

The Grail



Archbishop Riordan High School
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Poetry

The Universe

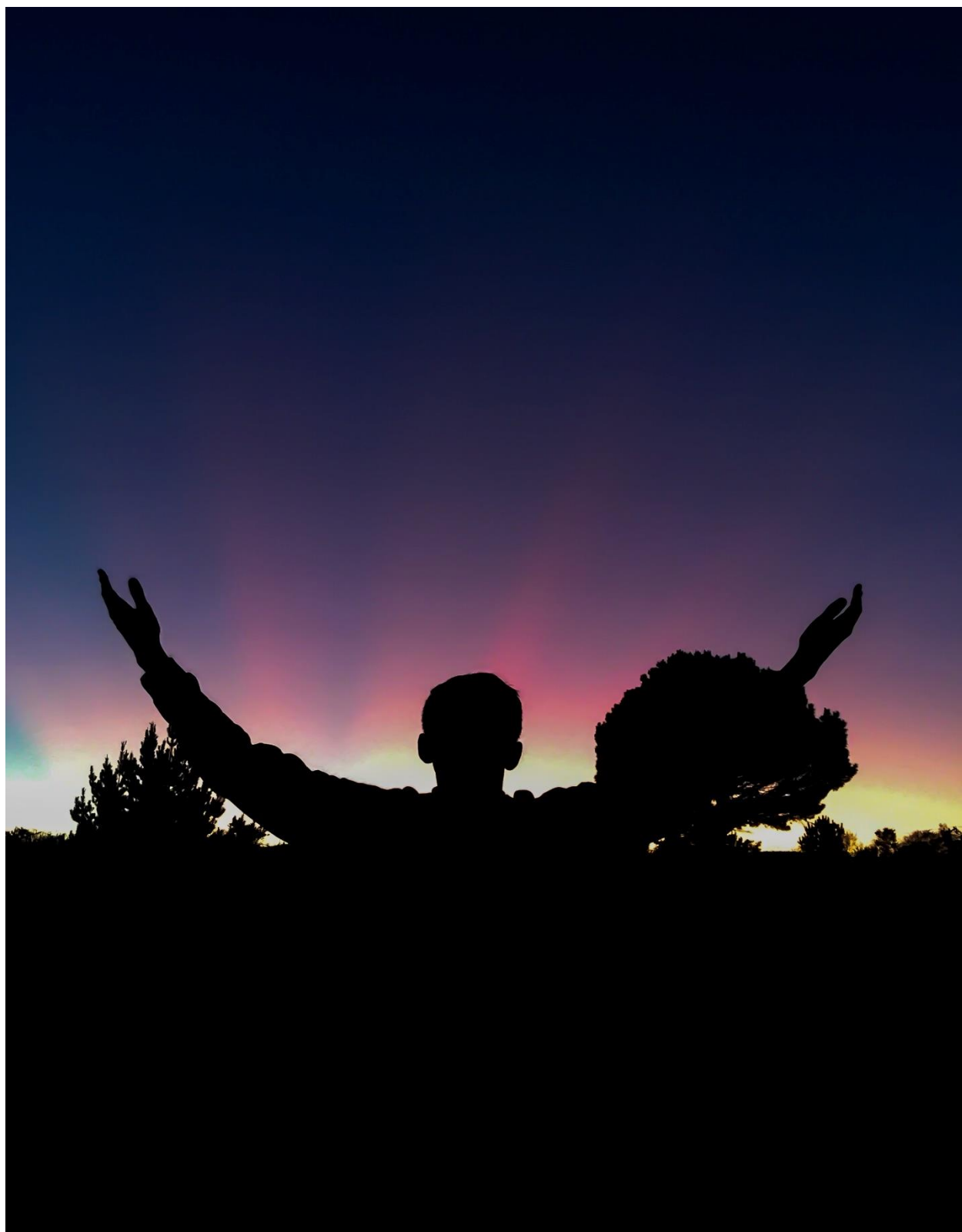
By Liam Funke '21

The universe is unimaginably massive
It is cold and callous
It is mystifying and beautiful
Within its nebulous mass
There exist trillions of stars
Each one lives for billions of years
Each one has the power to create and destroy
On a cosmic scale
Around these stars
Are trillions of planets
Each one is born from stardust
And after billions of years
To dust they will return
And on one small planet
There exist insufficient people
They believe that they are at the center of this universe
They think that they are special
Exempt from the inevitable jaws of a gluttonous universe
Drowning in their ignorance
They fail to understand that
The universe is unimaginably massive

