

The Bellarmine Review

Volume 75

Spring 2017



Bellarmino Review

75th Anniversary

Dear Reader,

I speak for the entire *Bellarmino Review* staff and writers as well as Fairfield Prep's Creative Writing Club members when I say that I was honored to assist in the production of the 75th Volume of the *Bellarmino Review*. The *Bellarmino Review* has fostered English writing excellence at Fairfield Prep since 1942 and remains Fairfield Prep's oldest student-run publication, hinging exclusively on student-produced work.

For seventy-five years the *Bellarmino Review* has striven to include Fairfield Prep's Jesuit heritage in all that we do. In the tradition of Saint Robert Bellarmine S.J., we strive to, like the Doctor of the Church, integrate both human knowledge and literary excellence into our prose, poetry, and artwork. As our mission statement states, we believe that through the authenticity of our written thoughts, we may unknowingly stumble on truth. Over the course of the last seventy-five years the *Bellarmino Review* has provided a space for the authentic ideas of Fairfield Prep students to congregate and thus, in the spirit of our Jesuit heritage and the motto *Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam*, encounter truth.

As someone who has been both a member of the Creative Writing Club and a contributor and editor for the *Bellarmino Review* for three years, I understand both the significance of the *Bellarmino Review* and its role in enhancing

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Fairfield Prep's community. The *Bellarmino Review* gives voice to the Fairfield Prep community and offers its students the opportunity to both share and publish their work. During my time as a member of the Creative Writing Club and contributor to the *Bellarmino Review*, I have been astonished by the sheer diversity in each pool of authors and the complex ideas that each member of the Prep community can offer to the *Review*. The *Bellarmino Review* is a place for the quiet artist to be heard, and heard loudly he will be.

Thank you, and please enjoy the 75th Edition of the *Bellarmino Review*.

Sincerely,

George Seyfried '18

Assistant Editor-in-Chief, *Bellarmino Review*

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Vice President.....George Seyfried '18
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.....Obumneme Nkwo '17
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Jack Fallar '20, Gavin Neumeyer '20, Pablo Zarama '19
Christopher Vivas-Nava '19, Juvaughn Lee '19, Kevin Gal-
lagher '17,

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 the 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.

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Poetry

Be You

Brandon Keklik '17

Don't worry about others, just be you.
To be your own person, you'll truly feel free,
Don't conform to anything, live life how you want to.

I'll try to describe the feeling, you haven't got a clue.
To transform yourself into someone new, someone you want
to be,
Don't worry about others, just be you.

It doesn't matter if your shirt is red, hair is green, or your
skin is blue,
To show people who you truly are is what they need to see,
Don't conform to anything, live life how you want to.

Get out of your comfort zone, try that new hairdo,
Don't get carried away though, I'm not saying to be care-
free.
Don't worry about others, just be you.

Go ahead, tell your friends your favorite food is gas station
fish stew,
If they'll still look at you the same, I cannot guarantee,
Don't conform to anything, live life how you want to.

I will assure you that this different outlook on life will give
you a wider view,
If you take up my challenge, I salute thee.
Don't worry about others, just be you,
Don't conform to anything, live life how you want to.



Brothers Forever

Ayinde Johnson '17

The first day we entered Fairfield Prep
Four years ago.

Our middle school days drawn to a close,
And now here, eyes wide, facing new changes.
An hour ago, we boarded the train, waving goodbye
To our mothers and facing the horde of boys on their way to
school.

So many questions, so many echoes.
We settled in, finding more friends than
Could be imagined. Our classes were hard: so much prep
Work. But we loved it, this new school
We called our own. We joined teams and clubs, growing
close
To people with whom we can now
Barely share a goodbye.

So many new experiences, so many new changes.

Our teachers were funny, helping these changes
History and English, feeding passion, loved.
As we moved up, it was hard to say goodbye.
But we knew that every teacher here at Prep
Would enrich our minds and keep us close.
We began to love everything about this school.
We were luckier than most; not every high school

Was as great as ours. We saw changes
In ourselves and our friends, and we slowly began to close
The doors of our childhood. We learned the importance of
you

Before I, of service, of teamwork. We learned how to Prep
For the lives that we would live when we finally had to say
goodbye.

We beat our opponents, waving goodbye
As they cried. A school who could never match the famous
Prep.

Together, we went through it all: changes,
Happy and hard times; anything you
Could throw at us, we took it, and it drew us close.

Christmas Cookies

Chris Giannini '17

I am walking along a cold dark hall.
Bones shaking so fast, I'm surprised I don't fall.
The snow, falling through rays of light,
Icicles forming over a long night.
A gust of wind cuts right through my thin, tan pants
Blinding my eyes, putting me in a trance,
So I just walk along an icy road,
Salt all over the ground. It must have snowed.
I walk inside my dark unlit home,
The smell of cookies, wondering who is home?
I walk on over and grab a big tray,
Chocolate chip, oatmeal, and sugar cookies in an array.
It is almost midnight, I need to rest,
My stomach is full, crumbs linger on my chest.



Circle of Life

Chidi Nkwo '17

School life, filled with promises of future,
Opportunities to impact the world,
Training to help mend ourselves, a suture
Refusing to lose, our faithful fists curled
Toward all the sadness and hate and pain.
A world, dark, in desperate need of light,
A planet, suffering, beaten and shamed
Not to go softly into the goodnight,
We do all we can, we do what is best
To bring back the joyful world we once had,
To heal the planet of which we are guests.
Slowly, surely we purge earth from the bad
And inject more. Plague, war, oh God the pain,
Bringing our earth to the brink once again.



Enticing Sea

James Paul '19

The water surges as if to tease.
I catch sight of the puff;
I instinctively fear the breeze.

Down the verge comes the freeze,
But I notice strangely enough;
The water surges as if to tease.

Within I see it slowly appease.
Although, I wonder if it is just a bluff;
I instinctively fear the breeze.

The water sprays around like bees.
I rapidly realize I may need to luff.
The water surges as if to tease.

My mind begins to ease;
For the growing gale has heightened to only rough.
I instinctively fear the breeze.

I feel the puff proceed across my knees.
I know I have not done enough;
The water surges as if to tease,
I instinctively fear the breeze.

God Father

Chris Ray '17

Remembering all the times you looked out for me,
Always giving advice,
Telling college stories of you and my dad,
Supporting everything I did and always having faith in it.
Then came the news you had cancer.

You put up the strongest fight I've ever seen,
Never thinking negative, always thinking positive,
Still coming to see me even when times were hard for you.
Always thinking of other people first, even with what life
had given you.

Then came the day.
A crisp spring morning,
Getting ready for church,
Rushing to get out of the house.
The phone rang, and the news came.
It seemed as if it was not true,
That you were still with us
Even though you left this world.
But, I know you'll always be with me,
Looking out for me,
And helping me get through life, with the courage you had.
You will never be forgotten.

Hibernation Season

Matthew Francescani '17

In vacant lots, piles of snow form
Lines, with mud, veins of gold
The tepid summer still I mourn.

For this is the unpleasant norm,
Though not unprecedented, still bold,
In vacant lots, piles of snow form.

From the sky, thousands of particles swarm.
But I am unable to appreciate what I behold;
The tepid summer still I mourn.

Inside, I take shelter from the storm,
I lie in resignation. The weather cannot be controlled.
In vacant lots, piles of snow form.

I attempt to achieve comfort in my dorm
To sink back into my seasonal mold.
The tepid summer still I mourn.

