

The Vignette 2009

Volume 48



St. Joseph H.S. Falcons

Mr. George Milligan with Special Thanks to Br. Kevin Finnegan, S.C.

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Celebrate...

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Sacred Heart

Frank Angiola '12

Celebrate...

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In the darkest night, let your light shine.
Judges 7

The past year has had more than its fair share of darkness. Recession, unemployment, bankruptcy, foreclosure, bailout – these words have become part of our mainstream vocabulary for the first time in my 18 years of life. Cutting costs and slashing spending in an effort to weather this economic storm, we Americans often forget to celebrate all that is good in our lives.

Amidst the palpable worry over lost jobs and lost homes, however, hope springs in unexpected ways. The Beijing Olympics showed us how wonderful it can be to set aside our differences and celebrate our common humanity. The historic election of Barack Obama reminds us that our country has changed for the better and that we should celebrate the advancement of our melting-pot society. Within the St. Joseph community, the successes of the Class of 2009 proclaim the promise of the future, demonstrating that excellence truly is a habit, not a goal.

The students who submitted pieces to this year's literary magazine have responded to the challenges of a rapidly changing reality not with despair, but with passionate expressions of the life that surges through them. Their fiction, poetry, and nonfiction pieces have been collected in the hope that this year's *Vignette* will serve as a beacon of light for future generations, a visual reminder of the life that surges through our school community.

With that, I ask you to join me and my fellow students in celebrating all that is St. Joseph High School.

Lucas Zavala '09
Senior Editor

Celebrate...

Election of a President

The history of our nation, although full of triumphant accomplishments, consists of many periods of decadence and malevolence. Among those dark times within our history, is the subordination of the African-American people. This point of our history exemplified the climax of hatred; the hatred that man can bear against fellow man.

Since the first arrival of enslaved African-Americans to the United States in the 17th century, the attainment of equal rights and the abolition of racial discrimination has been a steadfast effort. Although the movement has been a slow one, it has been marked with many successes throughout the years.

The endeavor to bring racial discrimination to an end in the United States began with the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863, which brought freedom of servitude to the African-American people. Although this was a large step for achieving a sense of equality for all, it certainly wasn't a leap large enough to bring an entire culture of bigotry to an abrupt end. The African-American struggle then continued for quite a large span of time. During that period, there were very few achievements, and a racist attitude sustained a prevailing position in American society.

Rights were virtually non-existent for African-Americans. Racial segregation, exploitation, and violence fueled by abhorrence against African-Americans continued. In 1909, the NAACP was established and resistance to the cruelty of racism became the means of protest for the millions of people who yearned to one day be recognized as equals.

With the NAACP and various civil rights activists such as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X, various achievements were made in the struggle for an end to prejudice. In time, black children were afforded the right to an edu-

cation alongside white children following the *Brown v. Board of Education* trial. The Civil Rights movement then succeeded with the Civil Rights Act of 1964 which banned employment discrimination. Later, the Voting Rights Act of 1965 permitted African-Americans to vote. The Civil Rights Act of 1968 shortly banned housing discrimination. Acts of civil disobedience also paved the way for equality with the Montgomery Bus Boycott, the Greensborough sit-in, the Selma to Montgomery marches, the March on Washington, the Poor People's March, and countless others. Since then, African-Americans have taken a place in a society as individuals of equal importance, respect, and dignity.

Recently, the American people came together, voted, and the election of a president took place. The very first African-American president of the United States of America, Barack Obama, was elected. After a long struggle throughout America's history, the election of an African-American as the 44th President of the United States proves to be the epitome of the realization of equal rights and of the abolition of racial discrimination within the United States. The election of Barack Obama will go down in the history of the United States as the final leap towards the attainment of those three fundamental principles of the American people both black and white, "liberty, justice, and equality."

Michael Fernandes '11

Celebrate...

Reaching the Mountaintop

At about eleven o'clock eastern time, I heard the news. I knew that night would become a historic night in American history.

Barack Obama's road to the presidency certainly was not an easy one, but the fact that he had won the election really did not startle me. Obama had attained a commanding lead in the Electoral College hours before that moment and, although there was some chance of McCain emerging victorious, a seemingly endless stream of democratic states was being shown on all of the major news stations. That sight made me completely forget about the massive amount of mudslinging and back and forth debating that had occurred before the election. Nonetheless, I had to consider exactly what I knew about Barack Obama and what he could do to help the United States during his presidency.

My first impression of Barack Obama was definitely distorted by everyone who judged him solely based on his name. After I listened to him speak about a few important issues, I realized that he is rather intelligent in addition to being an excellent orator. My new perspective about him was enriched by his performance during the televised debates. When reports were released about Obama's supposed relations with terrorists, my image of him changed again, but I soon learned that those reports did not have a strong foundation in fact and that Obama was only a child when those terrorist acts were being perpetrated. When Obama chose Joe Biden to be his running mate, I became suspicious about his plans again; nevertheless, Biden's show of experience during the Vice Presidential debates impressed me, even if some of his later comments to the media were stated very poorly. I noticed that Obama had the characteristics of a strong and winning candidate.

With regard to Barack Obama's economic policies, I initially had some confusion in trying to comprehend them. This was in part due to the fact that the news channels sometimes failed to mention exactly which people would have tax increases. I soon found out that his economic policies would probably help the country as a whole during this financial crisis, but now I feel that Americans will have to see if the economy can truly benefit from his support

of the working middle class. I never had a problem with his health care plan, and his strategy to remove the troops from Iraq may actually help to ease the tension there as well as to protect our troops. The only real issue that I had with his campaign was his policy on abortion, and unfortunately he may be able to increase the amount of unborn and newly born infants who are victimized every year because of legally allowed abortions.

Regardless of whether or not I agree with all of Barack Obama's ideas for how he can change America, I must say that his accomplishment is a huge step forward for America's future. The fact that Americans of every race could vote for an African American is a clear sign that racist feelings of the past are dissipating as America furthers its reputation as a "melting pot." Barack Obama truly has reached the mountaintop, and now he must undertake the enormous responsibility of guiding our nation through difficult times. Hopefully, with constant support and prayers, he will be able to fulfill his promises to make America better and will be able to enhance human life as a whole.

Michael Olson '09



Tenacity

Michael Shkolar '11

Celebrate...

Top of the Hill

In Northern Virginia, thirteen year old, Kevin Murdoch was playing with his younger brother, Lance, and his dog, Duffy. Kevin and Lance were throwing a tennis ball around their golden retriever, until they became so tired they had to lay down. As they were looking up at the clouds, Duffy was digging holes in the open fields. They were laying down near a large hill for about five minutes; when Duffy dropped a small book on Kevin's lap. The book was very old and covered in dirt. Kevin skimmed through the book and found only four pages that weren't left blank. He decided to go back to the first page and read:

To whoever finds this account,

I am Colonel Robert Patterson. I am not much of a writer, but I felt that I needed these possible last days of my life to be recorded. I never kept a journal before, so forgive me if it is not written correctly.

12 January 1863

My men and I are all quite weak. I started with about 2,000 men as we began our march through the woods of Northern Virginia. There are only one hundred and eight of us left. Most of my men died on the first of January. While most Americans were celebrating the birth of a new year, we found ourselves in the midst of an unexpected battle. There is a small bit of food left. We are all cold and must wait for reinforcements. Four days ago, I placed my men on the brink of the woods and about half of a mile from a large hill. We got word that the troops will be here soon and will come with food, and clothing. All we do is stare at the top of the hill and hope. We hope that we will see men dressed in blue coats, march down the hill and save us. I am far more realistic. That is the reason I began to write this journal. Four days have passed by since we got word from about the reinforcements. No one will come.

13 January 1863

I woke up this morning and received news that nine of my men have died overnight. I want to leave, but I can't. I can't have my men losing hope. They are not strong like me. They need to have hope in order to survive the night.

14 January 1863

Each day starts the same: eat small bits of food, try to stay warm, and wait. The death toll has now reached twenty two. It

was a cold, snowy night. However, today was different from the past week. At noon one of my men shouted out, "Look, at the top of the hill!" There were two men at the top of the hill. These men were wearing grey; we wear blue coats. These men are the enemy. We hid and watched the men. The men were standing and looking out towards us. We heard shouts, and then they ran down the other side of the hill and out of sight. Did they spot us? Will they march up the hill and try to kill us?

15 January 1863

There were dead men spread throughout the woods this morning. By now most of my men realized that the troops wouldn't come for us. We all feared that our foes will march down the hill and kill us. We finished all of our food this morning, and the snow became unbearable. I knew what I had to do. Acting quickly, I formed a few lines out of the twenty seven men who were well enough to fight. We marched up the hill, guns in hand, and feared for our lives. We reached the top of the hill and had a rush of mixed emotions. We were shocked, frustrated, and relieved all at once. Our foes were not there, there was a plantation. All of the slaves there were dressed in grey rags. We all starved and froze when there was food and warmth in front of us the whole time. The owner, Jacob Friedman, was very kind and hospitable. He fed us and gave us blankets. He allowed us to stay in a vacant barn as long as we liked, but I told him we wouldn't be long.

Just now, a young slave named William sneaked into the barn and gave us a warning. He told us that Mr. Friedman has Confederate soldiers over his house quite often, and that it is not safe for us to stay here. He then ran out very quickly. My men and I agreed we would leave tomorrow, after we eat a hearty breakfast.

16 January 1863

Today I face my prolonged death. I just woke up due to the smell of smoke. The roof of the barn is in on fire, and the doors are locked. Why didn't we take young William's suggestion of leaving last night? The barn is in chaos right now, some men attempt to break the door down, others are crying or praying, and I am writing. For I have accepted my death a long time ago. I have been avoiding my death my entire life and I knew that it would come soon. I am burying this book deep underground for I do not wish this account of my life to be lost.

John Guerino '11

The American Dream

My grandfather, Giuseppe grew up in poverty in the late 1930s. He lived in Castagna, a small dilapidated village in Southern Italy. The houses in Castagna were smaller than a classroom. There were no cars, no phones, and the nearest water source was over a mile away, up in the mountains. His father, who served in the American Army, surprisingly passed away when Giuseppe was four years old. This death left Giuseppe's mother, Angela, with 5 young children to raise without a husband. Adding more hardships to an already hard life, Nazis were stationed right outside the town. While we might think it would be terrifying to live next to German soldiers, my grandfather tells me different stories. Giuseppe and his friends used to sneak over to German camps and the Nazis gave them candy and toys.