Shoes

By Alejandro Ovando '21

The shoes I wear
They carry me everywhere
Every step I take and everywhere
I've been
They follow me
Everything I've done they've seen me do
But not only do they notice me but I noticed them
Shoes are the gateway to a person
With how clean they are you can see how much they care
With the holes you can see what they've been through
But no matter all of that the shoes carry them everywhere



By Henry Bensurto '20

Recursion

By Felix Alfaro '21

I was happy where I started
we changed for you to be happy
and I longed for home
but I finally accepted and enjoyed

Then we changed for you to be happy
and I longed for home
was rejected by the new neighbors

Then we changed for you to be happy
and I longed for home
these neighbors even worse

Then we changed for you to be happy
and I finally found a new home
love not like the real home
but I will make due

We are changing again for you to be happy
there is no such thing as a home

I will make do with what I have
I will make a change for me to be happy
I will find a new place to be
find good neighbors
and live in my own home

Evaporating

By Po-Hsuan Chang '21

The drop of water fell from the sky,
into the stream,
into the lake,
back to the sea,
and dries up to the sky.
The drop of water fell on the ground,
into a puddle,
stomped by a child,
down through the drain,
back to the sea,
and dries up to the sky.

Flowers

By Bryan Chau '21

I gift you a flower
A flower with twelve petals
I gift you one more flower
Now you have two flowers
Two flowers have twenty-four petals
Then I gift you another flower
Now you have thirty-six petals
More flowers more petals
More petals more flowers
More flowers become one bunch of flowers
I gifted you a flower

Tiger

By Wesley Robinson '21

The tiger in the jungle
He finds his freedom
In the lush and dense jungle
The satisfaction of the heavy silent step of the deadly beast
As he walks around it is hard to spot the tiger
Because of the rays on the sun hitting his fur
Why is it hard to see him?
Because the tiger is in the jungle

DMV

By David Dorantes '21

I'm here standing in line waiting
Wanting to take a test
So, I can get the keys to the car
And not rely on Mom and Dad
I'm here standing in line waiting
Waiting for my turn to take my picture
That's going to be with me for the next four years
I'm here standing in line waiting
To take that test
All I need is 80%

0-2

By Dylan Dekker '21

Look

At

The glove

Concentrate feel

The four rugged seams

Release and admire precision



By Henry Bensurto '20

The Game

By Jordan Tyler Maralit '21

Whenever I play The Game
I may have changed
It is ok to see
My feelings have enraged
To see the true person I will be

Heartbreak

By Billie Shakes '20

Heartbreak feels like the end of life itself,
But in truth it is just another step.
Learn once again to believe in yourself,
But the pain so intense no one can prep.

You are staring at your heart torn in two,
You're screaming for help you are truly lost.
However not a soul is there for you,
For that one person everlasting thirst.

For that one person that meant the whole world.
My head now heavy and my heart so cold.

Love a very fragile thing, like a dove,
Heartbreak is the result of misplaced love.

The Man in The Mirror

By Samuel Casey '21

The man in the mirror
Cannot see his reflection.
He doesn't know why,
But it cannot be mentioned.
The man in the mirror
He is seeing two paths,
He doesn't know where to go,
He cannot do math.
The man in the mirror,
He has found his way,
From buried in fear,
To a happy day.

September 11th

By Aidan Allwood '21

The sky is very dark
On this September day
It's early in the morning
The people have all turned grey
I think I'm late to work
The time is 9:05
My ears a constant ringing
Am I still alive?
I hear a sudden boom
To my face, a sudden smack
My head is spinning, spinning, spinning
Until a fade to black
I feel my pager buzzing
Deep down in my pocket
I cannot feel my arm
Don't think it's in its socket
I lie deep down in rubble
Blue and red lights flashing bright
A new wave of dense black smoke
Beginning to obstruct my sight.
There's a numbness in my hip
I'm cut from my torso
Smoke invading into my lungs
Will I get to see my son grow?
As hours and hours go by
I hear people yell my name
I want to scream out loud
But my voice is filled with pain.
As I'm finally freed from the wreck
I see puddles from people out bleeding,
I see cars and windows all shattered
I hope those people were breathing
I still do know what happened
Something seems too wrong
I can only look up and ask,
Where have the towers gone?

10 Toes Down

By Azaan Ledbetter '21

Always stay 10 toes down
Neva' fold stay solid
Through hard times and hardships
Remain strong and neva' fold
Always stay 10 toes down
Respect this who respect you
Love those who love you
Always stand for something
Neva' fold for nothing
Always be ready to die for what you stand for
Always stay 10 toes down



By Henry Bensurto '20

Fiction: How to Tell a True War Story

Sacrifice

By James Yu '20

In 1945 the Korean war started, this war was between the Northern and Southern parts of Korea. The Northern part of Korea believed in communism and the Southern side believed in democracy. During the beginning of the war the Soviet Union and China decided to aid North Korea. While South Korea had aid from the United States of America.

