

paragon



Paragon

GILMAN SCHOOL
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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 Any author who chooses not to claim his work after he has submitted it will not be published in the magazine.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.



-Evan Warnock, '10

Editor's Note:

Gilman has changed. A new headmaster and the move back to Carey Hall cast the past and present in black and white. Paragon is in color (at least the center eight pages).

Till next time...

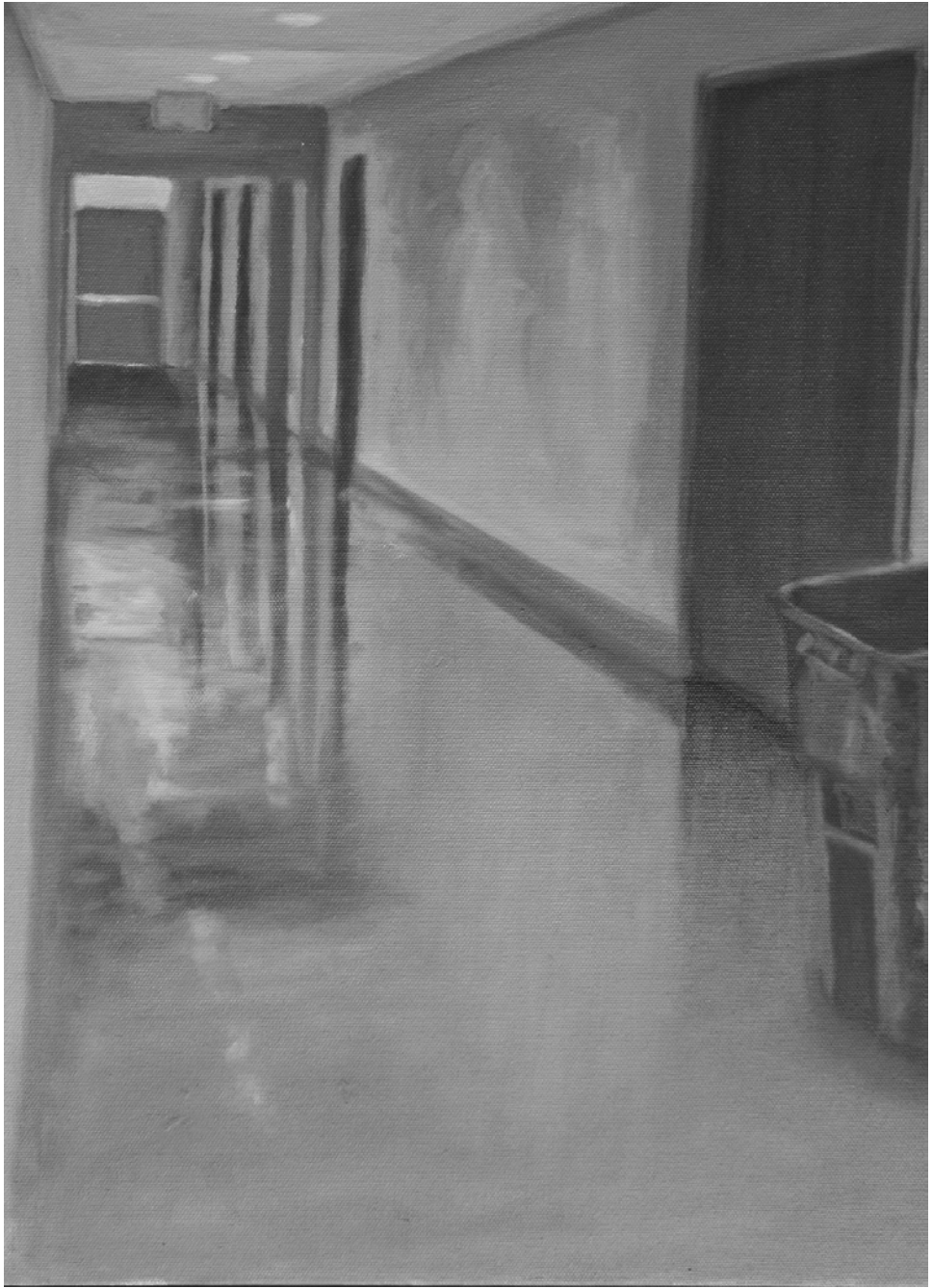


-Jack Dunn, '11

The City of Lights

I want to go to Paris
With a woman I love;
To see the city in kisses,
To walk the rues in the rouge
On your cheeks after the long kiss,
Not cosmetic, but the feeling
Of red lips locked by a key
Which I threw into the Seine
And felt drift away in
The running current of chills
That flowed down your spine
As I brushed your beautifully
Blonde hair behind your ear.
The hair brushed back
Reveals a face of lightness,
So bright that I need not
Open my eyes and look
At the night Eiffel Tower
To experience
The City of Lights.

-Chris Sheridan, '08



-Arthur Modell, '10



- Charlie Kerr, '11

Untitled

behind the wreath
on the door
a robin's nest

-Avesh Thuluvath, '08

Sunday Colors

outside the
chapel door

fancy glass
is humbled

lipstick on
cigarettes

-James Miller, '08



-Allan Brown, '11

Glass Balloons

There was definitely something strange about those balloons. I had a hard time placing it the entire time I was looking at them, but now that life has taken a stranger turn and I've had to reflect on my past, I realize that those balloons were made of glass. Opaque red glass, big red balloons floating feet from the ground. Their strings lay loosely on the sidewalk and the man selling them was asleep. He had big feet and his mouth hung wide open, releasing what I thought was a visible smell. But those balloons just shone. They didn't have the dullness associated with dust on rubber. Sculptural was how I described them till now. Glass balloons. They were just floating like they were on the end of a glassblower's pole. But I'm sorry, I'm just rambling. You know how memories are—they just jump out at you when you least expect them to. Back to my story though...

