

REFLECTIONS

2013


VOL 42 ISSUE 1



JANE DRINKARD, grade 12



MAY COHAN GRADE 12



REFLECTIONS is the annual magazine of literature and art of The Berkeley Carroll Upper School. Students meet weekly to discuss the magazine's high standards, the soliciting of submissions, and their own writing in progress. In February, the editors chair small groups who read and critique anonymous submissions. After the preliminary critiques, the editors choose and edit the final selections and lay out the magazine. The striking artwork and writing in this magazine were all crafted by Berkeley Carroll Upper School students, occasionally to fulfill class assignments but always from the engines of their own creativity.

This has been a record-breaking year for *Reflections*. New, energized staff bolstered the many dedicated veteran members and provided fresh perspectives for the magazine. *Reflections* will no doubt continue to expand and flourish under their leadership. Our never-tiring faculty advisors, Mr. Chu and Ms. Drezner, were steadfast with their support of this volume. The process of publishing this magazine would not be complete without the help of Berkeley Carroll's Director of Communications, Jodie Corngold, and the design talents of Bob Lane at Studio Lane. Finally, thank you to all who shared their work with us. Without you this magazine would not exist.

**Jane Drinkard, Allie Korbey,
and August Rosenthal**

Editors in Chief
Spring 2013

REFLECTIONS

2013

EDITORS IN CHIEF

Jane Drinkard
Allie Korbey
August Rosenthal

LAYOUT EDITOR

Emma Newbery

STAFF LIST

Emma Bessire
Eliana Blum
Maya Coe
Miranda Cornell
Emily Cornicello
Olivia Cucinotta
Zoe Denckla
Lena Drinkard
Karen Ebenezer
Kirsten Ebenezer
Ricky Fernández
Jacob Friedman
Lucy German
Matteo Heilbrun
Rebekah Hickson
Georgia Horton
Camille Johnson

Anya Katz
Andrew Keenan
Eliza Liebler
Julia Lisi
Eleanor Pearson
Henry Pearson
Itiah Pierce
Sabrina Quintanilla
Emma Raible
Kamyar Sadeghi
Olivia Saleh
Olivia Scott
Lucy Shenk
Natasha Strugatz
Lily Rose Weiss

POETRY

THE PERFECTIONIST , Isabella Del Valle, grade 12	7
A HYPOTHETICAL , Thomas Lippert, grade 11	12
11:30 , Julia Pike, grade 10.....	17
HER SHAPES , Lena Drinkard, grade 10.....	23
DEAR DADDY , Isabella Del Valle, grade 12	47
TWO POEMS , Myles Zavelo, grade 10	52
HOUSEWARMING , August Rosenthal, grade 12	60
SIRENS , Emmett White, grade 12.....	62



KATIE MAITLAND, GRADE 9



ELIAS CONTRUBIS, GRADE 9

PROSE

LUCKY STRIKE , Anya Katz, grade 12	9
NATURALISMO , Ricky Fernández, grade 11	14
CONSTELLATIONS , Allie Korbey, grade 12	19
THE RED-CUP TEST , Leyla Wade, grade 12	24
SINGLE , Nina Austin, grade 12	26
BI-MONTHLY , Matteo Heilbrun, grade 11	31
VENISON , August Rosenthal, grade 12	35
A BRIEF STORY , Katie McDonough, grade 12	39
SUBURBAN MYSTIC , Lola Newman, grade 11	43
HOME , Haley Gillia, grade 12	48
LITTLE LIGHTS , Sophia Timko, grade 12	55
BONES , Olivia Cucinotta, grade 11	59



STEPHANIE AQUINO, GRADE 9



AARON GOLDIN, GRADE 9

ART

PHOTO , Jane Drinkard, grade 12 <i>(Cover)</i>	
CERAMIC , May Cohan, grade 12 <i>(Inside Cover)</i>	
DRAWINGS , Katie Maitland, Elias Contrubis, Stephanie Aquino, and Aaron Goldin, grade 9	3-4
PHOTO , Elise Guarna, grade 12	6
PAINTING , Katie McDonough, grade 12	8
PHOTO , Julia Pike, grade 10	11
PAINTING , Zac Pepere, grade 10	13
DRAWING , Mekhia Posey, grade 12	16
PHOTO , Anya Katz, grade 12	18
PAINTING , Bella Rosa, grade 12	22
PAINTING , Lauren Howe, grade 11	29
PHOTO , Bella Boornazian, grade 12	30
PAINTING , Meret Baumann, grade 9	33
PAINTING , Olivia Churchwell, grade 11	34
CERAMIC , Bella Rosa, grade 12	38
PAINTING , Isabella Shoji, grade 11	41
PAINTING , Mekhia Posey, grade 12	42
CERAMIC , Sabrina Quintanilla, grade 10	45
PHOTO , Julia Pike, grade 10	46
PAINTING , Lucy Moulton, grade 10	51
CERAMIC , Olivia Cucinotta, grade 11	53
MIXED MEDIA , Gretchen Meyer, grade 10	54
AERIAL PHOTO FROM KITE , Phil Sweeting, grade 12	57
PHOTO , Anya Katz, grade 12	58
PHOTO , Anya Katz, grade 12	61
PHOTO , Jane Drinkard, grade 12 <i>(Inside Back Cover)</i>	



the perfectionist

The perfectionist cleans the empty bowls over and over
and when she's decided she's done
she licks their bare insides
and cleans them again.
This time she doesn't use soap.

The perfectionist stacks the empty bowls over and over,
she fits their cream porcelain shapes
and they obediently snug together,
then she lathers her hands with lavender soap
and ties a red ribbon around the pile.

The perfectionist rinses the hammer over and over,
she wipes away the years of rust
and she shines the tip
until she can see the shadows that marble her face
and unties the ribbon that holds the bowls
and she keeps her eyes wide open
as she shatters the bowls
and watches them shiver to the ground.



lucky strike

It is a cold night in October and the only light in the backyard is the faint glow of six cigarettes. We slouch in lawn chairs that have been organized into a perfect circle, 14 knees pointing towards the sky as if we are members of a moon worshipping cult. Smoke hangs in the air, curling upward, dissipating, and leaving behind only the sharp smell of burnt tobacco, as my friends sink deeper into their chairs with every exhale.

Before I was born my mother was a chain smoker. Mug in one hand, feminist tome in the other, and a Lucky Strike clenched between her top and bottom lips: a classic tableau of her coffee shop days. As the manager of the nonfiction section at Saint Marks Bookshop, she would sit perched on a high stool scouring the store for shoplifters. She took pride in the punk sensibility of the early 80s East Village, blowing smoke in customers' faces and occasionally gracing them with a snide answer. Her baggy black shirt would sink below her leggings as she dramatically pushed herself off of the chair, her thick curls bouncing below her shoulders, her long silver earrings dangling towards her collarbones. I never saw her this way though. My images of her are an amalgam of other people's stories and photographs that were left behind.

My mother died from tongue and throat cancer, the legacy of her addiction. Doctors say that the cancer may not have been caused by the cigarettes, but even so, the chemotherapy, her constant, debilitating pain, and hours of her body heaving across the floor trying to make it to the bathroom—all of this makes the single thought of one drag horrifying to me.