On May 5th 1950, I was sent on a top-secret mission to deliver weapons and explosives to the North Koreans at Kusong. All we knew was that these weapons were going to be used in the upcoming battle to take back Pyongyang. This was a crucial mission in order to take back their capital. This will not only boost the people's morale but it will also be a fatal blow to South Koreans. Our mission started dead at night. My squad of three men the eldest one of them was named Chen Wan he was 25 years old he is my right-hand man we both were at boot camp together so I trust him with my life. Our second oldest member is Lew Chen he is the medic on our team we so met in boot camp but he was another platoon. And lastly, we have Lie Wong who is two years younger than us. After we gathered all the supplies, we boarded the plane. Our plan was to fly to Pyongyang and deliver the weapons, this will take us about three hours to reach Pyongyang from our current positions, but one problem we had was the stormy weather. Our pilot said that it would be fine and that we should be able to make it to Pyongyang on time. The plane smelled of sweaty old socks and the ride sounded like it was getting pummeled by rocks constantly. Soon after, lightning struck the plane. This did not damage the plane but it did short circuit the plane and now we were gliding in the air. The pilot had to crash land in the ocean in order to hide the weapons and to cover up our crash. Right before crashing me and my squad jumped out of the plane into the water. We swam to the shoreline in order to hide from the South Koreans. We didn't know where we were but we did see a village in the distance along the beach. I ordered my squad to gather all of the equipment that we were able to take with us and we moved to the village. When we arrived at the village, it was abandoned. I told Lie to come with me to the well so we could refill our water while Chen and Lew went to check the houses for supplies. After 15 minutes since Chen and Lew started their search for supplies, we heard an explosion I ran towards the sound of the explosion and I saw that Lew was unconscious and Chen lost his right leg. I soon call for Lie to help me stop the bleeding. We were able to stop the bleeding and soon Lew woke up and assisted us in saving Chen's life. We all know that the enemies must have booby trapped some of the house when they abandoned the village and will soon return after hearing that explosion. We soon had to decide if we were going to take Chen with us or leave him at the village. I go to talk to Chen about our problem. I approach, Chen who is barely conscious, and said to him, "We have to move because the Korean soldiers will be here soon."

And his whispers, "So when do we leave?"

I respond saying, "We can't take you with us because you will only slow us down."

"Can you do me a favor John?"

"Sure, anything for my old friend."

“Please shoot me. I don’t want to be captured.”

“I understand.”

In the distance Lie and Lew heard a gunshot and knew what had happened. The three of us walked up north for about two days until we finally found the battalion of soldier heading down south to recover the weapon before the South Koreans found it.



By Alex Sarna '21

War Within

By Waheeb Mukatash '20

“A country built on the basis of equality and freedom. The United States of America; the place of opportunity, and the land of the free. Yet the reality is it has now become the land of prejudice and inequality. It is a time where the country is in a current state of separation, in which there is the North and the South. There are those who fight and oppose the cruelty of slavery, and there are those who promote it!” proclaims General Billy as he is preparing his soldiers for the Battle of Gettysburg. Billy yells, “Do you want to be the men who fight for justice or the cowards who let it happen!”

At this time there is a silent, yet very distinct pause and realization of the soldiers. A realization that thousands of Americans will kill each other. A feeling that some will have to kill their friends and family all depending on where they stand, the Union or Confederacy. Robert, a soldier of the union, has migrated from the South only months prior to the civil war. Robert will now have to battle and kill his classmates, friends, and even relatives. Shaking and trembling with fear, Robert is told it is for the greater good of the country, yet he waits anxiously in the dull and weary silence. Then, suddenly the silence ended quickly and abruptly and the war begins. The sound of warfare begins, and it is like the rumbling of an earthquake.

Suddenly soldiers begin dying, and it's a very graphic and horrific seen. Robert was like a deer in the headlights. His eyes wide open like an owl at night, yet his body frozen like ice. Then in a chaotic scene, he heard loud yelling in his ear from General Billy, “C'mon son! grab your weapon and kill those...” But before he finished his sentence, a bullet ran through his head and his blood splatters covered the face of Robert. Robert, now shell-shocked, picks up his rifle and started frantically shooting at the Confederates.