To my feelings, the weather will not conform,
So thick sheets shall become my stronghold.
In vacant lots, piles of snow form,
The tepid summer still I mourn.

Love? Or Pain?

Devonte Shaw '17

The worst thing about love is when
someone doesn't love you back.
Whenever I think about her I feel like
I'm gonna have a heart attack.
My heart starts racing and I can't think straight,
all I wanna do is take her out on a date.
But I won't get the opportunity
because she doesn't want me and
that's something I can see. I can't get over how
nothing can compare to her hair.
How I feel like I'm about to die
whenever I look her in the eye.
How she makes me feel
makes it easier to deal
with the struggles of life,
but it hurts like a wound from a knife
knowing I can't have her as my future wife.
Is love as beautiful as a
white dove flying in the sky?
Or is it just something to keep us down
as life passes us by?
Is it finding someone in whom we can confide?
Or is it finding someone
who only brings pain.... you decide.

Never Lost

Nate Miller '17

There were two,
Two before me I was told;
They were twins.
Premature,
The reason why they didn't make it.

Would I have been here if they did?
Probably
Not,
Most likely.
My parents would have stopped after them.

When September eighteenth comes around,
It's a very hard day.
It's never easy losing someone,
Especially a child.
They were lost, but never forgotten.



Omran

David Smeriglio '19

Winter has finally approached Ali,
All that is lost; joy shall never be
“Do not cry! The day is still young for it is just dawn”
Winter came early for this sweet fawn.

The cold of the air, the still of the wind,
Why must you suffer for those who have sinned?
A young boy aged only of ten
Dying for the sins of men.

“Go, Ali, mustn’t keep death waiting”
You shall find your new safe haven.
Tears were scarce if any.
Oh sweet Ali, one life too short one story of many.



Orchestral Feels

Alexandros Alatakis '17

The notes are hit, the shivers follow.
Nothing to see, only to hear

The full tone fills the hollow.

It makes it hard to even swallow,
It sounds so loud, it seems so near.
The notes are hit, the shivers follow
It blasts off like Apollo
As beautiful as the words of Shakespeare.

The full tone fills the hollow.

It sits you in your seat, you sit and wallow,
The wandering thoughts disappear,
The notes are hit, the shivers follow,
The cellos sing like a tree swallows,
The conductor like a puppeteer.

The full tone fills the hollow.

Full and warm notes has always been the motto,
The audience applauds with a great cheer,
The notes are hit, the shivers follow
The full tone fills the hollow.

Our New Home

Michael Tromba '17

She was green and beautiful back then,
Cruising gently through the night's sky,
In her calm and steady orbit,
Time and time again.

Look into the sky young children,
Just past the smoke and fog.
She once lived there in peace
Now floating dead like a log.

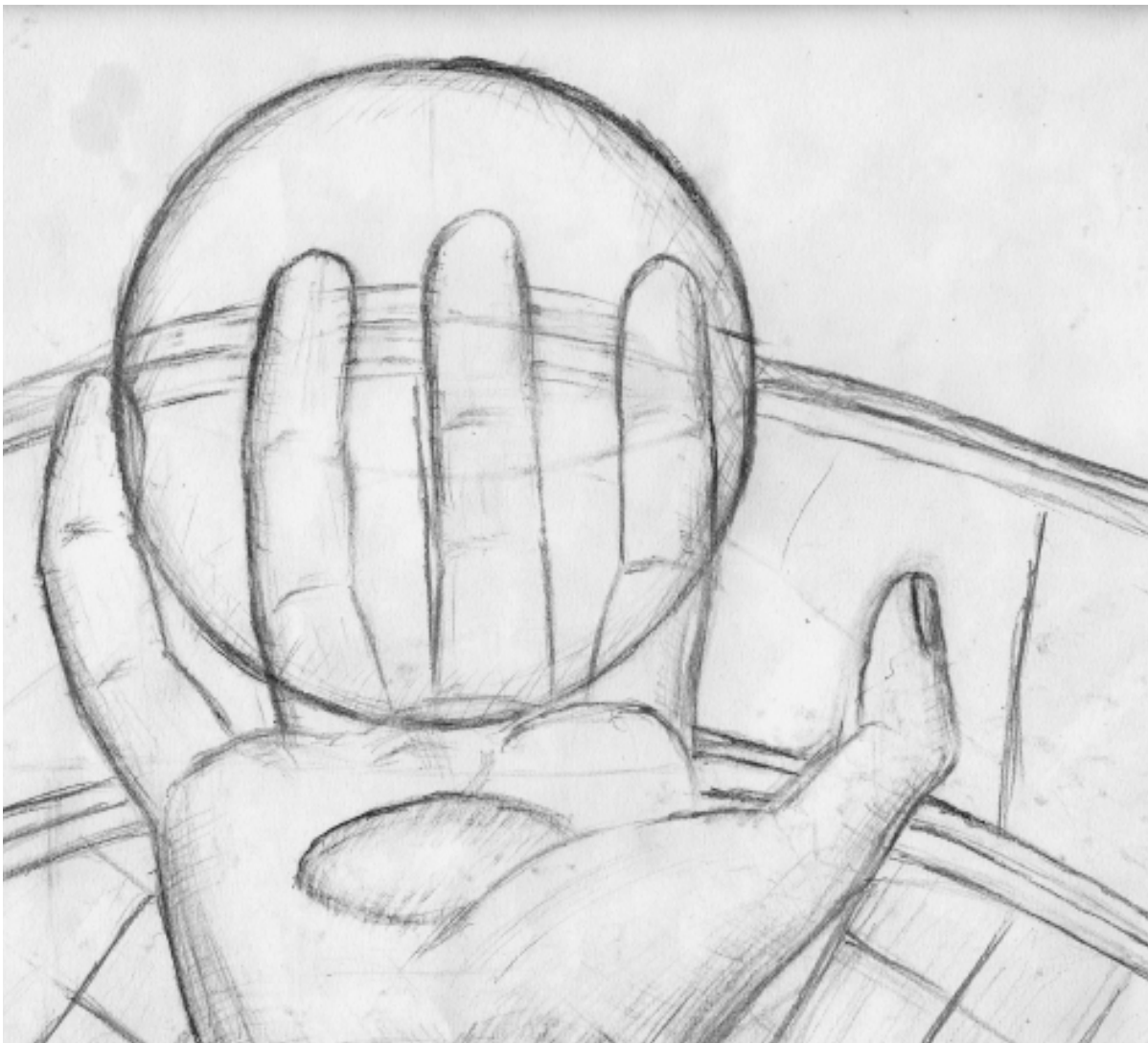
She was way too young to die,
It was never her own fault.
I often ask myself why
We forced her into a halt.

I, nor he, nor any of us did it,
But rather us all collectively,
Contributed to the disaster
Us all, and him, and me.

We complained whenever they told us
To turn off the lights and conserve.
To cut back on fossil fuels, thus,
We now have what we deserve.