I walk past the balloons and into the park. The huge marble statue spouts water in gushes, even though none of its inhabitants is a sea god. The figures in the statue mark the entry into the shady park where trees cluster to form clouds of shadow on the ground. The grass is nearly gone in some places where feet have shuffled it to death and there is a large waterfall somewhere in the distance. I take in the coolness of the scene. The audible spray of the waterfall. The formless shade of the trees. The breeze that blows through my billowy clothes. But then I notice a small pond about forty feet from me. I start to walk towards it when I am accosted by a man. He is wearing a long, dark-green overcoat and a hat. His eyes are also green and piercing. He has a gray, near-white beard and a deep solemn voice.

"How are you, sir?"

"Quite well, thank you. Absolutely lovely day, I think. And how are you?"

"Rotten, sir. I just—"

"Why rotten, my friend?"

"Well, sir, I just returned from the land of the biting cold. I can hardly breathe and I'm still chattering. Glad to be home, but freezing, sir."

"My friend! Were you in the arctic? Or perhaps Russia? I

should hope you weren't staying on the bottom of the ocean, my friend, as it is not as interesting as most tourists may think."

"No, sir, I was right over there."

"At that pond over there?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, my friend, I would not imagine that spending any number of nights in a pond, even in the summer, could be good for one's health man."

"I was not in the pond, sir."

"Where were you then?"

"Coldest winter, sir. I was in a land of no sun where the weather and the earth both joined forces to make my stay as unfeeling as possible. Sir, it takes a strong soul to endure such cold."

"At the pond?"

"Yes, sir."

"Let's have a look, shall we?"

So my companion and I trot over to the pool that had earlier caught my attention. It had been glistening a whiteness that caught my eye. Now up close I can see it. The pond is frozen solid. I stand on the healthy green grass, and feet from me is a frozen pond.

"What is this phenomenon?" I ask.

"Well, no meteorologists have seen it. It's quite hidden." I look around skeptically.

"I call it the frozen pond."

"I'm going to step onto it."

"No, sir, please don't. Look at how you're dressed. You would last two seconds before you would freeze. Take my coat. I must run home before I take ill. Goodbye."

With the man gone, I wrap the green coat around myself. It is made of wool and scratches against my skin. I start to sweat. The small round pond sits before me, just barely miraculous. *Coldest winter*, I think to myself. Just then, a young boy runs up behind me shouting. I turn in time to see him with his hands outstretched before I am pushed into the pond. Something breaks over me.

