

Paragon



Paragon

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Paragon Submission Guidelines

- 1) *Paragon* seeks to publish innovative and well-crafted art and creative student literature, including poetry, fiction, creative non-fiction, and memoir. Other forms of student writing (i.e. analytical essays, editorials, etc.) will not be reviewed by the board.
- 2) Work may be submitted anonymously to *Paragon*, but cannot be published as such. Any author who chooses not to claim his work after he has submitted it will not be published in the magazine.
- 3) All work submitted to *Paragon* must be the unquestionable product of the author. Any work which proves otherwise will immediately be taken out of consideration for publication, and the student who submitted it will be asked to refrain from submitting in the future.
- 4) *Paragon* only accepts work from current students of the Gilman Upper School. Work from any other authors will not be considered.
- 5) Per Gilman's policy, any submissions containing profanity will not be considered for publication.



-Richard Lenz, '07

Editor's Note:

If you're scared, put down the magazine and turn on your television. If you are hungry...welcome to *Paragon*.



-Andrew Nelson, '09

Nike

Perseus you flaxen dunce
Did no one tell you, shoes won't let you fly?

-Andrew Robinson, '08



-Greg Funk, '07

Nameless

Blinding rain hammered the metal bottom of the small transport ship. It brought a constant, heavy noise to drown out the urgent voices of the yelling men. Their shouts were weak and their boots were little reservoirs, frequently pouring over the edge. It was late March off the shores of the Japanese island of Okinawa, a battleground. A sick man was lying under a makeshift tent on one end of the LCVP, his breath stifled by the high humidity.

"Madison!" shouted a sopping soldier with his uniform jacket slipping off his shoulders, "Check on him again. Make sure his fever hasn't gotten too high." Madison gave a quick nod and, blurred by the torrents, slid down toward the tarp. The man was wrapped in a light, regulation blanket that hid his moon white skin and shivering arms.

"Hey pal. You're gonna be just fine, ya hear? Let's see how you're doin'." He pressed his cold hand to the hot head. The hand sat for a moment as Madison tried to judge the temperature: warmer or cooler. *Just the same*, he decided to himself.

"We'll have you to the hospital boat in no time. This baby's chuggin' along at a steady nine knots. She's just tearin' through the waves. There's no stopping her!" His mouth exposed a quick grin then returned to its stone grimace. He turned to leave but the patient groaned. He looked back, softening his eyes a bit.

"Wanna say something?" he asked loudly but gently. The man coughed violently several times before he could speak.

"Christ man... I didn't even... no gun. No fight... not for me. I want... wanted to serve my country... kill some Japs. Kill 'em... ya know? Avenge a few... make my dad proud... ya know? Now... damn body. Damn virus. Damn... Japs..." He fell asleep. Madison sighed and headed back to his commanding officer.

He glanced over the high walls of the LCVP. Beyond the steely gray, he saw ghosts. Spectral silhouettes of hostile ships patrolling the island's surrounding waters. They made no sound and were illuminated by only the rarest little glow. It sent a chill up the soldier's spine. *This won't be no skirmish*, he thought as he turned his eyes back to rainwater pond of the boat.

He practically waded to the rear where the small sheltered controls were. His officer, Junior Lt. Franklin, was mindlessly steering the boat in whatever varying direction his small radar machine determined. Sharp turns and choppy waves sent the boat rocking every instant. The soldier who

was worried about the patient earlier stood outside the control room, clinging desperately to a metal railing.

"Hey Dewey," called Madison, "He's doin' alright. Just depressed and all. Understandable though. Poor guy's worried about impressing his dad. Now he's sick and can hardly speak, let alone hit the beachhead. Gonna be a tough welcome home, right?"

"Heh. He's the lucky one, to tell you the truth. I'm envious of the guy, getting to rest a while. Might not even end up fighting before the battle's over. Who cares about a tough welcome?"

"Oh come on man! You know you'd feel pretty bad if your family was ashamed of you..."