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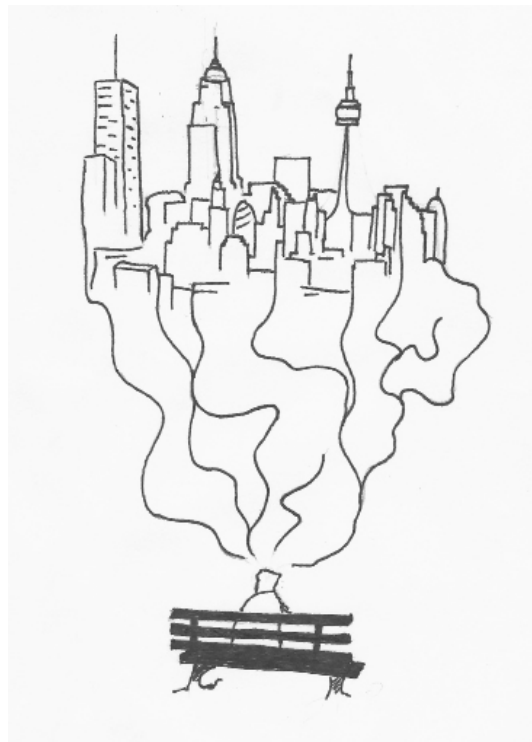
Now we are forced to live in the cold,
For the rest of our days to come,
Let's hope this new planet does uphold
Avoid neglect- let's not succumb.



The City

Patrick Godino '17

On every subway, a hundred stories.
People with a purpose and their own plans.
Some are twenty, some thirty, some forty,
Others older. Typically, they hold hands
With the stanchion. They all can't be on
Their way to the same place. This mundane space
They share only briefly. It shan't be long
Before they're running upstairs. It's a race
To see who gets to the top. For no one
They stop. Not for bikers, buses or cars.
There is business to run, jobs to get done,
And then, tomorrow, the process restarts.
I sit on the subway, filled with wonder
Over the city that I am under.



The Coin

Jack Smith '19

The coin comes around to reward, loyal deeds,
Between the rich gent and the hard working lad.
The wealth and the power, his only needs.

Like a drug, it inspires him to work with great speed.
A dime for a dozen can make men feel glad.
The coin comes around to reward loyal deeds,

The devilish coin can and will likely mislead,
Like a moth to the light, a good man goes bad.
The wealth and the power, his only needs.

The coin roots in his heart, just like a small seed.
Like King Midas, he's just chasing a fad,
But the coin comes around to reward loyal deeds.

The coin persuades law to let bad men go free-
To wreak havoc and harm even though he is mad.
The wealth and the power, his only needs.

He asks why not reject the coin and secede?

But the thought of the system is ironclad,
As the coin comes around to reward loyal deeds.
The wealth and the power, his only needs.

The Ugly Truth

Justin Gonzalez '17

We look up, and see the brightness of the sun.
Back to earth, violence is reality,
We look down and see the flash of a gun.

Cruelty is a weight, it weighs over a ton,
And it leads to somber and grim finality.
We look up and see the brightness of the sun.

Death is too fast, it can't be outrun.
With all this, peace is an abnormality,
We look down to see the flash of a gun.

Ignoring this would be foolish for anyone,
These criminals, unconcerned with legality,
We look down and see the brightness of the sun.

Parents suffering the loss of daughter or son,
Having to deal too soon with humans' mortality,
We look down and see the flash of a gun.

At the end of it all no one has won
Is anyone concerned with mortality?
We look up and see the brightness of the sun.
We look down and see the flash of a gun.

The Villains

Jack O'Connor '19

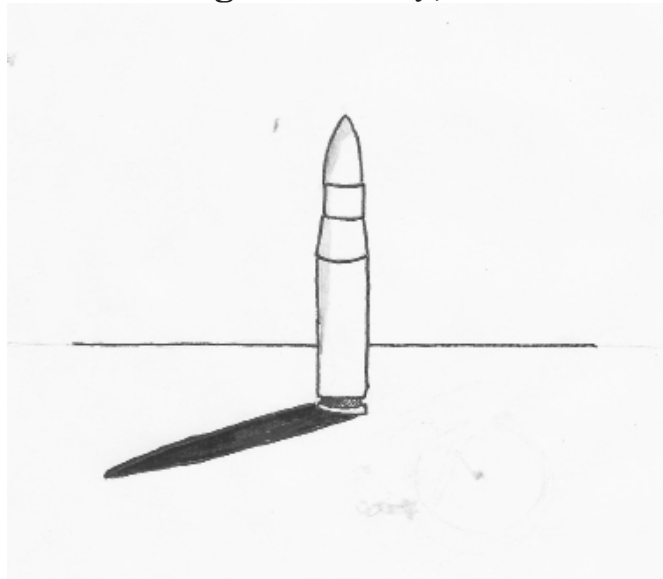
The villains always start to gather around eight o'clock,
And search to find their newest prey while lurking down the block.

We citizens all run and try to overcome the fear,
But in our minds, we know too well our looming fate is near.

They hold their weapons by their sides and walk amongst the night,
To try and stop their enemies and win this dreadful fight.
The bullets cut straight through the air and sprint on down the lane,
And through all this brutality, the villains still remain.

They run and stomp on through the town like monsters in black
boots.

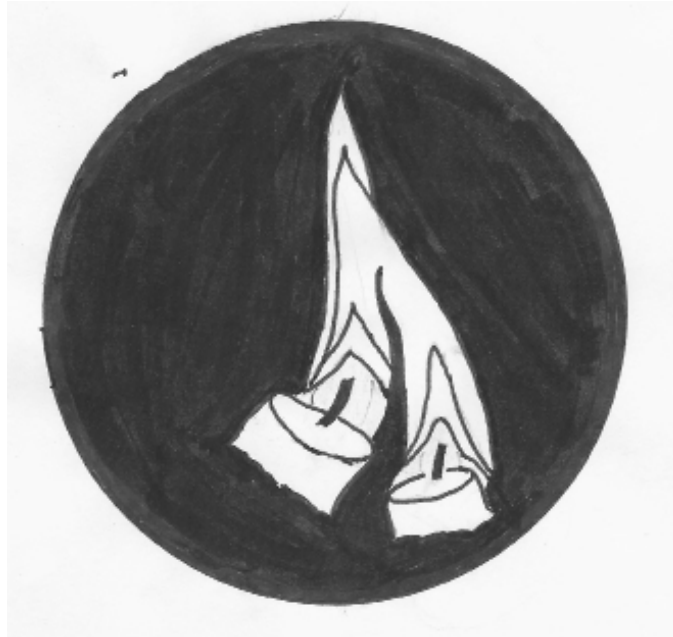
They show no love nor care at all, just heathens dressed in suits.
We citizens have dealt with all this grievance and this pain,
And as we suffer through each day, the villains still remain.



Two Flames

Zachary Arumugam '17

It takes some time, starting off slow.
Two flames uniting, becoming one fire.
It is gradual, rather hard to grow,
But when it burns, it's hard not to admire.
The fire is strong, it's light is bright,
You wish for the candle flames to last,
The warmth makes you revel in delight
It is good to see that some time has passed.
It keeps you warm on those cold winter nights,
It gives you hope during hot summer days.
As it burns it can take you to new heights,
But only if you keep that flame ablaze.
Falling in love is not easy, yes it's true,
But love, love is the greatest thing we do.



Untitled

Kyan Keel '17

What is this thing we call community?
It is different throughout the world.
In some places it's about unity,
In others there is a lot of discord.

For people there's one type of race, that's human.
Yet we base our world off differences.
Until we are separated, great span.
On earth we have exposed our ignorance.

Heaven on Earth is what we truly need,
Hard to get when we are our enemy.
The change will begin with whom that we breed,
We'll have to learn to be a family.

Prep, I've learned to be a man for others,
I enjoy everyday with my brothers.

