be long. Just don’t leave my office ok?” Chris nodded and his father gathered up some paperwork and then left. For a moment Chris looked around the office. The walls were painted white, as was the floor. The large oak desk in the room held a sleeping computer and a mountain of papers and folders. Chris could only wonder what all of it was for. On the wall was a large calendar with a bunch of sticky notes attached to it. One of the dates was Chris’ birthday. He never realized his father was such an elaborate planner.

He flipped open his DS and kept the volume on mute. He sat on that chair and played Mario in hopes of passing the time. He had been trying to beat this one level for days now, and it seemed like he was about to. Right when Mario was about to hit the flag pole and win the level, the screen suddenly went blank. Chris stared at the black void, his mouth dropped. In the back of his mind he could hear the evil king Bowser laughing at him with his deep triumphant laugh. With a sour face the boy closed his gaming device and tucked it away into his pocket. He sighed and laid back in the chair. The office seemed more dull now that he had no source of entertainment. He looked towards the computer but something told him it was locked. With no technology available, Chris was stuck in a boring office with nothing to do.

He looked at the sticky notes and the stacks of paper, and very slowly his mind began to find a way to pass the time. After taking the stacks of paper and making them form two columns with an open space in the middle. Chris took multiple sticky notes and began making them into small shapes. After he was finished he would attempt to flick them in-between the columns, trying to find a way for the small paper to stay in the middle during mid flight.

He did this for a while and then took a pencil and began drawing stick figures on the sticky notes, making each one have different stances so when he flipped it it looked like a large fight between the two figures. One figure was a dastardly pirate who had made off with a ship full of treasure, and the other was strangely enough a ninja trying to stop the pirate. In the end the ninja won because ninjas were cooler. Everyone knew that, even his dad.

After the stick fight Chris began to stick the small papers onto the wall, making a large portrait with them. On each note there was a small picture, and all together they made the image of a large bird. Chris wasn't sure what bird it was but he assumed it was really fast one with pretty feathers. He could already see it tearing through the sky, its magnificent feathers keeping it aloft.

Just when he put the last note on the wall his father walked in. For a brief moment he looked around his redecorated office. There was paper all over the place, and his piles of patient files were scattered here and there. Most of his sticky notes seemed to be used to make some kind of large depiction of a bird on a wall.

"I see you found my sticky notes." His father said as he placed his stethoscope on the desk. Chris nodded quickly and began to tell his father about the pirate and the ninja he had made up. For the first time, he didn't need Mario to help him pass the time.

## How to Save a Life

George Seyfried '18

“Is that what I think it is?” An elated smile crosses Pat’s face as our car bounces along the partially paved road.

“Oh my God,” I gasp, nearly speechless from my ravenous appetite. “It is! Civilization!”

We haven’t eaten anything for hours, a bacon, egg, and cheese, before crossing into Kansas. It’s looking as if instead of dining on the Cheerios I packed, our penultimate dinner together will be spent in a restaurant.

As our car pulls off the desolate highway and rocks back and forth onto an exhausted road, a blissful look appears on Pat’s face. Nestled between an auto-repair shop and a pharmacy lies a crippled electronic sign reading “J my’s Di er.” The diner is almost as forlorn as the highway; a lone trucker taps his chubby fingers on the filthy table.

“No way,” I mutter. “Let’s just eat cereal.” “Come on,” Pat’s anxious voice urges me. “This may be our only option.” I reluctantly agree. As Pat fumbles to take his key out of ignition, he accidentally turns on the stereo. A song from The Fray, “How to Save A Life”, blares. I can’t contain my laughter. “You listen to The Fray? A boy band?” “Shut up. This song inspires me to live the ideals we were taught at Prep, the ideals that of my dad lived.” I think back to the first time I went to Pat’s house as a freshman. On top of his crumbling fireplace, the only extravagant item in his prudent home sat a life-size portrait of a large man.

“Who is that?” I had asked.

“That’s my dad,” Pat had mumbled, staring at the picture.