The frozen pond is behind me, though hardly visible. I am standing in what I would call the exact center of an enormous plain, all white and violent. My legs press together for warmth and I shiver

as winds blow my overcoat up and down. The ice and snow are flying about, nicking my chin and catching on my hair. I squint so that I am not blinded.

"I am t-t-t-t-too c-c-cold," I stammer out. I turn to head back into the pond when I notice a single dot of color lying on the landscape. It is red. I run over to it, breathing out steam. On the ground lies a red balloon. The string is frozen to the ground, and the balloon sits in full expansion. It doesn't move in the wind. Just the delicate red balloon sitting alone in barrenness. I decide to sit down with it for only a short bit. The man must have brought and left it here, overwhelmed by the unsettling weather. I sit with the balloon for a couple minutes, looking at it, looking at the horizon, looking straight up. Then I stand up and leave...

I decided that I would leave the balloon there. In case someone fell into the frozen pond and was more adventurous than I, he would see the red speck in the distance and find the pool. But now I realize that the balloons were made of glass and glass shatters in the cold. It becomes brittle and weak. And I am too cautious to return to the cold. Too cautious to check on the balloon and make sure it is in one piece. I can only imagine that perhaps it floated up one day and went above the storm, above the mean icy land.

-Nicky Parlato, '08



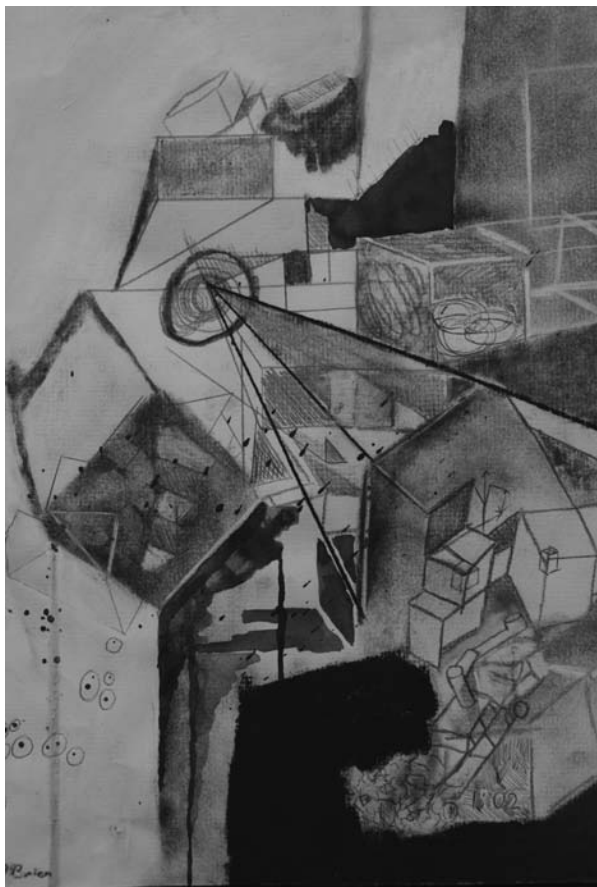
-Sam Ward, '11

Ice Cream

I saw you
Yesterday
Eating ice cream
And I saw you

Save the last
Scoop
For your
Boyfriend.

-Alex Hormozi '08



-William O'Brien, '10

How Lenny Stoopenni Traveled the World, Was in Two Places at One Time, and Wrote a Historical Treatise to Get into the College of his Dreams

When Lenny Stoopenni reached his high school years, he began to ponder the important issue of college. Lenny had always received noteworthy grades and was regarded as one of the top students in his class, and -- because of his exceptional academic career -- he believed he would have an easy time getting into a top college. Lenny, however, soon learned that his intelligence was not enough to gain entry into the top colleges of the world. The college Lenny wanted to attend since he could remember, Harvingtonford University for the Super Amazingly Outstanding Young Boys and Girls of the Universe (HUSAOYBGU for short), seemed out of reach for Lenny when he examined the various requirements needed to get into such a school. So Lenny, like many other high school students with similar ambition, set out to do everything needed to do to get into his favorite school, HUSAOYBGU.