Writer's Block

Adam McAree '17

The solitary Poet,
An old hand,
Staring at a blank page,
With a wary eye,
Tapping his pen
Against the desk.

With a twitching hand,
With a tired, scanning eye,
The ancient Poet,
Tired of the page
Dropped his pen
On the desk.

Rubbing his hand
And his weary eye,
The frustrated Poet
Looked at the page,
And with his pen
Stabbed the desk.

Sitting at the desk,
He looked at his hand

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With his eye.
The angry Poet
Hated the page.
He picked up the pen,

And wrote words with the pen
While his finger tapped the desk.
He moved his hand,
The a guide through his eye,
The sad Poet
Crumbled the page.

Selecting a new page
After putting down his pen
In a cup on the desk,
On his forehead lay his hand.
Staring with stress filled eyes
Was the lost Poet,

Taking his hand and looking with his eye,
The Poet looked at his desk.
But the pen continued to put no words on the page.

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Haikus

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Christopher Ligas '17

I lay in my bed
Listening to my music
In a pool of thought

James McGuire '17

Land under our feet
Mountains shake to the earth's fury
The land is the fury

Zachary Arumugam '17

Staring at the trees
Tranquility in the woods
Night begins to rise

The Seasons

Jac Young Stuhlman '18

Fall:

Pushing dead leaves
A man raking them all up
Wind taking them away

Spring:

Sun glares off the water
He is blinded by the light
The light is dancing

Summer:

The blazing sun burns
He has to move to the shade
The sun still beats down

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Frank Fortunati '17

The hour draws near
I can tell, there is no hope
Parent-teacher night

Alex Capozziello '17

I add a filter
To change my photo at ease
But I change myself

Miles Kaps '17

A white soft quilt lay
Snowflakes dance around and play
A beautiful day

Prose

\$1,245.14

Nick Allen '18

If I remember correctly, Dash found our apartment around the time Mom and Dad died. He claimed it'd show weakness if we moved in with a relative, so he went downtown one afternoon to look for a place. He bought the first one he saw, and we were living there within the week. Dash had dropped out of school his sophomore year, and I was a junior. The year was 1973, so he was about nineteen then. I was seventeen. A couple days after we moved into the apartment, he convinced me to drop out. Told me it was time wasted. Said it was about time I became a man and did something dangerous. So I did it, even though I always liked school. I didn't want to, but Dash made me. That's how things were with us.

Our apartment was nothing to speak about, really. A twin mattress on the floor for the two of us, our record player stacked on old newspapers beside it, and two boxes for our clothes. That's all we could fit in the place. The building was filled with junkies and burnouts, all hoping to bum a couple bucks from us. The plumbing didn't work, and we shared a bathroom with the rest of the people on our floor. The electricity was off most of the time, too. Dash and I used to steal candles from the "boutique" down the street so we could read at night. He always made sure we read. I never really understood why, considering he made me drop out like he had. Anyway, the place was a dump. But it was our dump.

We'd been living there for a couple weeks, getting by on the cash we got from selling Dad's Chevy. He loved that thing.

One night, Dash told me we were low on money. He said we wouldn't be able to afford rent unless we started working. So the next day, we started searching for odd jobs around the neighborhood. There wasn't much available, except for a gig at a butcher's shop. The boss said we'd have to work from 3-7 A.M. every other day hauling meat from a truck into the back room. We also had to clean the kitchen. Without hesitation, I remember, Dash said we'd take it. I didn't really ever get a chance to chime in, and that was how everything went with us. He was the older brother.

I found out in no time why the job was open. It was awful. The meat we carried was still bloody and had an ungodly smell to it, like the animal had been killed a couple minutes earlier. Some of the slabs were 50 pounds, and we worked with our bare hands. I was scrawny back then, too, so I had to fight to keep up with Dash. Cleaning the kitchen was almost worse, though. Mopping up blood, fat, and veins from the ground wasn't really my strong suit. I complained near every five minutes, but Dash kept his head down. He did his work and didn't say a word about it. I knew he hated it, too. He just wouldn't admit it. He never told me how he really felt, I guess. That's just the kind of guy he was.

So we kept working there for two or three months until I couldn't take it anymore. Dash would've worked there for the rest of his life if he had to, I reckon. But me, I was through with it. I just couldn't do it. Told myself I'd never eat a steak again. I convinced Dash to quit with me by pulling the old

“you made me drop out of high school” trick. It worked well, too. Anyway, we’d been stashing our earnings under the mattress, and neither of us really had any idea how much we had. So that afternoon, we counted it up. \$412.37. I’ll never forget it. Neither of us expected it to be anywhere close to that. We looked up at each other, smiled, and even cried a little. Yeah, I know what you’re thinking. Who cries about earning a couple bucks, right? It was different back then, though. We weren’t embarrassed. We’d been through of a lot. We earned that cash together. We had something to be proud of for the first time in a while. Give us a break.

We figured we ought to keep looking for odd jobs, so we did. Every time we got bored, we quit and moved on. That’s how things worked for the next four months. We were like Butch and Sundance back then. All we did was cruise around with each other and make some cash in the process. Those really were the days, man. We made some decent money, too, and Dash figured we had enough to last us another couple months or more in the apartment. We didn’t spend our money on stupid stuff, either. Dad taught us all about those guys who win the lottery and spend all their money in a week. Dash and I only ever bought food and cigarettes. The rest was for rent. In those four months, we earned \$832.77. That made our total \$1,245.14. We weren’t millionaires, but we were satisfied. Dash never really told me what he thought about all this working and earning money. He worked every job like it’d be his last, and was even tighter with the money than I considered my-

self to be. It was a good time for us, though, and I knew Dash couldn't be mad. We were in this together, and we were making a life for ourselves. We really depended on each other back then.

Dash used to shower at the YMCA every Friday night while I bought dinner from some burger joint or another. That was the routine, no matter what job we had at the time. One of those nights I got home with McDonald's and Dash wasn't there. He usually got home by 6:30, and it was almost 7. I wasn't worried, though. The walk to the Y was about a half hour. I figured he lost track of time in the shower. While I waited, I decided to count our money again. I did it every now and then, just to make myself feel good. Made me feel like an adult. But this time was different. We were missing \$12. I factored in the amount I'd spent on the burgers, too, so I knew wasn't losing my mind. I counted two more times just to be sure, and it was the truth. It freaked me out. I knew how tight Dash was with the money, and I knew I hadn't spent it. When he got home an hour later, I didn't say anything, though. I figured I'd wait it out until next Friday to see what happened. I knew the \$12 missing and his getting home an hour late had to be related. So I let it sit.

Through the next Friday we both worked at a record store pretty close to the apartment. I thought it was the best job we'd ever had. Dash and I loved Bowie back then, so we stole a copy of Ziggy Stardust one day. Anyway, sure enough, Dash came home late from his shower on Friday night. Plus, another

er \$12 was missing. I was close to bringing it up to him, but I couldn't bring myself to it. I didn't want to challenge him and embarrass myself if I was wrong. That Sunday, Dash told me he had made a deal with Lou, one of the junkies down the hall, to trade our record player for his Beetle. It was rustiest thing he'd ever seen, he told me, but the engine worked just fine. I thought Lou must've been out of his mind to make that trade, but I didn't expect anything else from a junkie. We made the trade that night, and took our new wheels for a spin, and it felt good. We had a car, and all we had to do was give a junkie a record player. That ride got Dash all jacked up, and while we were laying in bed that night he started talking like a wild man about moving to New York and buying a place in the East Village. That caught me off guard. No doubt about that. But I told him we ought to do it, because our schedule was wide open for the next 25 years.