The girl with the off-white Converse wraps her arms around me as if it's been years. The bleached tips of her hair reek of old smoke, the smell of a broad construction worker's winter coat in a crowded subway car. Her shoelace is undone so she hands me her cigarette.

Feel free to take a drag.

This cylindrical casing is foreign. I've seen it between my friends' fingers, but never mine. I watch as the heat eats away at the charred paper. I tap the top,

succumbing to the rhythm of a teenage smoker. Girls around me purse their lips, shooting cones of smoke into the air. I so badly want to wrap my mouth around the orange base. I want to let the smoke rush into my mouth. I want to stop it at my throat and let it seep back into the air.

This past weekend I visited my grandfather in what my grandmother calls his “temporary” nursing home. He sat propped up in his wheelchair, his knees locked in an unnatural position behind him, his lips tightly drawn to his gums, his face a shell. My grandmother leaned in toward my grandfather, her other hand on my hair.

Isn't she beautiful?

He looked at me, unable to speak, nodded, and forced a long hoarse breath through his lungs.

There's a gaping hole between my grandfather's collarbones, the remnants of his laryngectomy. His mother, father, grandmother, and grandfather all smoked as he grew up. He didn't know any better.

When people see the advertisements of rotting teeth or tar-filled lungs, they cringe, but do these images have a lasting effect? They are an attempt to make your stomach churn and make you feel embarrassed when you see a teenager hanging off the side of a brownstone, blowing smoke through her lips. But if the ads aren't personal, if they don't remind you of your suffering grandfather or dead mother, how are they supposed to make an impact?

I turn to face my friend. She is not drunk, maybe tipsy, and still loosely holding a cigarette between her index and middle finger. She taps the top and lets the ash spill into the grass. Bringing the cigarette to her lips, she pulls in and immediately breathes out, letting the smoke barely escape past the tip of her tongue. She lowers her eyelids and tilts her head back; she wants to be seductive. She guides the cigarette to her lips, once again teasing her lungs. I look at her, trying to understand the allure.



JULIA PIKE GRADE 10

a hypothetical

in which Darkness comes
to meet me as I sit there
in the somewhere of a cluttered forest.

A situation in which Darkness sits
beside me in the clotted leaves
like an old friend I haven't seen

in years, yet still insists on acting
like it was only yesterday when we last spoke.
We speak in hushed tones,

not because we necessarily have to
but more because perhaps—
in a different scenario—

the trees around us are trying their best
to eavesdrop. I tell Darkness things I think
Darkness would like to hear.

How nice a shadow feels on hotter days. Or
how that hallway I have had to walk through
late at night no longer feels so oppressive

as it used to. And Darkness listens.
And appreciates, and laughs
politely when appropriate.

And when he thinks he's listened long enough
or when he hears what he has come
for, Darkness will nod, stand up,

brush the dry leaves off his legs,
and pat me on the shoulder
before saying: "I am leaving now,

so that I may arrive."
And it will be a speculative in which
Darkness is true to his word

and leaves me to myself as I sit there
in that tense state of uncertain solitude,
my eyes beginning to see
only the surrounding trees, all conspiring together.



ZAC PEPERE

GRADE 10

naturalismo

El día era bien turbio. El sur acababa de salir de un huracán pero la belleza del país brilló en su contraste. Siempre fue así. El día fue un contraste entre el campo verde y una ciudad gris. Cuando dejamos nuestras bellas montañas verde entramos a un mundo mas anormal de que yo ni pensaba que existia. El cielo era tan oscuro que tal vez era posible que un dios no había existido pero si existe uno, es posible que el se olvidó de esta parte. Habían colinas por todos los lados. Eran lindas como el resto del país pero siempre hay un defecto que arruina el resto. Las colinas estaban cubierta por chozas. Eran hecha de zinc, el techo, las paredes, y la entrada. Uno arriba del otro, construida en una forma inclinada por la colina y también demuestra que están inclinado a fallar. Cuando llegamos, habían destacas de aguacate y guineo sin compradores. Los indigentes estaban asechando los visitantes. Morenos en ropa hecha jirones con miradas de desdén a los extranjeros de su tierra. A recibirno habían asistentes juvenes. Hermanos los tres. El mayor nos dio su palabra que vijilara para 'ladrones' en cambio de nuestro muestra de apreciación por sus 'protección.'

- ¿Protección de quien? ¡Ustedes son los ladrones!
- Pero señora—
- ¡No, no!

Atraves del día tuvimos que volver al infierno. De que salimos dos niños morenos, indigente ofrecieron su 'producto' al hombre al frente de mí. El hombre se olvidó las maneras de su patria y aceptó. Bobo. El saco veinte pesos de su bolsillo. De repente vinieron seis más niños golpeando el uno al otro. ¡Los niños se agarraron al cuerpo del hombre pidiendole que por dios le de los veinte pesos!

Al salir de ese lugar tan desgraciado fue extraño ver el rostro de mucho de las gentes ahí, especialmente los niños.

El mundo no fue hecho igual para todos y esta realidad es concreta pero lo peor es que nadie lo sabrá cuando hubiera sido lo necesario en tal hora.

naturalism

The day was very murky. The south had only just emerged from a hurricane but the beauty of the country had shone in its contrast. It was always like this: the contrast between the green countryside and a gray city. When we left our beautiful mountains we entered a stranger world than I'd ever thought existed. The sky was so murky that it seemed as if God had never existed, or if one did exist, it was possible he'd forgotten this part. There were hills on all sides. They were lovely like the rest of the country but there was always some defect that ruined everything else. The hills were covered with huts. They were made of zinc—the roofs, the walls, and the doorway. They were stacked one above the other along the incline, almost tilting over. When we arrived, there were stands with avocados and bananas without any buyers. Indigents were lying in wait for us. Dirty and brown, their clothing made of shreds, looks of disdain toward these strangers on their land. Three young helpers came out to receive us. They were brothers. The oldest one swore that they were on the lookout for 'thieves' and that we needed to show appreciation for their protection.

"Protection from whom? You're the thieves!"

"But madam—"

"No, no!"

At the end of the day we had to return to Hell. Two dark boys followed us, offering their "product" to the man in front of me and my friend. The man, forgetting the ways of his country, accepted. Idiot. He took twenty pesos from his pocket. Suddenly, six more boys came out, fighting each other off. They grabbed at him asking by God's will that he give them the twenty pesos!

Upon leaving this unfortunate place I thought about how awful it was to see the faces of those people, especially the boys.

The world wasn't made equal for everyone and this truth is certain but what's worse is that no one will know this when it would have been necessary at such a time.