The roar of artillery, loud cry of fallen soldiers, and distinct and loud pop of rifles was perhaps the most grueling scene in American history, has now been going on for two days. Thousands dead, many injured the country is at its darkest and most troubled time. Robert after fighting forever forty hours, has been hit in the leg by a canon, his left leg in one area, and his body in another.

Before Robert blacked out, he muttered, “God help America.” He woke up in a hospital, with many other wounded around him. He was informed the war has ended after three long and gruesome days and the Union has won. After weeks of agonizing pain, Robert died in his hospital bed. He never saw an end to the war, he never was able to free the slaves, and he never got the chance to see whether his friends survived or not. His body is buried in the same place that traumatized him, the same place he lost his leg, and the same place he died. This is the reality of the civil war, there are no happy endings, only a large tainted scar in American history.

Sounds of the Dead

By Ian Tupulua '20

"Duong we must go now. It's the orders from the commander," said Hung.

"I cannot leave him. I must pay my respect to the dead," replied Duong.

The two young Vietnamese militants were posted in the bunker and were ordered to retreat back to the primary base. The bunker was hot and filled with roaches and big rats crawling throughout the tunnels. Duong is still traumatized by the death of his comrade. He covers his dead comrade all the way to his neck with dirt in the bunker and said a prayer for him. When Duong opens his eyes, he saw his comrade open his eyes staring back at him.

"He's looking at me, Hung!" Hung looked at the dead comrade and sees that his eyes were closed shut.

"You're losing your mind! He's gone we have to go now! The Americans are coming." Duong shoves Hung and insists that he must stay here and continue praying for the dead soldier or else he will come back for him and haunt him.

"You're a prisoner to the dead. You have let them take over your soul. You fool! You weaken our country with worshipping ghosts," argued Hung. Duong yells back at Hung telling him to leave him in the bunker. Hung then walks down the tunnel with his gun and lantern, making his way to the exit.

As Duong closed his eyes to pray for his dead comrade, he remembers more simpler times when there was no war. He starts getting flashbacks of how his country was at peace and happy. Duong reflects on how he was prior to the war, a religious young teenager practicing his faith. Duong was not a fighter at all, in fact he was a pacifist. He was forced into the war to fight for his country. Duong had no choice, but to leave the lifestyle he lived before the war. He wished to go back to the way things were: peaceful times.

Shortly after Hung leaves, a huge gust of wind blows through the tunnels of the bunker, catching Duong off guard. Duong is startled and looks at the dirt where he buried his comrade. He leans towards the soft dirt nervously, thinking maybe the dead soldier is still alive under the dirt. Suddenly, an eerie sound of someone yelling echoes through the tunnels causing Duong to fall flat on his back. The sounds of yelling ran all throughout the tunnels getting louder and louder. It sounded as if someone was right behind Duong. Duong was terrified. He was the only one that was left in the bunker. Duong started hallucinating thinking that the noises were from the spirit of the dead soldier.

While covering his ears, Duong blurts out, "Please! Just let me finish my prayer! I mean no harm or disrespect!" The yelling and ghost noises continue to torment Duong. He gets up from the dirt floor, grabs his rifle and lantern and runs down the tunnels, hoping to catch up with Hung.

"Hung! Where are you?" cries Duong. Duong is running through the dark tunnels screaming for Hung. Hung finally hears Duong screaming for him. Hung tries to follow his voice.

"Duong! What's all those noises?" Duong is in fear that he is being chased by a ghost. He turns behind him and starts firing his gun.

Hung is worried and curious of what just happened in the tunnel. Hung sees Duong at the other end of the tunnel firing his weapon the opposite way. He sees that he climbed up the ladder to exit the tunnels. Hung hurries to Duong, trying to catch up with him. When Hung climbs up the ladder, he tries to look for Duong. Suddenly, the mysterious noise of yelling materialized outside as well, making Hung terrified. He tries to run away from the noise however, it feels as if the noises are getting louder and louder. Hung finally stumbles on a patch of wet leaves and crawls behind a tree. He pulls his rifle close to him. His heart beating fast, he clutches his rifle ready to fire. He turns away from the tree and fires blindly out in the open, screaming and yelling in fear. Unexpectedly, another gun fires in his direction, striking his chest with bullets. Hung falls on the grass with bullets in his body. He struggles to breathe with his eyes wide open. He had been shot by a U.S. Soldier. "Alright, alright turn that speaker off," said an American Sergeant. An American soldier then goes to his speaker that he was carrying and turns off the tape that was labeled, "U.S. Army- Psychological Operations; Wandering soul Ghost Tape #10." Two U.S. soldiers carried Hung's body. The group of American soldiers were scanning the forest for any remaining Vietnamese soldiers. They found Duong hiding not too far from Hung's dead body. They tied Duong up and sent him to the sergeant for interrogation. The U.S. soldiers had brought a speaker with a tape playing ghost noises. They used this tactic to trick the Vietnamese psychologically in thinking they are being haunted and hoping that they would give away their position by running out of their hiding spot out of fear. The U.S. continued to search for more Vietnamese soldiers hiding within the forests.