First, Lenny decided to do the community service that was so important to his top choice college. But Lenny did not just want to do the average service at the local YMCA or food kitchen; he wanted to do something special, something that only a super amazingly outstanding person would do. So Lenny took a year off from high school, packed his bags, and traveled the globe for one whole year, providing medical care for children in South America, teaching English to the people of Asia, saving villages in Africa from evil warlords, and attempting to end the Arab-Israeli conflict. Lenny returned to his high school a year later, content with his dabble in community service.

But Lenny knew saving the world just wouldn't cut it when trying to get into college. Lenny needed some impressive extra-curricular activities. So Lenny joined and became the head of every single club in his school: Model U.N., It's Academic, Young Republicans, Young Dems, and every racial awareness club there was. Subsequently, Lenny learned to play the cello like Yo-Yo-Ma, the trumpet like a young Miles Davis, and to sing as if he trained Christina Aguilera herself. He joined every musical group in the school, and went on to create the band "Lenny Stoo and the Dream Boyz," which was an instant pre-teen sensation throughout Central Asia.

Lenny was happy with his myriad clubs and his musical expertise, but he needed to become an all-star athlete to really impress HUSAOYBGU. So he hired a team of personal trainers to give him the physique of a Greek god and the endurance of Pheidippides. He used his physical ability to become a standout varsity athlete in three sports. But all of Lenny's clubs, musical groups, and sports teams made it impossible for him to effectively manage his time, so Lenny employed a team of body doubles to make it possible for him to be in two places at one time. This was the least he could do to impress his favorite college.

Next, Lenny thought about the essay he would need to write to get into HUSAOYBGU, but he knew that his genius could not be confined to a mere two pages of double-spaced, 12-point font. It would take forests of wood to make enough paper for Lenny's ideas. So Lenny wrote a book. He spent the little remaining free time he had studying the history of the world, and toward the end of his junior year in high school he published his historical treatise entitled *The Modern Day Ramifications of Nebuchadnezzar's Actions During the Babylonian Captivity*. The book was groundbreaking, and Lenny's insight was acclaimed among the academic community. Lenny knew his book would be the icing on the cake that he would feed to his future college. At last, Lenny was pleased with all the things he had accomplished while maintaining a 4.1 average, and receiving absurdly high SAT, PSAT, and AP exam scores.

Finally, in the middle of Lenny's senior year of high school, he summarized his plethora of accomplishments in a neatly packaged, 8-inch thick resume, and sent it off to his favorite college. Three months later Lenny received a letter from HUSAOYBGU informing him that he had been put on a waiting list, citing "lack of the x-factor." So Lenny cried for a good couple of days and continued to cry on lonely nights he spent waiting for finality in his quest for acceptance into Harvingtonford. But between his tears of painful irresolution, he became motivated for his next step in life, and Lenny Stoopenni began to ponder the important issue of graduate school.

-Ian Tamargo '10

Color Art Section



-James Miller, '08



-Galen Carroll, '08



-Micah Belzeberg, '08



-Tyler Woytowitz, '11



-Andrew Nelson, '09



-Sam Nolan, '10



-Cooper Jackson, '10



-Will Finney, '08



-Charlie Kerr, '11



-Luis Queral, '09



-Galen Carroll, '08



-Will Faison, '10



-Andrew Nelson, '09

Alleppey, India

the smell of cardamon

lingers in my jeans

grandma's cooking

the gravy and cashews

one final embrace

before the long flight home

-Avesh Thuluvath, '08

Human Anatomy

My dad and I talked about

Human anatomy,

Which led to a funny story

Of his ex-highschool girlfriend.

He laughed harder than he had to.

-Alex Hormozi '08

Constellations

For A.T.

I missed you tonight
So I kissed the window,
Making sure of the height,
Verifying wished-for lips' position.

And I peered through my lips' mark,
Reminiscent imprints on glass,
Textured and cracked, uneven, stark –
This clouded lens against the unaffected glass.

So I looked through an affected lens
At the night sky's curve as the starlight bends;
Wondered if you were watching through the panes,
Wishing on constellations – indifferent stars – in vain.