MEKHIA POSEY GRADE 12

11:30

you're enveloped in one of those lamp-lit, perfect nights,
not a whirlwind night of people, of streetlights
and cold breath in the air, but a soft night

sitting on a familiar family's couch, the babysat boys
asleep in their beds, just tufts of blonde hair visible above
the quilts, skinny little bodies hidden under blankets

in their dark, young rooms. your sister asleep on the
couch next to you, curled up, her legs bent, one foot
sticking out off the cushion like a question mark

listening to that song you've listened to every day
for the past year, that reminds you of your favorite place
in the world, and the ambulance siren, that urban owl,

wailing in the distance, reminding you of yet another
reason why you love this city. and you just know that
even though you're not the cool girl, maybe not the
desirable,

sought-after one, not the girl that people turn to hoping
for a smile, an acknowledgement, that your life will still
be okay, fantastic even. because life is not high school,
and even

when this chapter is over, there will still be cities
alive with light in the middle of the night, and songs
that make your heart ache in the best way, and late hours

flitting spent through the bullets of rain with the people
you love most in the world, clammy canvas sneakers and
drenched ponytails laughing through the dark, and
languages you've never

heard of, that sound like butter melting, and the eyes of a
boy some time in the future, alive with laughter, and paints
all lined up in their dauntless row, beside the creamy white
paper,

just waiting to become something beautiful, and rickety
trains leading to places you've never been, and books that
perfectly capture experiences and feelings you haven't ever
realized you had.



ANYA KATZ

GRADE 12

constellations

What my grandfather taught me best were the stars. *Constellations have it all figured out; they just sit up there and watch beauty unfold.*

Sitting together, my grandfather and I hold hands, mine cool and blemish free, his large, encompassing, aged; his facing the sky, mine resting gently on the folds of his tweed jacket. His clinking gin and tonic means it is time for the show. Ritualistically, classical music escapes the house through the shingles, lifting the sky to darken, pushing away the shade from the stars.

Glancing up slowly, about to conduct the symphony, he reads the stars like a well-practiced orator. Recounting tales of Galileo, painting pictures of Renaissance men with scrolls, delivering notices on horseback. *The seven sisters join together as the night sky begins its welcome. See them each holding close together in their orbit.* Darkening our faces and forcing our eyes shut, Orion swings his sword while Cassiopeia glows in her distinct formation. The Gemini twins wave goodnight, Cepheus dozes off in his throne, while the insignificant figures of people miles below blow out their candles for sleep. The people on earth close their eyes to the stars, as the stars come out to look upon the world.

My eyelids have slipped as my grandfather reaches the part about the winter night sky. When the Greek bull Taurus beats his horns into the neighboring stars, he demands sleep. Smiling, my grandfather pats my kneecap. On his porch, guarded by Achilles and his shining brothers and his sisters, our galaxies are impenetrable.

My grandfather recently leaned over the table at dinner, hands grasped neatly in his lap, facing me. He widened his eyes beneath his bifocals, stretching the wrinkles below the lids. *Do you remember that time when we were sitting on the hammock? You were looking up at the sky and I was sitting right beside you. I remember thinking in that moment: nothing can*

get any better than this. This is as good as it gets. That's what I thought, you know? This is perfect. This is as good as it gets.

My grandfather refuses to get rid of anything old. He recently brought photos from the 1930's to visit my grandmother in the hospital. My grandmother counted the days on her fingers as she paged through coupons. As we gathered around her wheelchair, joking about the fashion styles, giggling at longhaired men, and naming dead relatives in every picture, my grandfather held a single photo of a teenage girl. Somber, he gazed into the eyes of the girl in the picture until he nearly cried. This is your grandmother. *Look how beautiful she was. Look she used to have dimples in her cheeks. She had freckles too but they faded away with age. Look how young she was and beautiful.*

My grandfather must write a personal essay about everything he has accomplished for his fiftieth Harvard University reunion. The prompt is that he is supposed to discuss who he really came to be and where the path of life has led him before death.

He sits in the corner staring at a coffee table book. Holding it at the seams, caressing the pages, he looks up solemn, dark, frustrated, and old. *I found it very hard to write this essay. I can never take back my memories because they're over. I will never get the chance to re-live them. They're done. All of the good times are behind me. Everything good has already happened.*

So it is happening and it is swallowing his brain, eating his organs, constantly sloshing, pulsing veins, bursting blemishes out along his hairline, preventing oxygen from making it to his smile.

It isn't my job to solve it. It isn't my job to research the medications that might decorate the white dinner table or lie and say everything is okay. It isn't my job to deal with his incurable darkened viewpoint or pat him on the back every time he cries at a sad movie. I can't tell him it is all going to be

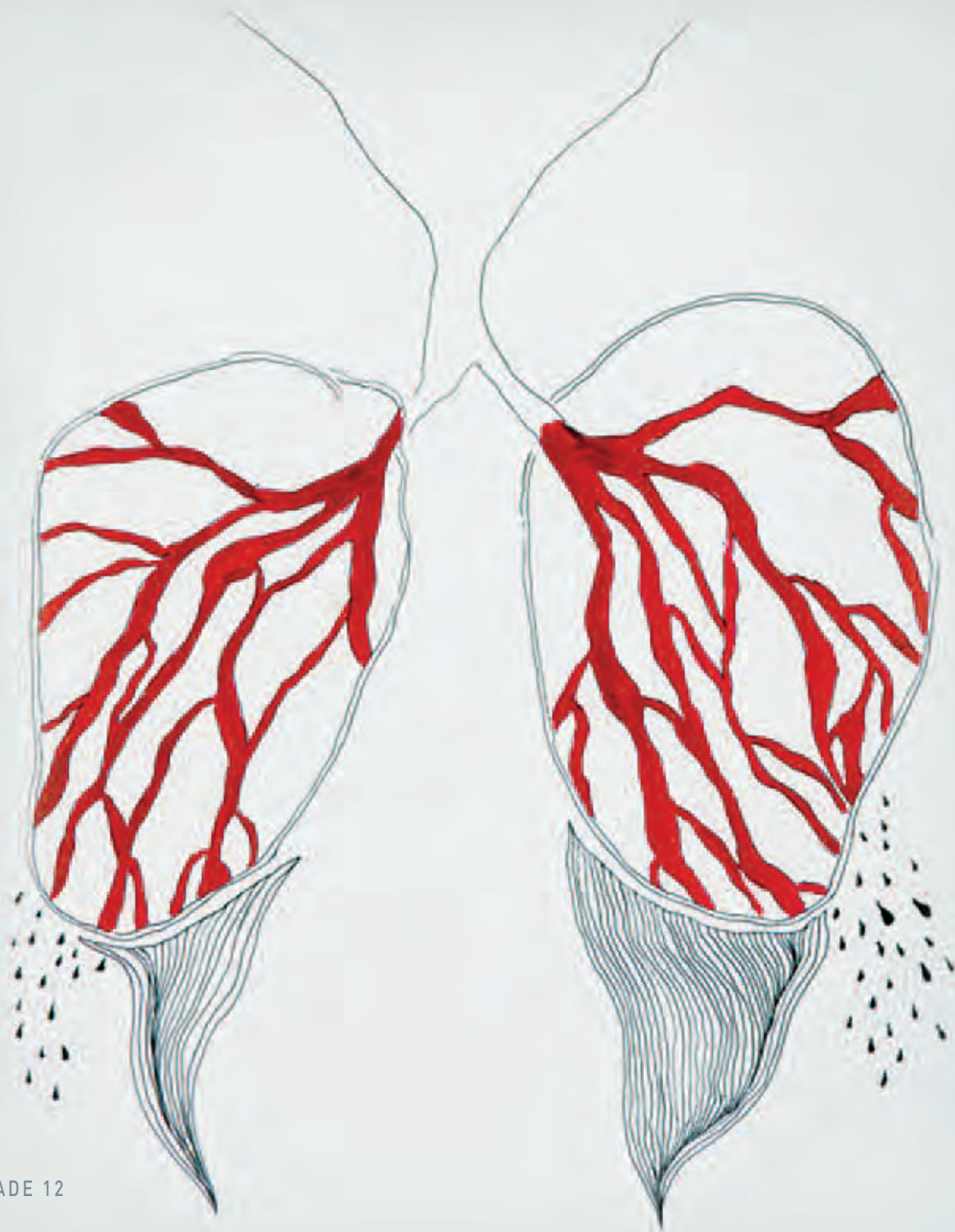
okay, because he is going to die, his good memories have passed, he isn't young, and it is nearing an end.