"Screw that," he said and stumbled toward the rear of the LCVP.

Madison sighed and looked up into the abysmal sky. The drops of water landed cleanly on his tongue and eyelashes. They covered his eyes and distorted his view of the cloudy faucet. The soldier noticed a slate blur descending from the sky and growing steadily larger. He told himself to ignore it. Just a raindrop.

The water crashed upwards, accompanied by an earsplitting screech of rusted metal, shouts, and a wave of warmth from the brief explosion. The kamikaze had just missed the small boat, its pilot blinded by the weather. Madison stood completely tense, gripping a railing and staring straight ahead with blood stained eyes. His pulse beat quickly through the vein just beneath the surface of his forehead. The small gray angel of death had just swung its scythe feet from his face and disappeared behind the thick steel wall. "Christ!" he heard Franklin yell suddenly as faint sounds of gunfire shuddered in their ears.

Glowing red pairs of metal destruction flew in the distance from turrets mounted on American battleships and carriers. Their paths occasionally crossed with those of the gray kamikaze planes buzzing in the sky. The planes' subsequent descent proved almost as dangerous as their pilots' initial intention, barely missing many ships.

Madison watched the violent defensive battle for only a moment before he heard his Lieutenant shout orders.

"Lights out! Everyone keep watch--break out some binoculars, something! Dewey. Take hold of the controls and keep us movin'... slowly though."

“Yes sir,” Dewey responded and rushed to the control panel.

Madison scrambled down the ship choking out a “yessir” while keeping the bright target in sight. Their patient had slid a small bit with the violent jerk of the ship and the wave created by the Kamikaze coffin. The light they had hooked up to the hanging rope was quivering, playing faint cage-like shadows over the sick man and Madison, who had slid practically on top of him.

“Hey man, we’ll get you there safe, alright? Everything’s gonna be fine... just great ok? You’ll get to fight just as soon as they release you from the hospital. It’ll be fine.” He received only a soft groan in response. Madison shifted his focus to the lamp. Looking right at it, his eyes burned, and a glare overtook his vision. He blinked rapidly and searched with his hands for a switch. *There!* And it was dark.

The silence traveled by rain and soaked into their jackets, then underclothing, then skin, then blood. Every man was an island, squatting in the small ocean, breathing deeply and spitting out the concoctions of mucus, rain, and saliva that had built up in their mouths. The red shells were still being launched into the air, although in fewer number and from fewer places. The quiet had been rocked only once by the explosion of an enemy aircraft on a ship. They had not heard the gurgling of the sick man as his lungs succumbed to the pressure and his mouth overflowed. They could only hear waves crashing in from all directions and the ghostly whirl of enemy planes above them. The boat had stopped moving in anticipation of the daylight, which had probably already come under cover of cloud. Madison sat licking the fresh rain off his lips.

God. I hope this isn’t how it ends. God...there is nothing, nothing glorious about this. Nothing noteworthy. No one’s writing about the three man crew aboard the transport dinghy that disappeared on some stormy night. No one. The last time our names’ll see the light will be on a godforsaken MIA list. Christ, what a hellish war. What a hellish war! This can’t be how it ends. It just can’t be...

A smoldering gray speck disrupted the coolness of the sky with its red and black trail. It was practically gliding through the bluster as its propeller slowly creaked to a halt. It came quietly. No one looked up. Madison blinked a droplet from his eye.

-Nicky Parlato, ‘08



-Ben Zunkeler, '10



-James Miller, '08

Unwanted Attention

A woman shot me today
beside the suited men shuffling
across Pratt Street.

By chance I'd strolled
between her targets
and was caught in the brilliant

flash -- suddenly, there were
two of me: one ambling forward while
the other froze

mid-step in tiny pixels
flat and still. I was jealous at first
of my twin's uncertain future, a form
to be copied,

pasted and cropped before
disappearing altogether.
But how unfair that I be remembered

for a half day's beard,
windburn, or the slack-jawed
expression I so deftly conceal
when photographers announce their intentions.