So, just like that, we were planning a road trip to New York. Times moved fast back then, let me tell you. Stuff like that just doesn't happen these days. Shame. Dash stole a map from the library, and we had it laid out on our floor for a while. We thought we would take Route 66, because it looked like a straight shot to the East Coast. We started planning everything out, too. All the concerts we'd sneak into, all the friends we'd make, all the times we'd have. I near forgot about the \$24 Dash had taken during all that excitement, and I hadn't checked the stash in a while. Later that night, when Dash was using the bathroom, I saw we were down \$12

more. I thought I must've been going insane. I told myself I'd bring it up that night if it was the last thing I ever did. After we took the Beetle out for another test run and parked it in the lot across the street, I was about to say it. I swear to God I was about to say it. But I couldn't. I couldn't challenge my older brother for my life. Who did I think I was, anyway? If I couldn't trust him, who could I trust? So I forgot about the whole thing. Never brought it up. Looking back on it now, though, I really should've.

Before I knew it, it was two nights before we were leaving for New York. I was so excited I couldn't sleep. Seemed like Dash was down for the count, though, so I gave it a shot. Just as I was about to drift off, Dash got out of bed. I acted like I was asleep. I don't remember why, but I did. I watched him put on a shirt, his Levi's, and pick up his box of clothes. He took the rest of the money, too. He opened the door, and just before he walked out, he turned around and stared at me. I reckon he stared for two whole minutes. But then he closed the door. I sprung up and looked out our cracked window. There was enough moonlight that I could see Dash running across the street to the Beetle. Next thing I knew, some girl with brown hair came running down the street and jumped in the passenger seat. That was my seat. I figured he'd been spending that cash on dates this whole time and didn't tell me a thing about it. I thought about running out and stopping him, but who was I to do that? I was nothing. I was the little brother. So I sat there, watching the car drive away. I watched

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until I couldn't make out the taillights any more. I never saw my brother again.

From Dust unto Dust

George Seyfried '18

He races up the marble steps as beads of warm sweat pour down his cheeks, extinguishing the frigid February wind biting at his face. Reaching for his ID in his wallet, his shoelaces act as a wired trap nearly propelling him straight into the damp, chilly stone. As Peter frantically swipes his ID, the screeching Period One bell pierces through his ears and seems to pierce through the dreary overcast sky. He races through the barren hallway, relieved that nobody, especially not Katie Orlin, can see his backpack sway side to side as he rushes to History. He's especially relieved that only his history class, filled with the biggest losers at Northfield High would see the sooty third-eye on his forehead.

Every Ash Wednesday Peter's dad Frank, donned in a purple tie and blazer, wakes Peter and his mother, Nancy, up for Mass, much to their groggy reluctance. It didn't matter if Peter only got three hours of sleep because he was studying for a physics test or if Nancy had to go to court with a client straight from Mass; it was when he was nineteen that Frank's dad, Peter's grandfather was killed in a fiery car crash a week before Ash Wednesday. That Ash Wednesday, Frank recited to a groggy Nancy and Peter as they downed their cereal in a matter of minutes, was the first Mass he decided to go to on his own decision, the Mass where he began to understand God's plan, and the first Mass when he understood the significance of remaining humble. As Frank explained how the ashes he received enabled him to understand his belonging in a

family bigger than himself and other soppy philosophical lessons he had spent the entire prior evening tweaking, Peter understood that he couldn't fight his dad on going back to bed for another hour. St. Jerome's was twenty minutes away and the farthest one could possibly get from Peter's house or Northfield High, a couple blocks away. But Frank had been baptized, confirmed, and married there and Peter liked some of the kids there.

At Mass Peter reluctantly bit his tongue and controlled his fear of his upcoming tests and the impending havoc they would wreck on his GPA as he didn't have an extra two hours to study. While he much rather would have preferred to be flipping through flashcards than listening to a pitchy soprano sing Latin prayers, he did feel a sense of doing the right thing as he saw his parents hug during the Peace Offering.

He kept it to himself that the ashes on his forehead were itchy and that during his next free second he would wipe them off in the nearest bathroom. He didn't complain that Communion was a mere fifteen minutes before the start of First Period. He, however, didn't reflect on what his priest, a white-headed man from Poland, had recited, placing ashes on Peter's forehead with his bony, frigid fingers and thick sonorous Polish accent; "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

Peter feels the stares during history class. He knows it's not paranoia; he saw all eighteen heads turn away from Mr. Maloney's luminous PowerPoint about World War I and

towards the swooshing opening of the door and its loud clamp shut. He saw Mr. Maloney, a man notorious for writing detention slips a mere fifteen seconds after the Period One bell had sounded, shrug and in a bombastic tone, boast that Heaven had a spot saved for Peter. Much to Peter's dismay the entire class erupted into laughter, girls calling him "an adorable Church boy". Peter gritted his teeth, partially in embarrassment of Mr. Maloney's class taking a break from learning about the Battle of the Somme and switching discussion to naming Peter most likely to become Pope. But Peter also gritted his teeth in anger with his dad, whose soppy annual tradition had, quite literally, affected his image.

He taps impatiently on his desk, blankly staring at Mr. Maloney's PowerPoint and pretending to pay attention. In reality, Peter's face is much too beet red and his mind is racing much too fast to pay attention. The dust on Peter's forehead is annoying and he can't help but see the dust out of the inner corners of his eyes, causing him to see cross-eyed. While he knows a lot of it is paranoia, he can't help but think that Peter walking into history class five minutes late with ashes covering his forehead will be the top story of the day amongst the junior class at Northfield High.

As soon as the bell rings, signaling the end of First Period, Peter springs out of his chair, but then slouches back, knowing that since he has a free period and no class to go to, he should take his time shoveling his notebooks into his drawstring bag, carefully calculating what time will be best to avoid

the masses in the hallway. He buys some time, asking Mr. Maloney for some clarification for why he thought the Battle of the Somme was important and then pretends to pay attention.

Peter is relieved that due to today's schedule he has time to wipe his ashes off his forehead before Katie Orlin sees him. Peter and Katie had talked a few times in the hallway and much to his friend's disagreement, he felt that he had a decent shot with her. He knew Jared Rush, a kid he thought was annoying and cocky, liked her and wanted to ask her to Junior Prom. Peter knew he was better than Jared, just because he wasn't so full of himself, and was appalled just thinking of Katie going to prom with Jared, or simply anybody but himself.

As soon as the hall traffic has died down, Peter makes his escape to the bathroom. He navigates his way to the sink, littered with napkins and clogged with toilet paper, and the foggy mirror with a glass crack down the middle. As he turns on the faucet and begins to run his hand under the lukewarm water, he realizes that his ash cross has smudged a bit by his sweat and the ashes extend down to the top of his nose. Maybe the smudge from his sweating as he frantically ran to First Period, or maybe it's the result of his face turning to boil beet red from embarrassment in History, but it's lost its shape and instead of repairing it, Peter decides to remove it completely.