This is what ruins me. What happens when you get to a point in your life when you know it is over? When you know that physically, mentally, and emotionally, the best is done? Is it the fear of death or this realization that drives you utterly stir crazy? Do you really want to live to forever when you realize that all you ever knew was the earth, and that alone seemed so complex? Karma was wrong, good guys die too, life loses purpose, and you fall into a dark hole.

I want him to understand that I get that. I know that nostalgia can't cure the soul. I get that he wants to plant himself in an era and sit in perfection as all else moves around him.

3:00 AM

Dark cold and breaking a sweat, my grandfather checks the clock, closes his eyes and getting down to kneel by his bed, he prays that his wife will get out of the hospital, that the apple tree out back holds up through the hurricane, and that his grandchildren will always keep kosher. He gulps down his anti-depressants and takes a quick glance at the stars just to make sure they're still there.



her shapes

Clarity hid behind its
Mother's leg
Staining her chaste cheeks
She wished for childhood
Simple and round
But got stuck with a shape
Too difficult
To describe

the red-cup test

As a ninth grader, I knew very well that cool kids went to cool parties, and that cool parties involved illegal activities. In January, I was invited to the birthday party of my best friend T. I knew it was going to be my first cool party because T's friends Z, D, E, and M were going, and Z, D, E, and M were smokers and drinkers.

I got a haircut before the party, even though I had no split ends. After a thorough examination of my closet, I decided on a blue plaid flannel, thinking it would be perfect. I paired it with skinny jeans—you couldn't go wrong with skinny jeans—and black leather boots, which had flat soles and tassels. It was a simple outfit, but I felt ready.

A few hours later, at T's house, we waited for everyone to arrive so we could head to the Japanese restaurant. C was late. "I don't even like C," said T to Z, D, E, and M. "I'm just using her for her camera."

At the Japanese restaurant, I sat at the small table with C and A. The rest sat at the big table. At one point, I noticed that Z and D weren't there. A conversation starter. I stretched my arm across the gap between the two tables and tapped E on the shoulder. "Where did they go?" I asked. "Went to smoke," she replied, not looking at me.

A minute or so later, I noticed that Beatrice Hollingberry, a celebrity among Brooklyn private-schoolers, was eating in the same restaurant. I had gone to middle school with her. Now that I was in high school, I was eating with cool kids, and I wanted her to know that. When she walked by my table, on her way to the bathroom, I spun around in my chair and yelled, "Hi, Beatrice!" She responded with a vague look of recognition. "Hi?"

Next stop: the crooked little deli on the corner of Smith and something. Z and D stuffed tiny bundles of weed into their cigarettes and smoked the whole way there, trailing skunk-scented fumes throughout the crowded

street. C and A went home before we reached the deli. I stayed. Hand shaking, I gave D the ten-dollar bill that my mom had tucked neatly into the pocket of my long, puffy coat. "In case you need a snack," she had said.

We lugged the bag of Four Loko and red plastic cups to the park. After emptying the bag onto a park bench, someone complained that all the Four Lokos were the orange kind, and that the orange kind tasted bad. So, to mitigate the taste, Z and D ran to the nearest drugstore and shoplifted mouth-numbing ointment. *They shoplifted mouth-numbing ointment.*

Finally, everyone settled into a clump in the middle of the deserted park. The carrot-colored liquid stared up at me from inside the red cup. Z pointed at me. "Guys, she's never had a drink before!" she exclaimed. "Wait, *what?*" said M (a boy). "Oh, okay. I *totally* respect that." They nodded; he nodded.

The others gulped and tried not to wince. I pretended. I raised the red cup to my lips and tipped it, but didn't open my mouth. Since I was sharing with E, she unknowingly drank the entire thing. My sobriety went unnoticed.

We stumbled back to T's house. "Did you get rid of everyone you wanted to get rid of?" T's mom asked with a smirk, referencing C and A. Uncomfortably, T glanced at me.

They fell onto T's bed and crashed, a heap of long, wild hair; sheer tank tops; sequined mini skirts; and five-inch heels. I sat in the corner of the room, texting my mom. I knew it; she knew it. I had failed the red-cup test.

single

On the day the car hit him, there was no birthday cake. There were no lit candles. There was no gift paper littered across his living room floor. For the first time in eight years, James Hickson did not get his face covered in frosting or get sung to sleep. His mother was singing, but he was not awake to hear it. For the first time, his mother cried over his small body. For the first time, his race car bed sheets were stained with tears.

"Mrs. Hickson, we—"

"Ms."

"Excuse me?"

"Just that it's 'Ms.' I've been alone all my life, I don't like to carry a false title."

"Very well then, Ms. Hickson, we have to be honest with you."

"Yes."

"Your son's condition is bleak."

"Bleak?"

"We don't like to make declarative statements in situations like this these."

"Can you—"

"I just want to be clear that we will continue to do our best for your son."

"James."

"Pardon?"

"His name. His name is James."

"Yes, of course, we will continue to do our best for him. But we also do not want to make any promises."

She thought about what it would feel like to have someone telling her to go home and eat, because her body couldn't handle all the stress on an empty stomach. Someone to tell her to take a warm bath, to soak her feet, to rest her head on her own pillow. One that didn't feel like a cinder block. Someone to say that they wouldn't judge her for going home for a bit because they knew she was tired and

her eyelids were turning grey with fatigue. She rubbed her shoulders and tried to imagine for a second that they were the firm, calloused hands of a husband or a kind man who was still willing to kiss her forehead even now when it was constantly beaded with sweat. Someone who would say, "Go rest baby. I'll keep an eye on him." Someone she could say no to because she wanted to be the first person to see him when he woke up.

"Is he going to wake up?"

"Mrs. Hickson."

"Ms."

"What is your first name?"

"Nellia."

"Nellia—if I may call you that—I'm afraid... I—I'm afraid we can't say yet."

When the doctor asked her to sit, she didn't say thank you, my body is tired, my ankles are swollen, I haven't sat down in almost 12 hours, or 34 years really. She said, "I'll stand, thank you," and then stood.

It was another three hours before the doctors returned. Two this time. In matching white lab coats and plastic gloves. They explained that they needed tests. She didn't like the way that sounded. Tests were something you could fail. He was turning blue; no test needed to prove that. He was asleep, they knew that without performing a test. He was sick. She wanted it to be that simple.

"We will understand how to better treat him."

"We need to know what's wrong to take care of him."

"One day ago he was hit by a car."

"Mrs. Hickson—"

"She prefers Nellia."

"We know why he's here."