Giuseppe had to work hard his whole life. He was either out gathering food, or fetching buckets of water up in the mountains that surrounded the town. Even though they had to work all day for their food, they remained kind and charitable people. One winter they were running very low on food and had to work a lot harder to feed themselves. One day after working hard, my grandfather came home and found his mother giving away all their food to the starving beggars in the town. Giuseppe began to scream at her, "We worked all day for that little food and your giving it away!" His mother just responded, "Would you rather be the people lucky enough to give food away, or the ones begging for food?" My grandfather never forgot that story and I don't think I ever will forget.

When Giuseppe turned sixteen years old, he decided to carry out his father's grand plan. Giuseppe's father was born in Castagna, but he joined the American Army in World War One. After the war, he lived in Yutica, New York. Later he moved back to Castagna and started his family. Before his death, he planned on moving his entire family to live in

America. Unfortunately, he died the same year he planned on leaving Italy. The dream of living in America was delayed, but not lost. Giuseppe was now sixteen, and old enough to live on his own. He crossed the Atlantic in 1952 with no money in his pockets and only a fifth grade education. He began work as a butcher in Elizabeth, NJ and remained one for 56 years. He eventually made enough money to afford to send his whole family to America. In 1958, he married Estherina Muraca. Together, they had five children and sent all five to a Catholic grammar school, and high school. My grandfather told my father when he was seventeen, "I paid for your schooling this far, now you have to pay for the rest." My father and his four other siblings all went to college and paid for college themselves.

I am very close to my grandfather and enjoy spending time with him. I often go to my grandfather's house and make sausage and wine with him. There many stories of my grandfather's life that are funny, sad, and inspirational. This inspirational story proves that anyone, with hard work, can live the American Dream.

John Guerino '11



Flags

Mr. George Milligan

Celebrate...

Bai San

Bai San is the name the Chinese give to the ceremony where they celebrate and commemorate their ancestors. Another name for Bai San is ancestral worship. However, this is somewhat inaccurate, since ancestors are not worshipped as deities, but honored and appealed to for support and direction. Through Bai San, we learn that the souls of our forefathers are alive. They witness our lives and pacify our souls, allowing us to live our lives more happily. Bai San is an act of gratitude to them.

This practice was adopted hundreds of years ago when people believed that the living had an obligation to honor the dead. The living offered them food so that they could be fed in the afterlife, and the dead would help them by bringing good fortune and financial prosperity. In ancient China, the emperors even conducted the ancestral worship ceremony in a special building. The ritual itself was adopted from an old Taoist practice. Back then, fish, crabs, chickens, pigs, rice, fruit, biscuits, and tea were prepared. Nowadays, offerings include everyday foods and daily necessities.

In our family, Bai San is held once a month. In order to perform it, we prepare a meal of chicken, rice, fruit, and wine, along with candles, joss sticks (incense), and portraits of the deceased. Once the offering is prepared, each member of our family will approach the offering, bow three times, and say a prayer to our ancestors. The souls of my grandparents are then given time to eat. Just before the candles go out, we bow again, and after the candles go out, we can start eating our meal. Offerings can vary from month to month and from family to family. Around the Chinese New Year, for example, we burn paper cutouts of clothes and cars for our ancestors to use in the afterlife. However it is performed, Bai San is a very spiritual ceremony and a great Chinese tradition.

Richard Lee '10



Unbrella

Dennis Zuraw '11

My Hybrid Culture

Growing up in a traditional Filipino family has instilled a unique set of values and customs that defines who I am today. My parents are immigrants from the Philippines who still value the customs and traditions they practiced in their homeland. From a very young age, these values were imparted to me; their culture was my culture. However, as I attended elementary and middle school, my eyes were slowly opened to a new culture. This American culture with its different values and customs perplexed me, as I attempted to identify with each culture. Throughout high school, I have been forming a unique sense of identity, borrowing ideas from both cultures. Today, I embrace my “hybrid” culture, which reflects the essence of my being.

My parents raised me in the traditional Filipino values of a close-knit, loving and God fearing family and inculcated in me strong Christian values and the importance of a good education. Throughout their lives, my parents have pursued their dreams and set great examples for me. Moving to another country was a momentous step for them; their journey was not easy. It was filled with challenges and contradictions. People would often ask my parents why they gave up everything they established in the Philippines to move to a new country and start from scratch. The answer was simple – through hard work and dedication coupled with divine guidance, my parents would be able to offer me a better life with endless opportunities. Through the years, my mom has built a career in banking, and my dad has become a successful internist and nephrologist. As a result, my parents have instilled a sense of hard work, determination and patience within me. They have taught me the meaning of self-sacrifice and the importance of family and hospitality. I continue to carry these Filipino values with me today.

Primarily through school and my friends, I have learned about the values of the American culture. Whereas Filipinos often stress the importance of family, Americans tend to emphasize individualism. Americans focus on the present, trying to make the most out of every opportunity and enjoy it. They highlight their liberties and voice their opinions. Americans are very proud of their culture. As a Filipino-American, I have tried to incorporate what I feel are the best values from each culture. My dedication to hard work and education is a key component of who I am. However, I still try to see the good that lies within all situations, keeping a positive outlook on life and enjoying myself as much as possible. My Christian faith and family are of great importance to me as well; these values are deeply rooted within me. Although I prefer to work alone, I can easily adapt and work well with others.

My Filipino-American culture allows me to understand and relate to people of various cultures. This allows me to be open and accepting of others. This is a very important part of my character. Instead of staying away from what is different, I often welcome and accept the new and exciting. It is this openness to different opportunities and possibilities that allows me to continuously adapt and find good in every situation. I am proud of my hybrid culture. It defines me and is the essence of who I am.

Michael Pico '09

Celebrate...

Nagypapa

Wearing a sweater over his oxford,
Under his jacket, he pondered,
Sharing few thoughts- none over his head, but all
Under his breath. He stacked the lumber tall.
Repairing the car, bent over the carburetor
Under the hood, he paid their Alma Maters.
Going home late, overworked,
Underpaid, he never shirked.
Seeing all, but overlooked often
Under the corner's shadow. Loving,
Knowing each, over others me.
Underneath the cloud, behind the stone, great.

Jeffrey Ulrich '09



Castle

Dennis Zuraw '11

Celebrate...

Caminos (Paths)

Throughout the entirety of the 12-hour plane ride, my gaze remained fixed on the miniature movie screen in front of me. My mind, however, wandered back to my home in New Jersey and all of the graduation parties I had foregone in lieu of a trip to my birthplace. I never quite realized – until I viewed by trip through the eyes of experience – that I had already begun to break free of the all-too-familiar bubble of American suburban life.

Despite the efforts of my uncle in Buenos Aires, who enrolled me in a local high school so that I could better experience the Argentine social scene, I remained stubbornly attached to the life I had known for so many years. Keeping in contact with my friends back in the States, I actually closed my mind to the unique possibilities before me. I had left Argentina with my parents to start a new life in the USA. Having grown to know and love that life, I was reluctant to go back. Slowly but surely, however, I grew accustomed to the environment in which I was living and the people with whom I was interacting on a daily basis.

As my new classmates incorporated me into their group, I paid less attention to Jersey, instead allowing myself to become immersed in Argentine life. In showing me the subtleties of the Porteño (Buenos Aires) accent, the basics of cumbia (a popular dance), and the delicious variety of alfajores (artisan cookies), my classmates reacquainted me with a wonderfully rich culture to which I had felt estranged for many years. I soon learned that, although I lived thousands of miles away, I could count them among my circle of friends. More importantly, they reminded me of the importance of shifting perspectives, of letting myself be shaped by the experiences of people living a different reality. Our friendship had grown across geographical and societal boundaries, reinforced by the immutable bonds of a common cultural origin. For the first time since I had left my country at the age of four, I realized that some part of me would always belong in

Argentina – and that some part of Argentina would always belong with me.

In the wake of trip, I have come to recognize the value of change as a means to personal growth. Before spending a month overseas, I felt so safe and secure with what I had known about life that I could not imagine learning something new. Escaping from suburbia helped me realize that there is so much more to this world than can possibly be experienced in Central Jersey. Only in opening my mind to this multicultural cornucopia of opportunities could I grow as both a global citizen and as a person.

As my American friends enjoyed their last few moments together before they embarked on their high-school journey, I was thousands of miles away, forging new memories with new friends. Originally afraid that my long-time companions would move on without me, I had in fact moved on without them.

Lucas Zavala '09



Eye

Alex Kruper '10

Celebrate...

The Ballad of AP English

In spring they made a real big choice
To take a complex class.
So seniors sit in AP Lit
And hope to heck they pass!

They start with Greek mythology
To review archetypes.
On themes and symbols they do dwell;
Such crazy behavior – yikes!

Then next it's *Oedipus* they read
With focus on the seer.
The blind man was the one to “see” --
The irony is clear.

A trip to Hell with Dante next,
The underworld is sad.
Contrapasso – oh so clever!
It's good not to be bad.

On to *Hamlet*, woe is he!
He knows not what to do.
He thinks and thinks then acts in haste.
Mistakes? He's made a few.

King Lear's a bloody play to read;
The old guy makes mistakes.
With evil daughters as his kin
No wonder his heart breaks.

In *Heart of Darkness* evil dwells
Inside the hearts of men.
Kurtz was crazy, if he could
He'd do it all again!

The family is dysfunctional
In *As I Lay Dying*
The story's told in varied voice
Their behavior can be trying.

The book *Beloved* brings to light
The plight of the poor slaves.
Heartbreak runs through generations,
They speak beyond the grave.

A.P. students learn how to write,
They use C-S-E/A.
They start with a claim, add support,
And then explain away!

If they are good and learned their stuff,
They'll analyze the lit.
With insight they discuss "so what?"
And try to make it fit.

All year long it's explications
So they can face the test.
With lots of practice they succeed;
They strive to be the best.

And when they finish out the year
Their writing skills are great.
Well-armed for college work next fall,
Can't wait to graduate.

Then they can brag that they survived
A year with Doctor G.
The pen is mightier than the sword;
I hope that they agree!

Dr. Martine Gubernat

Sports Hell

Note: The following is a satirical, sports-inspired version of the nine circles of hell as portrayed in Dante's *Inferno*.

The first circle of the sports hell is for the unbaptized, those who never had an appreciation for sports during their time on earth. These souls are enclosed in a chamber with flat screen televisions covering the walls. They have no access to the remote control and are forced to watch sports programming eternally. Making their plight even more wretched is that the volume blares from the speakers louder than "Hell's Bells" at an AC/DC concert. Though the souls of the first circle suffer greatly for their lack of interest in sports, their fate is kinder than those who truly turned against the will of the sports gods.