Though when I think on it,
it's far worse the way
I remember you: nothing

but skin and glassy eyes, begging
please, if you love me,

turn it off.

-Henry Kerins, '07



-Jack Rutka, '07



-Alex Parlato, '10



-Nick Kim, '10



-Galen Carroll, '08

A Soft Existence

I ran upward into the endless blue sky, letting the soft New Hampshire sun stream down in layers upon my chest and face. I ran among scattered black and white cows and crumbling stone walls. The horizon line became brighter, pulsating in tune with my feet. The green cow pasture, spotted with stunted evergreens bent sideways from the intense winter winds, ended at a startling precipice. My gaze was compelled onward, out over the turquoise lake spread out like a wrinkled map before the never-ending mountains to the East. I lay down on a simple slab of rock, forgotten years ago by farmers in their endless toil to clear the land. The emerald green grass split like water around my granite resting place, forming an island. I let the peaceful summer breeze ripple my shirt and flow outward into the massive expanse supported by the land. A stray calf broke from the others and delicately nestled my outstretched hand in search of an expected treat. She slowly lifted her heavy head to question my existence with eyes that spoke of effortless knowledge. I looked past her soft features, out once more to the lake. There were tiny white sailboats, dotting the smooth, unmarred surface. I could imagine the wind passing through their sails and the water breaking before their keels. The wind on my face became spray, and I felt the warmth and life in the ground beneath me. The land itself was alive and sentient. I reached a state of inner peace so profound, that during that time, I ceased to exist as an individual. I opened myself to become an unknown, a void, a vessel for the voices of the world. Nothing was overlooked, for I looked for nothing.

-Galen Carroll, '08

Return

Rummaging,
I take my younger brother's old things away.
He stands, a soapstone statue,
Smiling cynically at his trinkets.
"You're sure you don't want these?"
I would ask sorrow-and-regretfully.
His apathetic, piercing glance and
Biting grin were my only answers.

I shouldered the coffin of his
Innocence up to my room.
The whale-etched box expelled
Pinocchio
And a Gordian knot of junk shop necklaces
Onto my paint-stained desk.
The mass of metal, crystal, clay, dolphins,
Twine, beetles, and youth lay
Disheveled like a hairball.

Forty minutes. I had been forced
To draw my sword and cut one string,
Thin and greasy. The rest cooperated
With patience. And now that they lie strewn
Like fallen Crusaders, I didn't know why I'd done it.
I placed one around my neck
And felt the choke of the past.

-Nicky Parlato, '08



-Alex Bullen, '07



-Greg Funk, '07

Proof

Three words.
I am earning them now,
With the cold of the floor
In the hospital hallway
Seeping in through suddenly thin pants

In a contorted compression of a person
I sit
On an frozen pond against a wall
In a hospital
Where every floor
And every door of every room
Looks the same.

Each is the same to me,
Except one door,
And that one not because it looks any different.
Behind that door,
The lips I love when they are matted pink
Are blue.
Hypoxic is not a word real people use;
They are blue.

I don't want to have to kiss blue lips.
Please don't make me.
Just send out a man in blue scrubs,
So he can tell me I've earned it.
Sitting, cold, on any floor,
Guarding a growing pool of even colder tears.

I know that if I get up,
Some janitor will come and erase it.
I can't let that happen.
How will I prove those three words are true
When you wake up
And your lips are matted pink again.

-Chris Sheridan, '08



-Andrew Nelson, '09



-Jack Rutka, '07

Jedi Mind Tricks

It was snowing in April.

It was with my cousin catapulting into the future on the back of our
synergy drive.

It was a hybrid.

We scream broken songs in deserted streets (it was late at night)-

Classical Rap of Jedi Mind Tricks, Rock, Electronic.

Electronic--aha what a brave new word.