“He was a financial advisor in the city, and ushered twelve people out of the World Trade Center on 9/11.” I realized that the picture was vintage, and by the tone of Pat’s voice, it became clear that he hadn’t made it out.

“You know, all this ‘men for others’ talk is really making me think about my dad. A man who died helping others. We still get flowers from the people he saved.”

Two years later, after a career day, I asked Pat what he wanted to do with his life. He had better grades than me, and could do whatever he wanted with his life.

“I want to be like my dad,” he replied. “No, not dressing up in a suit everyday and going to the City. I want to save a life.” My goofy friend’s expression turned solemn.

A year later, on our way to college, his wish would come true. We’re seated at a table. My soup resembles dish-water, and his salad is moldy. “You’re lucky CalTech lets you keep your car on campus,” I say, trying to distract each other from this disgraceful food. “Yeah, but at UCLA, the girls actually look like girls,” he smirks. Suddenly, my ear is pierced with a shrill ringing sensation. A blonde haired girl appears at the door, and is seated next to us, in front of the truck driver, who is sipping his coffee.

After the waitress takes her order, her face swells up and tears begin to accumulate in her eyes. “Where’s your parents?” the waitress asks.

She’s all tears. “Back home in Missouri. I ran away.” The truck driver’s head bobs up, and after the waitress tries and comforts her, approaches her.

“Where you headed?” he asks her, a southern accent dripping from his tone.

“LA,” she replies. My head perks up, too. Pat could give her a ride. I could run my hands through her silky blonde hair for three days.

I need someone to keep me company; Pat's jokes only get so old.

"I could take you there," the truck driver offers. I glimpse at Pat, who's stirring his iced tea. He tells me he needs to run to the bathroom.

"You'd do that for me?" she asks, as a grin appears from ear-to-ear.

"Sure would. I just gotta check on my truck." He walks out of the restaurant as Pat returns from the bathroom.

Pat sits down across from her. "How old are you?" he asks. "Fifteen," she replies, tears beginning to fill her eyes again. "Let me tell you something," Pat says, looking around the diner, then leaning close to her. "If you go with him, I can guarantee that you won't come out of that truck alive." "I'll take my chances," she replies, starting to stand up. Pat grabs her wrist and looks her straight in the eye. "You are not to get in that truck. You understand?" Pat's regular silly tone has turned stern. She laughs. "Who are you, my mom? People like you are the reason I'm getting in that truck." The truck driver comes back in a tank top, his sleeves of tattoos exposed. "You ready, honey bunny?" He asks. Pat jumps in front of him. "I'm not letting her go with you." The truck driver laughs, dropping his car keys. "Wanna fight for her? Right now?"

I hear the siren seconds before the door opens. A police officer shoves the truck driver to the side while another slaps handcuffs on the hysterical girl, and leads her to the car.

By the time the girl is safe in a police car, the truck driver has sprinted out of the diner into his truck. A middle-aged woman approaches Pat, flashing him a badge. "I'm with the Children Protection Service," she says. "Thank you very much for calling. We followed the bus she took here, but didn't know where she went. It would've been too late if she got in that truck. We did a search for the truck driver, and he has three warrants for sexual assault. You saved that girl."

Pat looks down. "I feel bad that she got arrested."

"Don't be; she's going to a detention center, but she'll be picked up by her family tomorrow."

I turn to Pat. "Pat," I say, smiling. "You saved her life."

## The Same Old Fears

Stephen Demakos '15

Jim watched Dalton's body float from his fingers. He watched the suit drift back into space, frozen forever in its rigid contortion. The astronaut's arms were lifted, palms open towards the station as if they were reaching to be pulled back.

Jim wrapped the tether round his fingers, tightening hard fists onto his only connection to the station. The body moved farther and farther until Dalton was only a speck of white receding against the empty black of space.

"Dalton's off," Jim spoke into his mic.

Charlie came in from Houston, "Roger that." Jim floated in the silence a moment, straining his ears to find any noise but the rasp of his own breath. "How's your fever?" was all he detected.