Dreadfully residing in the second circle are lustful, front-running fans. During their lives, these souls claimed to be true fans of teams even though their allegiance was only to championship-winning squads and their support switched from one side to another, depending on whichever was most successful. These sinners are chained to the ground, clad in clothing of the teams that they rooted for, allegedly. Though the weather is dark and stormy with heavy rains falling — symbolic of losing seasons — they have no choice but to remain loyal to their team, since they are now shackled.

Gluttonous agents are tortured in the third circle, where a terrible skunk-like stench permeates the air. These souls swim in a river filled with slime and grease. Their punishment is just because on earth they were like sharks, bloodthirsty for their clients to make as much money as possible. As disgusting as the water they now dwell in was the value they placed on material possessions. Gold lies at the bottom of the river, but their hands are tied together, preventing them reaching the treasure, symbolizing how their greed thwarted any chance they had of reaching the sports heaven.

The fourth circle hosts hoarders and spenders, better known as owners. Heavy coins perpetually pour down upon the owners, who sit in uncomfortable seats, like one would find at a stadium. The raining coins represent the profound profits that they made as owners of sports teams by overcharging their patrons. The pain they feel from the hard-hitting coins is akin to the anguish of those who made sacrifices in order for the owners to get rich.

Making their home in the fifth circle are wrathful and sullen coaches. While alive, these souls took the joy out of sports for those whom they coached. Now in hell, the wrathful scream due to the pain they feel from burning hot temperatures and the sullen glare quietly, battling frigid conditions in their surrounding. The wrathful exhibited a short temper and yelled at players unnecessarily. Likewise, the sullen made life dismal for their players by displaying no compassion or appreciation for their hard work.

In the sixth circle are the heretics, or sports commentators. The souls of these former writers and television talking-heads are

ordered endlessly to stir a large pot of mud. Their punishment is symbolic of how, on earth, they often made sensational and exaggerated statements in order to generate a stronger audience, even if their comments were not heartfelt. Blood is stained on the heretics' hands to show how they maliciously damaged the reputations and feelings of those that they covered. The heretics are attacked by savage dogs as they stir the pot, which is fitting because as commentators they were like wild animals, too.

The sinners in the seventh circle are incompetent general managers. Such souls destroyed franchises with idiotic decisions concerning player personnel and contracts. As punishment, the incompetent have had their heads twisted backwards, symbolizing their backward way of reasoning. They cannot move because they are stuck in mud, much like the predicament their respective franchises face after their mishaps.

The fraudulent occupy the eighth circle. These souls were once referees, umpires, officials, or judges, who unfairly altered the outcomes of events they moderated. Now, they suffer from blindness and are also crippled. On earth, some were blind to the proper calls due to ineptness, while others were corrupted. In both cases, their errors unfairly hurt one side. The fraudulent are crippled because, metaphorically, they severely injured others. Their punishment is also intensified by the fact that the ground beneath them is covered with pungent cow manure, suggestive of their performance in their respective professions.

Athletes who do not make use of their gift from the sports gods by not making an effort to maximize their potential are subject to the ninth circle. These souls could have become sports demigods if they had applied themselves on earth. However, they wasted their talents and are now completely, and eternally, frozen. Symbolically, they froze themselves on earth by not making an effort to improve their athletic ability. To give anything less than one's best is to sacrifice the gift and that is the greatest insult to the sports gods.

John Nolan '09



Gargoyle
Kyle Witkowski '09

Celebrate...

A Grammatical Error
Reviewing, I twiddle my thumbs
Many grammatical blunders
Its full of em'
I sit and wunder
How to correct my grammatical errors?
Words here n their
They shout at me
"Were everywhere!"
It's a spree
They come in pears
My grammatical errors.
My paper needs a phix
He won't except this
They play tricks
A complete mis miss
How do I change my grammatical errors?
They have come alive
They cant not be stoped
On my paper they do the jive
My grade will be dropped!
They smile at me with a cunning grin
I try to herd them in
As I take a step back, I look and sea
This paper be
One big grammatical error

Warren Jagger '10



Sandwich Man

William Palmer '12

Card Games

The five's on the pot
 as three plays "forget-me-not!"
 Yet the ten stands tall, slowly getting lazy
 as the sun turns hazy
 and the yellow loses its daisy
 the eight goes crazy
 but the sour four
 won during the chaotic gore
 that was the war
 that knocked out one more
 whose money was ashore
 and is now no more
 and the six plays pick-up sticks
 because the act was in a lick
 that old nine sits on the pot
 that no one else got
 two's the moper
 because seven got the joker
 the king's sword is through his back
 while the queen dances with the jack
 but the house was won
 the jest was done
 with fitful fun
 and is now overdone
 his double deuce
 was once a golden egg from a goose
 little championed, but won the truce
 and made his chips even more lose
 the narrow guiding, along the straight
 into the panama, with his eight
 he's got a change, it might take the cake
 but alas the loss is here, and the mourn it aches
 fully enveloped, he's got the flush
 he has the change, he has the rush
 no one can beat him, there in a crunch
 the win is in, he beat the bunch!
 But you never know the full hand
 and that's the grand
 that card games demand

Vincent Saulys '12

Passion and the Plaque

Passion manifests itself in any successful environment. Besides its inherent benefits such as increased zeal and affinity to goals, passion helps cultivate other qualities such as authenticity, which in turn generates respect and trust. Passion produces authenticity because it is difficult to conceal one's passions. Furthermore, someone who is true to himself or herself may be more inclined to respect others who are genuine. Respect for others enables humans to work cooperatively towards goals; therefore, passion, whether for learning, for a cause, for a school, or for a team, is the greatest conductor of success.

I reaped passion's benefits most abundantly during my junior year in high school when I studied AP Chemistry with a group of driven, intelligent young men. At the beginning of the year, our teacher, Mr. Whittington, recognized the potential of the class. He thrust all his energy into helping us achieve success on the AP exam, rewarding our passion with flexibility and willingness to pursue our desires. He even surrendered vacation days and promised that if ten members of the class earned a five, he would hang a plaque in our honor. The plaque represented to us a tangible connection we would always maintain with that lab, a concrete rendering of our emotional attachment and a lasting recognition.

As was required, we had lab classes once a week, but we went beyond that minimum requirement. Often, we begged "Whit," as we affectionately called him, to let us perform experiments that would reinforce the lessons. We even came into school on days off to work on extended experiments that would have been otherwise impossible. On one memorable Saturday morning, we spent four hours with samples of unknown materials, examining their properties and performing chemical reactions. The goal was to calculate molar mass

experimentally and, employing that knowledge, to determine the respective identities of the substances. We became especially comfortable with the processes necessary to find molar mass, but more importantly we gained a confident swagger and a bond of camaraderie.

All this passion paid off on the AP exam. The class exuded an aura of confidence on the day of the exam as a result of our diligent preparation. Fortuitously, one of the written questions tested knowledge of experimental derivation of molar mass. Ten of us earned a score of 5 on the exam, but we are still waiting to see that plaque!

Jeffrey Ulrich '09



Chem Lab

Ms. Jeannemarie McNamara

Celebrate...

Inspiration

An inspiration
Can be found from strange sources
Such as laziness

Procrastination
A powerful enemy
For English papers

Writing these haikus
In the middle of the night –
Terrible idea

I want to sleep now
I might start making ty[os
That was ironic

I am doing it wrong
Haikus aren't comical
I'm not restarting

This is acceptance
It's not the worst I've written
Or maybe it is

Shannon Rosario '09



Plain and Simple
Michael Shkolar '11

Lamppost

Here lies a broken man.
What little light
Illuminates the cruel night,
A crushed spirit highlights.
In Vino Veritas.

He clutches a bottle.
It hangs from his fingers by a strand,
Sticking in his cold dead hands.
His life drains as through an hourglass, sand.
Sic Transit Gloria.

The Lamppost light is his halo.
His soul ascends from this life,
With only scorn, hatred, and broken promises rife.
The flickering beam goes out, ending his strife.
Requiescat In Pace.

Jesse Castellanos '09



Tired Sentinal

Michael Shkolar '11

Celebrate...

The Journey

It began in earnest at the beginning of senior year. A quickened pace, with a sense of urgency now. The search began last spring, but then, the future remained distant and remote, scarcely entering my thoughts among the myriad other concerns of the day. Now, this task is an ever-present reality, a nagging intruder into my daily thoughts. Hardly a day passes now without some reference to this monumental undertaking. Parents, teachers, and even friends remind me of the importance of the decision before me. A decision, I've been informed, with great impact on my future – college.

And so I embark on this journey. I visit websites and gather information. Soon, numerous brochures arrive, some solicited, many not. The stack of mail grows larger; my inbox holds names of institutions I've never even heard of, all touting that they offer the best programs there are. Next comes college night, information sessions, and actual campus tours. My parents discuss financial aid and finances. Soon every campus looks the same and every admissions rep claims that their institution offers the superior environment for these next four years of my life. My mind is filled with a blur of facts and figures that cause more confusion than clarity. Somehow, I must sort through this sea of information and narrow down my choices so that I may begin this enormous task before me.

Another round (and thankfully, the last) of SATs. Transcript requests, letters of recommendation. When will it end? Deadlines, essays, the Common Application. With every additional college supplement, essay, and preliminary application, I wonder, what's so common about the Common App anyway? And then there's THE PERSONAL ESSAY, supposedly one of the most important parts of the application. Really, how can those admission counselors base such a major decision on a 1 or 2 page essay? Days go by as I stare at my

blank computer screen, trying to come up with something creative, something different, something that expresses who I really am. It seems impossible. But I must begin. And so I commence this arduous process of applying to college, entering what seems like my entire life history into the frames of the online application. Hoping that I don't miss a deadline or leave out some important piece of information. Hoping that my essay is good enough. Hoping that, in the spring, I'll open that acceptance letter from the college that's right for me. With a final click and "submit" my future hangs in the balance.

And now I wait.

Luke Sheptuck '09



Rocky Mountain Snow

Ms. Jeannemarie McNamara

Our Place

It snowed that day, when they first met. The pure, white snow covered the ground, untouched, unbothered, in the town's open fields. The snow made the world seem quieter, more peaceful, and more welcoming. The bitterness of winter's cold grasp was defeated by the beauty of the snow that day, when they first met.

It was the perfect day for a twelve year old to run away. The footprints leading to the woods left behind would melt in time, Adam thought. The girl he rammed heads with in the clearing apparently thought the same.

When they both regained consciousness, they noticed how isolated they were from the rest of the town, remembering how far they had run into the woods from two different paths. While Adam immediately introduced himself, the girl was reluctant to.

"I'm running away from this town," she said. "I'd rather not tell some random boy who I am; I don't want my parents to know I've run away from home."

Adam sat down in the snow. "Well," he replied. "I guess it can't be helped. I was running away too, by the way. But I think I've found my place."

