

**ST. JOSEPH HIGH SCHOOL**

# **VIGNETTE**



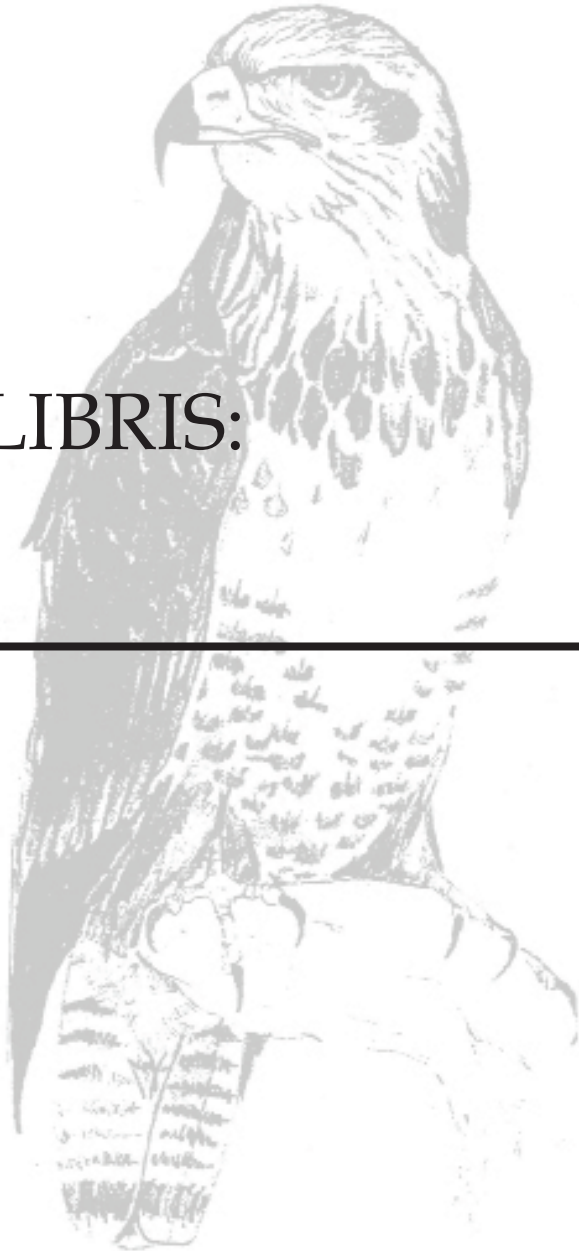
**2010**

# *The Vignette* 2010

Volume 49

EX LIBRIS:

---



St. Joseph H.S. Falcons

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

St. Joseph High School  
145 Plainfield Avenue  
Metuchen, New Jersey 08840

## *Table of Contents*

<b>Title</b>	<b>Author/Artist</b>	<b>Page</b>
<i>Vignette</i> Staff		4
Editorial	Matthew Galinsky, '10	5
Morning in the Life of a Falcon Swimmer	Christian Lewis, '10	6
Hindsight	Anthony Lubrano, '12	7
The Tournament	Nitin Srinivasan, '10	8-9
My First Dance	Tyler John Duggan, '12	10
Fishing is so Dull	Richard Walsh, '11	11
Homework Overload	Alexander Wintringham, '13	12
St. Joe's Cartoon	Robert Luceri, '10	13
The Son's Apology	Andrew Cinco, '11	14
Bright Idea	Kyle Madden, '11	15
A Puerto Rican Christmas	Gabriel Blanco, '10	16-17
Christmas Flag	Thomas Herring, '10	17
Only A Dream	Nitin Srinivasan, '10	18
Acadia National Park	Sean Pajak, '10	19
The Disturbing Bop-It	Paul St. Marie, '10	20
Now Look What You've Done!!!	Richard Walsh, '11	21
The Benefit of Sports	Quinn McCarthy, '10	22
Taking Off	Sean Pajak, '10	23
The Sunday Soldier	Francis Shammo, '12	24-25
For Whom Do These Bells Toll	Ms. Jeannemarie McNamara	25
The Sun Will Rise	Andrew Cinco, '11	26
A Tiny Test	Mr. Anthony Mangan	27
Aiden from California	William Toole, '10	27
The Vanilla Pop-Tart: A Story of My Life	Nicholas Bevilacqua, '10	28-29
All Curves	Matthew Scimeca, '10	29
Good vs. Good?	Amish Patel, '11	30
Weaver	Alexander Kruper, '10	31
Standing There	Justin Rapolas, '13	32
Industrial Sunset	Ralph Paone, '10	33
A Teacher's Journey	Mr. Craig R. Martin	34
The Godfather	David Mortellilo, '11	35
Christmas Morning	Mr. Craig R. Martin	36
Frozen in Time	Jonathan Vargas, '11	37
Ghost	Christian Lewis, '10	38
Open House	Matthew Scimeca, '10	38
Too Late To Wonder	Mr. Salvatore Ascolese	39

<b>Title</b>	<b>Author/Artist</b>	<b>Page</b>
Omen	Erick Delgado, '11	40
That Girl	David Mortellilo, '11	41
It's Not Just A Cliche	Matthew Galinsky, '10	42-43
Where Did You Say Your Grandmother Lives?	Richard Walsh, '11	43
Failure	Andrew Presnal, '10	44-45
Fireman in the Field	Francis Shammo, '12	46
Comfort	Mr. John A. Anderson, '70	47
Calamus Gladio Fortior	Aaron Knowlson, '10	48-49
Ever Vigilant	Mrs. Jeannemarie McNamara	49
Under the Feet of Progress	David Stess, '10	50
Towering Up	Patrick Hogan, '10	50
A Profound Impact	Paul Kibala, '10	51
My Inspiration	Matthew Modica, '10	52-53
For Better or Wurst	Edward Zukowski, '10	54-55
Menschen	Dominic Barszcz, '10	56
Mientras que Corra el Mar	Richard Ortegon, '10	57
El Camino de los Halcones Verdes	Richard Ortegon, '10	57
Cold Stone	Warren Jagger, '10	58
Coastal Maine	Sean Pajak, '10	58
Jab Jab Hook Uppercut	Samuel Syjongtian, '10	59
A Humble Proposition to Save the Earth	Dr. Robert Longhi, '81	60-61
Running	Michael Thorsen, '12	62
Brother George	Frank Angiola, '12	63
The Greatest Rival	Martin Pico, '10	64-65
Phone Call To A College Friend	Mr. Salvatore Ascolese	66
Boy's Best Friend	David Mortellilo, '12	67
Figments in a Blank Room	Michael Palughi, '12	68-69
Ode to the Yankees	Christopher Musante, '10	70
Ready to Roll	Anthony Lubrano, '12	71
A Lifelong Passion	William Scarano, '10	72-73
Why?	Matthew Mikula, '10	74-75
Gateway Through Ft. Wadsworth	Mrs. Jeannemarie McNamara	75
No Poet	Edward Zukowski, '10	76
Geese Family	Jonathan Vargas, '11	76
Robert Frost Contest Index		77

## *Vignette Staff*

### **Editorial Staff:**

Craig Barretto, '11  
James Bogdanowicz, '13  
Adam Cristofich, '10  
Kevin Eustice, '13  
Matt Galinsky, '10  
Michael Huber, '11  
Warren Jagger, '10  
Ryan McCadden, '11  
Andrew Modica, '12  
Nick Palmieri, '12  
Michael Palughi, '12  
Chirag Patel, '11  
Kishan Patel, '11  
Himanshu Patel, '13  
Martin Pico, '10  
Ankit Roy, '13  
Matt Ulrich, '13

### **Assistants**

Sean Finan, '13  
Evan Tardosky, '11

### **Moderators:**

Dr. Martine Gubernat  
Mr. George Milligan



A famous aphorism by the Greek philosopher Heraclitus paradoxically states that, "the only constant in life is change." Among many other important and relevant topics, this edition of the *Vignette* explores the inevitable transitions that we all encounter throughout life. Some are minor, trivial, and easy to negotiate while others are monumental, disruptive, and challenging.

During our time at St. Joseph High School, we grow physically, spiritually, and intellectually, dealing with many related transitions. In four brief years, a St. Joseph student moves from the passenger seat to the driver's seat, from high school freshman to college candidate, from carefree, unemployed teen to responsible, wage-earning young adult. While these changes may not have always been easy or enjoyable, being able to cope with them and to take them in stride is a crucial attribute that will shape a person's character and prepare him for the more difficult and important challenges that await. I am confident that, at some point in our lives, we will look back on these four years and recognize that they were invaluable preparation for the future.

The editors of the *Vignette* have selected the submissions that capture the resilience of the St. Joseph community and its creative response to life's challenges. Through publication, these entries and their creators will be immortalized to serve as a reminder of the challenges we have faced. It is with great pride and pleasure that I present to you the voice of St. Joseph High School.

*Matthew Galinsky, '10*  
*Senior Editor*



## Morning in the Life of a Falcon Swimmer

Once again, November 15 has arrived, marking the beginning of another season of St. Joe's swimming. Many team members look forward to this date through the summer and fall. The first day of early morning practice is a fierce wake-up call for the new team members. Literally.

Waking up at 4:45 a.m. and driving to a cold, unpleasant pool on an empty stomach is not very appealing; however, the drive to reclaim the state championship title greatly overpowers the desire to sleep in. My car slowly rolls into the Middlesex County College parking lot with windows still frosted from the bitter night. I sluggishly turn off my car lights and get my practice gear as I look into the windows of the building. The path toward the locker room is so ingrained in my memory that I think I could walk it in my sleep. After practically doing just that, I enter the locker room and wonder what torturous workout our coaches have drawn together.

The familiar smells of the locker room paint mixed with aquatic chemicals abound. The other swimmers eventually trickle in and the room is filled with half-asleep students trying to steal fifteen more minutes of precious shut-eye until our coaches arrive. Finally, around 5:20 a.m., the team shuffles out onto the pool deck quietly; some drag their feet while others walk swiftly outside. My stomach is growling because I have not eaten since early the night before; however, once my body hits the brisk water for warm-ups, my hunger is forgotten. Chlorine is my breakfast and lactic acid my dessert. The two hours of practice seem to fly by, and soon 7:20 a.m. arrives. While most teenagers are just waking up, the St. Joe's swim team is steadily getting quicker, faster, and stronger.