He looked to the vital chart on his wrist. "It's up to one-oh-six now." Charlie kept quiet, like his head had just dropped to his desk and he was trying hard not to let Jim hear his fist slam against the keyboard. "Don't worry about that alright? It'll go down eventually." He spoke cracked and tired like stress had manifested itself in his throat as a set of rocks, like his forty-second coffee of the week would barely keep him awake. "You know," he filled the quiet, "you know you guys are still on the news? Eight days now. Headline every night."

"I'd be insulted if anything else was," Jim said and Charlie forced a laugh. "How much detail are th-" his words broke down. His throat tightened, his stomach reached to eject whatever fluid it could. He choked on the air. He had long since emptied his insides and he only retched soft, almost silent croaks into his suit.

“They talked about how much blood Koza sweat,” Charlie spoke. “That was the most graphic. Not the uh...the hallucinating though. Media team hasn’t gone that deep yet.”

Jim’s stomach settled. His throat was pulsing with sore pain where it had tried so hard to eject what was not there. He took in a deep breath and the oxygen stung his inner linings and he forced himself instead to inhale only in spurts. “I’m heading back inside.”

“Roger...” Charlie responded, then: “Hey, Jim.”

“Yeah?”

“I’m still with you buddy, alright?”

“Yeah. Yeah, alright.”

Jim pulled along the railings and through the hatch and within minutes he had depressurized and was floating the inside of the station. Only him and the buzzing and whirring of all the mechanics and computers. Ramirez, Koza, Dalton, they had all gone. Grown hot from the fever until they could not breathe from throwing up, and they only tried to let out any possible scream that would have had them heard. And their eyes glowed in fear like they stared into the face of some creature visiting them in their passing and then they had died. One by one. Tossed into space to drift and forever be forgotten.

He pulled through the station. Each movement had turned to spinning noxiousness as he felt his fatigue take him over. The walls shook and waved and he felt his bones drained fast of life as he passed through the ship.

He pulled into the crew’s quarters. Blood and vomit drenched the sheets and parts of the walls and he knew it was an absolute nightmare to see. But it was his home and he would not leave it.

He saw a man in the corner, an astronaut fully suited. It was seated stiff against the wall as if pulled to the floor by the weight of gravity. Jim stared at the suit a long moment, testing his sanity in his head.

He knew it, knew by the cross tied to its ankles that it had belonged to Andrei Koza, and when the head turned to face him he knew. Knew in his own the vision he was seeing.

“Koza’s back.” He pulled himself towards the window and wrapped a first, second, and third blanket around his chest.

“What?”

Jim turned. Looked at himself in the suit’s visor, a curled figure shaking violently against the reflective black. “I don’t think I’m gonna be much longer, Charlie.”

“Jim what’d you say about Koza?”

His eyes looked to the window. He watched the mass of Europe. “I never went to Greece...” he mumbled. “I told that waiter at Eren’s a hundred times that I’d go. Have some...some handmade baklava. But I never did...”

“We’ll go, Jim. When you come back.”

“I think my wife hates me...” he said, ignoring Charlie’s voice. “All the time I was training I ignored her. She tried calling me at camp, remember? Every day she’d ask if I could talk and every day I’d tell her I had too much to do. She just wanted to talk...I swear she hates me...”

“You’ll be with her when you get back, Jim.”

“Shut up, Charlie.” Jim could feel Koza staring at him. “Who’s even gonna miss me. My wife hates me. My son won’t even know me.”

“But...but you’re an astronaut, Jim! Of course people will miss you.”

“C’mon. I don’t have a single friend anymore. Not even you. I’m half a thousand miles away from anyone who ever cared about me.”

The line went quiet. Jim wished desperately that he had another blanket. Every inch of his skin shook and he had become too weak to move.

“Will you...” he felt his throat begin to tighten, his stomach burn. “Will you bury me at least? Will you do that for me?”

Koza had stood. Jim caught sight in the corner of his eyes. Two feet were attached to the floor like the beast had not been in space. Jim only floated, unable to even clench his muscles as his throat turned more and more compressed.

“We’ll try...” Charlie reassured but Jim knew. Jim knew that when he died they would leave the station and the demon it had taken on to float endlessly into the expanse.