The girl prepared to leave the clearing, but realized how cold it was getting. Several feet away from the clearing, she looked back at the boy, and went back to sit next to him. "It's too cold," she said, huddling up next to him. "I'll keep going some other time. It's nice here."

They began to talk. She introduced herself as Caitlyn, a girl from the other side of town, which explained why Adam had never seen her at school even though they were in the same grade. While the boy was able to quickly explain why he ran away – a minor disagreement with his parents – the girl was once again reluctant to share her side of the story. As it started to get dark, Adam decided to head back home, leaving the girl behind him in the clearing.

He returned to the clearing the next day, finding that the footprints he left on his way in and out had been covered by the snow that continued to fall after he abandoned the woods. He was pleasantly surprised to see the Caitlyn there, leaning up against a tree looking up to the sky.

"You're here again," he said, catching her off-guard.

"I like it," Caitlyn replied. "It's a perfect place to get away from everything. Didn't you notice the way the sun shines into this clearing when you look into it from the outside?"

"I wasn't really expecting to end up here yesterday," Adam replied. "I wasn't expecting to meet you, either. I didn't really pay attention to the details."

"Then why did you come back?"

Adam sat next to her in the same way that she did the previous day. He looked into her curious eyes and said, "I thought I left something back here." Adam facetiously looked around the clearing.

Caitlyn smiled, seeing through Adam's attempt at avoiding the real reason why he was interested in coming back. "Alright, so will you be leaving again?"

"I think I'll stay," Adam said, looking up at the sky. "I like it here, too."

Every day after school, Adam and Caitlyn would head to the clearing to get away from the world, slowly connecting more and more, discussing their lives. They discovered that they weren't much alike, but still shared a fondness of the clearing, which mutually represented a refuge away from the troubles of the outside world. The only thing Caitlyn would stray away from was the reason why she ran away on that first, snowy day. All she ever mentioned was that her mother had actually died several years prior to their meeting, but nothing more.

One cold day, five years after they first met, Adam found himself waiting for her until nightfall. She ceased returning to the clearing completely, and Adam eventually decided to search the other side of town for her house.

For the first time since they met on that snowy day, Adam explored Caitlyn's side of the town, using everything he discussed with her in the clearing to find out where she had gone. He searched her school, and attempted to ask anyone she said she frequently talked to.

It was revealed by one of Caitlyn's close friends that she had taken the train to whereabouts unknown. To his surprise, Adam discovered that for years, she had been a victim of abuse by her father, and had enough. Adam decided not to pursue her; he had gone five years without pestering Caitlyn about why she stayed at the clearing much longer than he did every day.

Without any further words, Adam kept his memories of Caitlyn but refused to return to the clearing.

It snowed one day, ten years after their fateful meeting. On a visit home from college, Adam visited the clearing, thumbing the tree where he and Caitlyn inscribed their initials and the declaration, "This is our place." Looking around one last time, footprints that he hadn't noticed an instant ago led into the clearing from the path Caitlyn used to take.

"I thought I left something back here," a familiar voice said behind him.

Jason Diaz '09

Celebrate...

Here Goes Nothing

I'll take one more deep breath and hold it in
And count the steps that I take
As I cross through the doorway.
The air is cold
But my palms are sweating
On a quiet December night
As I'm blinded by the light her smile brings.
I'm so unprepared
And I know it's rude to stare,
But my tongue is way too tied for me to care.

I want to take her hand
And pull her just a little closer
'Til I can stare into her eyes
And feel her heartbeat,
But I'm lacking common sense
And I left my confidence outside the doorway.
My heart is racing
From a lack of self-control.
"Man, you can do this," I repeat to myself
To ease my nerves.
Well, here goes nothing;
Please give me something in return.

Christopher Montalvo '09

A Moment to Live

There's only a moment to live,
 Then we must depart.
 What gift can we take as we go?
 We came empty-handed;
 Empty-handed we shall go.
 Only a few sweet words of love will shimmer,
 And remain as happiness after we are gone.
 Life is like a fleeting breeze of joys;
 It's like some gust of wind.
 But this breeze betrays us,
 It's like a gust of deception.
 For what happiness is such,
 Which flaring up, is quickly extinguished?
 What happiness, which having been found,
 Is not even truly possessed?
 So, one has to laugh at this world;
 Because if one does not laugh,
 The world will laugh at him.
 One must cherish the time he is given.
 One must strive for the dream
 That in this world exists someone who belongs to us.
 Because there's a special face
 That the eyes cherish.
 And there's a special scent
 That intoxicates the heart.
 There's a special voice
 That evokes sweet words of love.
 And remember ...
 These sweet words are all that will live on
 And remain as happiness when we are gone.
 So strive for the dream,
 And you shall live on ... forever.

Samip Shah '09

Freedom and Folly

Franz sat down at the dining room table after a long day at school and stared at his birthday cake. Seventeen years ago he entered this world alone and crying; with the exception of a few scars and cavities, nothing had changed. His grandmother, a sweet and caring old lady, placed a box of his favorite candies on the table in front of him and wished him all the best. His grandfather dimmed the lights and started singing an out of tune but sincere rendition of "Happy Birthday."

As his brother blew out the candles and everyone cheered, Franz sat motionless and pondered the importance of this birthday. Surely, Franz loved the presents and the cake, but every past birthday merely served as a reminder that he was growing up. Finally, Franz had arrived at his destination. Though he certainly was not all grown up, Franz had reached the age where he took on the responsibilities of an adult. The sky was dark, but the night was still young. Franz put on his coat as he stepped outside, sat down on the porch and studied his driver's license. Somehow this small card with nothing but his picture and his signature was proof that he was trusted by society to operate a deadly piece of machinery.

The car that was parked on the street was his means to travel anywhere and everywhere. The sleek exterior of the vehicle taunted him and challenged him to speed away forgetting his troubles and his pain, while his conscience reminded him of the respect he had earned from his family and friends. Franz walked slowly down the driveway and toward the four-door sedan that represented his escape from the monotony of life. Franz made up his mind; this was his moment to break free and see everything the world had to offer. He ran around the car and hopped in the driver's seat, simultaneously thrusting the key into the ignition. The engine purred, and Franz turned up the radio to drown out the despair that lurked in the depths of his heart. Franz's foot hit the pedal and he pulled away from his house with a gentle smile on his face. His mother heard a noise from the kitchen and walked to the front door just in time to see the red taillights of the car as he turned off the street. She stood in the doorway and shook her head, knowing that her

son finally felt the need to rebel and find his identity.

Franz stopped the car in front of a house and honked the car horn over and over again until a girl appeared at the door. She put on her jacket while she walked out the door and then sat down in the passenger's seat. Franz looked to his right and stared into her piercing blue eyes. The girl's soft, cherubic face glowed as she smiled back at Franz and the boy's heart beat faster. Then Franz shifted the car in drive and sped away toward their destination. They passed through a small town full of the energy that is usually present on a Friday night until they reached a small, quiet park. Franz parked the car and took the girl by the hand as they walked toward a bench near the pond. Without a word, she rested her head on his shoulder while he stared out into the cold night.

After several moments Franz stood up, and the girl followed suit. He walked to his car in the nearby parking lot and turned it on. Then Franz turned up the radio until she could hear the music at the park bench. The slow beat and soft voices of the song created the perfect atmosphere as Franz walked back over to the girl. He calmly put his hands on her hips as she wrapped her arms around his neck. The two rebels stood

swaying in the moonlight, gazing into each other's eyes, forgetting all of the troubles and stresses of life. The song ended and they stood in the park wondering what would happen next. Franz leaned forward and just as his lips were about to meet hers, she pushed him into the pond and suddenly he woke up from his dream. Franz looked at his cell phone that sat on the table; it was only Thursday morning. He gathered his books and got into the car as his mother drove him to school. While he sat in the car, Franz thought about the adventures he would have very soon and about the girl of his dreams, the girl from homeroom who still did not know his name.

Edward Stivers '09

Celebrate...

Salvation

I am fearless.

Just look into

my face:

opaque eyes,
empty expressions
of darkness within,
standing sentinel over the secret you seek –

my soul:

blackest night before break of day,
deeper than death,
devoid of life,
sinking, swallowed by space –

shall I share this all with you?
should you share my burden?
soothe the sorrows that shake?
still the swelling surge?
stop my silent screams?
save me from –

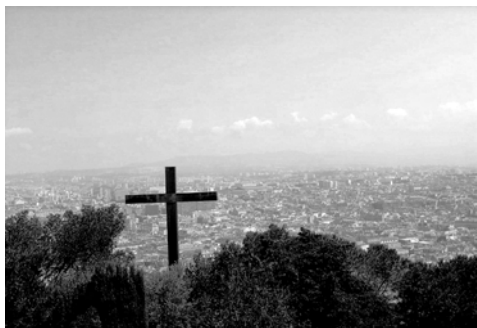
Myself?

shelter me,
shepherd me
guide me to grace,
gently hold my hand,
become a part of me,
because –

if you look close enough,
you'll see,

I am *afraid*.

Lucas Zavala '09



Cross Over Marseilles
Mr. George Milligan

Devil's Dance
 I lead- she follows.
 I hold her close
 As our legs tango in unison.

Left Right
 Left Right

The scent of her perfume,
 Enthralling, captivating, ensnaring.
 I shouldn't trust her,
 But I want to.
 My mind wrestles with my heart.

Left Right
 Left Right

I let my guard down-
 Just for a second.
 I open up-
 Just for a second.
 She sees the opening.
 She reveals a dagger.
 It's ice-cold in my gut.
 The pain is unbearable-
 My heart stings.
 My knees buckle.
 I fall to the ground.
 I watch those red stiletto heels
 As she walks away.

Left Right
 Left Right

Michael Chua '09

Celebrate...

Colors

I have been thinking about colors a lot lately. With the change of seasons, leaves are turning auburn, dark pants are replacing khaki shorts, and the bright sun sets earlier and earlier every day. These colors astound me. The mixture of several colors of light results in a white beam; whereas, the combination of various colors of pigment creates a black hue. What a contrast! Life is much like a rainbow: a beam of white light (meaning one that is inclusive of all colors) is refracted and the various colors are vividly expressed. The colors, or the different types of individuals one meets throughout the course of one's life, complement and enhance each other; each color benefits from and contributes to the beauty and inimitability of the other colors. These colors, or types of people, enrich the vibrant community that is mankind. I believe one's experiences in life and interactions with others show him the blessing he has been given, and help him learn more about himself. The experiences that have taught me the most about myself are my volunteer service at Bayshore Hospital and my trips to India.