By Alex Sarna '21

Come Home

By Dominic Borrego '20

Some people say that war brings out the worst in humanity. They would be right, but way wrong at the same time. It may bring out your worst qualities, it may reduce you to a shell of your former self, it may break you down into so many little pieces that you cannot put yourself back together. This is my reality, and one day I hope someone can read this to me when I forget who I am, so I can remember, because someone has to remember.

My name is Charlie Kaya, and I am from Miami, Florida. It was an ungrateful bog down there, so I decided to enlist and go live in the tropics. That was a mistake, and I hate myself for doing it now. December 6th 1941, all is quiet, and I am sleeping in my bunkhouse with my friends, Dan Hitchman and Bill Bailey. Dan is extremely rowdy, but deep down he is just as scared as me. Bill is a family man, who constantly gets letters telling him *won't you please come home*. Besides that, we were all just soldiers who anticipated that we could live in Hawaii until the war was over and not have to worry about fighting ourselves. The next morning, we were greeted with the soft screeching of bombs exploding in the distance, followed by the cry of the sirens alerting the base we were under attack. We quickly had to leave our beds with all of our belongings and sprinted out to see an air detachment of Japanese Zeros and fighter bombers. Our M16 anti-aircraft guns made an effort to repel the attack but there were too many and they caught us off guard. Before we made it to the base, the attacks had stopped and the Arizona was taking a nap at the bottom of the sea. In that moment, it was not the fear of being killed in the attack, but the fear of knowing we were going to fight in the war against the Japanese. We were drafted and put into a platoon that would soon aid in the efforts of the Allies, and our journey begun.

Living on the base was all that it could be. Same weather, and we had to do drills each day and some basic run throughs of emergencies and scenarios. We mostly got away with driving in the jeep down a long path and talking about women we left behind to join. It's as if we put up a facade for each other, but we all knew the truth that none of us wanted to be in a war. We looked at the benefits and denied that the cost would ever come. For some reason, it still seemed that the cost had not come, even after we entered the war.

"I'm gonna make me some sushi when I get over there!" Dan predicted, acting confident.

"Oh yeah? I doubt you could even pick up your gun before you run away," I said, playing along, but also looking to mess with Dan

"You'll see, they'll call me Dan Hitchman, the war hero!" Dan exclaimed, "And I'll have all the women at my side, while you sit there and complain about Florida or whatever."

"Okay big man" I said. "Whatever shuts you up the fastest." Bill proceeded to take the next turn really fast, and Dan being confident, never bothered to sit down, so he was flung out of the car. He was not pleased, and Bill had him in his ear the entire drive back, but for me and Bill, it was worth it.

On our way to the island of Okinawa we had stopped at Midway to refuel the ship, and while we were there, we saw some things some men only dream of. Giant metal behemoths as far as the eye can see, and men doing repairs like ants. We saw the true might of our country, and I felt proud to be an American for once.

Colonel Collins was in charge of leading us into battle, and had small tasks for us to do to

prepare for the upcoming conflict.

“Charlie, get to organizing your equipment, I’d love to see the day where one of my men is fumbling for a grenade in battle.”

I got to work, and when he left Bill uttered, “He’s a keeper Charlie, he’s got such a way with words.”

“Yeah Charlie, you better not disappoint him. You know what happens to the last guy who disappointed him” Dan said, while winking at me with a malicious grin, trying not to laugh.

“Whatever, I would rather die than disappoint the colonel,” I said through laughter. I organized spare guns and ammo for the brigade, and put a bunch of grenades in everyone’s battle packs. I went to sleep, not knowing about what was to come.

Battle of Okinawa.

Dan cried, “I did not sign up for this man!” While trying to look for a way off the ship.

I replied, “Technically, you did because we all enlisted in the army you idiot.” I looked at him, confused.

Bill had decided what he was going to do, “Dan, just get injured, they’ll send you home with compensation and you won’t need to fight.” Dan glanced over at Bill, shocked that he would say such a thing.

Bill responded to his look with, “I’m just trying to get home, if you want to fight and die, then go for it, but I would rather be stuck at home than stuck in a POW camp.”