"We just need you to trust us."

She didn't say anything else. She stood next to her sleeping son in the cramped hospital elevator. She watched him behind the glass on the other side of the x-ray room. She watched him fail test after test. She never took her eyes off him.

When they returned to the children's ward there were more wheels than when she'd left. A row of child-sized gurneys were lined up against the wall. The sheets were folded neatly. They were too white. They stood out against the color of everything else. In all of its morbid splendor, the children's ward tried desperately to be playful. The walls were covered in paint handprints and crayon scribbles. Each hospital room door had a poster of a small, bandaged animal saying, *It hurts now but it'll get better*. She wondered how many children looked at that poster and smiled because she knew immediately that there had never been a single one, but instead a countless number of parents wondering the same thing that she did.

It was recess. The children were riding around in little plastic green cars. They were racing. She was laughing at how little their legs were, and how quickly they moved nonetheless. She watched intently as the frantic frenzy of feet moved toward the painted yellow finish line. She thought for a moment to amuse them by pretending to be a flag girl waiting for the winner of the race. She stepped in front of the partition on the floor flailing her arms almost as violently as the cascade of toddlers were shuffling their feet. All the noise and movement was dizzying, but she couldn't help but laugh at herself. *FLAP*, she thought. She stood there almost manic in her effort to please the children. She was thrusting her forearms against an imaginary current when one of them crashed into the front of her calf.

"Winner!" she cried.

The child paid her no attention. She reached to hug him but he had already climbed out of his vehicle and begun to walk down the other end of the hallway. She stood there rubbing her bruise, still laughing. One of the nurses asked if she was lost. She stared at her for almost two minutes and then walked away.

On the day her son died she did not cry in front of the doctors. She did not scoff at their white coats. She did not tell them she knew the tests wouldn't have helped or yell when they said she couldn't leave with his body. She collected the used tissues from around the room, her duffel bag, her jacket, and her car keys. She tried to drive home; instead she fell asleep sitting up in the front seat of her car.



LAUREN HOWE

GRADE 11

BELLA BOORNAZIAN

GRADE 12



bimonthly

The chair is an atrocity. I can feel its wooden panels and nail heads making an imprint on my butt. The cold, hard, iron back does not seem to be built with consideration to the contours of the human spine.

I hold my forearms against the edge of the table, contemplating the strange food that is arranged on a thick wooden slab in front of me. He sits across from me, leaning forward on his elbows, eyes raised in a pose of patient anticipation.

"Well," he says, "you wanna try it?"

"Umm, sure, I guess," I say. "But I can't use those things."

"Oh. So just use your fingers, it's the same. Here. Try this one," he says, pointing. His finger gets obnoxiously close to my food as he leans over his own slab. I grab the thing with three fingers, as if it were a slug. It feels like a slug, faintly cold and moist. The rice is stickier than I imagined.

I bite half of it off with my teeth, making sure that my lips don't come in contact with it. It tastes sort of metallic and slimy, the way I imagine my own tongue tasting. Except this thing is mushy and the rice is sour in a kind of satisfying way. I like the rice. Overall the thing's gross though, and I daintily place the other half of it back on the slab.

"It's all right," I tell him. He wipes his chin with his napkin and smiles with his mouth closed.

"Here," he says. "Try it with the sauce." He pushes towards me a dish with a murky black puddle in it.

"Umm, I'm not really sure if I—"

"Just try it!" he says, smiling at me. "Here, this one." He points at one that is circular and has rice around the perimeter. It looks like the cross section of a bone. I pick it up and dip it into the puddle. The liquid spreads up into the rice and turns it brown. The thing is now slightly heavier, and I pop it in my mouth. I can only taste the liquid, which is acrid and incredibly salty. I cough and force myself to swallow. It crawls down my throat like a cold lump, leaving a trail of parched, briny devastation that I can feel when the air

enters my throat. My eyes water and I cough again. When it reaches the bottom I take a deep breath.

"I don't like it," I say. He raises his eyebrows and smiles, but his eyes look sad. "You don't want to try another one of those? Without the sauce?"

"No."

He drums his fingers against the table. I can hear his fingernails clicking against the wood. I readjust myself in the chair to change the place where the panels and nail heads dig into my butt.

"All right," he says. "I guess your mother can make you some pasta or something when you get home."

"Yeah," I say. "I'm not that hungry though. I'm fine."

I look down at the remaining food on my slab. The limp little oddly colored strips sag from their rice perches, and the strange, rice-lined, technicolor tires stare back at me unblinkingly. I'm suddenly aware of the silence between the two of us. I look up at him.

"Well, I guess in two weeks we won't get sushi," he says, laughing. He smiles at me. I can see the little wrinkles next to his eyes. I make myself smile back.

"I was thinking actually a month from now. Not in two weeks—your mother's doing something with you in two weeks. But two weeks after that, we could go to a Yankee game. What do you think about that?"

"Yeah, that would be cool," I say.

"Great," he says. He puts his last piece in his mouth. "So I guess we can just wrap this up."



MERET BAUMANN GRADE 9



OLIVIA CHURCHWELL GRADE 11

venison

He killed an ant on his plate. Well, his plate from yesterday. More ants came, carrying away crumbs. There were stacks of plates and cups next to his bed, all dirty. He'd been wearing the same once-white underpants for a week. His dad said he could stay at home until he felt better about everything. His mother would've preferred he went to school, but neither of them were taking her advice; someone who deserts people in need certainly shouldn't be giving advice anyway.

Since Jeff's parents separated after his father walked in on his mother with Kurt, the mailman with the twitchy left eye,—you know, the one who is always muttering to himself and whatever—Jeff has been skipping school, camping out on the couch playing video games and ordering pizza. Every time he shoots someone on the screen, he heals a little more; he takes his misery and shares it, virtually, with hundreds of other people. Sometimes, if he focuses hard enough, he can forget he exists at all and believe that each virtual life is his own. Every time he dies the corpse reminds him how ephemeral this all is, and pushes his sedentary body closer to leaving.

Ben knocked on his door the other day, took him outside into the blinding rays, and told him about the old warehouse. Down on 26th, there's this warehouse, right. It's got beaten doors, windows blown out, graffiti everywhere, and they're tearing it down! Ben's dad has got this construction manager type job or whatever and he's working the wrecking ball on the crane. They're going to sneak in, climb through the windows and film the interior, keep a record of the unmonitored beauty that's inside that no one will see, in person, again.

Jeff found a pair of his mother's pantyhose amidst a pile of her old things his dad had wildly constructed in the living room. He pulled it over his face like he'd seen robbers do in movies, shivering at touch of his mother's skin through the transitive properties of her worn clothes. He

and Ben left early, before the sun woke, before the cloud of alcohol had left his father. They hid their bikes in the bushes around the corner, and like so many other times, climbed the barbed wire fence. Jeff turned on the camera, and Ben announced the mission: keep the world intact.

"Save the unknown from being destroyed. Fight back for those who can't fight for themselves."

"Ben, can we just do this already? I've got, like, six voicemails from my mom because she checked the house and saw I wasn't there. Let's go."