I was once given the responsibility of transporting patients to and from different parts of the hospital. One patient told me there was a fire and that I should call 9-1-1. I assured her that there was no fire and that everything was going to be okay, but she still persisted. When we finally reached her room, a nurse told me she had been having hallucinations for a week because she had just lost a close family member in a fire. For some people, this patient might represent a withered tone of gray, but for me, she epitomizes a lively shade of green. This experience taught me that I am blessed, not only with material things, but with the love of my family and the stability of both my physical and mental health.

I have been to India four times over the course of my life. These trips have taught me to understand different viewpoints and belief systems. The last time I went, I visited an orphanage and volunteered to help feed and play with the children for a day. Although some people may have looked at these children and seen a gloomy hue of gray, I saw a hope-

ful shade of blue. I learned about their hobbies, aspirations, and outlooks on things like careers, religion, and America. Likewise, one must give his time to local neighborhoods that help make up the community of mankind, and from this experience, one should not only hope to bring a smile to other people's faces, but to gain insight into different lifestyles.

Rainbows are ephemeral; they are seen for a while, and then disappear. This is where the lively community of mankind and one's contributions to this community differ from a rainbow. The community is always a constant when it comes to expressing its diversity, but at the same time, it is continuously changing and being joined by different types of people from various places in the world. One must strive to be an integral part of this community, and pledge to help it be not like a fleeting rainbow, but instead an enduring and ever-changing one.

Samip Shah '09



Silent Noise

Michael Shkolar '11

Celebrate...

Allure

The allure of her is sought through vivid strokes.
In search of her, my thought provokes.

With her in mind, to dream is key.
On paper my thoughts can run free.

She is boundless and no form is true;
She isn't characterized by one shade or hue.

No realm for her is there to keep.
The allure of art is what I seek.

Shane Lawrie '10



Soccer Boot

Kyle Witkowski '09

Pure Bliss

On the windowsill he sits
 His body whole, his soul is split
 His mind at the bottom of an endless pit
 Thoughts reoccurring
 Silent but stirring
 Heavy contemplation
 Deep Meditation
 A manifestation
 Of his infatuations
 Stare of determination
 To my interpretation
 Might be my imagination
 Or my obligation
 Receives a revelation
 The young boy did
 No emotions hid
 Happy as any kid
 Out of his seat he arose
 Joy overexposed
 He opened up wide
 So that you all heard
 One
 Single
 Word.....

SNOW!

Victor Breton, Jr. '10

Celebrate...

A Carefree Game of Tennis

It is a cool autumn Friday afternoon. After a long week of homework and tests culminating in two very important AP Biology and Calculus exams, I am ready to relax and unwind by playing a carefree tennis match with my brother, who is a year younger than me. As I nonchalantly play and reflect on last week's events, a plethora of thoughts come to me.

I stop to look at the colorful leaves, gracefully falling from the trees. The leaves are orange, yellow, and red because of carotenoid and anthocyanin pigments. These pigments are always present within leaves, but green chlorophyll pigments mask their colors. These autumn colors are only present because the chlorophyll pigments break down in autumn, when sunlight lessens. (Yes, I do in fact think in these terms when observing the natural world). I try to see how science, especially biology, affects me and is present in my everyday life. I admit that my friends will sometimes catch me lost in thought, pondering some minute detail of nature. Next, I think of how ironic it is that people, including myself, find such beauty in autumn trees, when in fact they are dying. Suddenly, my thoughts are interrupted as my brother yells, "What are you waiting for?" across the court. Grumbling, I pick up a ball and begin to play.

As I begin to rally with my brother, I think of how silly tennis is. All I do is hit a small fuzzy ball over the net, back and forth with my opponent. I could be doing something more productive, such as reading or playing the piano. Then I begin to think differently. Actually, tennis is a lot like life. I have to hit the ball over the net, which is similar to how I have to overcome obstacles in life to reach success. I must hit the ball as close to the lines as possible to score against my opponent, but I cannot hit the ball beyond the lines. In life, I must push myself as close to my limit as possible but know my boundaries. In tennis, my opponent could give me a drop shot, a slice, a lob, or an overhead. Just as I need to be ready for whatever he gives me, I need to be prepared for whatever life gives me. I must take what life gives me and make the most out of it. Also, rallying in tennis is similar to two people arguing back and forth. Each player tries to hit a shot that his opponent cannot return, or a shot that forces him to make an error. In an argument, a person tries to make a point his opponent cannot refute, or a point that causes his opponent to contradict himself. Often, I try to think of how everything is connected or related to each other, as different as two things may seem.

Soon, my rally with my brother grows to thirty strokes, and we are both out of breath. I notice that my arm is starting to become

Individuality

sore, and I recall why this happens. This occurs because my body is unable to supply the muscle cells of my arm with enough oxygen. As a result, the muscle cells convert from aerobic respiration to anaerobic respiration to provide my arm with energy. However, this process produces lactic acid, which causes soreness in my arm. Unfortunately, my thoughts are interrupted as my brother catches me off guard and rips a forehand winner across the court. "Is that all you got?" my brother says playfully. Suddenly I remember why I love tennis so much. Not only is it a form of exercise, but it is a sport in which my whole being can participate. It is a game that requires passion and results in a sense of fulfillment. Although they are opponents, both players share a special bond that results from their respect and love for the game.

As I am reminded of this, all my other thoughts melt away. I become focused, only concentrating on winning the match. I answer my brother's question as I whip a powerful forehand across the court. What was once carefree play has now become a heated battle. Just as I am able to ponder on many things in my free time, I am also able to focus my thoughts on one particular subject when necessary. Perhaps it is this focus and determination that has enabled me to stick to my childhood dream of becoming a doctor. After an hour of intense action, I serve an untouchable ace. Game. Set. Match. I win.

Michael Pico '09



Delicate Arch

Ms. Jeannemarie McNamara

Celebrate...

Sleep

The best ten seconds of my day
are when I fall asleep.
Though I'm too tired for bedtime stories,
I enjoy counting sheep.
When I reach the number two
I know it's time for bed.
The light goes out at number four,
so I can clear my head.
Once I reach the number six,
my eyelids start to close.
Then when I get to number eight,
I cannot see my toes.
If could get to number ten,
I'd say I love it most,
But by that time I'm snoring.
I really love to sleep.

Edward Stivers '09



Easter Morn

Ms. Jeanne McNamara

In the Car

What random thoughts flood and invade my head
When I should focus on the road instead,
But I can't help but to allow myself
To escape the world and enjoy myself.
The sweet, night air, the serene solitude,
Oh, not a care. Oh, what people would do
To possess such peace perpetually!

The cool, night air, the ineffable cadence
Of words unspoken, a pleasing silence.
Left only to my mind, my own musings.
Thoughts of anything of my own choosing.
Thinking of things to come, things that will be,
Not often do I get this luxury
To discover myself, to finally
Relax and just exist. Simply, to be.

Michael Lee '09

Tic, Tic, Tic: An Autobiography

Tic, tic, tic... no that is not the sound of a clock. Those are the little, and sometimes not so little, neurological impulses that run around somewhere in my nervous system.

I was diagnosed at an early age with Tourette Syndrome. It really is not a big deal and that is not why I am talking about it.

Having Tourette Syndrome and dealing with it is a success story for me, not because of my personal accomplishments but because of the person it has helped me become. I have had the experience of being medicated to help control my tics. Was that medication for me or for others who might have been uncomfortable because of my facial or hand gesticulations? I was lucky; I stopped the medication when I realized that its negative effects were worse than its positive effects. I was a classified student but always felt as though I could do more and wanted to be challenged, not coddled. Well, I believe I met the challenge, academically, socially and in countless other ways.

High school has also challenged me to become involved beyond the classroom. My school is a strong proponent of community service. My community service involvement has given me the opportunity to help those who are less fortunate, including children with varying disabilities. This has been particularly meaningful for me and has helped me develop a better personal and social perspective.

The most important part of my story, however, is not about what I have accomplished but what I have learned about myself and others.

Tick, tick, tick...over time I have learned that we are only as limited as we allow ourselves to be. I have learned that our perceived limitations pale in comparison to the real limitations faced by many. I have learned that if you are first willing to help yourself, there are many who will help clear the way for you.

Cameron Lambert '09

The Secret

I watched from my hiding place in a thicket near the forest trail as the column of soldiers wound its way past me, rifles glistening as they caught the light filtering through the canopy of leaves above. I held my breath and remained completely still, hoping the soldiers couldn't hear my heart as it hammered against my chest. They passed by without noticing me and a few minutes later the sound of their progress through the forest faded into the distance. Gradually my heartbeat returned to normal as I realized that I had escaped detection.

The soldiers had been sent to capture me, I was sure of that. I had found out a secret, one that the Government didn't want anyone to know, the kind that, in the right hands, could bring the Government down. That was why the soldiers were after me. I had been forced to flee my home and friends. I knew I could never go back. My only hope now was to find the Resistance. They might be able to hide and protect me, and they needed to know the information I had.

It was around noon when I finally emerged from the forest and got a look at the town that was my destination. It wasn't large, probably containing a thousand inhabitants. One of those inhabitants, however, was my old friend John, who was involved with the Resistance. I had acquired forged papers before leaving my own city but I was unsure as to their quality.

I approached the entrance to the town and was stopped by the guards who demanded to see my papers. I handed the forged papers to the soldier and stood, barely able to keep myself from trembling as he slowly looked them over. After what seemed like years he told me that everything seemed to be in order and I was allowed in. I made my way through the city to my friend's house. Seeing me, John broke out into a huge smile and welcomed me into his home.

John offered me lunch which I accepted gladly after my exhausting journey. While eating I told John about why I had come. I told him of how I had been chased from my home and was being hunted because of what I knew. I also told him

the secret. John assured me that he would get me to the Resistance and promised that they could hide me. We would leave that night. When darkness fell we slipped out of the house and began making our way across town to the entrance into a secret tunnel system used by the Resistance. Soldiers had spread out through the city in groups of five and were searching the streets and houses for me. Worried now we doubled our pace and moved as quietly as possible. We were nearing our destination when a group of soldiers turned the corner behind us.

We broke into a panicked sprint as the soldiers shouted for us to stop. If they caught us we would be killed. The soldiers then began to fire. Bullets whizzed through the air passing within an inch of me. Wheeling around a corner we ran on, neither of us having been injured but other groups of soldiers attracted by the noise appeared behind us as well and bullets filled the air once again. I was falling behind now, never having been a good runner. Turning the final corner I saw my destination in sight, a normal looking building but in the basement was the entrance to the tunnel. I was cramping now and gasping for breath, I couldn't keep running.