Excellence and success are St. Joe's traditions, and our swimmers get a head start every morning to achieve those goals and the ultimate objective of re-claiming the state title.

*Christian Lewis, '10*



Hindsight

*Anthony Lubrano, '12*

## The Tournament

Two and a half hours after takeoff, our plane landed at Chicago's O'Hare Airport. My quiz bowl teammates, coach, and I took a shuttle to our hotel, where we unpacked, ate dinner, and got a night's rest.

This was it, the National Academic Championship. This was the culmination of our many months of hard work and preparation. We had already been to approximately twenty tournaments that year, but none of them were as important as this one. I was nervous.

I lay awake for a few hours that night, thinking about the matches in which I was to compete the next day. Would I play well? How much more difficult would the questions be at Nationals? I tossed and turned for a while, wrestling with my agitation, before falling asleep.

Soon my alarm went off and, still nervous, I got dressed and headed downstairs to eat breakfast. By the time our first match started, I was almost completely frozen. We were playing Zionsville, a strong team from Indiana, in a crowded room where every seat in the audience was occupied by a coach, journalist, or member of an opposing team. Consequently, I was too tense to answer questions that I would have found simple otherwise. After the first quarter, my coach, Mr. Ed Powers, pulled me out of the game to have a word with me.

"I know you're a good player; that's why you're here at nationals. So there's no reason for you to be nervous. Just go out there and have fun," he told me.

Coach inserted me back into the game at the beginning of the fourth quarter. I took a deep breath and tried to concentrate on the questions, but I was still nervous. My

stomach was turning over inside me and I could not seem to stop my leg from shaking.

As soon as I answered a question, my nervousness disappeared and I was back to my typical self, focused and ready for the next question.

"Last question of the match, worth twenty points," the reader announced. "Saint Joseph leads 275-260."

The next few seconds would decide the outcome of the match, and perhaps our team's fate in the tournament. As I listened intently, I heard a phrase that I recognized: increasing entropy. My instincts took over and I buzzed in.

"The Second Law of Thermodynamics!" I exclaimed, as soon as the reader nodded at me.

"That's right!" the reader responded. "Saint Joseph wins 295-260."

The moment I heard those words, I breathed a sigh of relief. We were victorious in our first match at Nationals; however, this match did more than just add a 'W' to our win column. It gave us a huge confidence boost and momentum going into the rest of the tournament.

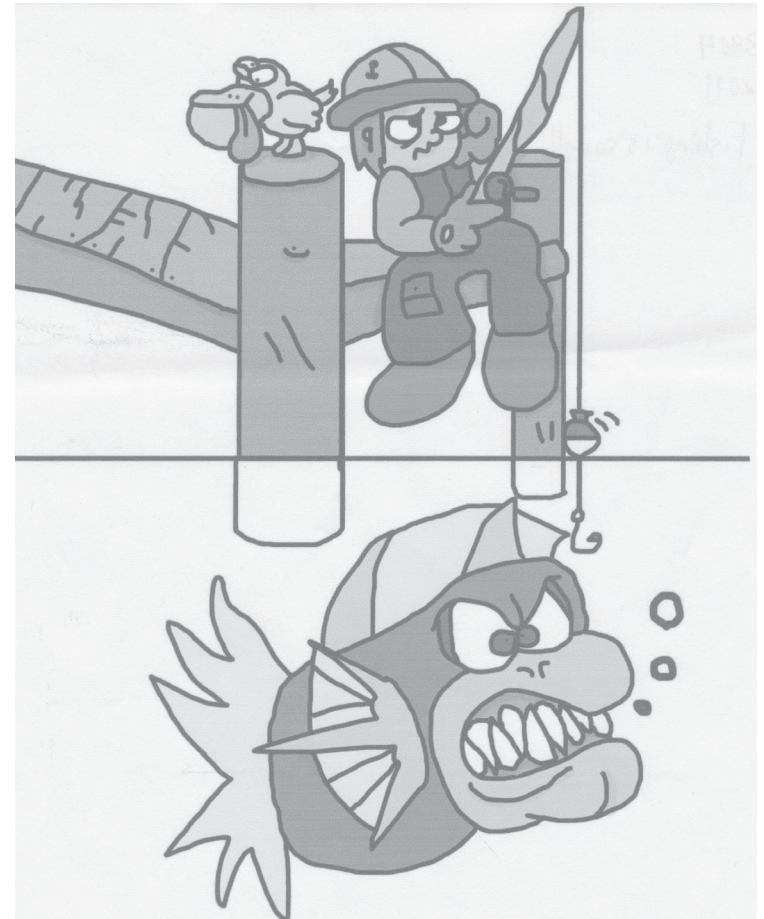
*Nitin Srinivasan, '10*

## My First Dance

I bought my Golden Ticket and awaited my first dance  
With excitement in my heart, as the rest was up to chance.  
Friday was drawing closer, and so was my first dance.  
I figured it'd be awesome and that was my new trance.  
The bell, it sounded loudly, on that Friday afternoon  
And I knew that my first dance, was coming way too soon.  
I arrived here at the school, not wanting to advance  
And I entered through the gym, with no clue of how to dance.  
When excitement turned to fear, and fear then into dread,  
I knew not what would happen or what would lie ahead.  
I saw my friends start dancing, and that just tore me up,  
But when they came on over, all I could say was "sup."  
I had to start to dance, or all of this would be a waste;  
There was just one problem that I knew I had to face.  
Time was running short, so this was my last chance  
To pucker up the courage, and ask a girl to dance.  
All the girls were dancing, and I knew not what to do.  
And then I came to realize all my fears were coming true.  
I gazed around the gym and my eyes were often met  
By a girl so beautiful, that I began to sweat.  
My heart began to race as I approached from far away  
With I a smile on my face, for I knew not what to say.  
I was very nervous but I seemed to hold my stance  
Then I heard us say together, "Would you like to Dance?"  
The confidence within me, then, started to emerge,  
Making me quite comfortable as emotions raced and surged.

A feeling of accomplishment and pride entangled me  
And I knew that my first dance had really set me free.  
I later left the gym and then out the entrance,  
With excitement in my heart, awaiting my next dance.

*Tyler John Duggan, '12*



Fishing is so Dull

*Richard Walsh, '11*



## Homework Overload

Every year, millions of students around the world face the challenge of furthering their knowledge. In doing so, they attend various and unique schools that contain some of the greatest intellectual minds the world has ever known. Students endure vigorous academic challenges throughout their school day; afterward, they go home to their families and continue their studies by doing homework. This usually consists of assignments that help the students develop a firmer grasp on the material covered throughout the day. This allows for students to hone the skills needed to accomplish academic goals as well as to realize what they need more help on. With this useful and beneficial strategy comes another serious issue. How much is too much?

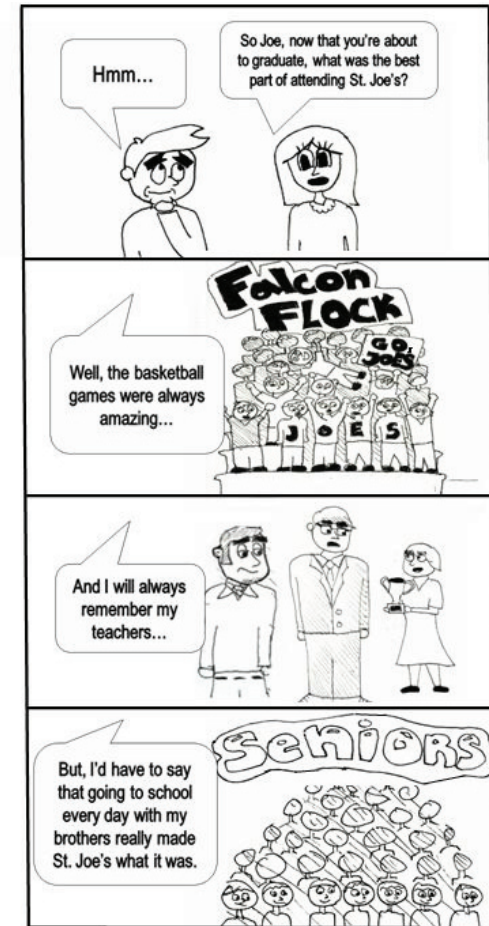
While I support the use of homework to increase comprehension and educational knowledge, I believe that there should be a limit. Stress from hours of work and participation within a classroom builds on the continuously changing human brain and emotions. Panic attacks, frustration, anger, and depression are only a few of the possible consequences of unhealthy work routines. Incomplete homework or even the temptation of cheating can result as students struggle for relief.

During the time of educational development, students need to have balanced lives. Physical activities, schoolwork, and relaxation are all needed in order to have the best time possible during these years. Many people, myself included, look toward spending time with friends as an opportunity to leave their books at home and enjoy their youth. Even these short moments of time away from schoolwork can help people to relax and keep their minds open to social engagements. If human beings are continuously focused on their work for extended periods of time, their social skills may start to decrease. Teenagers, especially, need social moments in order to build character and lifelong friends. Excessive homework can preclude these crucial social opportunities from taking place.

As with most things in life, there needs to be boundaries and balances for work. For example, if students get an average of seven

to eight hours of sleep every school night and then go through a seven-hour school day, they can become exhausted and stressed. If this is followed by another four hours of homework, depression may result. Therefore, I strongly believe that the homework assigned to students should be limited to what is truly necessary.

*Alexander Wintringham, '13*



St. Joe's Cartoon

*Robert Lucieri, '10*

## The Son's Apology

Regret fills my heart,  
Emptiness nears my soul.  
I have hurt a loved one;  
For that, I must pay.

They worked so hard  
Yet I worked so little.  
They fed and clothed me;  
I complained it was too cold.

I grew up slowly,  
My life in their arms.  
I should love them,  
So why do I hurt them?

Perhaps they deserve more;  
Surely they want more.  
Who wants a child  
That complains, "What for?"

If they push me away  
Because I pushed too much  
I will love them anyway,  
Because I know I was wrong.

So it does not happen,  
So I can show them more,  
I will work harder,  
To show them the son that I can be.