Inside, Jeff marveled at the graffiti, entire scenes sprawled out on the walls, painstakingly made for no one. There were paintings of this deer, all over the building, and it kept looking at Jeff, its head tilted to one side like it was thinking. Not like confused or anything. Proud and thinking. Jeff followed the deer paintings, camcorder in hand, entranced, separate from whatever illicit, momentary glee Ben was having on the first floor. The beast took him up the broken stairs to the roof. It was in full gallop, stampeding for the exit. He burst out the door looking for the final painting. A stuffed elk head, mounted on the water tower, head tilted, peered at him, beat him to the ground, whispered that only death comes from solitude.

The ground shook under his feet. Well, the roof shook under his feet. Jeff hurtled down the stairs, hurrying past the deer beckoning him back up to the roof. The handrail gave way and Jeff tumbled to the floor. Above, the concrete started to crack, walls shuddering, steel creaking as girders bent under the force of the wrecking ball. It hit the building again and Jeff fought to his feet, leaned against a breaking wall, and pushed on. He was sure Ben was left with the deer, left with the herbivores preyed on by the native, North American wrecking ball. Barely managing to escape, Jeff hid from the construction crew and hopped the fence, only to find a note from Ben: "Bored, went to get pizza. I'll see you tomorrow, dude."

Jeff limped to O'Dwyell's Bridge. His ankle had twisted in the collapse. A building once raised for industrialization, razed for metropolitanization. The river was furious, powering black water beneath O'Dwyell's. Jeff peed into it.

His mom's car stopped, after Jeff had finished peeing. They both looked down at their feet—Jeff's mom after seeing her pantyhose in her son's hands, and Jeff after realizing his fly was still unzipped—unprepared for this interaction. He would live with her now. She would take him from his father, take Jeff into a stable, healthy household, just one that wasn't his.

A support officer followed him to school. He glazed over, waking only for moments when he and Ben could creep out to the school bathroom and fly. He had watched part of the video again, and it was just as trippy. He had paused the video well before the roof fell though.

While his mother worked, he took out the video games again. They weren't holding his attention. New guns, new maps, but the same old ending: guy wasting his life on a couch. Killing had lost its catharsis. All he could picture was his head, stuffed, mounted on a wall. He wondered what facial expression he would have.



a brief story

January 14, 1997

You will make it and so will I.

December 28, 1996

You're going to be in the hospital for a few days. The heater is broken and I don't know how to fix it.

December 11, 1996

Every day I tell the universe that today would be a good day for a breakthrough in medical science.

November 1, 1996

You started your chemotherapy three days ago. I'm only good at fixing colds so I thought maybe a bowl of soup would help you feel better. It didn't.

October 17, 1996

The word "diagnosed" has been used a lot recently.

October 2, 1996

You told me about the doctor; you told me about the tests.

September 20, 1996

You've stopped talking at the dinner table.

September 15, 1995

How did you fit all of your belongings into three boxes?
I wouldn't have cleared out so much space in my apartment if I had known you only owned three shirts.

September 9, 1995

Your grandmother died today. You wanted to be alone.

August 30, 1995

For my birthday you got me a small potted cactus.

June 17, 1995

We went to your cottage in Newport two days ago. On the sliver of beach in front of the house, you whispered a soft "I love you" into my collarbone while the waves licked our ankles.

April 29, 1995

I like your freckles.

April 16, 1995

The cute cashier at the bookstore asked me to dinner Thursday evening. I guess one night out can't hurt.





MEKHIA POSEY GRADE 12

suburban mystics

My favorite candy was called Blue Zing. It was a sucking candy that came as broken chunks in a reusable plastic bag. The solid pieces reminded me of a church's stained glass—half-transparent, light-hungry, and beautiful. They tinted my lips and teeth a color reminiscent of Windex cleaning fluid; my mother used to joke that it looked like an illness. I spit into my hand, drooling electric colors, pushing my saliva around with my pointer finger. I allowed the slimy substance to slide onto the grass. I wiped my hand on my bell-bottom jeans. I could almost see my mother and her dark red lipstick scolding me. Don't spit, use a napkin, that's disgusting, darling.

"Who needs napkins when you're wearing pants?" I said to my friend, who was not listening. She had no interest in my cut-rate philosophy—no one did, really. She drew a heart onto her arm with a black Sharpie.

"What did you say?"

"Nothing." It was better that she didn't hear. I have said greater things.

She was not so much of a listener. I was a bit of a careless talker. That was why we were friends.

We sat on steps made out of wood that gave you splinters when you pressed your hand down on its surface. My hands were speckled with sharp wood chips, slipped into my skin so casually that at the time I had failed to notice.

The suburb I lived in was a jungle of sprinklers and driveways full of little rocks that hurt your bare feet to walk on. You would play in yards and smiling, friendly adults with lemonade would saunter out and offer you refreshments. They would sip margaritas. They drank a lot but weren't alcoholics.

I watched my friend openly, a rude, blank stare. She wouldn't notice, I suppose I assumed, and if she did she would revel in the attention. Her beauty was exotic, something that wasn't immediately apparent, something you had to search for. Her face was defined, artfully designed. Resting on her chin was a wide, thin-lipped toothy mouth, which looked almost out of place on its mountainous cheek bone perch. She pursed her lips and turned to me.

"Let's go for a run, yeah?" We went for a run. We ran through woods and into fields. The wind pressed against my back, diving into the forest and weaving through the trees,

sprinting to keep up with me. I pumped my little legs, panting heavily, my chest collapsing and inflating again.

When I ran hard enough for long enough, my heart got so tired and I felt like it might burst, pop, and I would die instantly or feel heart particles ricochet off my bones.

Dusk loomed, which prompted an explosion of mosquitos, which dipped hungrily into our flesh. We rolled in the grass. Our skin itched from the bites and the dewy blades. We could not distinguish one sensation from the other.

As I lay in the grass, I became suddenly distracted by a shimmer peeking through the weeds: a jewel, a diamond, it looked like. It was hidden amongst the blades, but I could just make out its glittering surface as made visible by the rays of the setting sun.

"Look," I said. It stared at me, daring me to investigate.

"What is that?"

"Treasure."

"What is it doing out here?"

"I don't know. How should I know. Let's go closer."

"Okay."

We went closer, standing up in the tall grass, stumbling awkwardly, lifting our legs high and stomping clumsily.

The diamond we saw was attached to an ear. The ear was attached to a woman. She was an adult. She drank margaritas but wasn't an alcoholic. She brought us refreshments. Her hair was brown. She was unremarkable. An everyday suburban sight. She wore a cardigan similar to the one I knew my mother owned. She had on dark red lipstick. Her treasure earrings were tiny studs, one piercing alone. Her ears were very small.

She was delicate in death. She was missing a shoe. Her right leg was bent up and to the side.

I have no recollection of where exactly my friend went. I just remember how suddenly alone I was with the average woman. How I could not move.

I can picture myself, a solitary figure, more alive than ever, standing next to something so drained and finished. When I look back I hover above the scene in a cloud.

The wind brushed her dead, average hair. A couple strands slid off her forehead and onto her shoulder. She had a drop of what looked like blood at the nape of her neck.

I think that is when I began to cry. I felt pitiful, and too big next to the crumpled body.

An ant climbed her arm and went down her shirt. Her jeans were coated in a thin layer of pollen. I reached over, brushing some of it off. Her flesh, under the denim, felt so alive, soft and pink like mine. But I was here, and she was somewhere else.