I decided to finally chime in, “Both of you have stupid ideas, let’s just get off this boat and do what we came here for.”

Dan exploded, “YOU’RE HERE FOR THE SAME REASON AS ME! YOU THOUGHT IT WOULD BE A FLIPPING VACATION! Instead this is a nightmare come to life.”

I sat in my seat, realizing that although we had different views of the current situation, he was right that I did not want to be here, and I thought enlisting would be a getaway.

As we got off the boat, we soon learned of the area we needed to take, the ridge, and it was a treacherous climb into almost certain death. We were armed with Thompsons and a 1911 Colt. We were tasked with taking the ridge, but our main goal was to survive. After months of fighting, we had become more experienced, while the Japanese had become more aggressive. Some tell stories of the Japanese with no hands running at them and trying to bite them. One thing was for sure, they seemed a lot more patriotic, willing to go to the end for their country. It somehow made me feel ashamed as I was trying to take advantage of war, I thought I would never fight in, and now I have to pay the consequences and see the enemy die in the name of glory for their country.

The next morning, we climbed the ridge and prepared for the attack, little did we know that nothing could have prepared us for what was to come. As soon as the sun rose, so did the enemy. Gunfire everywhere, explosions from grenades, artillery, and bombers. Men losing their lives in the flames, a preview of what is to come for them. Truly we were using weapons that were unnecessary, as if human history up to that point all contributed to ending our own lives. Dan was shot right between his eyes storming a Japanese pill box. We had to continue our attack, and it was even more grueling. I don’t even know what was tougher to traverse through, the displaced earth from the explosions, or the piles of bodies decaying. We heard that we needed to hold out for another two days until reinforcements arrived. Everybody, even the commander, knew we would not survive that long. Bill had received an order to go back down to the base camp and call in more artillery strikes.

“Bailey! Go back down and call in the shells, these bunkers will mow us down!”

Bill did not want to risk dying, and it was not according to his master plan, but an order was an order. As for me, I was just any old foot soldier, and I had killed around ten Japanese men. For some reason I did not feel bad, even though I almost envied their burning passion for their country.

I thought for a second if I really was an American, if I needed to die for my country to somehow gain something. Respect, proof of loyalty seemed obvious. I did not understand why I was there, was it a getaway or was it me fading away. All these thoughts surged through my head and I realized I was still alive, and the colonel was screaming in my face, “KAYA, WHERE IN GOD’S NAME ARE YOUR GRENADES?”

I realized where they were, in my pack that had fallen off when we tried to storm the pill box. “Sir they are out above the trench, near the opening of the pill box,” I said, trying to stay calm, if that’s even a word now.

“HOW DID THEY GET THERE?” Questioned the colonel.

“Dropped them sir,” I replied, hoping he would not ask me what I think he was going to ask me.

“Go get them.” Bill dashed over to me and the colonel and said, “Colonel, I’ll get them, Charlie can have my grenades.”

“Bailey, what did I just say? I said to go call in an artillery strike, why are you still here?” The colonel was confused as to why Bill was still here, but I was confused as to why he would say such a thing.

“Give my job to Charlie, he has more experience with giving coordinates for the artillery strikes.” Bill lied, but why? I knew he had a plan, but it seemed that maybe he never had anything to go home to, maybe he did not want to go home.

The colonel looked at Bill, then at me and said, “I’m the one who gives orders, and you are to follow my orders and let Kaya get his own grenades!”

I looked at Bill, he nodded, and we both pushed the colonel down. Bill jumped out of the crater we were in, I opened fire with the last bit of Thompson ammo I had left, and then Bill grabbed my grenades, pulled out as many pins as he could, and threw them in the pill box and tried to make a break for it. A stray enemy bullet hit his leg, and before he realized he could not move, a festival of flames and smoke launched him. The area where the pill box was, was now ruins and Bill had been pushed back farther towards us. He was in critical condition and now we were free to make a run for the ridge. I picked up Bill, and he did not say a word, but I did not need to hear from him to know that what he did was for us to have a chance. I ran as fast as my legs could take me before collapsing near the area where we needed to drop down back to the base camp. I put Bill on a stretcher and lowered him down, while I climbed down with the little strength I had. We had made it, and were covered in dirt, blood, and smoke. Bill was a bloody mess. I finally had a good look at him, and realized the massive hole in his leg, as well as shrapnel in his stomach. I called for a medic, but all of 20 men had made it back down with me. None were medics, so I tried to help him myself, to no avail. I tried to help him, but at that point, I was working on a corpse. He had one dream, and it was to be able to support his family, and he had enlisted to help them. Now it seems he will never come back home.