He scrubs his forehead with some toilet paper and while at first the ashes smudge all over the top of his face, he is able to wipe them all off after a minute of constant scrubbing. He can't help but feel a bit guilty as he throws the toi-

let paper in the garbage on his way out of the bathroom. He reassures himself that he's doing nothing wrong; he went to Mass to make his parents, especially his dad happy, and even sacrificed his image during First Period History. He reassures himself that it's simply too much of an inconvenience to walk around with ashes all day; it feels uncomfortable and it's embarrassing. Even if it is a sign of God's claim for himself, Peter thinks, he doesn't want to be that kid by shoving his religion down other people's throats. Before Peter exits the bathroom, he makes sure that there's no trace of any ashes on his forehead or of anything that will embarrass him. Sure enough, he looks as he always does, though he notices a few purple bags under his eyelids from another sleepless junior year night. As soon as Peter walks out of the bathroom he heads towards the library so he can do some last-minute studying for his physics test. As he turns the hallway corner, he recognizes a laugh, a beautiful laugh that sounds like the sound of Spring to him. He stops dead in his tracks as he knows it's Katie Orlin. He takes a deep breath and calmly walks around the hallway corner, though his heart plummets to the bottom of his stomach when he sees Jared Rush, with his hand on a locker and ashes covering his forehead, laughing with Katie, who also dons ashes on her forehead.

"I know," Katie giggles. "I thought I was the only Catholic at Northfield High, too! It's so great to see another Catholic!"

"I know," Jared grins. "We'll have to meet up before St.

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Aloysius some time.”

Peter grits his teeth as he opens up the library door. He doesn't doubt that Jared is a good guy, he just beats Peter at everything. He hates Jared even more now but he doesn't understand why; he hates him because like Katie, he had the courage to display his faith proudly.

Peter plops his books down at a desk and prepares to fail his physics test.

Juggling

Freddy Rio '17

I peacefully looked around, taking in the beauty of the minimalist set, softened by the glow of dim ambient lights. This was it. The time had come for the number for which no musical ability could aid me, the test for which no books could prepare me, the ultimate showdown: “Juggler Freddy vs. 500 Spectators.” The thought alone was nauseating, but many feelings beyond slight queasiness dominated my mind in that moment. It was the opening night of Fairfield Prep’s production of “Carousel.” I walked onto the stage with my ensemble and prepared for the opening carnival scene. The soft orchestral music slowly crescendoed and became more complex around me. I stepped onto a platform and stood ready, feeling extremely nervous. I had never juggled before an audience. As I saw my fellow cast mates on the stage and felt their collective focus and energy, I reminded myself that I must be perfect. I could not let a single one of them down. Then, snap! Bright lights immediately illuminated the stage and the orchestra began a waltz as I stood ready and started to juggle with hundreds of eyes upon me.

The internet is a wonderful resource that I have used to learn many random skills like drawing in Photoshop, tying bow ties, and most importantly, juggling. Many years ago, after watching a YouTube video about juggling, I thought, “Wow this is pretty neat! I want to do that!” and decided to try it. When I discovered how fun it was, I was determined to master this skill. I thought

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that I was pretty good until I had to juggle for a performance. I dropped balls during rehearsals...a lot of them. Rehearsal after rehearsal, someone would need to chase the balls I dropped as they rolled around the room, much to my chagrin and my friends' amusement. But I was determined. I was obligated to master my juggling skills for both my satisfaction and mostly for the sake of the Prep Players. I had to fully engage myself in the activity.

As I practiced more and more, I noticed that like more orthodox sports, juggling is both a tough mental and physical game, a beautiful synthesis of dexterity and calculation. I spent hours mastering my craft, slowly learning the necessary pinpoint precision. I needed to conquer my nerves so that each deliberate, accurate throw appeared effortless. Originally, I had juggled for fun and personal gratification, but due to "Carousel", my juggling balls became extensions of my limbs, and rhythmically throwing and catching became reflexes. The skill became an experience in which I unconsciously lost myself. Muscle memory took over, time flew by, and the three balls became all that mattered. I was finally ready to take my juggling abilities to the stage.

Juggling onstage was a test of sheer focus, dedication, and tenacity. As the lights went on, I repeatedly told myself, "I've got this!" as I recalled each rehearsal during which I dropped a ball or two. I knew the stakes were high this night and I could not afford to drop a single one, so I did not. Instead, I reminded myself of my ability to juggle all that I do and love in my daily life. Endeavors begin as fascinations. Fascinations become challenges. At the 8:00 p.m. opening of "Carousel," each challenge became a ball, deserving my utmost attention and dedication, that I carried out onstage

and could not drop. Though I may have dropped balls during rehearsals, when I was on stage and the stakes were high, I attained perfection. As the lights finally blacked out and the curtain fell, I felt satisfied.

Obscured by Golden Clouds

Ben Martinez '17

Venus and Mars have always held a poetic relationship with one another in the mind of man: one to our right and one to our left, one heaven and one hell, one a world of salvation and one that of punishment. This has always been true, and in many ways it continues to be true to this day. All that has changed over the decades is the role that each planet plays in this poetry. Our biases and shallow, superficial observations led us to make false judgments of each world and attribute to them characteristics of which there was no evidence of their presence, as we often do to everyday people and objects in our everyday lives.

Venus, for example, was named after the Roman goddess of love and beauty because of its own beauty and brilliance. It is the second brightest object in the night sky after the Moon. It is bright enough, in fact, that on a clear, moonless night, it can cast shadows upon the surface of the Earth. It seems like a welcoming world to us Earthlings, as it is the closest to our planet and the most Earth-like in size and composition. It is almost the exact same size as the Earth in terms of mass and diameter, it is made of the same rocky material, and it even has an atmosphere with similar (albeit more extreme) properties as the one that we breathe.

All these truths, coupled with the golden clouds that hid its surface from our telescopes led many fanciful astronomers and science-fiction writers to believe that this world harbored life of its own. It was only logical that such a beautiful and inviting world

would host equally beautiful and inviting creatures. But as the decades progressed, our technology got better and better and with it our understanding of the universe increased as well. This increase in understanding extended to our knowledge of our closest neighbor, and we now see it for it really is: a hellish world with a jagged, black, lifeless terrain. Those beautiful golden clouds that hid the surface from our view turned out to be clouds of pure carbon dioxide gas, the presence of which we fear in our own atmosphere. Those clouds trapped the heat of the Sun in a runaway greenhouse gas effect, which superheated the planet's surface to a scorching 460°C (860°F), hot enough to melt lead. The destructiveness of these clouds do not stop there. They are so dense and plentiful that they exert a pressure equal to the pressure exerted by the Earth's ocean on a submarine 1 kilometer below its surface, pressure enough to crush a human skeleton.

By contrast, Mars, our second closest neighbor, was named after the Roman god of war because of its blood-and-fire-red hue as seen from the Earth's surface. We equate that color with the blood of war, with pain and suffering, with heat and flames, with the devil and hell itself. This world is one that is far from welcoming, and science-fiction film producers quickly took to depicting its surface as one of intense heat and jagged peaks, as can be seen in films produced as recently as the 1960s, like *Robinson Crusoe* on Mars, in which our marooned protagonist must overcome the planet's cruelly hostile terrain as he awaits the arrival of a rescue crew.

In time, just as it did with Venus, our understanding and perception of the red planet greatly transformed. Our landers and orbiters have found that not only is it not the world of hellfire that

we once thought, it is actually quite cold. The surface can experiences lows of -153°C (-243°F) at the poles, and highs of 20°C (68°F) at the equator. Its days are only 40 minutes longer than our own, so Martian settlers would experience very little in the way of cosmic jetlag. Scientists have even found there to be liquid water, the very stuff that sustains us and all life as we know it, flowing upon the surface of that red planet.