It was then that I stumbled and fell, in sight of safety. Before I could rise again I felt the agonizing pain as a bullet tore through my stomach, felt the warm blood as it flowed from my wound. It was a fatal injury, I knew that at once. I wasn't going to make it. I would die here with safety a mere hundred feet away. Through my dimming vision however I saw John enter the building, I realized that he had escaped. Any soldier trying to follow him through the tunnel would become hopelessly lost by their labyrinth-like complexity. He would deliver my message.

As my consciousness began to slip away and death started to claim me, my thoughts were of hope. Though I wouldn't live to see it, with my secret in the Resistance's hands, the Government's days were numbered. Their oppressive rule would end. A new era was upon us.

Michael Bender '11

Celebrate...

Music

That which cannot be put into words
And that which cannot go unsaid.
The power to bend oak
And soften rock.
Music is Religion
And Nature is music.
What we cannot experience,
But all that we understand.
Behind walls of realism
Lay the meadows of musical experience.
A spark for emotion
And a fire in the soul.
Limited to none but the sky,
Eternity's only companion –
Music.

Timothy McCaig '09

The Falcons Are Flying

♩ 178

Salvatore Ascolese

Intro

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Mr. Salvatore Ascolese

Symmetry of a Jigsaw

Each tree, every cloud, the grooves in the road, they all stand as if they were placed there, works of an artist's brush. They stand still, but move and swirl as each one dances by my window in the waltz of life. The world is cold and the wind is sharp but whispers and roars the lyrics of the world unto my ears. The sun hides behind the trees and reveals herself between their leaves. She gives off her warmth to complete the symphony of fire and frost while I listen to the music of the world. As I gaze out the window, now lacking its shield of glass, I can't help but wonder what glorious design this all is. How the road twists and turns to the beat of the wind, while the sun flashes through the trees to give fireworks to the orchestra. In the midst of this bliss I can't help but realize the subtle perfection of the world. It's as though some man drew each object into place like one who uses a protractor in a math problem. But somehow it's more than that. It's as though their contradictions are what make them all part of the same. The highway crafted by the work of men, cuts through nature and is a thing of rock and steel. The grassy land beyond the metal rails, stand as a testament to the beauty of the earth. These two works of man and nature come into conflict so much in our world but here they live in a silent truce. Without one there wouldn't be another. Like two rocks perched upon each other there would be no need for one if the other were to be missing. They complement through contradiction because that is the nature of the world. They say how the mundane is supreme and how the everyday is the only day and how this moment is more important than all of the time before. In that moment I realized how perfect the world really was because of the imperfection that resides within it.

Thomas Semple '09

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Robert Frost Writing Contest
First Place Winners

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Winding Revelations

I ran. I ran as fast as I could;
That was all I knew how to do.
I was in a world all my own,
A much simpler world
With flashbulb skylines and
Waves of cheer and pride
Floating on the air.

I never knew what My World looked like,
Except for that one part at the end,
That one final part
Of red tape and white lines on
Rubber pavements, and
That one pumping group of legs lined behind me.

High on sweat and tears,
I pump my legs and arms into
Sweet coalition,
Running along my lane of white tape.
I was almost there.
The air around me filled with that intoxicating reverberation
Of pure victory,
In all of its glorious pride.

I pounded my last few steps,
Just glancing back to see if My World would be challenged,
And inches kept my universe close.
I crossed the finish line,
Red tape hugging my belly and my sides.
Then, that one final roar of ecstasy
Filled the stadium like an ocean.

It lifted me up, out of My World,
Into a reality so much sweeter –
A reality of sweat,
Muscle,
Honor,
And Victory.

Andrew Modica '12

The Mother Hen and the Unhatched Egg

There once was a mother hen. Inside the coop at her farmhouse, she had a nest full of eggs, on which she sat everyday, waiting for them to hatch. After weeks and weeks of waiting, she was just about losing her patience. Suddenly she heard cracking and began to flap her wings and run around in excitement. After she had calmed down, she went back to her nest to watch her babies hatch. One by one, little chicks pecked their way out of each egg. She fed each of them some cornmeal from the food stash, and took them back into the coop for some rest. The whole day she bragged to the other mother hens, and by nighttime, she was very tired and wanted to rest.

Upon returning to her nest with her six newborn chicks, she found a surprise. One egg still remained, unhatched. Immediately she began to panic, running and flapping around the coop. All of the other hens awoke quickly, yelling at her for her rude and disrupting behavior. She was just about to tell them about her unfortunate mishap, but thought, "What will the others think of me? I can't tell them what happened, especially after all of my bragging."

Apologetically, she shouted out, "I'm sorry everyone. I found a needle in my hay nest," and everyone went back to sleep. Well, everyone except for this mother hen, that is. She began to worry, and immediately thought the worst: the egg was defective. And she quickly realized that if her egg was defective, then she was defective. She pictured in her mind the other hens talking about her, saying, "Can you believe that her egg didn't hatch? There must be something wrong with her!"

Soon the whole coop would be gossiping about her, and then the whole farm would be doing the same. The horses would scoff as they galloped by, and the sheep would bleat in laughter. How miserable her life would become! She figured that she would have to fix this problem, and the only way to fix it would be to make the egg hatch.

All through the night, she stayed awake in case the egg hatched and she accidentally squished it. Exhausted as she was the next morning, she kept incubating her egg, unaware that her other offspring were out wandering through the farm. Five of the six got mixed with another hen's chicks and they followed her around all day. However, the remaining one walked onto the nearby highway just as a truck came speeding down the road. Unfortunately, it was unable to dodge the truck, and the rest is history.

That night the five chicks managed to return to their neglectful mother, who was unaware that one was missing. She was too busy trying to hatch the seventh egg. She encouraged herself by thinking, "Seven is a lucky number. Surely this egg will hatch in time. One more day is all it will take."

Again all through the night she stayed awake, and again the next morning her chicks wandered off on their own. Four of the remaining five got mixed in with another hen's chicks and followed her around all day. However, the other one went to another part of the farm. The cat found the little roaming chick, and the rest is history.

That night, the four chicks found their way back to their neglectful mother, who was unaware of the tragic fate of two of her children. She was still incubating her unhatched egg, thinking, "Seven is a lucky number. Surely this egg will hatch in time. One more day is all it will take."

Once again she stayed up all night, and the next morning her chicks wandered off on their own. Three of the remaining four chicks got mixed in with another hen's chicks and followed her around all day. However, the fourth found its way to a thick, intricate, nearby forest, and the rest is history.

That night the three chicks were able to find their way to their nest in the coop and their neglectful mother, who was still sitting on her unhatched egg in frustration, still thinking, "Seven is a lucky number. Surely this egg will hatch in time. One more day is all it will take."

For the fourth time she stayed up all night, and the next morning her chicks wandered off on their own. Two of the three got mixed in with another hen's chicks and followed her around all day. However, the other went to the pond for a swim. Unfortunately, its pre-occupied mother had not taught it to swim yet, and the rest is history.

That night the two remaining chicks found their mother, who was still thinking, "Seven is a lucky number. Surely this egg will hatch in time. One more day is all it will take."

When the next day came, the mother hen had still been up all night and her two chicks wandered off on their own. One got mixed in with another hen's chicks and followed her around all day. The other waddled into a plain and was picked up by a hawk, and the rest is history.

That night the last chick went back to the coop, where its mother was still trying to hatch the seventh egg. As everyone in the coop fell asleep, she thought to herself, "Seven is a lucky number. Surely this egg will hatch in time. One more day is all it will take."

The mother hen still didn't sleep through the night, and the next morning her final chick wandered off on its own. It got into the barn and climbed up the stairs and onto the roof. Once on the roof, it lost its footing, and the rest is history.

That night the mother hen was all by herself in her nest in the coop. She was completely exhausted, but would not give up. Instead, she kept thinking, "Seven is a lucky number. Surely this egg will hatch in time. One more day is all it will take."

By the next morning, the mother hen had not slept in a week. She was about to pass out when suddenly she heard something crack. She tiredly got up and watched her seventh egg open, revealing nothing but a thick, runny, bright yellow yolk. Disappointed, the mother hen cleaned up the mess, lay on her nest, and took a nap.

That night as she awoke she remembered that she had six chicks. She searched for them but couldn't find them anywhere. Worried, she went outside only to hear the other hens gossiping about her, saying, "Can you believe that she neglected all her kids and let them die? There must be something wrong with her!" Embarrassed, she went back inside the coop. She had learned her lesson: Be grateful for what you have, because someday it might be gone.

Michael Thorsen '12

Celebrate...

Warning: Do Not Puncture

I have escaped severe bodily injury again. I unwittingly seem to put myself in constant danger, but I (almost) always escape with all my limbs working properly and my dignity intact. My most recent exploit began when I was running to get a seat in the crowded lunch tables at my high school. The tables quickly fill with boys, and it is hard to find a reasonable seat (one where your French fries are not stolen). I was racing the kid whose locker is next to mine to reach my favorite seat in the cafeteria. I won handily, but in the process my ancient backpack's strap broke, leaving a giant gaping hole where it ripped. I ate my lunch and continued through the day with one usable strap.

I got home and in usual fashion completely forgot about my homework and started to fix my backpack with duct tape. I was having trouble with one part sticking, which is hard to believe, so I took out my super stapler (it can staple through a wall) and slammed it down with all my might. Then I heard a hissing sound. I was not immediately alarmed, for lots of random things happen to me. However, within a few seconds, white gas spewed out of my backpack. Very alarmed, I dug through my backpack and found the source: my can of Axe deodorant!

Even though I was holding the hissing can, I did not do what most normal guys would do, which is run and throw it out the front door. I did not even throw it out the back door. The can was colder than ice because of the air pressure being released. In fact, I ran past both the front door and the back door. I ran upstairs and into my room and threw the can of

deodorant out my window, onto the roof. If the can was full, it would have exploded and then I would have shrapnel all over my body. That would not go over well with my mother, so I am grateful my armpits smelled that day and I used some of the Axe.

Immediately after the defenestration, the carbon monoxide/gas alarm went off, which usually summons the fire department, given enough time. We have already had that happen to us once before when we left the car running in the garage, and it was not enjoyable because the fire department had to use a gigantic fan to disperse the carbon monoxide. A minute passed and the alarm stopped, but my mother was worried. She asked me “What was that noise?” considering that I was walking by trying to look casual even though the whole house smelled like Axe deodorant.

My low key reply was “I think I know....” I explained the situation to her and she laughed and told me to stop being stupid. My backpack still smells like Axe. The fire department wasn’t involved.

Robert Jessen ‘12

Celebrate...

Fallen Friend

Who was the man, waking, living, bleeding, so he in return
could gain happiness from another's
wellbeing,

The ultimate test of courage, devotion, loyalty, and absolute
love, all for a family left behind, quiet warmth awaits,

The sound of the golden trumpeter, resonating among the
fallen white memories on green fields,

Many of which graced the lives of countless others,

Brass and common love pay tribute to a memorable chapter
in one's life.