*Andrew Cinko, '11*



Bright Idea

*Kyle Madden, '11*



## A Puerto Rican Christmas

The Puerto Rican celebration of Christmas is rich in cultural tradition and spirit. In contrast to American traditions, Puerto Rico's Christmas season lasts three weeks, from December 24 to January 14. It is a time of festivity as families prepare for the birth of Christ and the New Year. In early December, Puerto Rican homes are decorated with lights and Nativity scenes, and the spirit of a Puerto Rican Christmas begins.

This spirit is best captivated in the tradition of the parrandas, which is similar to Christmas carolers. The parrandas, however, surprise homes by arriving unannounced at any hour of the night to play their lively music. As part of the tradition, the residents of the house must welcome the party, offer them all the food and drink available, and listen to the musical performance until the parrandas decide to move on to the next house. When they do move on, the hosts join the party of parrandas for the rest of the night.

On Christmas Eve, Puerto Ricans reunite with their extended families at dinner parties and attend a special midnight mass, La Misa de Gallo, to prepare for the celebration of the birth of Jesus. The Christmas celebration is more calmly observed out of respect and spiritual reverence for Christ. The solemn celebration continues through December 28, the day of Holy Innocents, which is held in memory of the male children of Bethlehem massacred by Herod in his attempt to kill Jesus. Festivities resume on New Year's Eve as families and friends gather to welcome the New Year.

Originally, Santa Claus did not exist in Puerto Rico. Instead, Puerto Ricans celebrated El Dia de Los Reyes (Three Kings' Day) in honor of the magi who followed the star to Bethlehem and presented gifts to baby Jesus. On the eve of Three Kings' Day, January 5, children fill small baskets or shoeboxes with grass and place them under their beds at night. While the children sleep, the magi arrive, find the boxes, and give the grass to their camels to eat. The children awaken the morning of January 6 to discover that the kings have left in their boxes small gifts, fruits, and sweets for them

to enjoy. For the remaining eight days, Puerto Ricans celebrate the closing of the Christmas season by visiting family and friends, and by continuing the adoration of the baby Jesus and the Three Kings as parades are held and early morning masses are attended.

The influence of American culture has also infiltrated Puerto Rican Christmas customs through Christmas trees, the introduction of Santa Claus, and the giving of gifts on Christmas Day. Happily, these influences have added to and not displaced the cultural celebration of Christmas in Puerto Rico. The spirit of Puerto Rican Christmases continues to thrive and unite Puerto Ricans to their cultural history and the roots of their civilization.

*Gabriel Blanco, '10*



Christmas Flag

*Thomas Herring, '10*

## Only a Dream

Shall I compare her to a summer's day?  
Claim that her face has launched a thousand ships?  
But that would do her justice in no way.  
For all these things, her beauty does eclipse.

Each lip is a delicate and red rose,  
And her hands so very soft and slender.  
Her hair grazes my cheek as the breeze blows,  
Never has there been a touch so tender.

With eyes that are the bluest of all pools,  
Skin that the snow envies for being fair,  
She turns the wisest of men into fools,  
And makes even the peacock stop and stare.

All eyes behold her entering a room,  
Ears hear the sound of her angelic voice;  
Noses search for a trace of her perfume,  
And finding these gives reason to rejoice.

Loyal and humble, intelligent too,  
She never fails to leave others impressed.  
Her statements are always nothing but true.  
In personality, she is the best.

She stood there before me, biting her lip,  
Then turned to face me and blew me a kiss.  
And instantly, my insides did a flip.  
I had never felt anything like this.

All of a sudden, I woke with a start.  
She disappeared, and had taken my heart.

*Nitin Srinivasan, '10*



Acadia National Park

*Sean Pajak, '10*

### The Disturbing Bop-It

The day I became a man happened a long time ago, when I was about eight years old. I was playing a game known as Bop-It, which I played for an hour without disruption until something happened that I will never forget.

The Bop-It emitted a sound like “Schhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!!” The only comparable sound I can think of is the noise made by an out-of-service television station except this was much scarier to my eight-year-old self. I was frightened and did not know what to do. I ran screaming and pleading for my mother’s love and attention. My mother consoled me; she said I was paranoid. I knew I was not paranoid, however, because twenty minutes later the Bop-It made the horrid sound again. I was terrified once more, but this time I was determined to protect myself.

I ran outside with Bop-It in hand and screamed wildly, ready to wage a battle with this terrifying toy. I smashed the Bop-It into pieces with a sledgehammer. I felt confident that the nightmare was finally over. I went inside to celebrate my triumph with a victory soda but this battle was far from finished.

Two hours later, the smashed Bop-It emitted that terrifying sound again. I knew that this would be my final struggle to find out if I could overcome my fear and finish off this foe. I threw the Bop-It into my pool and watched it short circuit; it was dead. I was ecstatic that I had won and my day returned to a typical one. Anxiety no longer lived within me; my nightmare was over.

The great nemesis known as the Disturbing Bop-It had fallen and I stood as the lone victor. The Bop-It was beaten forever. Once this battle concluded, I ventured into my house, turned on the television, put my feet up onto the ottoman,

and relaxed for the rest of the day. My eight-year-old brain believed that I had accomplished a feat that was incomparable to that of anyone else my age. I proudly thought that what I had done was heroic and incredible. In the matter of a few hours, I went from an eight-year-old boy to an eight year old man.

*Paul St. Marie ‘10*



Now Look What You’ve Done!

*Richard Walsh, ‘11*



## The Benefit of Sports

Over the last decade, Americans have endured harsh economic and destructive periods. In times like these, members of the community can unite and escape from these events through the local sports teams. Through the success of a team, a person's mind can be relieved of the stresses of life, even if it is only for a few hours every week. It is inspiring to see a community band together and support a common cause in the face of a struggle. A clear example of this was demonstrated by the New Orleans Saints, a team that truly took their city on their shoulders.

The city of New Orleans was in disarray following the devastating Hurricane Katrina. To make matters worse, the hometown Saints were coming off a futile season. The following year, however, the Saints performed a miraculous turnaround to win the Division. The Saints could have never anticipated the effect their turnaround would have on the struggling city. Their season was highlighted by the nationally televised Monday Night game. Emotion in the stadium was at an all time high as the fans famous for wearing bags on their heads were now united and could finally experience the thrill of a strong local team. This game sent a message to the entire country, that the people, like the Saints, would rebound and overcome tragedy.

The Saints continued to be contenders year in and year out while working in the community to help rebuild the hurricane damage. The citizens of New Orleans continued to find release in the Saints but, deep down, the whole city desperately wanted that elusive championship. This year, the Saints entered the season stronger than ever. After finishing with the best record in the conference, they were able to reach a previously unattainable plateau, the Super Bowl. Despite being considered a huge underdog, the city of New Orleans rallied together in support of their team. In a thrilling upset, the Saints defeated their rivals in a typically New Orleans way - by rebounding from a struggle. The Saints were able to achieve victory after being down early, a theme synonymous

with the resilient citizens of New Orleans.

The emotional story of the New Orleans Saints going from zeros to heroes in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina is just one of the many examples of a community finding belief and release in a local sports team. It provides people with the spirit of hope that is necessary to rebound from tragedy. Although these Saints inspired the community and helped rebuild the city, it is not a stretch to say that the team would never have achieved such great success without the support, loyalty, and resiliency of their fans.

*Quinn McCarthy, '10*



Taking Off

*Sean Pajak, '10*

## The Sunday Soldier

Running, breathing heavily, sweating, and running some more, bullets whizzing, hissing snapping, and cracking yet I kept running. Why did I keep running? I lost my men, my friends, my brothers. I am alone now in this June heat, by myself in a country I do not know, with men in it that do not want to know me. All they want is me and the rest of us dead. I'm afraid so I hid in the dark barn that heart-hurting Saturday night, praying for Sunday morning.

A crunch sounded through the room and I flashed out of my dreams. I rolled out of the damp hay, grabbed my rifle, and pointed it toward the darkness of the barn. My heart pounded quickly and hard with terror when the crunch sounded out again. I looked toward where its source was and realized that a swallow had landed in the barn. I let out a sigh of relief and looked up at the swallow. It looked down at me curiously then looked out the window and flew away. I, too, looked out the window and realized it was morning. I smiled, realizing my prayers had come true; morning had come quickly for me and the horrible night was over. I picked up my rifle slowly and opened the door to the outside. I walked down the dirt path with caution, hoping no Germans would see me.

When I reached a small, abandoned town, I saw a church in the middle. I walked up to it and opened the door. Two candles burned on the altar with the crucifix in the middle. From this sight, I felt like God had put his hand on my shoulder and said everything was going to be OK. I smiled and wiped the tear from my eye. All the horrible images of my men being mowed apart on those beaches and all the screaming and shooting went away. I looked to the right of the altar and noticed a man in the first pew praying in a quiet voice. I did not want to disturb him so I knelt down two pews behind him. We both prayed silently, giving God our hour for the week. I felt so relaxed, so comforted, and warm.

We sat in peace and when the bells in the distance sounded 12 o'clock, the man in front of me got up genuflected, and turned

around. I was in shock as he looked at me. He had blond hair, a crisp, black jacket, and that distinct red band around his upper bicep. The Nazi and I stared at each other for a good two minutes and didn't say a word. He looked at my three strips and my gun then glanced at my eyes and stared. He then looked down at his watch and back at me. He nodded to me and gave me a small smile then proceeded out the door. I looked at the cross and was still in shock that I had just seen a German sergeant in a church so close to me. Sitting there, I wondered what kept me from just picking up my rifle and killing him. Was it my heart, my soul, my God? I genuflected and left the church quietly.

I looked for my men the rest of the day and finally, at about five-forty, I found them hiding in a large bush outside a town. The next day, we continued to fight several skirmishes against the German soldiers. I looked for that German sergeant and never found him. To this day, I think about him and wonder if I ever killed that man, that sergeant, that Sunday soldier.

*Francis Shammo, '12*



For Whom Do These  
Bells Toll?

*Ms. Jeannemarie McNamara*



## The Sun Will Rise

The war, the people,  
All are gone but me.  
I hear on the wind,  
“A new day will come,”  
But the sun never rises.  
  
The people I loved,  
All gone and left me.  
The wind blows on,  
“Light will shine again,”  
But the tunnel never ends.  
  