“Charlie...” Jim spoke but his throat closed and his stomach tightened. Koza bounded towards him. Its boots hammered one after the other on the metal and his gloves rose to grab Jim out of the air and pin him against the wall. Koza tightened its grip and Jim felt the bones around his throat crack from the force. He tried desperately to scream but his lungs were drowned of oxygen and he could not manage even a croak.

He looked into the visor, into his own scared and helpless face. “Jim?” Charlie asked with his voice growing bored. “You there?”

Jim reached and reached to scream but he could not.

All had gone dark around him but for the man holding his neck. He relaxed his throat. He looked into his own eyes and forgot about screaming and Koza’s grip fell away.

He floated back. He knew somewhere Charlie was calling to him but he could not hear anymore. He watched. Watched as he drifted backwards, away from the suit. Koza shrank smaller and smaller as he receded. And he watched. Until it was only a speck of white against the black.



*Dan Tuozzoli '15*

Kid Crusader  
Turner Donelan '15

“What? That doesn’t even make sense, you don’t know what you’re talking about kid.” “Hey just because I’m only 9 ½ doesn’t mean I don’t know that Batman would beat Green Lantern.” “Yeah whatever, so are you going to buy that toy?” Drake rushed to his mom on the other side of the store. “Mom? Can I have ten dollars to buy the new Batman action figure?” He said while tugging on her coat and making the puppy eye face. “Sure honey, but you’re going to have to clean the dishes and vacuum when we get back to the apartment, and please take your mask off when we’re inside.” He swiped the money from his mother’s hands “It’s not a mask mom it is called a cowl.” Drake had his Batman costume on he got for his birthday, he gets a new one every year since he keeps outgrowing them.

Normally his mom does not allow him to wear it in public, but today was a special day of the week. The day that he got to go to the comic book store down the block with all the cool toys and books and posters. But Drake always stayed in the front left of the small store, right where all the Batman things were.

Running to the back to the counter he handed the teenage cashier the bill for the new Justice League Batman action figure. “Alright kid here’s your toy, have fun with it.” “Mom, mom, mom! Check it out! This one comes with a mini batarang and you can throw it and it’ll go all the way across the room!” “That’s very cool sweetie, now help me pick out a Wonder Woman comic book for your sister.”

“I don’t know, what about this one, it’s called ‘From the Flames’” “Sure that seems like a good one, I can’t tell any of them apart anyway. Let’s pay for this and head home.”

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“Hey Diana! We’re back.” Drake shouted. “Ugh you don’t have to shout, I’m right down the hall” his sister said slumping out of her room. “Did you get me anything at the store?” “Yes we got you a Wonder Woman about flames or something like, Drake get your sister the book.” “You know Batman would beat Wonder Woman in a fight,” he said handing her the comic. “Drake they wouldn’t fight in the first place they’re on the same side, beside Batman doesn’t have any powers, he doesn’t even use guns.” “That’s because he doesn’t have to use them he has martial art skills like karate and stuff. Plus you only like Wonder Woman because you have the same name as her” Drake said as she rolled her eyes, “Mom can I go play with Batman on the roof?” “Only if you promise to wear your sweatshirt underneath your costume.” “It’s not a costume its protective armor.” He said this while running down the hall to his room. He grabbed his sweatshirt off his bed and his Two-Face action figure from underneath. “Make sure you’ll be back before it gets dark.” His mom called from down the hall. As he ran to the door he told his mom, “Batman isn’t afraid of the dark.”

Drake was squatting on the edge of his apartment building a jungle of brick and cement apartment buildings. He looked at the sunset that had just begun. The Two-Face and Batman action figure stood on the patio table besides him. He had his cowl over his head. He felt safe and he felt like he was in control. He looked around the city that surrounded him and he saw obstacles. He saw the gaps between him and the buildings to his right and left. He walked over to his right until he came the edge.