Miraculously, wonderful gates of a new joyous life wait,
Many believe the employment was one of killing, death,
destruction.

Though true, it was more than this belief of the overseers,
A calling from the one true moral buried deep within each of
us.

He was a soldier for all.

Yet this man will never be forgotten.

He has returned to everyone.

All the blind, the deaf, and the senseless will appreciate and
treasure his gift.

He remains nameless to nearly all,

For it is not the name that makes he who now peacefully lies.

The surrendering of life will be the sole factor for naming
him,

But has the world felt the effect.

For the world has unimportantly been struck with a grain of
sand,

Yet its inhabitants have been pummeled with a great stone,
Stepping forward while all others stood in line.
Few will ever appreciate the magnitude of such, that he
knew to be true and proper.
To many, a white engraved memory, is all that is required to
know such a man.
He may have been a brother, a son to the luckier few,
Now a divine symbol of courage, devotion, loyalty, and ultimate love.
For the man that now peacefully lies, with engraved white
and the green above...is a friend.

Dedicated to the Family of Specialist Michael Gonzalez

Michael Shkolar '11



Fallen Friend

Michael Shkolar '11

Celebrate...

Summer Dancer

Humanity was in a dire situation but no one remembered why. The circumstances of the situation were twofold, although many other problems ensued as a result of the underlying causes. The first part of humanity's dilemma happened in a period of time no one could say exactly how long ago. Humans along the span of their existence became increasingly unable to preserve thoughts in the long term or short term, a condition appropriately diagnosable as hypomnesia by anyone who could remember the formal term for their eternal Deja Vu.

People wandered aimlessly around, now confused and disoriented on top of the general idleness and unproductiveness that had permeated society at large over an indistinguishable number of years. Wise men squabbled over the reason for their punishment only to forget the conversation and repeat themselves again the next day. Wars were fought and won in a day, only to be fought again later.

The second problem was less of an issue for the humans. A genetic disorder had developed soon after the global hypomnesia set in. The disorder could be described as a progressive numbness that attacked the nervous system as the victim grew older. By age twenty, the victim could not feel anything from the outside world at all. The younger kids were often hammered with questions concerning how things "felt" and they often faltered trying to describe the sensation one gets from touching the environment around them.

Before long however, the same people would ask the same children the same questions, effectively diminishing the need for creative expression in favor of routine articulation. Eventually this behavior accelerated the same impending chronic amnesia that locked humans in a pointless present without past. The children were pressed down by being aware of their own downfall as a society, and the only way to escape was to forget.

Life on Earth tried to go on as normal, but social society became an oxymoron. First impressions were the only impressions one person had for another, and in their own ignorance, saw each other as clumsy and simple-minded individuals, nothing worth initiating a short-term relationship. People antagonized each other, with only enough interaction to allow for sustenance of life amongst the members of a clueless civilization. Within that clueless civilization, was a clueless man: Edgar.

Edgar parted the drapes of the small window of his house to watch the rain as it poured down and made everything "wet," a feeling one gets when water comes in contact with one's skin. From the distance he saw a girl dressed in a white summer's gown twirling in the streets, as if she was dancing to the pitter-patter of the raindrops on the Earth. He watched the girl performing silently in the streets, taking in her

whimsical yet confident gestures; a summer dancer taking center stage in harmony with the rain. Though he was numb to the world, he felt something. Edgar felt what could be closely related to “burning” in his chest, though he could not say for sure. The girl saw Edgar peeking through the window and Edgar hid, hoping she would not stop dancing out of embarrassment. Unlike most, Edgar was remarkably open in a world where every experience was new and strange.

It seemed the girl felt the same.

When Edgar peeked through the drapes once more to see if his summer dancer had left, he was surprised to see that she continued to dance, moving closer and closer to Edgar’s house. She waved her hand, beckoning for Edgar to come outside, and he was out the door before he realized it. It was as if his body was trained to respond automatically to that graceful gesture.

Outside rain fell everywhere. His clothes weighing down on him and his hair matted down on his brow were the only indications that he was “wet.” Edgar had forgotten why he had gone outside, but his heart seemed to leap out of his chest with every beat. From the distance, he saw a girl dressed in a white summer’s gown twirling in the streets, as if she was dancing to the pitter-patter of the raindrops on the Earth. He watched the girl performing silently in the streets, taking in her whimsical yet confident gestures; a summer dancer taking center stage in harmony with the rain. The dancer was a beautiful woman with smooth pale skin and long black hair, also matted past her eyes. As they came face to face, Edgar was perplexed with how soulful her eyes could be against her pale, numb countenance, but that did not bother him for long.

She put her hands to his face and pulled Edgar in abruptly, and his heart skipped a beat. They looked each other in the eyes and kissed long and hard in the rain, as if in hopes to create true physical feeling out of the sheer passion of their embrace. Does it mean anything to say it was Edgar’s most important first experience in his life? Whether or not it does, that was the case for him. His mind raced through all the possibilities of how a kiss could feel like on his skin, but it was pointless. Even though the physical experience was no different from the rain drenching him or the girl’s lips than his own, it was because of this that Edgar came to understand the true emotion he was experiencing, if only for a moment.

Edgar did not notice when the girl had stopped. This was not because of the physical disconnection between the two, but rather due to his numbness to reality as his mind was flooded with a sensation so powerful that if it were tangible, it would burst from every pore of his flesh. The irony of sharing such an intimate moment with a stranger was as exhilarating as it was embarrassing for Edgar,

Celebrate...

but he kept his eyes closed to take in every second of the embrace.

When Edgar opened his eyes, she was already dancing away into the distance, as if she was trying to evade the drops of rain as she went. He committed himself to seeing her tomorrow, and went back inside. His mind was a mosaic of emotion; a powerful image crafted from equally powerful emotions not even Edgar himself could pull apart. He returned to his house and dressed for an early slumber. As he tucked himself in and closed his eyes, all he had on his mind was the summer dancer who showed him something every human wishes to relive: first love. Her beautiful image slowly became less and less recognizable as Edgar drifted off to sleep...

The next day it rained.

Edgar parted the drapes of the small window of his house to watch the rain as it poured down and made everything “wet,” a feeling one gets when water comes in contact with one’s skin. From the distance he saw a girl dressed in a white summer’s gown twirling in the streets, as if she was dancing to the pitter-patter of the raindrops on the Earth. He watched the girl performing silently in the streets, taking in her whimsical yet confident gestures; a summer dancer taking center stage in harmony with the rain. Though he was numb to the world, he felt something. Edgar felt what could be closely related to “burning” in his chest, though he could not say for sure.

Alexander Ganescu '11

School Spirit

I was one of hundreds in a wave of green and white. I was one of many, but I made sure my voice could be heard. All around me were passionate students like myself who were yelling and screaming for one team. That one team walked through the locker room doors and onto the bright center circle known as midcourt. The chant began, "Let's Go St. Joe's!" As I looked towards the opposing team's players, I noticed fear in their eyes – the fear of a game that has already been lost.

The game started with a quick, effortless basket for our team. We saw the ball rattle through the rim and a powerful cheer carried a sensation of confidence to our team and a feeling of hopelessness to the opposing force. Everyone in the gym knew that a long and brutal night awaited the rival team.

However, about halfway through the game, all of our momentum was suddenly stopped when our star player fell awkwardly to the floor. He let out a dreadful cry that pierced my ears. He looked to be in immense pain and I figured he was done for the game.

From then on, the score came closer and closer. Finally, the opposing team was within just one point. A single basket would ruin the night for the massive, zealous fan section. The clock was winding down to zero. The rival guard was looking to sink our spirit by making the final shot as the clock expired. He dribbled to the foul line and took an off balanced shot. Airball! We narrowly escaped an embarrassing loss. A sense of relief filled my body.

Then I heard a whistle. "Foul," said the referee, "Two shots." We all went crazy. As the home crowd, we could not believe that the referee would make such a bad call. Their player had a chance to either win or lose the game. Luckily for us, we knew of the incredible pressure he was under. Additionally, his two foul shots were to be taken right in front of the entire student fan section. This was our opportunity to win one for our team.

All of us in that wave of green and white were doing anything possible to distract the shooter. His first attempt was short. The shot was not even close, so the whole game came down to this last foul shot. We continued to do crazy motions to distract their player. He released the ball. As it sailed through the air, the gym became dead silent. The ball hit the rim and rolled around it a few times. My heart was pounding at this very moment. After what seemed to be a lifetime, the ball rolled out of the basket. On that day, the sixth man for the Falcons won the game, but he didn't come off the bench – he was in the stands all along.

Ryan McCadden '11

Celebrate...

Bullet or the Ballot

With darkness consuming and no one around,
Light fades away, hope falls to the ground.
We try to speak but the words don't form,
Quiet chaos like an oncoming storm.

How can we be heard when all sounds eclipse our voices?
Staring into the blankness, can we make our own choices?
We can't keep quiet because it hasn't worked before.
Can we push down the walls and open the door?

A shot into the shadows, did it make a noise?
A sudden decision, the bullet destroys.
Screaming in agony, was our decision heard?
In the blinding adrenaline, vision was blurred.

Piercing through reason, cutting like a knife,
An indentation upon the fabric of life.
The consequences are final, they can't be erased.
Innocence and purity are never replaced.

It's an indelible curse, everyone is fleeing,
A dividing into halves, a separation of being.
Have we been heard or was there a better way?
Could we have avoided death and seen a brighter day?

We can hold a sword or hold a pen.
We can choose to fight or choose to be men.
With a ballot in our hands, the decision is ours
We are given the choice, granted the powers.

Be known, be heard, be the strength for all.
Become a beacon of light and always stand tall.
Bring light to the darkness; let the world know you're there.
Let your voice be heard and breathe in the air.

The pendulum swings and time passes by.
With voices all around us, how do we reply?
Whether in times of peace or in the midst of wars,
Bullet or ballot – the choice is yours.

Martin Pico '10



Beach Landing

Mr. George Milligan

Destiny

"Hey kid, what are you doing on my lawn?!" The girl replied, but only with a low, sad whimpering noise. The tone of the man's voice changed and asked "Hey, are you OK?"

"No, it all started when my father left me and my mommy" said the sad little girl.

"Oh. What is your name, little girl?"

"My name is Destiny," she replied.

"That is a nice name. Why don't you come in and we will talk about it over a hot chocolate? It looks like it's going to snow," proposed the man as he looked up at the fierce, black clouds hovering over them.