Friends who stood by me  
Now left me for others.  
The moon cries out,  
“I will leave, the sun shall come,”  
But the night stays forever.  
  
All who I held dear,  
Gone without a trace.  
A voice filled with love calls out,  
“Listen to me, and the light shall come,”  
And the horizon gleamed with a great flash,  
And the sun rose again.

*Andrew Cinko, '11*

## A Tiny Test

Congratulations! You score 100!  
Oh, I'm sorry. Are you listening to music while reading this?  
You score 95!  
Oops! You say you're watching TV at the same time?  
You score 90!  
Excuse me! You're reading this while on your computer?  
You score 85.  
Amazing! You're reading this while simultaneously texting?  
You score 80.  
I see! You're doing your homework at the same time?  
You get a 75.  
Oh my goodness! You're on the phone, too?  
You get a 70.  
Wow! You mean you're tweeting also?  
65!  
What do you understand about what you read here?  
What does that matter? I passed, didn't I?

Yours truly,  
The Dinosaur

*Mr. Anthony Mangan*



Aiden from California

*William Toole, '10*

### The Vanilla Pop-Tart: A Story of My Life

Simply put, the Vanilla Pop-Tart is God's gift to toaster pastries. Coated with vanilla frosting and filled with vanilla cream, it was the staple of my childhood diet, and I could not have been happier. Almost every day for 14 years, whether for breakfast, lunch, dinner, or just a snack, I had the supreme pleasure of indulging in its deliciousness. The Vanilla Pop-Tart was ingrained in my everyday life, almost without my knowledge.

I barely remember my first experience with the Vanilla Pop-Tart, but it made an immediate impact on my taste buds. Nana would make weekly runs to ShopRite to satisfy my growing appetite and increasing desire for my new dietary staple. Three days a week for six years – from ages 4 to 9 – I would devour my beloved toaster pastries while playing my uncle's Super Nintendo, waiting until my mother finished teaching her classes and came to pick me up. When my mother finally persuaded me to abandon the adventures of whatever new game my aunt and uncle bought, we all shared a meal (which I was never hungry for). My only concern was whether my grandmother bought the good Italian bread. My life was carefree, filled with video games, hide-and-seek, and of course, the Vanilla Pop-Tart.

As I grew older, the Vanilla Pop-Tart drifted away. Since few people shared my passion, more and more stores began to abandon them. The once routine local trips made by Nana, Aunt Diane, and Uncle Bill became excursions to Pennsylvania. They would drive the hour or so to Reading to buy the Vanilla Pop-Tarts for my sister, with whom I shared the secret, and me. Since we lived in New Jersey, they would often surprise us with two or three boxes whenever they visited, whether just to say hello or to baby sit. With two people now eating them, the Pop-Tarts were usually gone within 72 hours.

About three years ago, the Redner's Supermarket in Reading ceased stocking Vanilla Pop-Tarts. My grandmother, aunt, and uncle traveled even further to obtain them, all the way to Delaware. Each time they journeyed to Delaware to enjoy the tax-free shopping, my sister and I could count on a new stash to devour. Still, the distance between our beloved toaster pastries and us presented a new issue: we had to learn to cope without Vanilla

Pop-Tarts. Though I would never have admitted it at the time, opening the pantry to find it Pop-Tart free helped me to appreciate the Vanilla Pop-Tart.

During the summer, Kellogg's discontinued the Vanilla Pop-Tart. I was shocked. Two boxes of Pop-Tarts remained in my pantry. They were the last two boxes I would ever see. My sister and I decided that we would attempt to make them last for as long as possible. Unfortunately, "as long as possible" only turned out to be a month.

I still have the last empty Vanilla Pop-Tart box. It is sitting prominently on my dresser, where I can see it every day. Every time I look at it, I am reminded of not only the Vanilla Pop-Tart, but also of all the memories I connect with them: of the lazy days of Super Nintendo with my aunt and uncle, of the surprise visits my grandmother made and still makes, of the late night studying fueled by the vanilla crème goodness during freshman and sophomore year, and most of all, of my childhood. Time only moves in one direction; I can only revisit my past through my memories. Time has moved on, and so has the Vanilla Pop-Tart, but I will always cherish the memories.

*Nicholas Bevilacqua, '10*



All Curves

*Matthew Scimeca, '10*

## Good vs. Good?

The theme of Good versus Evil is fairly common in our culture. It varies from the wars we wage to the stories we read; however, a true good versus evil scenario is really nonexistent. The reality is that we will never have a side that believes they are fighting for evil. A true match between good versus evil is never found and only occurs in the plane of imagination.

A conflict between good and evil can be found in today's comic books and movies. Often we pit superheroes against a nemesis that seeks to destroy the planet for evil intentions. The truth is, this fictional scenario is the only time we see good versus evil in its pure form; however, we often justify our desires and petty arguments based on this scenario. We have waged wars based on the assumption that we are good and our enemy is evil. Realistically, however, once we put ourselves in the shoes of our enemy, we realize the flaw in this assumption. People in real life do not consider themselves as the "evil side." When we use this premise as our reason, our justification, for assuming that we are right, we can see that our logic is flawed. When we act upon this assumption, we act irrationally so we must reassess our thinking and contemplate a new perspective.

Good versus Evil is a phrase that is nowadays exploited and overused. It is thrown around all the time, becoming the "go-to" answer to justify getting what we want simply because we label our actions as "good." This phrase, however, cannot be our sole reason because it simply is not true. An assembly of human beings would never consider themselves evil. We act for what we accept as morally correct. History has reflected this many times, such as in the Crusades or in current-day event like the wars in the Middle East. This terminology has been the root cause of many erroneously waged wars.

People would never cause the intentional harm of someone without, at least, the outcome being beneficial from their perspective. The next time we hear, speak, or see Good versus Evil, we must examine it more closely, for the benefit of all mankind.

*Amish Patel, '11*



Weaver

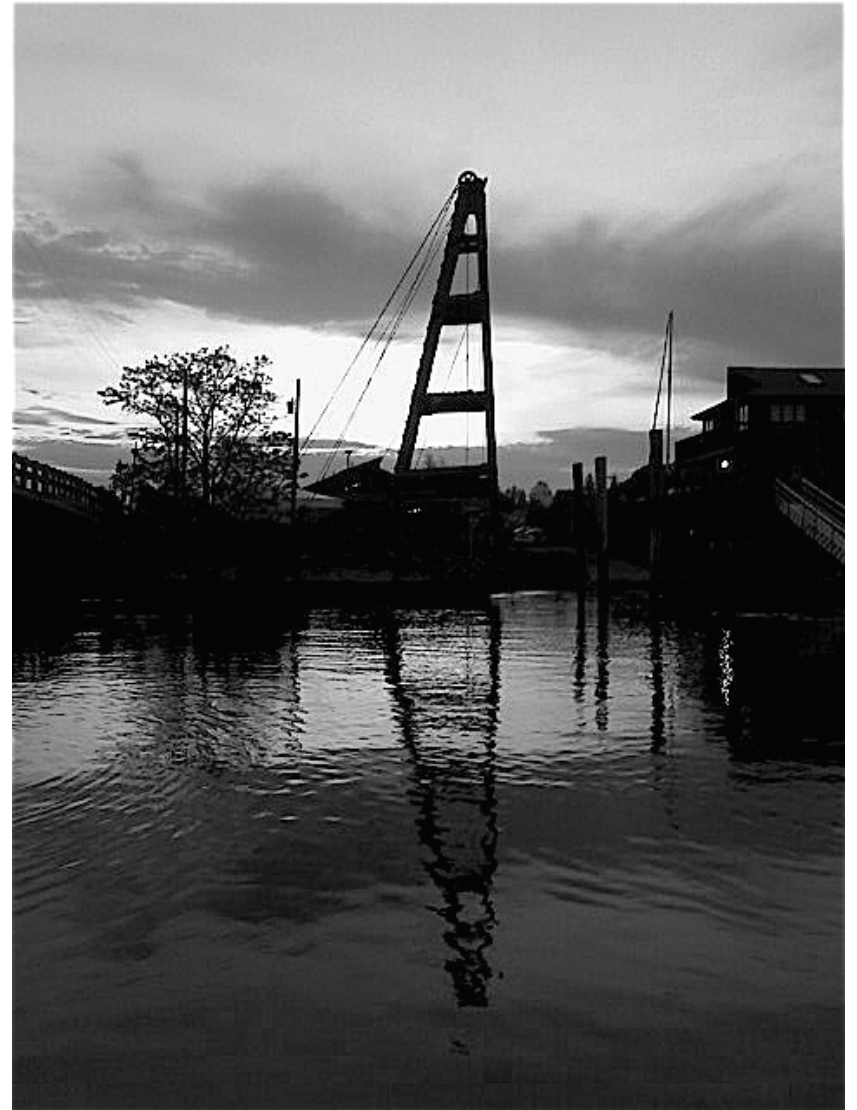
*Alexander Kruper, 10*



### Standing There

Lying there while the Earth dies around them;  
    Standing there helpless.  
Waiting for someone or something to speak up;  
    Standing there friendless.  
Giving all the Earth has got till nothing is left;  
    Standing there selfless.  
Mother Nature slowly crumbling to almost nothing;  
    Standing there motionless.  
Praying while their future is predicted;  
    Standing there fearless.  
The earth choking on everything they do;  
    Standing there hopeless.  
Running around not knowing what they need to do;  
    Standing there brainless.  
Who would do such a thing?  
    The Human Race.