“Now that I’m looking across it isn’t that far, not even enough room for a fire escape,” he said trying to convince himself. Looking down he thought “Even if I do fall the buildings are only three stories high and there are dumpsters full of soft garbage down there.” He backed up until he couldn’t see the windows of the building across the gap. He closed his eyes and clenched his fists remembering that Robin did this stuff all the time.

He was ready. He sprinted forward and jumped off the edge. For a second he felt exactly like Robin. He could feel how high up he was and he could picture himself and what a sight it was. A 9 ½ year old boy in Batman protective armor jumping from one apartment building to another, his mom would have killed him. When he landed on the other side he fell onto his knee and stayed there for a couple minutes shaking and in awe. He finally stood up and looked back still amazed at his accomplishment. He felt amazing and wanted to do it again. So he did, and again and again and again. He had never been happier in his entire life, he was finally like Batman. It was dark but Drake didn’t notice since the street lamps gave him enough light; he wanted to see how far he could go.

He ran across the rooftops, with his cape blowing behind him. He climbed over air vents and sneaked by adults grilling on top celebrating the weekend. He even jumped by some teenagers sitting around passing a funny looking cup. He jumped building after building until he lost track of how many he jumped over. Finally he had to stop because he got to a gap that was too big. He sat down and started to try and catch his breath. He had a huge grin on his face and couldn’t make it go away no matter how many times he reminded himself that Batman doesn’t smile.

He was looking at the blue building across the gap when he heard a women shriek. He stood up and looked down and saw that in the alley underneath the soft orange glow of the streetlamp there was a women in a red dress and wearing a huge shiny pearl necklace. There was also a man who was slowly backing the woman towards the end of the alley. The woman threw something she picked up from the ground but she missed and hit a pile of mattresses next to the building Drake was on. “She needs somebody’s help” Drake thought to himself, “I better go back and get mom”. He turned his head back and saw all the buildings he jumped and he remembered what he just did. He put one foot on the edge of the building, his chest puffed and his head up high. Backing up furtherer than he did the first time he looked back to the rows and rows of buildings he conquered and made his decision. He was ready. He sprinted forward and jumped off the edge. This time feeling exactly like Batman.



*Dan Tuozzoli '15*

# Essays

A Father and his Son: 1,620 Hours on the Road  
and Counting  
Paul Cashman '15

From 2011 to 2014 I spent two months of my teenage life on the road. I spent 10 weeks, 70 days, 1,620 hours, 97,200 minutes, or 5,832,000 seconds--not counting miscellaneous trips from place to place-- sitting in the seat of a standard Subaru Impreza or a red Prius that looks like it came straight out of the movie *The Other Guys*. These precarious hours of driving were consumed with homework, eating, or my personal favorite, sleeping. Back and forth from the front porch of my home to the front porch of Fairfield Prep, I watched my high school years dwindle away as the hours and hours in the car began to deteriorate my very soul. I felt as if the car was Satan's den, a fiery red container that would deal me back pain, car sickness, and during the winter, temperatures that would make our boogers freeze in our noses. These unfortunate encounters are child's play compared to the slick wintery roads of the Merritt Parkway that caused our tires to skid constantly, or the ferocious rain that entrapped our vehicle in such a horrid gale, that it seemed as if Poseidon himself were wishing a watery death upon us. I save talk of traffic because I would rather forget the horrible days spent in the seemingly crowded parking lot that was the Merritt(less) Parkway before illustrating them. And to top it all off, I spent every one of those 5,832,000 seconds with my sarcastic, ass riding, ninety mile per hour driving, creator: my father.

Most teenagers would cringe at the very idea of spending an extended period of time each day with their father or mother, so naturally (because I am a teenager) I cringed.

I had no desire to spend four years sitting next to the man whose primary job (other than teaching at Fairfield Prep) was to discipline, embarrass, harass, and interrogate me. I add interrogation to that list because being the child of a teacher at your school is the equivalent to having a security camera crammed in every nook and cranny of your body. I remember the fond words of my father on a Friday morning before a mixer saying, “Christian Paul Cashman, I swear to God, if I hear you were grinding on a single girl tonight, your ass is grass and I’m the lawnmower.” That night I commenced to grind on every girl with two eyes and a head, because any son who receives an order from his father is required to disregard it. Of course now as a senior, I know grinding is for kids and that a true man can woo a girl with the graceful step of a waltz or the energetic moves that go with that song “Twist and Shout” (clearly my childhood should have belonged to the eighties).