-Chris Sheridan '08



-Ned Whitman '10



-Galen Carroll, '08

Along the Fence

dog tags
keys earrings
pocket change
simple treasures
whose rust-ravaged edges
hide them from the braver children
while they sleep in pairs
whispering to the dirt
along the fence

-James Miller, '08

Rabbits and Spiders

None of them knew about the war between the children of Brér Rabbit and Anansi the Spider. But, then again, it was a war invisible to most normal humans, only occurring in storybooks and dark alleys, movie theatres and blank pages.

For years it had been a cold war. Every once in a while a Spider or Rabbit would snap and kill the other. The others just watched in despair, some like Hyena would laugh, thanking God that they were not involved. Tiger was anxious to see the eventual bloodshed, and Vulture was ecstatic about the eventual corpses he would feed on.

Ever since the first story was told by Neanderthals in a fire lit cave somewhere in Africa, Anansi and Brér Rabbit have existed. Ever since then, they have argued and fought over who was the King of Stories. (Tiger, at one point, had all of the stories under his dominion, but he was tricked by Rabbit and Spider to sell them for seven shiny pennies)

Vergil Douay (Rabbit) is just one of the poor souls stuck in the intricate web of this war, called by future generations as “The War of Pages”. Vergil is a human. Vergil is a Rabbit. Thinking too much about this fact will bring a person no good. Vergil Douay was born in Toronto to a French Canadian father (Gordon Douay) and Chinese-Canadian mother (Mingyu Fei Douay; he will later find out that his mother was a Spider). Vergil never actually understood the war, always wondering why he would be called away from his life to carry out random orders from a small Japanese woman (Mayu Tsumura, Rabbit) that met him every Wednesday at a Coffee Shop in downtown Toronto. She would tell him to buy six hundred latex balloons and drop them into the Toronto Harbor, or bury a box of iceberg lettuce at High Park, behind the third blue bench from the Grenadier Pond. The lettuce was later thrown at Leopold Becker (Spider) as he tried to kidnap Oliver Twist in his respective novel.

On this particular day, Vergil sat at his usual Wednesday table at Pixxy’s Coffee shop, reading a book he was assigned in his university English class, waiting for Mayu. As Vergil was reading a particularly naughty sentence involving a moose, he noticed that Mayu had taken her usual seat across from him, a medium caramel latte held in her hand.

“How ‘ya doin’ Vergil?” Mayu said, before sipping at her hot drink.

Vergil put his book down on the table, “I’m good, how about you?”

“Could be better. Just came from Nairobi. I think I’ve got some weird jungle disease now. I’m a bit itchy.”

Vergil laughed, Mayu always complained about traveling, and always about her itching. “Mayu, you’ve been itching for months now; Go see a doctor.”

“Ha! After my doctor turned out to be a Spider last year? Forget it; I’d rather have you give me a physical!” Mayu took another sip of her latte as Vergil chuckled. She then placed the Styrofoam cup down on the table, and immediately asserted a serious look on her face. “Vergil...”

“Mayu...is everything okay?”

“I’m afraid things may begin to get much worse...listen...”

It does not really matter what Mayu explained to Vergil. The simple fact is that his life would be changed forever. No more classes, papers on the Bolshevik Revolution, or cold Toronto weather. No, Vergil’s life will soon become infested with giant tarantulas, constant travel, grumpy river spirits, and maybe an occasional tea party. Within the blink of an eye, a life can change.

-Michael Randolph ‘09



-Tyler Woytowicz, ‘11



-Andrew Nelson, '09

Sublime Moment

When you're sitting in the front seat of the car listening to the radio
While coming back from a lacrosse game on a Sunday afternoon
And the sun is right in that spot before it sets
Where it's too high to be blocked out by the trees
But too low to be blocked out by the car visor
So it just kinda hangs there and shines right in your face

-Jason Adleberg, '10



-Sam Nolan, '10

Harrington Park

Lying in my mother's old bedroom,
White walls glow in faded moonlight.
I follow stucco swirls with my fingertips
And feel the house asleep.

Night drifts in through open windows,
Ebbing and flowing like the swells of a sleeper's breath.
Snatches of cricket song float like drowsy dust motes through dark hallways,
Scattering when the railroad throbs.