*Justin Rapolas, '13*



Industrial Sunset

*Ralph Paone, '10*

### A Teacher's Journey

I want for nothing yet I am never satiated;  
I ask very little still there are so many questions;  
I expect much yet am often disappointed.  
I introduce new thoughts yet they are not well received;  
I look deeply into the eyes of those before me, which are  
Said to be the windows to one's soul and yet they are empty.  
Words are studied, sentences made, and rules examined  
Yet many lives often go unexamined; therefore, are they truly  
Worth living, as the ancients warned?  
My goal is to set the mind ablaze, to foster an enthusiasm,  
To bring light to a darkened place, to illuminate what had been  
Formerly diminished. Never should one cease to strive, or seek  
As Ulysses would tell us.  
My voice is strong, intense, and willing to meet any struggle  
That sits before it, yet often is that voice unheard or muted.  
Why does it not resonate as intended in the minds of those who hear?  
Are pages read to invoke thoughts of antiquity or can they reflect  
The hearts and minds that speak of generations to come?  
And just how often have we been true to ourselves?  
This is a noble question, yet a declaration that Polonius would  
Use to remind young Laertes.  
Challenges stand before us not unlike those of Gawain and his  
Vainglorious quest, yet are those before us prepared for similar  
Journeys into the unknown?  
We share a world and experience the same and yet there are  
So many differences...  
We are one world, we do bleed together, and laugh when tickled as  
That proud Merchant once noted.  
There is a "potency to our existence" and we need not fall into the  
"Valley of stars" as Eliot predicted.  
If we but open our eyes and choose not to "mock the time with  
Fairest show" as tragic Macbeth would plan, could we not achieve  
All that may become us?

Let us realize the world is our classroom and from it grows a life,  
One of resplendent color and resiliency.  
This is your time, your moment, your education.  
Bear welcome to all those who stand before you and drink deeply  
From their fountains.

*Mr. Craig R. Martin*



The Godfather

*David Mortellilo, '11*



## Christmas Morning

I awoke in the morning, after a long night's sleep  
And thought of the memories that were mine to keep.  
I remembered the tree with its lights and its scent.  
I smiled at the memories, realizing what they meant.  
We rushed down the stairs to see what Santa left,  
It was true he had come for there lay our gifts.  
Our stockings were filled with something for all,  
But this seemed not to matter as our tree stood so tall;  
The time that was taken to carefully wrap  
Was easily forgotten as we piled gifts in our laps.  
Our eyes were bright and the smiles on our faces  
Would say that with others we would never change  
places.  
We laughed with excitement as each wrapping was torn.  
Looking back it seemed not to matter, for on this day He  
had been born.  
As we grew older and the traditions were kept,  
I would begin to realize what had happened just before I  
had slept.  
What mattered most was peace for mankind and the joy of  
living,  
Not what we received, but the importance of giving.  
We often forgot the real gifts that we had,  
That could last all year leaving no time to be sad.  
We can't always be children and must grow through the  
years,  
Instead we must cherish one another and dismiss any  
fears.  
Perhaps snow will fall and the lights will seem brighter.  
In our hearts we will sing as the land becomes whiter.

Yes, I remember Christmas when I was a child,  
With "peace on earth, and mercy mild,"  
It could last forever; it was how it must start,  
If all would remember to just do their part.  
You see, Christmas isn't just one day or time of the year;  
Instead, it lasts a lifetime, if loved ones are near.  
It's those vivid memories that leave me soaring,  
Whenever I think of that Christmas morning.

*Mr. Craig R. Martin  
December 25, 2009*



Frozen in Time

*Jonathan Vargas, '11*

## Ghost

As the lively family that occupies this dreary house  
spends its precious time  
eating, talking, living life together,  
I yearn for a spirited companion.  
Though those living on their side cannot see me,  
they recognize my presence.  
How I long for them to know,  
how I long to join in their daily communal meal!

This ancient mansion has been my prison  
And its inhabitants the sentinels that keep me isolated.

The blinds clash together, screeching;  
the panes clash violently  
when my shadow passes by the house's windows,  
yet there is no wind.

The rooms and stairways creak  
as I glide through these detested halls.  
The August sunlight is strong,  
yet thermometer needles plunge when I linger.

The ignorant people that live in this gaudy house do not  
understand;  
my desperate bellows are cries for  
help!  
They call it haunting.

*Christian Lewis, '10*



Open House

*Matthew Scimeca, '10*

## Too Late To Wonder

**Andante con espressione** (Piano Solo) Sal Ascolese

Copyright © 2010

## Omen

All you see is darkness, abysmal darkness. It envelops you and you feel as though you are choking. It continues to increase its pressure on your back and neck. It becomes increasingly harder to squeeze in even a sliver of air. The life that was once with you begins to slowly fade from you. The darkness becomes even more enveloping and suddenly a bright light is visible, followed by the sounds of water slowly dripping to what seems to be metal flooring. You slowly regain consciousness and start to perceive things in a very blurry way. You begin to see clearly and shock slowly sets in as you process your surroundings. Water is streaming through cracked glass while blood is mixing with the water. A seatbelt restrains you from moving, and water flooding your mouth stops you from speaking. It finally sets in what is occurring to you. You immediately flail helplessly, knowing you have little time left before you run out of oxygen. You become disoriented. In a few seconds, you center yourself, remove your seatbelt, and notice the thumping of your heart. Knowing that any beat could be your last, you work desperately to find an exit. To your dismay, nothing at first glance is available to crack the windows. Upon further inspection, you find a small wrench underneath the seat, probably from a tool kit in the car. You throw your remaining strength against the window with the small tool with hopes that it might shatter and provide an escape. After several tries and many heartbeats, the glass does not break. Your eyes begin bleeding and everything is viewed with a red tint. Your brain feels as though it is swelling, screaming to escape from your skull. As a last ditch effort, you channel the small remnants of power left and kick the window. In a stroke of great luck it cracks open, and you

quickly squeeze yourself out through the broken glass. Glass fragments pierce your stomach, but the adrenaline prevents you from feeling what would be agonizing pain. You make quick, large, strokes to reach the surface before you run out of air. As your fingertips are just about to touch the surface of the water, you wake up screaming in your bed.

*Erick Delgado, '11*



That Girl

*David Mortellilo, '11*

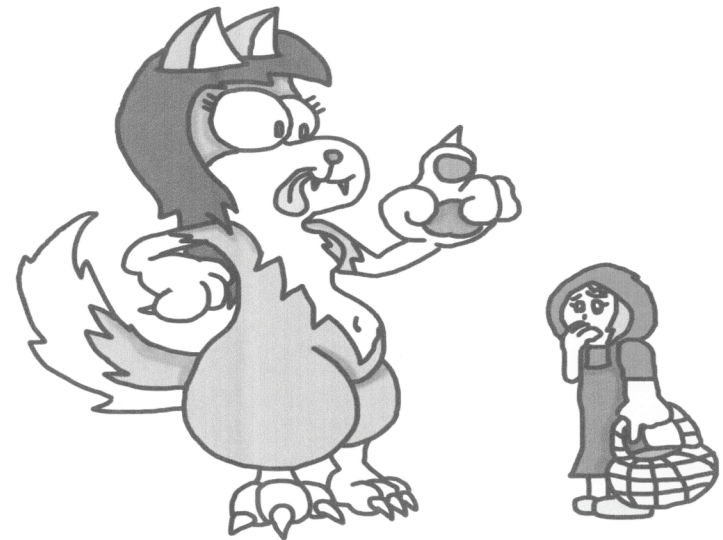
### It's Not Just a Cliché

I really don't want to be doing this right now.  
A weekend without homework would be great!  
But, hey, you can't always get what you want.  
I do have some time on my hands, so I might as well  
Hunker down and put the pedal to the metal.  
As soon as I'm through I can do what I want  
But I mustn't rush since haste makes waste.  
And hosing up this assignment just wouldn't fly.  
I don't want to be caught with egg on my face.  
My parents would hit the roof  
And I would be defenseless like a deer in the headlights.  
My parents are fair but they know that if they  
Give me an inch I will take a mile.  
This school is very competitive and it is very important  
To keep up with the Joneses.  
I must move on full speed ahead, with my shoulder to the wheel,  
Leaving no stone unturned as I draft the perfect assignment.

Now for the topic: this is the hardest part.  
I may have to ponder this for a long time.  
I won't sugar-coat this: I may be here until the cows come home.  
It must be picture-perfect. My teacher will certainly  
Put it under a microscope, examine it with a fine toothed comb  
Lock, stock, and barrel and take no prisoners if disappointed.  
I really want to knock one out of the park and hope she will like it.  
She wasn't born yesterday and will certainly see the effort.  
This is the beginning of the quarter so I want to get off on the right foot  
And come out firing on all cylinders.  
I am not looking to fight an uphill battle or to swim against the tide.  
Last quarter, I earned an A by the skin of my teeth so this quarter  
I will turn over a new leaf, work my fingers to the bone,  
Dotting all my I's and crossing all my T's.  
I do not want this quarter to be a nail biter.  
Just because this is senior year does not mean that I am out of the woods.

Anyway, I think I am beating a dead horse.  
I must get to the point. Crying over spilled milk is not helpful.  
I wish I could put this poem on the back burner, but I just want to be done.  
This assignment should be right up my alley and I should be able to  
Complete this with one arm tied behind my back. But I feel like  
A fish out of water and my brain is fried. I want this to be exceptional  
And different instead of the same old song and dance.  
Wow! I'm getting down to the bottom of the page before I even started!  
I guess time flies when you're having fun.  
But all's well that ends well.  
I hope I'm not jumping the gun or seeing the glass half full,  
But people will fall head over heels for this assignment.  
That you can take to the bank.

*Matthew Galinsky, '10*



Where Did You Say Your Grandmother Lives?

*Richard Walsh, '11*



## Failure

Shiny white walls were all around. Fluorescent lights flickered above and ice-cold floors chilled bare feet below. Voices over the intercom constantly foreboded something terrible. Someone screamed down the hall, adding to the chaos and confusion.

As the young man stepped into the waiting room, he noticed children crying in pain. A few coughed chronically and a small boy with a twisted finger was lead into the operating room. The young man was nervous, so he sat down in a small, wooden chair in an attempt to calm himself. He felt helpless to the events around him. All he could do was stare aimlessly at the poorly tiled floor beneath his jittering legs.

A young nurse walked into the room and told him to follow her. He nearly tripped when he stood up because of his anxiety. He was led into a large, chilly room where he noticed countless gadgets and gismos. His heart pounded wildly as he noticed large needles placed beside the bed and he worried about what they were for. Beads of sweat slid down his body. He had no way of escaping what was about to happen.

A man wearing a white lab coat ambled in with a smile and introduced himself. He described the procedure with detailed accuracy, which terrified the young man even more. The doctor then asked him to lie down and said it would all be over soon. The doctor opened a drawer and pulled out some thin tubes, then assembled the pieces and finished by adding a needle to the top. The young man began shaking and the doctor again gave a cynical smile, repeating the word, "Relax."