We scour the web restless for bits of the anti-music,

The new motorcycle prophets burning the streets.

Rubber.

Maybe I'll understand when I'm Sixety-Four.

Streaming through my mind the beautiful Catholic girls

In their sexy summer skirts (not that the time of the year matters).

Hail Mary!

Going fighting, clubbing, drinking-our way.

Shooting up to 10 snack wraps.

I only ate 4--I have to maintain my Greek god body.

The amorphous eggs of our revolution have taken shape.

This is Samuel Winter.

-Sam Winter, '09



-Alex Bullen, '07



-Andrew Eyring, '07



-Richard Lenz, '07

Drowsy

they're heavy

oh theyre hevY

youre sore

cant take anYmre

you have to.

One more page

your neck gIvs way

your foreArms cRamp from tYping

are you hungRy?

or is it juSt anothr excuse to sTop?

yOu wonT

you caNt.

College.

bLurs vIision

eYes itCh

bones aCHe

One more paragraph.

the hOmE-strEtch

cRaCK your kNucKls

roLL your neck

bo Un Ce yOuR KnEe

nRvous tIcks! nErVus ticKs!

One more sentence

its cLosiNg ovR yOu, like a mother sWaTTing a flY in the kITCHen

S l o w l y

it adVaNCeS

SMACK!

Sweet Dreams.

-Alex Hormozi, '08

Shorebreak

The treaded path recedes into my mind
As I drift down a dark vein of forest,
Curling up and throwing me onto my next foot
To land onto disintegrating gravel, instants big.

Lamp posts, illuminated by a soft, sweet beating
Mark me at each toe's touch
And extend ahead and back beyond the wave,
A cheeriness among indifferent trees and grasses.

The little lights flutter with a delicate whiteness
And caress the patina with wispy fingers.
My cold worn skin feels
The warm kindred fire beating.

Fire in hand, we walk into the murkiness
And avoid life's bending sickle compass
To light our raised feet another step and
Fill the waveswept track.

The forest ends and my emptiness becomes
A delicate whiteness.

-Nicky Parlato, '08



-Richard Lenz, '07

A Brief Encounter

I never classified him as a lover, nor was he my best friend. Some would even deem the title “acquaintance” a stretch, but I find it’s often hard to categorize something so wrought with emotion. So for now, we’ll call him by name—King Reginald Philip III.

My first encounter with Philip was my last. We met on one of those interim nights between fall and winter where you’re forced to put on a scarf just to walk from a store to your car. The cold was unable to mask the beauty of the Aztec-gold sunset, however, as the sun tucked itself in behind the barn until morning.

If you don’t already know, I am a miserable driver. With three speeding tickets (each no less than doubling the posted limit), four parking tickets, and two red light violations, all within a year, the court date had been set to revoke my license. Seeing how the ruling had not been confirmed yet, I took the liberty of driving up until the court date. Alas, let me return to my tale.

I was so close to home, yet I felt a devilish itch creeping up my leg. I bent below the steering wheel to scratch away the tingles plaguing my ankle. Pulling up my frayed pant leg, I managed to hit the spot and release that unique feeling of ecstasy that accompanies a good scratch. When I glanced back up at the road, my worst nightmare unveiled itself in front of me.

A tiny clump of fur, no longer than a foot and a half, bolted from the left lawn towards the wooded area on my right. As it reached the middle of the road, he must have become suspicious of the oncoming two tons of metal and rubber, and turned his head just slightly to the right. At that very moment, he paused for a moment, as if trying to comprehend the enormity of my vehicle as it charged onward. Our eyes met, and I noticed the unmistakable fear now pervading his glossy eyes.

I slammed on my breaks, but as my tires screamed against the pavement, I felt the fatal bump that I knew meant the inevitable murder of this poor creature. I threw the gear shift forward until “P” became illuminated and tugged on the icy door handle. The pavement felt malleable, almost molten, under my feet as I approached the front tire. I saw my skid mark turn from black to red, the colors separated by the mangled, bloody mess of the most angelic bunny. His intestines littered the street, and I was surprised to notice the magnitude of blood that was now pooling around my feet. I never thought such a small creature needed that much blood.