My point is not to portray my illicit “sexual” activities as a freshman, rather to illustrate the relationship my father and I maintained throughout high school. Every ride seemed as if it would end in World War III, whether the fight be about grades, sports, disciplinary issues, or other idiocies. After many years of battling for the win of the argument, I realize that my absolute and utter ignorance was the reason for the controversies that constantly took place. My father would say don’t do this, and I would do exactly that. I have allowed myself to reach that stage of life where you look back and say, “God dammit, my old man was right all along.”

When I reached this stage, all the memories of the bad fights and angry moments disappeared, and the beautiful times emerged. I recalled a time where on an early Fall morning, riding on the highway, my father and I would look up at the overwhelming sunrise that would appear, and look at each other and smile because we both realized that words could



## Wiffle Ball

Matthew Rusin '15

Picture this. I, a six foot one, seventeen year-old; high school senior am standing next to a spray-painted home plate in my backyard. The pitcher is peering down at me from the mound while my black bat gleams in the sun like a shadow from the left field foul pole. The pitcher winds and throws the white sphere, twisting and turning as it approaches my waiting bat. Then, Crack! My bat connects with its target in a blink, sending the projectile sailing over the brand new, cedar smelling, outfield wall. “Aww man Matt, you cracked the ball” says my brother, Ben, as I round the bases, staked not into infield dirt, but the soft grass of my backyard Wiffle Ball field.

Wiffle Ball has always held a special place in my life. As a child, it provided a great medium for friendships to blossom as the other players and I dwelled in the same space for however long we desired; setting goals for longer homeruns and better curveballs. The best feeling in the world was getting lost in a game for hours without ever thinking about a possible last inning...or anything else.

Now as the pressures of college and hormones have well been introduced, many of my former competitors have retired, moving on to other forms of fun. Yet, I still stand at the plate, reminiscing about what I once was and what I wish could be again. But, if my reason for standing would be to remember times past, I could just as well be inside. Standing at the plate is my signal; my sign, that I am still here, ready to play the lifelong game.

Just as I have grown to interpret the world in different contexts, Wiffle Ball has grown alongside me.

If I have a huge test coming up, I will go outside to hit. For the ten or fifteen swings I have allotted time for, I am able to rediscover confidence in my own talents so that when I am studying and taking the test I know that I am going to hit a homerun. When I play Wiffle Ball as my current self, the only place I am is in the batter's box. I like to think of myself as a Wiffle Ball playing Buddha, becoming one with the eternal Brahman. Sometimes I will play in bare feet to feel the earth beneath my toes so that for at least for a couple minutes I know exactly where I am. So often my mind will be in ten different places at once, but when I play Wiffle Ball all of these extensions of my spirit return to me as I knock another homerun over the wall.

It would seem pointless in the grand scheme of life and survival to just be swinging a bat for hours on end. Such a task as Wiffle Ball does not feed my stomach nor fill my mind with mathematical functions, nor does it reflect the universal balance of predator and prey. Instead, playing Wiffle Ball feeds my soul. I find that playing Wiffle Ball as a teenager allows for me to exist in a realm of almost mystical context where the only focus is hitting the ball, just as it was when I was young. In a world where temptations for evil are always on my doorstep, Wiffle Ball provides me with an opportunity to enter into a world from which I may feed my spirit with the simple nourishment of competition and fun. Like a child sucks on a Popsicle after getting a tooth pulled, the game of Wiffle Ball is both enjoyment and a remedy for my soul. I enjoy the absolution that it brings from stress and anxiety- turning them into the power behind my swing.

This is why I play Wiffle Ball and so fervently love to stand with a plastic bat in my hand. When I am batting, everything makes sense. Everything is instinct, allowing my mind, heart, and soul to reconnect after the challenges of the day have split them apart.