For this, everyone from world leaders like President Barack Obama to great minds like Stephen Hawking to captains of industry like Elon Musk, Mars has come to be seen as a lifeline for the human race. Mars, not Venus, is the only planet that truly welcomes us. It is the only planet other than Earth upon which we can make a true and lasting home. Our nightmarish image of Mars that we held so tightly for hundreds of years was one that actually reflected the reality of Venus, whereas our heavenly, welcoming image of Venus turned out to be more fitting for Mars. We are flanked by these two worlds which serve as constant reminders to us of how little we truly know. They are constant reminders that, what may seem to be true based purely upon the most superficial and shallow observations, can turn out to be further from reality than we could ever imagine.

Sailing

Kevin Gallagher '17

Since first pushing my eight-foot “Optimist” into the cold, stinging water, I have been drawn to the inscrutable seas. Sailing pits mental power and physical prowess against an unconquerable force: nature. All a sailor can hope for is a moment to work with nature and gain “her” respect and with it, moments of immense poetry, rigor, and honor. “All of us have in our veins the exact same percentage of salt in our blood that exists in the ocean...” JFK described before the 1962 America’s Cup, “therefore...We are tied to [it].” Indeed, for me, there is no more humbling nor liberating moment than one that begins with: “Sails up!”

After pinching through puffs and hiking in gusts on keel-boats small and large, I am still thrilled by knowing that I have never been on this exact same water before—whether I had set sail at 10-years-old or at 6:00 this evening. As sailing exhilarates, it terrifies, as it pushes my physicality and intellectual improvisation to outsmart the winds, it gratifies an ancient instinct: the desire to dominate nature even when I know who is boss.

Stop and Think

John Patrick Haley '17

This essay is written in order for you to understand a little bit more about me. In order to accomplish that in seven hundred and seventy seven words I have to be brief. So I will try to tell you a story. One that has three ideas, but I won't tell you where they are. It has a beginning and an end. You are already halfway through the introduction, so I promise my story won't take you too long. Now allow me to begin.

On January 28th of the year two thousand and seventeen, I suffered a concussion while skiing. I was skiing down a white slope with snow and people all round. The sky was a perfect shade of blue and the day seemed too good to be true. Sadly that turned out to be the case. I was so caught up in skiing that I forgot how bad I was. To be perfectly frank, I am not very good at skiing.

I skied off of a jump that was too big for me. The wind snapped past my head quickly. Far too quickly, something was wrong. The jump rose up before me like a monster. Too late, I tried to lean back, but something pushed me forward and alas, I fell. I now realize I skied too fast off of the jump. Unable to control myself, I soared through the air. I flew for a short while and, like all birds, I eventually touched the ground. Too hard as it turns out.

My head snapped back and hit the snow. No pain just stars. Quickly my instincts kicked in. I ran in case anyone was following me. My skies and poles laid across the snow like leaves

spread across a snowy hill. I stopped by the side of the path and stopped to catch my breath. I felt good, but something seemed off. A stranger skied down and checked on me. Apparently I had sailed through the air with as much grace as anyone does who jumps too fast. Which is to say no grace at all.

The stranger was my age and kind. He told me no one was jumping. The park skiers knew a lame duck when they saw one. I gathered my things and skied down to the bottom. I wish I could tell you that I went home after that. I wish I at least stopped skiing. However, I was too concussed to realize my fall had been meaningful. I never stopped to think.

This inability to stop and think has caused more problems in my life than I'd like to admit. I skied the rest of the day. Unfortunately I never stopped until I was too tired to continue. I skied without using my head. Without thinking. Most of the day is a blur, but I remember skiing better than I ever have. Jumping higher than ever before. Never stopping. Never slowing. Never thinking. Just skiing.

I would be a liar if I said it wasn't enjoyable. I had the time of my life out there. I loved skiing, and I still do. However, as it turned out this would be my last ski day for a very long time. There was trouble lurking around the corner. I didn't know it yet. All I knew how to do was ski, and boy did I ski. I skied up. I skied down. I even skied sideways! The half pipe is a wonderful creation. I looked good doing it too. I saw the way people looked at me. I never stopped to think. I just modeled what I saw the good skiers doing and I copied them exactly. For some reason this came easily to me. I hadn't yet realized that something was wrong. I didn't

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know how to think. All I knew was skiing. If you asked me my name I probably couldn't tell you. I was reckless. I was alive.

This story will end soon. That last word just so happens to be the six hundred and sixty sixth. A good number, but my story needs more. I wish I could tell you more, but my space is limited. So I will soldier on and make due with what I have. My experience skiing did not last. My newfound courage was short lived. I found that I was scared, but I didn't know why. I lashed out and was violent. I yelled. I screamed. I went to the hospital. 7 days they kept me there. 7 days to learn who I was. 777 words to tell you a story.

Epilogue:

I have a postscript for my essay. It is a task. Please read my story once more and find the three ideas. If you can find three ideas then you will understand why I stopped so suddenly. These words are extra. They do not belong. This entire paragraph does not belong. My story is seven hundred and seventy seven words long. You can count them if you are in to that sort of thing. If you understand my story you wouldn't be reading the epilogue. It is unnecessary. Thank you for reading. I apologize for the length.

The Calendar's End

Nick Allen '18

SETTING:

Our play begins on the front porch of a humble home. A small wicker chair is located at stage right, while a long wicker couch is located at center stage. A door is located just to the right of the couch at stage left. To the left of the chair downstage is a small table with a newspaper, pack of cigarettes, and an ashtray. Three windows above the couch allow the audience to peer into the home, which appears to be completely empty. A white banister extends slightly from stage right, with the space between the banister and the audience representing a sidewalk.

AT RISE:

A man wearing a white button-down shirt, a floral tie, and grey slacks enters the stage from the door and slowly walks over to the chair. As he walks, a dim spotlight follows him. However, while his body is visible, his face is completely obscured by the shadow of his black fedora. Before he sits down, he takes a pack of matches out of his pocket, picks up a cigarette, and lights it. Sitting down, he removes a pair of glasses from his breast pocket and begins to read the newspaper. He has crossed his legs, and his face is still obscured beneath the hat. Throughout the performance, the man's face will never be visible. After 30 seconds of silence, a woman walks out from stage right in front of the banister. While her face is not obscured by anything, her back is to the audience as she faces the man.

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SCENE 1

WOMAN:

Excuse me, sir. I couldn't help but notice that you're new in the neighborhood. I live in that yellow house over there, just down the road. I thought I'd come over to introduce myself.

[MAN keeps his head down as he continues to read the newspaper]

MAN [flipping pages]:

Oh, right. Nice to meet you.

[The audience sees that MAN is uninterested in the woman's company, as he never seems to look up from his paper]

WOMAN [eagerly]:

Where're you from? Nowhere close, I'm guessing.

MAN [sighing as he puts down the paper]:

Milwaukee.

WOMAN:

I knew it'd be some faraway place. I've never been myself. What's it like?

MAN:

Not too bad, I guess. Decent people. [Picks up his newspaper to start reading again]

WOMAN:

There're some decent people here, too. I've lived here my whole life. Say, have you met anybody else in the neighborhood yet?

MAN [looking up from paper]:

No, can't say I have. You're the first one.

WOMAN [excitedly]:

Perfect! I'm having a small get-together at my place tonight. You should come! If you want to, of course.

MAN [putting down paper]:

Wish I could, miss, but I've got an early start tomorrow. It's my first day on the job at an office downtown. I have a few things to sort out before then.