The sun had almost set, but a few rays of light illuminated the top of the still intact rabbit-head. The black marble of his eye occasionally disappeared behind a graying eyelid, proving he was not yet dead.

“I’m really sorry, man,” I whispered as I bent towards him.

“Sorry? My liver is across the street and all you say is sorry?” he retorted. His voice sounded like a blender when set to “grate.”

“You ran in front of my car. It’s your fault, too” I replied defensively.

He asked what my name was, and I told him. I asked for his.

“King Phillip,” he said as if trumpets were supposed to follow his pronouncement. I was taken aback by his sudden boldness.

“Nice to meet you King Phillip,” I replied courteously.

We stood there in silence, or, rather, I stood, and he laid in the street in silence. A heater whirled to life a couple houses downward, but for the most part, the neighborhood was silent.

Then he finally said, “It was nice meeting you. I’m sorry we had to meet under such adverse conditions. I’ll be dead soon, but...wait with me until I’m gone? And, one other thing...” he was getting short of breath now, “just...slow down?”

I promised I would, and waited until that marble finally disappeared for good. Not knowing whether to bury the rabbit or not, I used my shoe to shuffle his body to the side of the road. The toe of my shoe was stained red. I wiped it off on the neighboring lawn and drove home.

That night, and in the ensuing days, I thought about King Phillip. As if Fate wanted to torture me for my misdeed, I was forced to look onto his decaying body every time I entered or left my neighborhood. His body continually reminded me of his dying message.

Not knowing how philosophical King Phillip was, I applied his advice to all areas of my life. I stopped wishing for tomorrow, stopped wishing that the clock would say four-thirty, and stopped wishing I would reach my destination sooner. At the court hearing, I explained my story to the judge. He understood, and allowed me to keep my license.

Two fortnights after the accident, King Phillips’ body was gone. I imagine someone in his kingdom found his body, and he was given a hero’s burial deep within the rabbit hole. I can only surmise how the women rabbits mourned his death and how the men in the kingdom were silenced by the news. His son, or perhaps his second cousin, took over the throne, and has since named King Phillip a saint, or a martyr, or a demigod. But for me, King Phillip was my teacher. In the brevity of a single conversation, King Phillip taught me something that a college-degree or law school could not.

And for that, I am forever grateful.

-Kevin Niparko, ‘08

Summer Time

Some other time I will,

Concern myself with concerning myself,
Come up with right answers,
Or be on time

Some other time I will,

Bend over backwards and pretend to like it
Or run in circles because they tell me

The times I sprang forward,
And times I fell back,

I will shelf for some-other-time and,
Breathing in the hazy Baltimore air,

Wipe the sweat from my brow,
Trying to stay “cool” in every sense of the word.

-Neto Opara, '07



-Alexander Parlato, '10

Address To Captain Nemo

Good morning, Captain Nemo,
Lone aquatic adventurer,
What Atlantis do you seek today?
What giant squid in the briny clouds
Catches your mind's searching eyes?
There are no windmills
Where there is no wind, no air to breathe.

Good afternoon, Captain Nemo,
Eager submarine pilot,
Call your crews to come into being.
Lower periscope, secure hatches.
Fly through the imagination
Past glowing fish and epic whales
Where none exists but space.

Good night, Captain Nemo,
Wretched drowsy man,
Lay down in the Captain's quarters
And the crew's quarters
To sleep endlessly where there is a sun
And you are somebody
Saved by more than iron and walls.

-Nicky Parlato, '08



-Richard Lenz, '07

I Found a Brick This Morning

I came downstairs this morning
To find a brick
Sitting on the living room floor.
It had let itself in through one of our priceless antique windows
And nestled down
Among the splintered wood and broken glass.