Standing on the artificial turf batter's box, I am able to live fully in the moment; living in unity with my surroundings. When I stand at the plate ready to swing, I know who I am and I know where I am. I know that I am Matthew Rusin and I am at home.



*Dan Tuozzoli '15*

Sports Exhibition of the Forest and the  
Trees

Simon Whiteman '15

As the slicing wind howls against the windows of my bedroom, I sense the urgency of winter's approach. The once-radiant light streaming through the glass fades into silent blackness earlier and earlier each day. We are completing the cycle, sliding down the rugged back of November, soon to plummet into the chilling depths of winter. I glance down at the Bible resting on the nightstand beside me. A subtle bookmark peers out, marking that famous passage from Ecclesiastes 3:1, "There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens."

Suddenly, I recognize a correlation: as the seasons change, so do the sports that we play. Each sport shares innate qualities with both its season and the type of athlete that plays it. For me, the differences between indoor track and baseball perfectly illustrate how these sports suit both their competitors and their seasons. Track is isolated, like a cold winter snowfall. Baseball's collaboration appeals to an athlete who thrives on teamwork, like a fusion of spring trees to create a vibrant forest.

In both track and baseball, competitors don widely recognized and distinctive uniforms. Yet, the styles of these uniforms create contrasting impressions of the athletes who wear them. Even in winter, indoor track athletes sport uncomfortably short shorts, slim tank tops, and spiked shoes that boast the lowest weight of any cleat available. In this equipment, designed to be little more than a second skin, the athlete is nearly bare, like the trees of winter.

As the runner steps up to the starting line, dropping his leaves of warm-up gear, his bark reveals itself. The bark, or skin, is personal to each. Some runners wear shirts underneath their garments. Others wear multicolored high socks. To each wintry tree, a new style. As I recall the scene of a starting line, I see no forest. I see bare trees, stretching their branches to the chilly night sky, each holding its own ground.

For baseball, it is not so. Each ballplayer wears the same uniform, the same pair of pants, the same jersey, and the same hat. Certain individual touches, like sunglasses or sweatbands, can be noticed, but they barely stand out among the consistency. A baseball team is cohesive, like a copse of trees. Each player, with his common springtime foliage, is indistinguishable from the forest. Before each new inning, ballplayers layer their hands with their teammates in a cheer, like trees intertwining their tangled branches to produce a unified image. Both track and baseball use numbers to identify their athletes, but with different significance. To a track athlete, a number is trivial, used only for identification, and varies by race. A runner may have more than fifty numbers by the end of the season. As the number is peeled off across the finish line, the only interest is the name on the score sheet. Each tree stands alone. To a baseball player, his number is his only identity. It matters not which tree in the verdure he is. Individual names are forgotten. Players fight to retain their personal numbers. The only significant name for the ballplayer is that of the team on the front of his jersey; he sways his branches as a proud member of the Redwood Forest, and nothing more.

Both track and baseball attract distinct types of athletes whose personalities mirror characteristics of the seasons in which they play. Training alone, battling the chill December wind, the sprinter is a solitary fox. While the snow falls around him, the fox stands silent and isolated.

He puts on his gloves and begins his laps, with a goal to shatter his personal record. Each step against the frozen gravel turns his feet into to paws. The runner, unified with the desolate winter, lives alone.

Conversely, ballplayers sprout in bunches, assemblies of tulips emerging amongst the vivacious plant life. Like flowers, baseball players grow together, hitting and fielding collectively to meet team goals. In the magnificent foliage of an Easter meadow, every flower contributes to the surroundings. Alone, each baseball player is only as beautiful as his own petals. Together, on the field, they make up a beautiful vista.

As I sit in bed, drifting on the edge of a peaceful wintry sleep, I listen to the wail of the distant wind against the bare trees outside. In a few weeks, for track season, I will need to imitate those lone trees, stretching my bare branches to stand alone at the starting line. Yet, in my heart, I know that I identify most with the explosion of beauty in a springtime meadow. At my core, I am a ballplayer and I can't wait for baseball season.



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