It is too hot for blankets,
And I let the heavy air cover me.
I imagine I am the only boy awake anywhere
As everyone else's stomachs rise and fall in unison.

Across the hall, I can feel you dying.

I wonder, how does a heart stop?
Does it seize and sputter?

I think of the porch swing on those blazing Georgia Sundays,
Long abandoned by giggling children fleeing the afternoon heat
But still rocking, barely
Straining faintly against the heavy still.

-Gabe Donnay, '08



-Will Finney, '08

The Streets

Damon
his name
Crack
his game
no school, no shame
16
his age
the streets
his rage
forever
his cage

-Evan Tarantino, '10

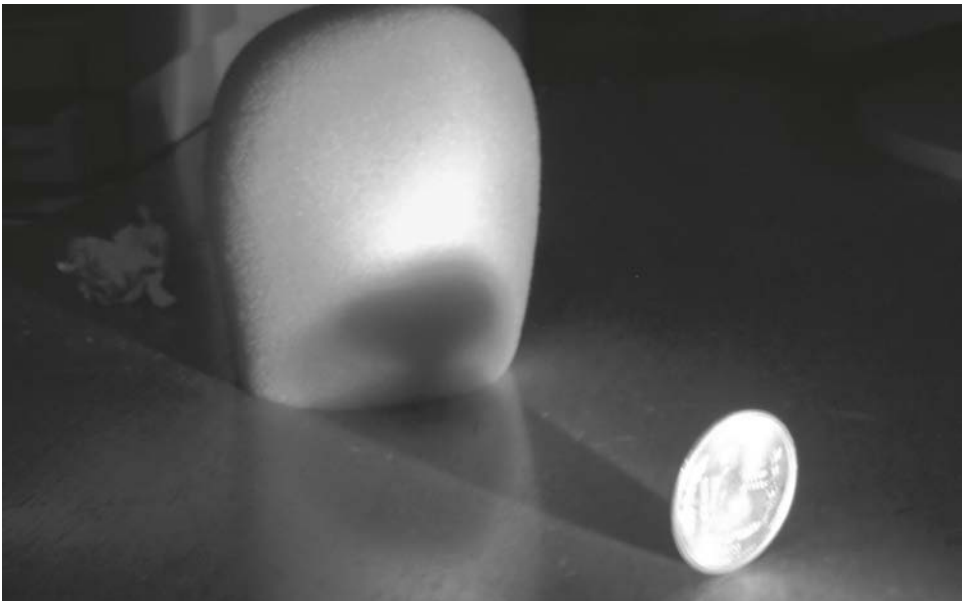
Detroit

I watch the streetlights of Detroit burn black as
night shifts to morning. The roads are patched with
the remnants of rainfall, and foremen rush down
16th Street to unlock the doors of the factory.

Behind me are neighborhoods filled with
shattered shingles, shag carpets that
reek of cat urine, and Christmas lights
tangled and knotted and thrown haphazardly
over worn shrubs.

In front of me, a city sleeps. The boarded windows
of Willy's Diner are eternal. The soot-stained walls
of the Family Dollar are as black as the faces that
have lived forever.

-Kevin Niparko '08



-Chase Jackson, '09

Things I Know About Myself

I know the backyard rose garden
Where the rose that pricked me
Grows at my eighteenth summer's edge.

I know the consequence of the unsure touch.
I know the thorn, seventh on the stem,
Stained red still with my blood.

I know the rose-prick's summer;
I know the parlor in Fells Point,
Saints & Sinners, where I had
And the fire and the rose are one
Tattooed on center of my chest
In ultra-violet ink.

And I know that when I look
At the mirror in my room
The words can be seen,
Burning white in the black-light
That I switch on when all is still.

I know that there is a certain girl
With thinly hammered threads
Of gold for hair
And sunlit ocean eyes.

I would pick a rose surely
From the garden for her
If only the prick marks
Wouldn't burn in the black-light
That I switch on when all is still.

-Chris Sheridan, '08

Smoke

The afternoon fades to dusk
like water slips through a drain.

Clouds roll overhead
and wind stirs the leaves.

In the distance
smoke rises from the autumn treeline.