Furious, I picked up the brick,
And I was about to hurl it back out
The way it had come in,
When I was struck by the beauty
Of the scattered splinters of glass
Gleaming like diamonds in the morning sun.

-Gabe Donnay, '08



-Greg Funk, '07



-Andrew Nelson, '09



-Andrew Layman, '08

Bell's

Her arrival so pronounced
and her person so hidden, it was
difficult to say when she arrived.

The ghostly blonde sweetheart,
stepping silently from the pages of *Vogue*
into our neighborhood, unseen.

Hers was a new
privacy, the cloak of
a woman whom others wished

to be. Caught in her
gravity we shared the
street's unwelcome guests:

serial dog-walkers, their routes
detoured for a glimpse
of the misplaced starlet.

You stayed inside, moving
listlessly from chore to
chore, shopping at rare hours.

Sundays you shivered
beneath cold needles that
would not thaw your nerves

while specialists assured
us your senses would
return. At dinner, impractical

sounds halted your
failing lips, and in their place
you wept, excusing yourself

to an evening regimen of
pills and restless sleep. Cracked,
you slipped through your life

and fell into hers, indulging
in grocery store aisles
at sunrise, but never

betraying the isolation
that bound you two apart.
So you dissolved until

one morning when,
as on all other mornings, you
opened the paper and silently read

what you once did aloud.
And when you found the article with her
figure attached to your name you paused,

and reading, discovered
photographers and writers
had hidden themselves

at rare hours, just as you did,
outside the homes of
two secret belles.

And when they described
the skeletal hand waving
at a distance, and you looked down

at that same hand, I was quick to tear
my eyes from your jagged smile,
quivering and enchanted.

-Henry Kerins, '07



-Dean Liao, '10

Second-hand Tales of My Grandfather

Today I watched the '68 riots--flashing
colors, young noses broken
bloody by clubs, feet stumbling
back as heaped chairs grew
taller. The crest of blue uniforms

about to break against their
dam. I chanted back to myself,
cursing against the war. I stared
at the striped stars hung
over our classroom door. Drifting

to my grandfather's battles,
which my father tells in unfaltering bass
as he pours the last drop of
the fifth and final Merlot
in a neighbor's glass. I hear

how sweat ran across Granddad's red
Irish skin as he tried to convince
his friends the island sky was
dropping bullets, steam still
rolling off the casing he threw

across the barracks onto a
sleeping friend who yelled
"you're drunk Shea,
go back to bed!" in disbelief
while others scurried outside

to hoist no stand machine guns,
that slipped off the sweat of other
men's backs. Harmless in their
bouncing, like a grandson on your knees,
their shots melted in the rising sun.

-David Shea, '07

When I Was Sixteen I Went to Summer Camp

Seeing Jack in the hallway, I ask
him how he is doing,
If he likes the seventh grade,

if Mr. Culbertson still
licks the chalk from his
fingertips, if he has ever

wanted to test the
strength of his bones
as badly as I do. We talk

about the chickenfights,
how funny he looked
on my shoulders,

him jabbing and pushing and
tightening his grip on
my skin, me stumbling

among the lake's rocks
and pretending to be terrified,
terrified not of Jack's fall but of

the things that come with it,
the trueness of his smile
when he asks me

if I have ever kissed a girl,
or thrown a punch, or
spent nights remembering

the way my vomit smells
smeared across my father's
dashboard. Here in the

hallway he is quiet about
these questions he never asked,
careful not to ask them again.

-Peter George, '07



Jack Rutka, '07

High Tide

“Teamwork.” Tommy closed his eyes and recited through the two gaping holes in his top gum, “T-E-E-M-W-O-R-K.” “Try again,” Katie said. Katie’s large blue eyes stared at Tommy expectantly as she rocked her head back and forth, causing her long brown ponytail to dance behind her head.