SABRINA QUINTANILLA GRADE 10



JULIA PIKE

GRADE 10

dear daddy

I
dreamt
I could watch
you from a bottle.
There you were just
floating in a ship made
of toothpicks and super glue.
I sit
on my
bed and
tilt and
sway
your little ship back and forth watching you stumble with
every man-made quake. The only ocean keeping you afloat
is a quivering tear. Its briny taste rolls onto my tongue and
I remember the sickness I feel when I sleep. And I
always think that same question when I try to rest:
Have you killed a man, Daddy?
Did you use that same bullet that tore apart my mother's heart?

home

What is home? It's four letters—3 consonants, 1 vowel. That's nine points minimum in Scrabble. I love the sound of the word, the way the soft "H" rises at the back of your mouth, protrudes when you push a breeze of air from your billowed out chest, and then, finally closes down on the "mmmm" at the end, a smooth and vibrating sound that rounds itself out. Resolved.

Bowerbirds spend years building the perfect nest to attract a mate. They decorate their houses but each one seems to have its own stylistic taste. In Ecology class, I watched as these blue-beady eyed birds with their slicked black feathers went on long-term decorating excursions. One bird brought in purple and blue speckled flowers. Another chose poop.

A lot of my drawings during free time in Lower School were of slanted houses with large windows, flowers pots on the sills, and family members' heads popping out of each of the four purple windows: one each for mom, dad, my sister and me. Humphrey (my cat) was always in every drawing, sitting in the spiky grass lawn.

I was obsessed with all my friends' houses too. They were all so magically different, so every playdate was a peek into another kid's secret enclave. The most alluring sat on Carroll Street—a sterile multi-level play castle, with a tiny girl hiding somewhere inside its manicured folds. Caroline's house. We didn't get along most of the time (she cheated mercilessly at chess and wouldn't let me have any of the Barbies with hair), but we had at least two playdates a week for most of my childhood because our moms always planned them. Caroline is extremely small and always has been. In a desperate attempt to make up for her smallness, this tiny girl would lash out poking me with her pointy words. When she came over to my house, she liked to point out how small everything was, or how my sister and I had to share a room.

Tiny girl lived in a big house. I imagined what it would be like to have all that space to play in. It had 5 floors, which included a library filled with untouched books, their spines perfectly snug (assembled artistically by color

and style—not by genre or alphabetical order). But what was most fascinating was that all these crisp, shining rooms with perfectly perfumed pillows and rugs and walls of smiling photographs all went to waste. No one could lie on the couch or sit at the gleaming dining room table.

I live in an apartment. My family is on the top floor. The neighbors below are silent. I imagine them sitting in a perpetual trance, their faces like raisins crumpled up and pursed. Carefully, they lift a single silent finger up and turn the page of their latest book and oh so carefully the whoosh of air particles are pushed down by the thin paper. One floor above are me and my sister. We are loud. I play my violin for hours and listen to music while staying up late conjugating Spanish verbs and reading about Gandhi's obsession with his own bowel movements. We run down (and up) the hallway, we laugh over *Friends* episodes and who can come up with the dorkiest dance move of all time. We fight over who gets the remote, who shoved the other one first, who gets to have the last bit of Cherry Garcia ice cream and who should have to get up to turn off the light (we once both refused to get up to turn off the light in a deadlocked stalemate for 30 minutes).

Our landlady, Mrs. Murray, with the raspy voice and the heavy Long Island accent, hates us. She calls and tells us to stop walking so loudly in the hallways, and to lower our voices. Last week, I saw her outside the building as I was leaving, so I opened the door and ran my way past her not stopping to say hello. She's a bizarre, idiotic old woman who thinks that very occasionally doing routine building maintenance like changing the hallway lights or painting the walls is a major capital improvement and a reason to raise the rent. She doesn't let us have washing machines or dishwashers, so I feel stupid when I can't easily figure out these appliances out at my friends' houses. The rooms are small, and we are all crammed in and jumbled up to fit together—a clashing and loud combination of individual voices. Recently my dad moved out of his apartment one block away and back into the spare bedroom because my mom's job became part time and we can't afford two different apartments. I hate having to explain that to people, so I don't tell anyone. It's much easier to leave in the morning and forget about the

apartment with the creaky floorboards and the silent neighbors.

On the way to school, I pass the mansions on Prospect Park West. Some are flat, some are graceful limestone, some have curved stoops and others have a sprawling set of steps going straight down. I watch as people hurry out of their little units—forced out and away from their alcoves. Later in the day, people scurry back into their homes and shut themselves in their own little worlds, hidden. I walk the twelve blocks home, hike up the creaky steps, smelling the various dinners being prepared on each floor, and on some days step a tad harder on the 2nd floor to piss off the creepy wrinkled Chihuahuas in Beverly's apartment.

Away from neighbors and the landlord, I make even more noise. I play music as loud as I want at my music school on 129 West 67th Street. I search for an available practice room—snaking my way through the hallway—all are varying sizes, with huge fluffy rugs on the walls. I searched for my music there, wiggling my fingers around on the strings sometimes finding the right note, sometimes not at all. I searched and discovered Bach and Prokofiev and Mozart. I learned to be tough and hard working (stern and steely, and sometimes nasty Russian teachers will do that to you). Sometimes, on boring rainy days, my friends and I would sneak off to the music library, where the papers in the stacks are mismatched and yellowed with the unfamiliar curves and bumps of the Russian alphabet and smell of spilled coffee. We would run through the stacks, playing high-stakes tag, peeking through the spaces in the shelves above the frilled tops of Bach or Mendelssohn. Shrieking, we ran through a forest of dead people's music.



LUCY MOULTON

GRADE 10

two poems

1. Resurrection

This pigeon is obviously the reincarnation of Malcolm X.
That pigeon is now gone
Just like Malcolm X.
There are now pigeons everywhere.
Malcolm X is everywhere.

2. Picnic

My standard poodle loves Dan Quayle.
Their first child was produced in Kentucky.
No chainsaws were needed.
Much Cuban food was enjoyed afterwards.
The ability to love is a quite powerful thing.



OLIVIA CUCINOTTA GRADE 11



GRETCHEN MEYER GRADE 10

Little Lights

(after Brian Doyle's "Joyas Voladoras")

Consider the *Aliivibrio fischeri* for a second. *Aliivibrio fischeri* are aquatic unicellular bacteria. Alone, they are invisible to the human eye. Their miniscule bodies blend into the dark background of Puerto Rico's water, lurking, every bacterium to itself. *Little lights*, is what I thought, what I saw as our kayak stopped and I tipped my forehead over the boat to gaze at the illuminated abyss below me. The little lights twinkle in the water, and I know that an *Aliivibrio fischerum* is now not alone. An *Aliivibrio fischerum*, previously invisible to me, can now be seen with its bioluminescent body now glowing as part of a community of *Aliivibrio fischeri*.