The young man cringed as he watched the needle penetrate the skin of his arm. He quickly felt a sharp pain and

pinched his eyes shut. The doctor drove another needle into his leg and almost seemed to grin as the young man writhed in pain.

Soon, the pain was gone. The young man's body was completely numb, but vulnerable to the doctor, who placed a mask over his face. The doctor told him to count down from one hundred; he made it to ninety-eight before blacking out.

Hours later he woke up, wrapped in three thick blankets in a room with four other patients. He tried to stand up but was still too weak from the operation. He placed his head on the fluffy pillow and slowly shut his eyes. He was glad the surgery was finished.

He heard footsteps coming towards the room and spotted the same doctor that had operated on him. The doctor showed no expression as he sat down next to the young man's bed. Then he blurted out the words the young man feared most, "I'm sorry, but the surgery was a failure. We will have to do it again sometime in the near future." The young man was speechless. He rested his head against the pillow and remembered what he had already experienced. His body would heal soon, only to be operated on again within a few months.

*Andrew Presnal, '10*



## Fireman in the Field

Some say it's just a job, others say it's a skill, but most people call them heroes. What is a Fireman? People look at them as men who fight fires, and wear big yellow and black suits with funny looking hats. Do we simply look at them as men who drive the trucks in parades? Some people do not see and respect firemen until they actually need them. Most people take them for granted, as mom always said.

The night was a typical winter night. The date was December 10, 1988 and the weather was cold. Dad and mom were upstairs while Jane and I were downstairs. Jane was about 5 and I was 9 years old. While we were watching TV, I heard thumping on the stairs indicating that dad was coming down in a rush; he had a call. He didn't tell Jane what was going on, but he told me that a large fire had started in an apartment building on Walnut Street on the north end of town. He told me that they needed all the firemen to report to duty. Smiling at me, he said, "I'll wake you up in the morning, buddy, and I'll take you to school in the fire truck; I promise." He told the family he loved us all and ran out. I looked out and saw him and the others pull away in a rush as the sirens blared.

I never have forgotten that night; I talk to my dad about it all the time, telling him how he looked so happy when he pulled away on that truck. His smile was so big, he looked as if he could do anything. Dad was a hero that night because he went into the fire to get the last person out. Anna was her name, a blonde girl with blue eyes and a soft voice. She was trapped on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor of the building threatened to collapse, but dad went up there and rescued her. He received an honorary medal for his brave actions. The fire engines drove down the street for daddy while he got to ride on its back. They said thank you for what he had done, and saluted him.

It is now 2009. I'm thirty years old and I visit my dad every weekend, usually after church. I talk to him about the week and how that night was still a night I will never forget. After talking to him, I place my flowers under his helmet, kiss his stone, say goodbye, and leave my dad, my friend, my fireman in the field.

*Francis Shammo, '12*



Comfort  
*Mr. John A. Anderson, '70*

Calamus Gladio Fortior  
(The Pen is Mightier Than the Sword)

Three years experienced, the brave soldiers  
Met on windy plains, blue clouds above.  
Donned in green and brown and tan,  
They prepared for the battles yet to come.  
They stretched. They joked. They sharpened their weapons.

They assembled and marched on calmly,  
Their soft shoes crunching the tall grasses  
Beneath them. Their goals were different, yet  
Were similar in their attainment.  
They worried. They readied their weapons.

Right over the grassy hill stood a line.  
Each of the soldiers saw different faces  
As they looked upon those countenances,  
Though the seventh's was identical.  
They wondered. They feared. They squeezed their weapons.

The first six were easily dispatched,  
Requiring little effort and work.  
After, only one stood in the way  
Of their goals that lie beyond the red hill.  
They cheered. They reared back. They threw their weapons.

The seventh was like a demon, red eyes,  
Sharp snout, a thin tail wrapped around its waist.  
It deftly wielded a strong, blood red sword.  
The sword left a stream of red in its wake.  
They cringed. They tried to run. But their weapons...

The sword cut through their shields and weapons like paper.  
Everywhere it cut, red exploded out.

The demon laughed and cackled as it fought,  
Killing the men like a deadly virus.  
They fought. They tried. But their weapons were weak.

Their goals, their futures, their destinations  
Were lost to the demon of the red sword.  
The demon, however, did not work fast.  
It took about a year to defeat them,  
And their weapons were merely thoughts and paper.

*Aaron Knowlson, '10*



Ever Vigilant  
*Ms. Jeannemarie McNamara*

## Under the Feet of Progress

A proud tree standing  
The wooden floorboards were once  
In a distant land  
Descendent of lineage  
Hidden under old carpet.

*David Stess, '10*



Towering Up  
*Patrick Hogan, '10*

## A Profound Impact

He has been a prominent figure in my life since the day I was born. He went to every one of my baseball games for eleven years and never missed an opportunity to coach from the bleachers or yell at the umpires. In his mid 70s, he was still able to outplay my brother and me in everything from hopscotch to horseshoes. There is only one person who could truly fit this description: my grandfather.

How could someone with such childish characteristics be a shining example for me? In addition to all the whimsical and embarrassing things my grandpa has done, he is still my primary role model. My grandfather washes dishes after Christmas dinner when everyone else opens presents, voluntarily served in World War II, and still works at the youthful age of 83. Even though I cannot duplicate these charitable deeds, I still aspire to follow in my grandfather's footsteps and volunteer my time to the community.

One occasion that especially sticks out in my mind is the time my grandfather shoveled my family's enormous driveway without being asked. My family returned from an extended vacation the following day, obviously perplexed by the plethora of snow that mysteriously surrounded the unblemished driveway. Not until New Year's Eve, approximately three weeks later, did we confront my grandpa about the driveway. Pushing 80, my grandfather labored through this feat without expecting the slightest bit of gratitude. He simply wanted to assist us when we needed help.

Although his message is often diluted in one of his countless war stories, his main message always resonates in my head. "Stay in school," my grandpa tells me practically every time we talk. As someone who left school after 8<sup>th</sup> grade, he knows just how difficult it is to succeed without a college degree or even a high school diploma. It's comforting to know that he always has my best interest in mind. The truth is, my grandfather has a profound impact on my life, more than I could ever imagine.

*Paul Kibala, '10*



## My Inspiration

Hidden among the arboreal beauty of the Appalachian region of West Virginia lies the isolated Camp Galilee. The camp is concealed among the trees and a scenic lake is located on the grounds. The mainly wooden living conditions were very alien to me when I first arrived at my temporary home. Camp Galilee is the home to anyone committed to the cause of helping others in an area stricken by poverty. When the region's coalmines were closed, the main sources of finance and income were destroyed. The miner population, which made up a significant portion of the area's citizens, was now trapped in a jobless economy and quickly became impoverished. Several community service-based groups regularly make trips to Appalachia to try and help the financially suffering people with much needed home maintenance and supplies. My journey to the region would change my life forever.

The environment quickly changed once the van carrying my team and me exited the familiar New Jersey landscape and entered West Virginia. There were woods everywhere. Although the people in Appalachia often lived in small shacks with limited living conditions, their surroundings were often breathtaking. Our first destination was Camp Galilee. After unloading our supplies and settling into the camp, we loaded the Penske truck and headed to the home site we would be working on. I had no idea what inspiration awaited me. My team began our journey to the destination, traveling on unpaved roads that put our loaded minivan to work. Soon we arrived in an open field full of trailers resembling what could be described as a forest slum. The trailer homes were scattered across the dirt and grass field. The homes and cars dispersed around the lot were deteriorating, some clearly out of use for years. I soon learned of the individual I would be helping, whose name was Ernie. He was a war veteran with two bad knees. His deck was so worn that he could not exit

his own home safely because the wood was rotting, the stairs were wobbly, and the support was about to give way. The adults of my group knew it was going to be a long project.

Beginning with demolition, we cleared the space where the old deck used to be and then began the building process. The days were long and the work was hard. I was told not to ask for anything from the person I would be in contact with because their supply of necessities was very limited; however, on one hot day, Ernie brought the entire team a giant bucket of water. This simple gesture was not so simplistic at all. Ernie took away from his meager water supply so that our day could be made a little easier. I was amazed by his display.

At the end of the seven-day process, my team had built a new, magnificent deck, which almost matched the beauty of the region. During the building process, I bonded with Ernie. He told me stories of his life, and showed me a miniature house he had built while in prison. I felt a real connection with a person I had just met days before. He could look at his new deck and remember me, the former stranger, who cared about him. The hard week was well worth it after seeing Ernie's big smile, two front teeth missing and all, after setting eyes upon his newly completed deck and stairs. Seeing his joy, his absolute happiness with what I had created, affected me in the deepest way. I had never felt so accomplished in my entire life. I felt almost ashamed that I had once complained about the state of things at my own home. This man was so happy living in such a ramshackle trailer; I couldn't help but feel selfish being upset with my own home.

We were driving on that last day back to Camp Galilee when I saw Ernie waving on his deck through the back of the minivan's window with a big smile that seemed to scream "thank you." I will never forget Appalachia.

*Matthew Modica, '10*

## For Better or *Wurst*

Since I had no idea what course of studies I ultimately wanted to pursue, I was fortunate that my high school provided me with the opportunity to take all sorts of different classes. I decided to take things slowly, keep an open mind, and see what academic discipline “fit” me. I then stumbled upon what would develop into my true intellectual passion: the German language.

German was unlike any class I had ever taken. It was difficult yet fascinating. The grammatical constructs were challenging. Oddly enough, I found that the language came naturally to me. By the end of the first week, I could introduce myself and make light conversation. I found myself looking up words and grammar rules of my own volition. As weeks and months went by, I realized another great attraction that studying German had for me: the language is always changing. I like being exposed to new material and information. In German class, practice came naturally through ordinary conversation as we learned new words, phrases, and idioms.