All I could think to say were the words in all of his letters, *Bill Bailey, won’t you please come home.*

PTSD

By Claudel Garcia '20

“EVERYONE! KEEP ... YOUR HEADS ... DOWN, YOU HEAR ME?” Sergeant Chad Sullivan tried to alert his crew about the kamikazes from the Japanese. “Fifteen seconds!” The squad was together in their boat heading towards the shore after being deployed to raid the island of Okinawa to cut off supplies to the Japanese and possibly pick up intel on where they might attack next. However, as their boat was approaching the beach shore, one private thought it was wise to stick his head up to catch a glimpse of the chaos surrounding him. All of a sudden, his head popped off like a soda bottle cap. “OH MY GOD! SANCHEZ’S HEAD JUST GOT BLOWN APART I THINK I MIGHT PUKE,” exclaimed Private Garfield. Blargh! They all just witnessed their comrade, their friend, take a bullet right to the brain. Pvt. Garfield was only 19 and had been with the U.S Marine Corps for seven months before being deployed to fight in Okinawa. All around them, U.S Marine inflatable motor boats were no match for the oncoming Japanese kamikaze fighter jets. It seemed like nothing could get worse until their boat got stuck on the corals by the shore. “JUST RELEASE THE RAMP RIGHT NOW,” exclaimed Sullivan. “WE HAVE NO CHOICE!” Right before they could all get out of the boat, an artillery hit their boat causing it to explode. Body parts went flying but somehow, some troops managed to survive. Some went underwater where they either drowned from being unconscious from the blast while others were helped up by fellow troops. The original crew of ten Marines including the driver of the boat fell to four troops: Sgt. Sullivan, Pvt. James, Pvt. Swan, and Lt. Pipe. The four made it to the beach where they regrouped with other troop units already taking heavy fire from Japanese infantry and vehicles.

The sun smiles down on the destruction of the landscape, which was once a beautiful, mountainous, clear-skied, and tropical, but now a desolate, smokey hell. “I swear to God this is a suicide mission, there’s no hope for us,” proclaimed Pvt. Pipe as he began to cry. The overwhelming feeling overcame him and he ran across “no man’s land” taking bullets to the chest, legs, head, and torso, until an artillery strike completely obliterates him to pieces of death like a broken reaper.

The Japanese came in swarms overtaking more and more of Okinawa over the U.S. Marines. The infantry came in running and gunning with long bayoneted Type 30, sharp enough to cut air into two. Their faces red and distraught with the intense anger established within them from Emperor Hirohito. One infantryman came running at Pvt. James and stabbed him in his side. The bayonet pierced through the skin and bone and went directly through him coming out of his left side. Pvt. Swan managed to kill the enemy but not while Pvt. James was seeing the light. “THAT SON OF A GUN STABBED ME OH GOD MARGHH!” Pvt. James died angrily, his life, meaningless to his enemies, was wasted. Pvt. Swan and Sgt. Sullivan could only just look around and come to the conclusion that in order to counter the lives lost that they needed to live on even though they would be forever changed.