Each *Aliivibrio fischerum* subsists on organic molecules within the water. They are found, floating in low concentrations, generally lonely. They travel using flagella, long, spindly hairs that protrude off of their infinitesimal bodies. The flagella can push them, beating against the waves, as they make their way to others, to their communities, to their bioluminescence. Consider for a moment those bacteria, who are hovering alone: the *Escherichia coli*, *Salmonella enterica*, *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*, *Acinetobacter sp.*, *Aeromonas sp.*, and *Yersinia enterocolitica*, each isolated body swimming around, each inner light, a brilliant glow, waiting to be ignited.

Aliivibrio fischeri, like many other organisms, communicate through quorum sensing. When in denser communities, they secrete inviting signal molecules. These foreign messages are received by other members of their species and bind to receptors, activating receptors to trigger the genetic codes for bioluminescence, producing a cascade of bioluminescent luciferase, making the whole community of *Aliivibrio fischeri* glow. There are over a million *Aliivibrio fischeri* on this earth. They can choose to exist alone, like a crab, and never shine their inner bulb, or they can choose to exist together, in dense symbiotic communities, and fluoresce their bodies across oceans.

The most intelligent brains in the world are inside humans. A human brain weighs approximately three pounds. It is 1130-1260 cubic centimeters and

contains four lobes: parietal, frontal, temporal, and occipital. The brain contains long, winding, cortical folds, gyri and sulci, which wrap around in unique patterns beneath the hard, protective skull of each person. The occipital lobe is responsible for speech and communication. It controls how we talk to each other, what we say, how we turn our thoughts and ideas into words, which will flow from our mouths just as the chemicals will flow from the pores of the *Aliivibrio fischeri* and light up their bodies. Our brains are buzzing with the vibration of electricity. The jelly-like consistency of the entangled *gyri* and *sulci* of the lobes tapers off into the brain stem beneath the occipital lobe to carry nerve signals down spines and into the organs and limbs where they belong.

Humans use words in different languages. Herring gulls gesture with legs and heads and stomachs. Chameleons change color in response to their surrounding environment. Dogs squint and scrunch their noses. Apes, monkeys, birds, and tortoises gaze. Hammer-headed bats, red deer, elephant seals, and humpback whales call to their mates, singing out. Mongolian gerbils and silkworm moths secrete pheromones, which are smelled and sensed by members of their same species. No living being is without communication. We all want to be heard.

So much held in a brain. So much held in a signal, a chemical, a community. We are alone and yet we yearn for interactions with others. We pour out our hearts and spew our thoughts to communities of people. Perhaps, we could not bear to live so alone. Perhaps we could not bear to hold our thoughts inside, waiting to be transferred to the occipital lobe so they can come out of our mouths. When we are babies, we cry for our parents, tearing up and screaming for attention; when we grow up, we dress scantily and decorate our naked faces with make-up and flaunt our talents for recognition and interaction. You can sulk in a corner and build a wall to push people away, but there is always a part of you yearning for that communication, sparked by your mother notifying you that dinner is ready, by your sister's tantrum because you are leaving, by your boyfriend's plea to take him back, your parents' shouting at each other in the middle of the night, and the silence of your solitude, echoing in the streets where pedestrians stumble home beneath the street lights.



ANYA KATZ

GRADE 12



bones

One day a bird fell from the sky. I stepped out onto the stoop because it was unusually warm and sunny for March, and a little yellow bird dropped out of the air and landed, hard, on the pavement.

I walked over to where the bird lay, on the sidewalk but under a tree. The tree's branches were full of new leaves, light green and not yet large enough to protect the bird with shade.

I looked down on the delicate thing with a sad fascination and crouched next to it, tracing the curves of its tiny body with my eyes. It was yellow interrupted by stripes of black down its wings and a spot of black on its head. Its eyes had no pupils, not that it could see much of anything now anyway.

I heard a dry cough from the doorway. I turned to see my sister toddling over towards me. She took my hand and with all the compassion of a very small child told me, "Don't worry, he's just tired. He'll wake up soon."

"You're probably right," I replied.

She then tugged my hand and I got up and followed her inside, where she asked me to make mac and cheese.

After lunch my sister went to rest. I went back outside. A trail of ants had found the bird, a line of them ending at its body and beginning somewhere out of sight. They wound around the bird, so numerous that from a distance they looked like one shining black rope, constricting. As I came closer I saw the bird's eyes had been taken away, bit by bit, by the ants that were now climbing in and around its empty sockets.

I couldn't let it continue. Not out here, not in the open. I grabbed a spade and dug a grave for it under the tree. I scooped up the bird, the ants still moving through its feathers, eyes and open beak, and placed it in the ground. I pushed the soil over them all.

I had made a cross from two sticks and a rubber band. I stuck in into the ground to mark the grave, turned, and walked inside.

The following autumn a squirrel was digging by the roots of the tree for acorns and instead unearthed hollow bones, long forgotten. He examined them and then, one by one, carried tibia, humerus, vertebrae and the rest up the tree to a haphazard nest made of leaves and twigs and bones.

housewarming

On the way to the supermarket, my car hit a stag. An eight-point buck.
A stallion beast of the wild. I know nothing of deer
or animals, so don't take this part as gospel.
My Maggie—yes, still goes by Maggie—was clocked in the face
by the airbag. It's not like I knew the deer (stag? buck?) was coming. It just sort of appeared,
I guess.
I didn't mention this earlier, but I was stopping by the grocery store near Maggie's parents'
new country house
because we were staying with them for the weekend and wanted to stock up
on meats and frozen waffles and other stuff you need to keep old people happy.
And I look at the deer's face. Let's just call it a deer from now on.
It's perfectly intact. OK, so I don't know much about animals—or forest animals—
but this one is majestic. It has horns, twisting, with points. And the tongue,
draping from the mouth, flat on frozen asphalt road. I need this deer. I try to pick it up.
Maggie is conscious again at this point. She's carrying on,
screaming from the car about blood and concussions and divorce. But the deer
is patient with my tired legs. I whisper that I am weak. In my trunk is a saw.
My father-in-law promised we'd cut down a tree, told me to buy a bow saw. I'm happy I got to
use it.
The neck was thick, and the bone was hard
to get through. Maggie was crying the whole time,
said I went off the deep end going after this deer head. She didn't have the foresight I did.
This deer would be the perfect gift. I didn't get on well with her parents.
The head would change everything.

A full-page portrait of a person standing on a dark, silhouetted hill. The person is wearing a dark beanie, a dark jacket over a patterned shirt, and dark pants. They are looking towards the camera. The background is a bright, hazy sky with a gradient from yellow to light green. The left and right sides of the image are framed by vertical borders with a dark blue, textured, and scratched appearance.

ANYA KATZ

GRADE 12

sirens

(after René Magritte)

We are not beautiful
We stop no ships
We sway no men
We steal no souls
It is we who have been stolen
Turned rough and hollow
Transformed by the crisis of our cries
Crushed and dilapidated by the sea
We armlessly hold each other for all time
While masts, sails, and most of all men
Pass us without notice



JANE DRINKARD / GRADE 12

the
BerkeleyCarroll
School

181 Lincoln Place
Brooklyn, NY 11217
www.berkeleycarroll.org

Typeface: Swiss XCompressed, Din
Paper Stock: Titan cover / Endurance text
Computer Equipment: iMac 12,2
Number of Copies: 500
Design: Studio Lane, Inc.
Printer: Liverpool Litho



Printed on recycled paper