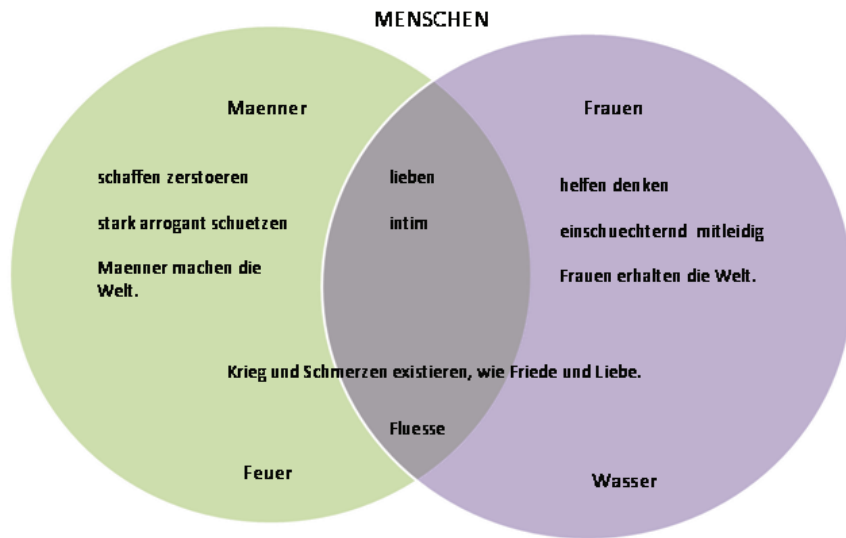
Upon reflection, I think that I enjoy German so much because it has helped me uncover what truly entices me. Paradoxically, the German tongue combines structure and creativity. The actual grammar and sentence structure is quite rigid, but the freedom to string nouns together to create incredibly complex ideas seems ingenious to me. I find myself happily creating new words that later surface in my classmates’ vernacular. Having grown up unable to draw or paint (I am unbelievably untalented with any sort of drawing utensil), German has provided me an opportunity to channel my inner creativity while not sacrificing structure. The result is exciting and energizing. More importantly, it has shown

me that creativity does not always culminate in a work of art or a performance; it can manifest itself in the beauty and precision of basic units of communication.

Although I have spent a great deal of time doing formal writing both inside of school and out, knowing that every article I have written has been a creative exercise, to see the creativity involved in the construction of a single word in German gives me an even greater thrill. And while I still have not plotted out in detail my future plans, I am a lot closer than I was. I know that I will search for the creativity within defined boundaries in each academic field that I study. And, almost certainly, I will continue honing my German skills, leaving behind a legacy of neologisms along the way.

Just as my love of German struck me by surprise, I have a feeling that I will discover another field about which I am passionate in college, but, if all else fails, I can be sure that I will be the most erudite *Wurst* flipper in all of Europe.

*Edward Zukowski, ‘10*



*Dominic Barszcz, '10*

### Mientras que Corra el Mar

En las horas de la noche empezó el buho a cantar  
Mientras las olas lo cubrian con su llanto furte  
Y la luz de la luna tocó en la orilla del mar  
Al cuerpo del hombre que por fin encontró la muerte

Se perdió en las aguas poco despues de embarcar  
En un viaje que empezó muy urgentemente  
En una lancha dejo la playa intentando escapar  
De una vida convertida al dolor y lo demente

El pueblo entero, sin Consuelo, se puso a llorar  
Al ver la vida, ya perdida en la gran corriente  
Ojala que a ninguno esto le vaya a pasar  
Por falta de pensar las cosas detenidamente.

*Richard Ortegon, '10*

### El Camino de los Halcones Verdes

Aunque a veces la vida puede parecer amarga y difícil de  
atravesar  
jamás debemos olvidarnos de nuestros orígenes, de nuestros  
sueños, y de nuestra fé  
porque sin estas necesidades podríamos perder nuestra identidad  
y nuestra integridad.  
Como alumnos de Saint Joseph High School es nuestro deber  
ser lo mejor que podemos ser para nuestras familias y nuestras  
comunidades  
y aunque a veces la vida puede ser difícil  
siempre debemos seguir por el camino de la verdad y de lo justo  
porque halcones somos  
y por siempre halcones seremos.

*Richard Ortegon, '10*



## Cold Stone

You are like a cold stone.  
You are a choice of death  
And you have killed me.

You are like a cold stone.  
You love to banter thee  
In your clean glass house.

You are like a cold stone.  
Better yet, you're a rock  
Hard, sharp with no emotions.

*Warren Jagger, '10*



Coastal Maine

*Sean Pajak, '10*

## Jab Jab Hook Uppercut

The brass bell rang as the young fighter met his opponent in the middle of the ring. He approached his target cautiously. Before he even recognized the situation, both of his hands were up. His jaw clenched tightly on his rubber mouthpiece. A few moments passed and then suddenly he felt a hard blow to his chin. His opponent struck first. It was time to show the crowd and prove to himself what kind of fighter inside could be unleashed. Jab. Jab. Hook. Uppercut. It was a beautiful combination. His opponent was stunned by the damage that was inflicted.

He moved in and out on his opponent, keeping the pace of the fight in his favor. Sweat from his brow ran down his face as he ducked and dodged his opponent's counterattacks. Watching such a young, disciplined fighter pick his target with precision and patience was a thing of beauty. Always fighting on the defensive, the young fighter was a counter puncher, waiting for his opponent to make the fatal mistake of leaving an opening big enough to end the fight right then and there. At that moment, his opponent threw a flurry of punches, none of which connected; however, a sensational opening presented itself to the young fighter. The opportunity to strike was there and he took it. He threw a left hook to the body followed by a right straight to the face. Staggering away, his opponent sensed the end was near.

The young fighter wanted to end the fight in the first round and show the crowd what he was made of. He taunted his opponent with body jives and danced around, imitating the great Muhammad Ali. Again the young fighter went inside and gave an uppercut to the jaw of his opponent. The crowd went wild and he loved every moment of it. The glory was his. Suddenly, the young fighter lost vision in his right eye as he was hit by a beautiful left hook. The young fighter wobbled away, hoping to get saved by the bell. He heard the decisive sound of the wood marker, denoting the ten second warning. Ten seconds was all he needed to survive and get back to his corner. Shocked by the turnaround, the crowd was stunned as his opponent launched a hurricane of punches – left straight, right hook to the body, left hook to the face, right upper cut. Paralyzed by the hits, the young fighter abruptly hit the canvas like a sack of potatoes. He was knocked out.

*Samuel Syjongtian, '10*

## A Humble Proposition to Save the Earth

I recall reading some time ago the postulate of a world-renowned sociologist, who's name escapes me at the moment, in which he said that every human being on Earth could be adequately housed in the state of Texas. The ecological benefits of such a reality are beyond question, and a singular community of souls would certainly eliminate the tensions and conflicts inherent in the present diaspora. Unfortunately, having been to Texas on occasions, none worthy of digression here, I feel compelled to point out the fatal flaw in this scheme: the good and decent people of that state will never countenance such a trespass.

Because I am a recent convert to the environmental movement, you can imagine my dismay at having had to abandon this idea and continue to participate in the muddled heresies of incrementalism. It is a lot to which I found myself neither suited nor inclined. So, after much research and reflection, I have devised an immediate and permanent solution to the impending environmental apocalypse.

Before I reveal the plan, prudence dictates that a brief review of the current state of environmental affairs be presented. Catastrophic global climate change is as immutable as the cause of it: man-made greenhouse gases. The worldwide community of scientists has long since vetted from the list of possible causes any other plausible conclusion. To be sure, there are a few straggling naysayers remaining, but their excommunication is as imminent as their theories are discounted.

It is the responsibility of every legitimate government to set in place policies that promote the advancement and well-being of its citizenry. Any proper thinking person will look upon the United States, Europe, and the other advanced societies as the model for basic modern amenities. Temperature regulated dwellings with indoor plumbing, abundant food, modern communication technologies, and an efficient transportation infrastructure are the simple aspirations of the billions upon billions living in the poor and developing countries of the world. China and India, long in the backwaters of poverty and concomitant industrial failure, have taken bold steps to raise their impoverished billions to our level. Africa and Latin America are on the brink of following suit. The Earth will not survive their journey.

The desires of humanity are as infinite as the natural resources of the Earth are finite. Even unrenowned sociologists will tell you that this is a recipe for war and environmental degradation. There are too many of the

poor to ever raise to the desired level without destroying the very planet upon which they live. The most severe environmental decay and violent human-on-human atrocities occur in the most destitute of places.

But we know this; it has always been thus. Haiti, the current preoccupation, is only one first-world earthquake or hurricane from becoming just another Somalianic trinket in the world's menagerie of bygone causes. Our delusions of poverty's demise are sporadic ailments cured by time and personal distractions.

What is to be done?

My proposal is not a change in policy but in its implementation. Our current poverty reduction strategy of indifference and neglect is not resulting in a diminishing number of poor. In fact, a truly objective observer, one shorn of prejudicial attachments to continuity, must admit that the opposite has resulted. Despite our withholding of food, medicine, and pesticides, the number of poor increases daily. To continue to pursue this failed course of action will be the ruination of the planet and the demise of humanity.

Standing as we do now, upon the precipice of environmental calamity, no choice is left to us as stewards of the Earth. We must kill all the poor and we must be swift about it. Think of the immediate environmental benefits of removing some four plus billion people. Deforestation ended; the defiling of the great water ways of the world with feces and fertilizers halted; violence and arms trafficking staunchened; the over-fishing of the seas terminated; the industrial juggernaut tamed, content to spew only as much filth as the Earth can absorb. With the misery of poverty eliminated, our fleeting bouts of guilt and melancholy will be forever banished. The balance between the needs of Nature and the needs of man will thus be restored.

The most cost-effective and environmentally sound way to carry out this solution is to shoot them. The use of more efficient means, such as nuclear or chemical weapons, would defeat our environmental purposes; biological means may escape our control. It is a convenient truth that shooting is easy and anyone can do it with a minimum of training. Bodies can be buried, or, if properly dismembered and ground into fine mulch, used to naturally fertilize farm land, thus reducing phosphorous runoff.

In closing, I would hope that you do not confuse my pragmatism for coldness. Some of the nicest people I've ever met were poor.

*Dr. Robert J. Longhi, '81*

## Running

I had to run more quickly. He was close,  
Just right behind me, getting closer by  
The second, but I could not turn back now.  
I pushed ahead, with objects whizzing by:  
Some trees, and bushes, flowers – images  
Of average forests. Pushing vines out of  
My way, I gazed up at the bright, full moon,  
Now white against the pitch black, starless night.  
Adrenaline continued driving me;  
I broke into a sweat but did not stop.