WOMAN [disappointed]:

Oh, I see. There'll be plenty of other chances, I'm sure. Well, I should get going. See you around!

[MAN picks up his paper and starts reading again. Lights cut to black]

SCENE 2

[Set has changed to the interior of MAN's house. Essentially empty, a few boxes are stacked up at stage right with a mattress just in front of them. A staircase is located at upstage left, with only about half of it being visible. Several newspapers are scattered around the mattress. At center stage, a black rotary telephone is on the ground. MAN is sitting next to it, with the receiver in his hand. As the curtain rises, MAN remains completely still, and his face remains obscured by his hat. A dim spotlight allows the audience to look around the room. After a few seconds, NARRATOR walks out from stage right, steps over the mattress humorously, and speaks]

NARRATOR [sarcastically]:

I hope you enjoyed that little scene there. Took some time to write the dialogue, I'm sure. Anyway, things are about to take a turn

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for the worse, or the better, depending on how you take it. Either way, you'll need to keep up with me here, so I advise you to pay attention. [NARRATOR walks off stage right, and the once dim spotlight becomes brighter. After 6 seconds of silence, MAN speaks into the phone]

MAN:

Look, Charlie. I don't know if I'm going to be able to do this. [Places phone between his shoulder and cheek as he lights a cigarette]

Yeah, yeah, I know what you sent me out here for. I just can't see it. She seems perfectly alright to me. What'd you say she did, anyway?

[MAN listens for a few seconds]

Jesus, you sure? I just can't see it, Charlie. Give me a couple days before you pull me out, though. I'll try to get as much information as I can.

[A few more seconds pass as he listens]

What? What do you mean I only have until the calendar's end to "do my job"? How do you expect me to get this done by then?

[A few more seconds pass as he listens]

Alright, alright. Sure, yeah. I'll call you when I get more.

[Hangs up the phone. Lights cut to black.]

SCENE 3

[Set changes back to the porch from Scene 1. MAN is sitting on porch reading and smoking once again. The lighting is dim, so the audience assumes it is late afternoon. WOMAN walks in from stage right, and speaks to MAN with her back to the audience]

WOMAN:

Hey, mister! You all settled in now?

MAN [looking up from his paper]:

I suppose I am, yeah.

WOMAN:

Well look, some of us are going over to Jill's house over on Vine in an hour. Everyone's been asking a lot about you. I think you ought to come. It'll be fun!

[MAN puts his paper down in his lap and puts out his cigarette in the ashtray]

MAN [exhaling]:

Sure, yeah. Why not? I'll have to do it sometime.

WOMAN [excited]:

Great! You want to come over to my place for a while until then?

MAN:

I'd be glad to. [MAN gets up from chair, walks around banister] After you.

[MAN and WOMAN walk off stage right, lights cut to black. Darkness for ~15 seconds, then 5 seconds of flashing lights. This flashing represents the passing night. Setting remains the same, and MAN and WOMAN run back out from stage right. A dim spotlight lights the stage, representing late night]

WOMAN:

Hey, that wasn't so bad, right?

MAN [happily]:

Not at all. Thanks for asking me along.

WOMAN:

You kidding? We were glad to have you over. Well, I ought to get

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going. See you in the morning. [She starts walking away, while MAN watches her go. Lights cut to black]

SCENE 4

[Set changes back to the inside of MAN's house. Nothing seems to have changed, and he once again has the phone in his hand. As the curtain rises, he is completely still for 10 seconds]

MAN [stressed]:

You're out of your mind, Charlie. The girl's clean, I can guarantee it. Look, I was with her for the better part of five hours last night. You've never even met her.

[A few seconds pass as he listens]

I couldn't care less about the job, Charlie. It's the girl. She's not who you say she is. No- don't interrupt me. You listen to me. You're setting me up here, or something of the like. I have no idea. All I know is, the girl would never do what you say she's been doing.

[A few seconds pass as he listens]

Yeah, you could say that. I might be out, Charlie, I might be. I'll give it one more shot, but if I can't find anything to prove she's the one, I'm out. I can't do a job like this on a girl like her. I searched her whole place when I was over there. Not a thing. But, look. I'll wait it out for a couple more days. I didn't come all the way out here for nothing.

[A few seconds pass as he listens]

Yeah, I know my deadline. Why do you keep pressing that? Alright, sure. I'll talk to you soon.

[MAN hangs up the phone, lights cut to black]

SCENE 5

[Set changes back to the porch. As curtain rises, MAN is pacing back and forth as he smokes. After 15 seconds, WOMAN walks out from stage right. Her back is still facing the audience, and MAN's face is still obscured by his hat]

WOMAN:

Hey, you alright? I was getting the mail and saw you pacing like you're worried or something.

MAN:

Yeah, I'm alright. Just work.

WOMAN:

Hey, I know what you need. Why don't I come over tonight and cook you some dinner. That kitchen of yours needs a test, anyway. Whatdya say?

[MAN stops pacing to think for a moment]

MAN:

Yeah, I'd like that. I really would. Seven, let's say?

WOMAN:

Works for me, see you then!

[WOMAN walks off stage right and MAN sits back in his chair to read. Lights cut to black, followed by darkness for 10 seconds. Suddenly, a dim spotlight follows WOMAN as she strolls up the sidewalk through the door carrying two brown bags. Lights cut to black for 10 seconds, then cut to brightness to represent morning. MAN and WOMAN both walk out the door]

MAN:

The Bellarmine Review

Thanks for the meal and everything else last night. I had a great time. You've really helped me get used to this place, you know?

WOMAN [giggling]:

I'm glad I could help. So I'll see you later tonight?

MAN:

Of course.

[They kiss. WOMAN walks off stage right as MAN watches her go. Lights cut to black]

SCENE 6

[Stage is completely dark for 25 seconds, with ominous music playing quietly. Suddenly, a dim spotlight appears at center stage, and NARRATOR walks into it from the darkness]

NARRATOR:

Strange turn of events, no? It's been 3 years since that all happened. Unbelievable, seems like yesterday. Anyway, as I'm sure you've already gathered, the young man abandoned his deadline, as well as his job. In fact, the two of them started to fall in love after that night and got married not too long after. She quit her job as a waitress, and they moved out to Milwaukee. Now she's pregnant with a boy, if I remember correctly. Very strange thing, someone giving up the town they've lived in their whole life for some guy, isn't it? What a unique circumstance indeed. It just all seems too good to be true, if you ask me. But what do I know? [Spotlight cuts to black]

SCENE 7

[Our setting is now a park bench in Milwaukee. Park bench faces

AWAY from the audience. MAN and WOMAN sit close together, and he has his arm around her. They point up at birds, clouds, and other imaginary things within the park]

MAN:

Can you believe all this?

WOMAN:

What, honey?

MAN:

Us. Three years ago we hardly knew each other. Now look at us.

[They kiss]

You like it here, right?

WOMAN:

Of course I do. I'm with you. [They look at each other and hug.

They then continue to look around for 10 more seconds in silence]

MAN:

I never did tell you the whole thing, though, I suppose.

WOMAN:

What "whole thing"?

MAN [chuckling]:

Why I was really out there. You'll never believe it.

WOMAN [gravely]:

Oh, honey. I already know.

MAN [laughing]:

Oh yeah? What'd you know, then, huh?

WOMAN:

That you were hired to kill me. I've always known. [MAN looks at WOMAN in shock as lights cut to black. Curtain closes]

FIN.