As the man finished his sentence, Destiny turned around, thinking about what her mother said to her about talking to strangers, but she saw something friendly in the man so she agreed to talk to him inside the small, decrepit house. As she walked inside, she passed boxes of dusty book collections and a bookcase full of the Dr. Seuss collection, her favorite books. As she sat down in the old, wooden kitchen chair, she looked around and saw a lot of dust on the table. She was able to see where the counter was used and what drawers were used because of the lack of dust in those areas.

"So, where did it all begin? Once I saw that you were sad, I wanted to help you. My psychiatrist once told me that talking about your problems helps relieve the pain so I asked you to come in and talk," he said.

"Well, it began when I was younger, I guess. My mom, dad, and I were driving to a restaurant for my birthday because that is what we do. On someone's birthday, we go to a restaurant to celebrate." She paused as she got up to blow her running nose. "On the car ride there, my parents got into another argument about something stupid that I don't remember. I remember my daddy calling mommy, "B..." which he called her often. Then mommy slapped daddy for some reason and daddy stopped the car, and my mom got out and told me to get out, too. So I did. Then mommy screamed and daddy drove away. I looked up at my mommy and she was looking at me with tears flowing down her face so I hugged her and told her, "It's OK mommy, I'm here" like she would tell me when I cried, to make me feel better. I think it worked because she stopped crying. Mommy and I started walking, but I didn't know where and I don't think she did either. We walked for days. I was really hungry but we slept under the beautiful

stars every night. Sometimes I woke up at night but I didn't see my mom so I just went back to sleep. But one night..." Beeeeeeeeep...

"Hot chocolate is done," the man uttered in a low voice as he stood up and got the mug of hot chocolate milk from the microwave. "Here you go. I made you a sandwich, too, because you looked hungry."

"Thank you. As I was saying, one night I was awakened by a man screaming at my mommy, calling her by the name my dad used and throwing money at her as she was getting out of a car. I closed my eyes as she started to walk toward me." She paused.

"Are you crying?" asked Destiny.

"No, I have something in my eye" assured the man.

"Oh, I hate that. Any way, the next morning I had the biggest breakfast I ever had in my life. I had pancakes, toast, eggs, and even sausage, but my mom only had a coffee. I didn't want to finish all of it because I wanted her to have something to eat but she insisted that I eat all of it, so I did. Later that day, we went shopping in a store and my mom bought this warm, puffy jacket and these warm, fuzzy pants. Then we walked around some more and it became dark so we looked for a place to sleep but I was tired of walking so we sat down on the chair that was inside the town park. I fell asleep and when I woke up, the sun was shining but I couldn't find my mom. I waited and waited for my mom to come back but she never did, so I went looking for her. I think she ran away like I did once when my daddy hit me. I haven't stopped looking, but I get tired a lot now so I sit down on the side of the road once in a while, and now I'm here.

The man looked Destiny in the eyes, realizing he knew those eyes. Then he broke out in tears.

"Is there still something in your eye?" asked Destiny.

"No," he answered with a snuffle and tears flowing down his face like rain. "I made your life miserable and I intend to do everything in my power to try and make things right."

Brandon Cotroneo '10

Celebrate...

Two-Sides of a Paper

I put the pen down. I take a glance at the words and notice the mistakes. All the cross-outs and misspellings jump off the page hoping to be changed, but they cannot be fixed. Their screaming presence fills my mind with feelings of doubt and uncertainty. What have I written so far? What have I accomplished?

No matter how hard I stare at these imperfections, there is nothing I can do. The words are written in permanent ink. They are words of the past, forever inscribed into this piece of paper. There is no turning back. The ink has bled through and time has sealed the words. Time cannot be undone or reversed. With each tick of the clock, time disappears.

What will I do now? My hands tremble. My body shakes. I try to pick up the pen, but I cannot hold it. My fingers cannot grasp it and reality seems to slip away. My head is clouded. I can't think straight. The mistakes flash through my mind creating a foreboding picture. A sense of urgency and regret engulfs me. I look around, but everything is a blur. The world seems to spin, while I am frozen in place. An overwhelming feeling presses down upon me. There is no escaping. Can I move forward, or will I stay there forever?

The page has been filled with good and bad. The lines are complete. The words are just as they appear and nothing can change that. Is there anything left for me to write? Is this the end of my story?

Turn the paper over. It is only the beginning. The world stops spinning. My mind is free; the end is undefined. With the blank page before me, the words are mine to write, mine to create, mine to shape. A sea of white lies before me, ready for me to sail upon. It's a true canvas for my imagination. Carefully forming words from the tip of my pen, I continue to write, not sure of what the future holds.

People will read both sides of my paper. They will see my faults, my mistakes, my disasters. They may judge me for my past actions and beliefs and try to take away what I have, but they will never be able to take away the power to write my own future. There's always a chance for a new beginning, to turn life around and start anew. Just turn the page and start a new chapter in your life.

Martin Pico '10

Uncertainty

College, majors, jobs –
He has decisions to make,
That anxious senior

His future at stake,
College admissions, careers –
They overwhelm him

SAT, AP,
ACT, and GPA
Acronyms abound.

Mom likes that college,
That program. She means well but
Not her decision.

What to do in life?
Doctor, writer, bus driver?
Possibilities

Advice, instructions
Everyone gives their ideas
Hard to hear his own

So when he retreats
To the insides of his mind,
He can sort his thoughts.

He has the right traits:
Passion, drive, integrity.
Life will work out fine

Now he sees clearly:
Wherever he wants to go
A winding path waits.

Raj Patel '09

Celebrate...

The Worst Tragedy

The small boy was ecstatic. He held his newly obtained reward with pride and satisfaction. He stood still and admired it for a very long time, gazing at it with an amazed look on his face. It was flawless: its shape was perfectly designed and its vibrant crimson red color shined under the sun like a bright ruby. Never in his life had he beheld such a tremendous spectacle of beauty. Its aura was hypnotizing; the boy couldn't take his eyes away. Many other children who passed him became envious, desiring to have one for themselves. The boy flaunted it as he walked along, knowing that he possessed, in his hand, the single greatest item ever to exist.

Just then, a powerful wind picked up. Unaware of the sudden breeze, he continued to gape at his prize with awe. He failed to fully clench it within his hands, and, suddenly, the gust whisked it away. It all happened so fast; the boy was shocked. One minute, he was staring at the most beautiful sight; the next, his hand was empty, the marvelous entity drifting farther and farther away. He continued forward as it eventually disappeared into the horizon, never to grace the world with its beauty again. He experienced the worst tragedy that could ever happen to such a young boy. He held his reward with such pride and content, and such a loss struck him with overwhelming grief. He welled up in tears and let out a piercing cry. Deep inside, he knew that he would never possess something so extraordinary. With tears gushing from his eyes, he looked sadly at his mother. "Oh, don't worry, honey," she said, trying to comfort her son. "I'll buy you a new balloon." He began to smile.

Ryan Santiago '09



It Wasn't Me

Michael Shkolar '11

Celebrate...

Br. Rich: Coach, Mentor, Friend

Entering high school, I considered myself a soccer and basketball player. I have loved nearly all sports since I was young, but during my grammar school heyday, soccer and basketball were the two that I enjoyed the most and excelled at playing competitively. Over three years later, I no longer play either sport competitively; instead, I am a runner.

The man who deserves much of the credit for my transformation is Brother Richard Leven. Br. Rich has been coaching cross-country and track at St. Joe's for over thirty years. In that span, he has won many championships, but more significantly, he has inspired countless young men, including myself.

Br. Rich, who was ordained to the Brothers of the Sacred Heart in 1959, began coaching freshmen cross-country and track in 1989 after a storied tenure as the varsity coach. Br. Rich also serves as the guidance counselor for all 200-plus freshmen at St. Joe's. While his duties in this role include assisting ninth-graders as they make the transition from grammar school to high school, Br. Rich utilizes his position to recruit freshmen to his squads. In a school that boasts 13 competitive athletic teams, the task of forming strong cross country and track rosters is not easy. Nevertheless, Br. Rich leads his teams to success year in and year out.

I can attest to Br. Rich's effective recruiting efforts. Knowing that I was a soccer player, and assuming that I could be an 800-meter runner, he called me into his office several times during the fall of my freshman year. Br. Rich implored me to come out for the winter track season. Though I was flattered by his interest in me, I dismissed the notion in order to try out for the basketball team, which I did not make. However, rather than run winter track, I decided to become manager of the basketball team. Even so, Br. Rich still encouraged me to join spring track, and I did,

not realizing its impact on the rest of my high school career.

I will never forget my time running spring track under the tutelage of Br. Rich. He pushed me to work harder than I had ever before and motivated me to achieve feats I thought impossible. Even though during our exceptionally strenuous workouts I thought he must have been trying to kill me, I realize now that he was only making me stronger, both physically and mentally. Always stressing to “train for a purpose,” Br. Rich instilled in me a work ethic and self-discipline that has made me not only a better athlete, but also a better student and person. During the season, our purpose was to triumph at the NJ Catholic Track Conference Freshmen Championship. Though we placed only fourth at the meet, my personal fifth place finish in the 800-meter run is one of the accomplishments that I am most proud of in high school. When I ran on the track in that race, I was not running for just myself, but also for Br. Rich and my teammates. His passion for the team was so great that I could not bear to disappoint him. He had become more than just a coach; he was a friend.

Over three years later, I look forward to saying hello to Br. Rich in the school hallways each day, whether talking with him about his new crop of freshmen runners, or teasing him about the shortcomings of his beloved New York Yankees. Br. Rich’s influence on me has been one of the defining marks of my high school experience. Because of Br. Rich, I am a varsity cross country and track runner, and more importantly, an individual who knows what it means to “train for a purpose” in life.

John Nolan ‘09

Policy

All students enrolled at SJHS, and all faculty members who work at the school, are encouraged to submit poetry, fiction, nonfiction, artwork, and photography to the literary and arts magazine. Submissions are judged equally on all grade levels. Writing submissions are collected in conjunction with the SJHS Robert Frost Writing Contest. First place Robert Frost contest winners, in all grade levels, are published in the magazine. Other writing that is published in the *Vignette*, as well as all the artwork and photography, have been reviewed and approved by the literary staff. Each student may submit a maximum of five works. Previously published pieces are not eligible. All writing entries must be typed. Each submission (writing, photography, and artwork) must include the following information: student ID number, grade level, title, and category (poetry, fiction, nonfiction, photography, artwork).

Submissions are judged by the *Vignette's* literary and layout staff, which is comprised of students who try out for their positions. The English department also provides guidance and feedback with regards to critiquing written submissions, as well as judging the winners of the Robert Frost Writing Contest.

With the exception of artwork and photography, submissions will not be returned. The editors and advisors reserve the right to edit manuscripts for grammar, spelling, punctuation, and clarity.