Run

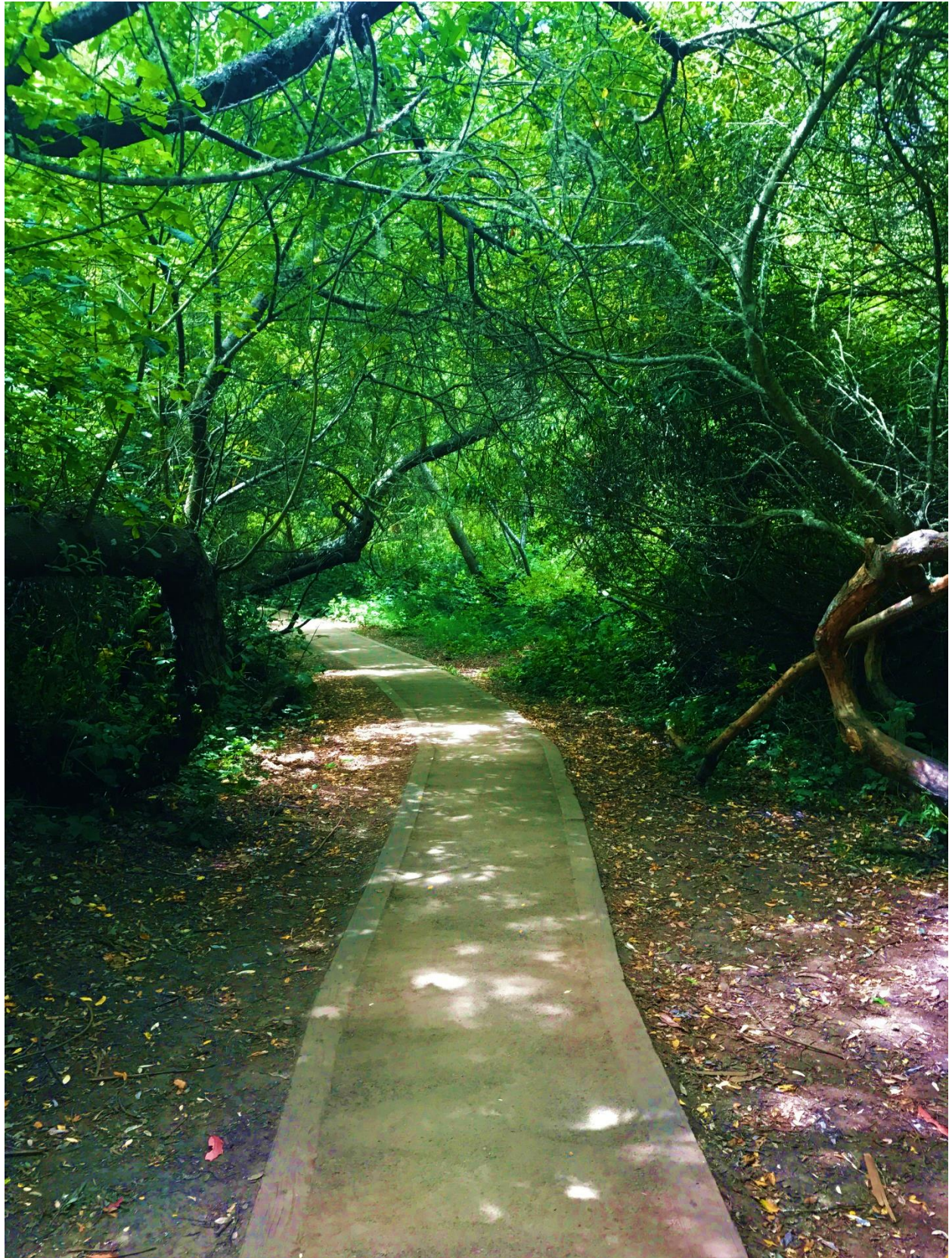
By Daniel Henderson '20

It was 1968. We were in Vietnam. We were walking down a trail. I looked at my friend. I blinked. He was gone. Then he was everywhere raining down from the sky in a red mess. I'd known him since middle school. He was my best bud. We'd done everything together and he was gone, just like that. We even tried to get out of going to war and applied to college but it didn't work. The government started learning what everyone was doing and shut that down. And now here we were in a place we didn't know and with people we were told to hate.

As soon as he was gone, a rain of bullets came down from every direction. Someone yelled, "It's an ambush!" I thought to myself *you don't say* as I was ducking down to avoid death. The field that we were pinned in was muddy and smelled of fecal matter but I didn't care, I buried myself in the mud and hoped it would be over. It seemed like it would never end. I believed death was upon me, upon my whole unit. I cried a little. Then it ended. I looked around me to see where everyone was. I could see them all. They were dead. I was alone. The Viet Cong we're approaching. I could see them through the blades of grass. They wore ragged clothes and looked like they hadn't taken a shower in years. As they got closer, I realized what they were coming to do. I heard the first shot, and it was into the back of my commanding officers head. They were making their way towards me and I just froze. I didn't know what to do. There were 10 of them and one of me. They were an unbeatable force. I knew I had little time and said a prayer. The Viet Cong then turn to themselves and start yelling something I couldn't understand and started running off. Then I heard it, the sound was almost angelic. It was my savior, a Huey. I knew exactly why they were running.

Not long after the Huey flew over, there were jets. As I ran for my life through the thick overgrowth of the jungle, I could see them dropping napalm. I'd never run this fast in my life. In high school, I did 100m sprints during track season but those today were long gone. The weight of my gear was slowing me down, I could feel it. I threw my equipment to the ground and kept running. My face started to bleed from the constant slapping of it from the branches. It hurt but I kept going. And then I saw something sticking out of the brush. There was a leg. A very skinny leg. As I approached what appeared to be the body of an unfortunate Viet Cong. Corpse or not, I didn't want take any chances and immediately jumped onto it and started punching it everywhere. If I didn't win this fight, it would at least be my last. When the body would not move anymore, I wanted to roll it over to see if he was actually dead. I decided not to stick around to find out. I continued to run for my life.

End



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