But I am no longer there.

I no longer see the crimson
of the boxwoods or smell the
coming of rain.

Instead I see you. I see those
sleep-filled eyes hidden in the moon.
My hand drifts over your body like an
abandoned skiff. Your shoulders
are delicate. Your breasts pale in the
light. I am struck by the sudden impetus
to become one with you, to defy the laws
that govern our possibility and slip into
your being. I must know what it is
like to swallow the world with those
honey-brown eyes. I wish to rouse you
and tell you everything, but I can not.

From behind, a sparrow
sings me back to the mountain.

-Kevin Niparko '08



-Alex Merkle, '10

Bullet

An argument; the last for one,
For a title, a victory, nothing substantial,
The wire, a fence, police cameras,
Black on black; red on cement,
A man's life is ended,
Shot to the ground, smacked,
A chamber, a slide, an explosion,
Hot lead pierces the cool night air,
The bullet has no name, but takes that of another,
Inside this man, enters his skin, his muscle, his body,
9mm is only a description; it doesn't mean what the machine does,
What the machine takes away, a machine of death,
It drops the man in one hit, a force so strong it sends rivets
Through the lives of others
All for what?
He pulled the weapon,
Pulled the trigger,
The slide flew back,
An explosion inside,
Bullet exits and enters.

-Drew Robinson '09



-Ryan Lee, '08

Sic Semper Hominis

When they had done all they could
I asked politely for the paperwork

and when you were dumped into the ground
I wiped a tear from your wife's cheek

and when tonight I run the bath
I will become a child again

washing your whiskey from my back—
one shard at a time.

-James Miller, '08



-James Miller, '08

Clarence

It was one of the coldest winters in years. Cinders of trees leaned heavily under their snowy burdens. In the distance, smoke rolled out of a vacant, stout country house. The father and son who lived there were in the field.

The boy saw it as a black splotch, toppled over on its side, legs still poking out. Thin fuzz had grown over the pony's balding body. After enduring years of starvation, it had finally succumbed. Shuffling a few feet from his father, the boy swiveled his lips between an awkward smile and a frown. He stared at the dark lines in the shape of a saddle still fixed on the pony's back.

The boy was tall and gaunt. A layer of dirt, the kind on the belly of torn-out grass, always covered his face. Even when scrubbed clean for church, the darkness persisted.

His father had a very pale complexion, checkered with scars and liver spots. He was overweight but had the build of a boxer, a thick mustache.

"Where is he going?" the boy asked. Receiving no response, he trudged home a few feet behind his father, who called a neighbor.

"Thank you. Yes, Ralph, that'd be fine," the man said.

The boy said nothing.

The boy and his father sat at opposite ends of the breakfast bar and shared a plate of crackers and Monterey Jack. The boy watched his father eat all the crackers and cheese and nodded when his father asserted, "Cheese and crackers puts hair on your chest." His father retired to the couch and an episode of *Everybody Loves Raymond*; the boy ensconced himself in his room with a copy of *The Great Santini*.

An hour later, Ralph arrived by tractor in a full body snowsuit. Only his full, ruddy cheeks, gray beard, and watery eyes were exposed to the cold. The boy and his father followed him to the field. Noticing the son and father in thin polo shirts, Ralph shook his head.

"I'm terribly sorry about your pony, sir," Ralph said, looking at the boy.

The father licked his mustache and pivoted his bulk to face the neighbor. "We all have to die sometime. Will you please just drag it off?"

"That's why I'm here."

“You clung onto his back just like a tick. You weren’t getting wet!” his mother had laughed. The pony had sat down in a stream after a hot day’s ride with the boy still in the saddle.

His mother had been gone a long time.

The father approached Ralph with a few dollar bills.

“Thank you greatly, but I couldn’t.”

“No, take it,” the father said.

“That’s mighty generous of you, but I couldn’t.” Ralph glanced at the boy.

Ralph started the tractor up the driveway. Its rusted sheets of armor wobbled. Chains lined its tires.

Dragging a little ways behind, the pony’s hooves dug trenches alongside the tractor’s tracks. The pony’s side trailed a bundle of red lines. The boy’s awkward smile shifted into a frown. The tractor disappeared in the trees around the top of the driveway, and the son and father walked back into the house. The boy was quiet.