Rolling my eyes, I glanced around the room; groups of boys and girls sat on the beige carpet in little clusters of threes. The uncertain spatter of misspelled words filled the air. The fluorescent bars hanging from the ceiling burned my eyes. I gazed at a crack in the paint on the high white ceiling, expecting, hoping that it would come lunging at me like lightning.

“T-E-E-M-W-A-R-K?”

“OK, one more time,” Katie said giggling. “Teemwark.”

“We can just look on the next page,” I said, annoyed.

“Mrs. Lopez said not to do that until we tried three times,” Tommy shot back, still with his eyes closed.

I began to drag my yellow pencil through the carpet, watching it leave a dark grey smudge between the crevices in the texture. Slowly, I dragged it up on the wall and quickly sketched my own outline of a bunny. I was shading it in with the thick lead when Mrs. Lopez yelled out, “James, do you think your mother would like to see the drawing you are making on the wall?” I did not respond. My face burned as everyone in the class turned to look at me. “Erase that right now! And everyone begin cleaning up, and get your coats for recess.” I saw Beth, a short skinny girl with an awkward pointy nose out of the corner of my eye. She silently erased the outline of her hand which she had traced on the wall. “Figures I’d get caught,” I thought.

Mrs. Lopez did not come out to recess with us; I suppose the sunshine could cause any of her thin, crisp, pastel dresses to fade. Our recess teacher was Mr. Abermarle. He was a large black man who always wore the same navy blue sweatpants and sweatshirt. His gut hung out over his waistline and he always seemed to be chewing; I want to say he was chewing gum, but he always chewed as though he were chewing a whole pack at once. I had never seen him anywhere but the playground, so I assumed that he never left. Shortly after we stampeded through the door, cold rain began to tickle our noses. Mr. Abermarle sent us inside but continued to stand there, glancing about as

though we were still playing kickball right in front of him.

The room was empty, but the lights were on, in that way that makes something feel wrong. Mrs. Lopez was out of the room, not expecting us to be back for another twenty minutes. Not having anyone to tell us to take our coats off, we kept them on. Feeling angry about what had happened earlier, I went over to the wall and drew another bunny a few feet away from where the other one had been. Katie began laughing and pulled a brown crayon out from her desk. She skipped over and handed it to me. I slowly colored in the bunny, realizing the room had gone silent. Blushing, Katie pulled out a purple crayon. She carefully touched the wall with it, as though the wall might be hot, and then she traced out a long thin line. Chris, a thin, pale boy with red hair and freckles came over and drew a triangle in green. Soon everyone began bringing crayons over and drawing little lines. I took it as a dare to draw more things, so I did. First I drew an Earth. Then I drew a few apples. I also drew a big blue house. The other boys and girls, sick of waiting for me to put their imaginary fantasies on the white wall, picked little spaces and began drawing their own things. The room quickly became noisy as crayons were being passed back and forth, and soon markers came out too. I tripped over one of the many coats strewn across the floor as I ran to the corner to help Tommy with his crocodile. I noticed a kid named Pete was drawing a big red cow over Katie's purple guitar and they were fighting over the space. They were both laughing as they scribbled over each others' drawings. Suddenly we heard a shout, "This is unacceptable! No, this,...no! I cannot believe this, I cannot believe this, boys and girls! Out in the hall, everybody!"

We had to sit in the hall for a long, long time doing spelling exercises in our books by ourselves. Mrs. Lopez frantically rushed in and out of the room with buckets of water. Maintenance men came too, even other teachers, all leaving shaking their heads. When we were allowed back in, I noticed the wastebasket was filled with crayons and markers, perfectly good ones too. A sharp ammonia smell stung our small nostrils. On the wall, a poisonous puddle of whiteness drowned our proud creations. No plump animals, or houses, or planets greeted us. The colors flowing in a river across this barren landscape were gone. They remained now only in smudges strewn amid the sea of guilty hands.

-Adam Miller, '07