From his bedroom window, he could have seen the pony’s body where Ralph had left it, at the head of the driveway, but he never looked. He shrugged when his father spouted, “The damn bears will get a hold of it! They said they’d be here yesterday!”

The corpse had begun to rot. The maggots started at the soft spots: the eyes, the tongue. When nearly all of the pony’s face had disappeared, a plain white box truck sporting a sanitation sticker pulled into the head of the driveway. A few men jumped out in generic blue uniforms, pulled the corpse onto the elevator, loaded it inside, and drove away. The process took no more than five minutes.

When the boy asked his father his pony’s whereabouts, the man sneered, “It’s providing for some dogs in a big way.” He reached into his pocket and jingled some change.

-Sam Winter, ‘09



-Cooper Joy, '11

After Dorthea Lange's Migrant Mother

Southern California sun
runs across your face,
creating shadows in the wrinkles
that stripe your forehead and cheeks.
You sit hunched over,
with children of burlap and flannel
clinging to your shoulders.
Those fingers that you used
to support your family
now support your chin
from sinking down into your lap.
With eyes of shale you look past me,
perhaps at the tomato field you once picked,
spoiled by drought, dust, and depression,
stalks helpless beneath the
southern California sun.

-Giff Brooks, '08

Little Blue Butterfly

Ever since I was young, I've always seen these little blue butterflies. My old and decrepit grandfather had one as he drifted off to sleep. The same with my dad and baby brother. These blue butterflies were always there, since the beginning of time, when sleep was upon the unfortunate.

I walk up the creaking, cold, metal steps to the top. Breathing deeply, I gulp the night air and lock the door. My mother knows. She screamed and begged me not to. Same with my sister. Yet I'm going to anyways. No, I will not be swayed.

I walk up to the edge and stand tall, savoring the last sweet drops of amber juice dripping down my arm from the discarded needle on the ground. I look at the cars below and the neon flashing from Joe's diner next door. The lights start to mesh and a cool breeze picks up. It's now or never. And son, with my toes over the edge, I jump.

I tumble head over heels as my hair flies in the breeze. And just before I hit the ground, my little blue butterfly comes and sweeps me up into the air for eternity.

-Samuel Davidoff-Gore, '12



-Chase Jackson, '09

Handicaps

He wondered if the dead could walk. He didn't care if they could speak. He didn't feel like talking to anyone, and there were too many words peppering the place where he remembered the dead who walked silent:

where the percussions of hush and holes tattooed rotting orange peel sky
where men carrying magazines full of bullet holes chinked handy caps
where the moving dead always slept with their backs to a graveyard
where pieces of men stumbled into pieces still

He envied their stumble. If he could stumble, or blink, or shake a leg, he might tremble away the coil of memory, but he could only move his right hand a few inches back and forth, steady at the wrist. He couldn't love his wife, or enter the summer through his window, or unlearn how to be mean. The nurse entered at 6 A.M., tested his movement, and returned every two hours to slide her eyes over a few machines, including the one on the hospital bed, whose gears (except for one) had stopped, and whose surface was 27% burnt. After today's movement exercises, the nurse had jostled him a few inches to the right, so that his right hand dangled over the edge of the bed. The nurse always locked the door, stowing the key in a flurry of the fat that pulled at her eyes, nose, and mouth.

He had typed to the nurse, each stroke an endeavor, that he preferred his door locked because he saw his wife flirting with one of the doctors through his room's window, and he did not wish her to come in his room to visit. He had told her, but he never actually doubted his wife, who sagged daily into waiting room chairs. The nurse locked the door.

He hadn't thought about his wife for a long time, but he imagined her strong thighs, flashing buttocks, and sharp face, her body pressed firm by blue summer haze or pressed against his with light autumn breeze. His hand battled a few inches and stroked something next to his bed. In his mind, he and his wife crumbled together beside an oak's approaching shadow. Locked together, never ending, never ending...finally ending. He yanked.

The power chord rapped on the floor like a machinegun burst. A life support machine failed, and the oak's shadow overtook him.

-Sam Winter '09