Then suddenly something made me slow:  
A high-pitched howl from some wolf faraway.  
Yet how it pierced me, echoed through my soul,  
And causing something I'd not felt before;  
Not fear, no, I was not afraid. Instead  
It gave me apprehension. How was I to know  
That I would flee from my pursuer? I  
Could only just pick up the pace and hope  
That somehow I'd be saved. I heard the howl  
Again. I almost stopped to turn around.

Instead, I looked for him, pursuing me,  
But neither was he visible nor heard,  
As if he'd simply vanished, into air.  
I slowed down in confusion. To my shock,  
I looked ahead and there he only was  
Ten feet in front of me. I gasped. He stepped  
A little closer and I screamed. Before  
I could go any further, I conceived  
That I'd been caught. It finally was done.  
My days of running now came to a close.

*Michael Thorsen, '12*



Brother George  
*Frank Angiola, '12*



## The Greatest Rival

Pausing for a moment, I take a step back to wipe the sweat from my brow. My eyes glide across the court to the other side. Once they fall upon him, my eyes quickly return to my feet again. I bounce the tennis ball once, twice, three times. The ball hits my foot and I chase after it, apologizing for what I see as my inadequacies. Maybe it's just nerves.

Why does this feel so familiar, like I've lived this moment so many times before with the same result? As I close my eyes, thoughts from the past cloud my head. With a flick of the wrist, the judges destroy my hopes as I feel my hard work end in defeat. I stare at the scores as if I am waiting for them to change but nothing happens. I watch as they place the gold medal on his neck, while the bronze on my own only seems to bring me down with its weight.

"Are you ready yet?" yells my opponent. His words pierce through my thoughts and my mind is back in the game. I throw the ball up towards the sky and with my whole body in sync, I unload a serve down the middle. It's an ace. I feel my adrenaline pumping as I win the next couple points. Suddenly, the thought of yesterday's soccer match enters my mind. As the ball leaves my teammate's foot I jump in the air, align my body, and pull my head back as I spot the goal in the corner of my eye. With a twist of my head, I send the ball towards the goal but I see it swerving wide. As I land, I see him there gently placing the ball in the back of the net.

Before I know it, the score is deuce. I miss-hit the ball and it lands on the top of the net, luckily bouncing over his side. One more point, I only need one more point. As I toss the ball in the air to serve, a crack of lightning disrupts our

play as I let the ball fall to the ground. The silence is broken as a gentle rain begins to fall and I know that the game is over. As I walk towards the net, the rain stops. My eyes move from the sky back down to the courts and I see the hand of my opponent reaching across the net. I move my hand to meet his as I hear the words: "Good match, Marty." As the words linger in my mind, I remember more than just defeats. I remember the pat on the back after the Taekwondo tournament, the high-five after the soccer goal. I saw my opponent in a different light that day. Whether in victory or defeat, he is always there motivating me to do better. From his composure to his sense of self-confidence, he is the person I have always tried to emulate, but who, at the same time, has helped me discover my individuality.

I wait for that time when we will meet again. I look forward to the memories that will form from our encounters. As I reflect on the experience, I remind myself: "Every encounter is a challenge. It's a challenge to grow, to learn, to live in the moment that teaches me so much about myself." I cherish every second with him because not only is he my greatest rival, but my greatest friend, and most importantly, the greatest brother.

*Martin Pico, '10*

### Phone Call to a College Friend

Hey, are you married,  
are you playing in a band?  
Tell me, are you doing well,  
are you still a partyin' man?

Me, no, I'm just hanging in,  
trying to survive.  
There's one thing college never taught us,  
it's how to keep our dreams alive.

We couldn't wait to graduate  
and we would always say:  
"As soon as we get out of this place,  
we'll really start to play."

Sorry to hear that your 9 to 5 has kept you from your goal.  
With a family to feed,  
it's what you need.  
You took on a brand new role.

Don't get me wrong, gigs come along.  
I play for kids at their Sweet 16.  
I never turned the page, 'cause when I was their age,  
I was playing this same old scene.

Some gigs I've had were worse than bad,  
some, I'd rather forget.  
I filled my book with lame jobs that I took,  
some that I really regret.

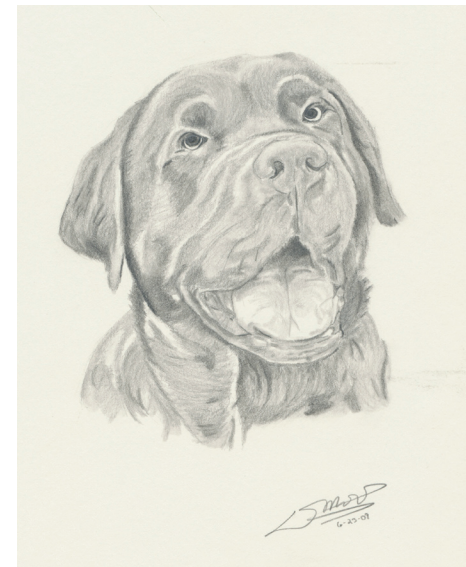
I do the lounge thing with a girl who can't sing,  
but yet, she thinks she's a star.  
The question I face as put my horn in my case,  
is when did my dream slip this far?

Remember how we'd stay up late  
and counted down 'til May?  
We'd be chattin' who was going to take Manhattan  
and who was going to take L.A.

We can lose our ambition; we can lose our minds,  
makes no difference in the end.  
Here's what I'll do, is write a blues for you,  
and do the same for me 'ol friend.

Hey, it's been nice talking to you,  
I think of those days a lot.  
I thought I'd phone, 'cause I thought I was alone,  
but now it seems, I'm not.

*Mr. Salvatore Ascolese*



Boy's Best Friend  
*David Mortellilo, '12*

## Figments in a Blank Room

It was a completely blank, white room with cinderblock walls no more than twenty feet long. The ceiling above was lined with dim, white lights, some of which occasionally flickered. Its occupants were prisoners that were sent to this solitary confinement room: a man named Mr. Howard and a man nicknamed "Figment." They had been here for about a month. The only voices that echoed in the room were those of the two prisoners. They desperately wanted to leave the silent, white room but they couldn't. They were trapped. They were all alone in this blank room until the day Mr. Howard discovered Figment's powers.

Mr. Howard had just woken up and he rubbed his eyes so he could see clearly. The room was silent, as usual. The lights randomly flickered, as usual, and he was unaware of what time it was, as usual. He heard Figment say, "I'm bored, Mr. Howard. Let's take a journey!"

Mr. Howard got up and laughed, saying, "What are you talking about, Figment? The only journey we can take is walking twenty feet across the room!" He laughed some more.

Figment replied, "Let's go to Ireland! I've never been there, Mr. Howard! Let's go!"

Mr. Howard laughed again and sarcastically replied, "Okay, Figment. Let's go to Ireland!" Instantly, the room lit up with great flashes of light. The smell of flowers and grass filled the room. Mr. Howard and Figment stood in a field that was immediately familiar to Mr. Howard. He was shocked.

Figment said, "I believe that this is Ballyclare, Ireland, your hometown." Mr. Howard slowly nodded his head.

Figment said, "You've wanted to return here ever since you left twenty years ago."

Mr. Howard looked at Figment with his jaw dropped. "How did you know? How did we get here? What's going on?" Figment replied with a smile and bent down to the grass and picked a five-leaf clover. Mr. Howard took it. "Wow! A five-leaf clover! I remember dreaming of these when I was a little kid, growing up here in Ireland." He added, "How is this possible? How did we get here? Did you bring us here,

Figment?"

Figment once again smiled and said, "Yes, but we don't have much time. We only have three days until we will be released from the solitary room. These 'powers' can only work while we are in the room." Figment began to walk away saying, "Where should we go to next?"

For the next two days, both Figment and Mr. Howard traveled to places that were once only present in Mr. Howard's dreams and memories; however, the third day arrived quickly. On this day, the officers entered the room to remove Mr. Howard.

Remembering that Figment's powers only worked in this room, Mr. Howard began pleading, "No! Wait! Leave me here! I want to stay here! Where's Figment?"

The officers looked confused and one of them asked the other, "Who's Figment? There's no one else in this room. This man's crazy!"

Mr. Howard continued to plead with the officers to let him stay in the room for the rest of his life. For a moment, he couldn't believe it. He actually wanted to live the rest of his life in that room. Why not? Figment's powers took him on many journeys. He didn't need the real world anymore. He had his very own elaborate and imaginative world, thanks to Figment!

After Mr. Howard was escorted out of the room, one of the officers turned to the other and said, "You know what's odd? I was once sentenced to that solitary room for disobeying orders. I didn't want to leave either. There was this man who took me to far away places! After I was released, I realized that he wasn't real. It didn't really happen. It was all an illusion that was created from being confined all alone in a room. It was almost as if those walls were a blank canvas for my mind to create imaginary places and people."

The other officer looked at him and laughed hysterically. He jokingly said, "And did this 'man' have a name?" He started to laugh even harder.

However, the other officer didn't laugh. He stared into the desolate solitary room and said, "I'm not sure what his actual name was, but he had a nickname. It was... Figment."

*Michael Palughi, '12*



### Ode to the Yankees

It all started in 1913 when they received their new name.  
At the Polo Grounds is where they played their game.  
A new house was built for them when the Bambino came along.  
They have stayed in the Bronx because that's where they belong.  
In this new home they had their first World Series win;  
What a great accomplishment the first year they moved in.  
Although that was their first win, it certainly was not their last.  
They had many more to follow thanks to players both present and past.  
The names upon the rosters were some of baseball's greatest;  
Lou Gehrig was a former star and Jeter is the latest.  
Many have worn the famous pinstripes that are blue,  
DiMaggio, Mantle, A-Rod and Pettitte just to name a few.  
Winning 27 championships is not easy to do,  
But with the help of all these greats they managed to pull through.  
All contributed large and small in their own special way  
To help make the Yankees the dynasty they are today.

*Christopher Musante, '10*



Ready to Roll

*Anthony Lubrano, '12*

## A Lifelong Passion

High speeds, exotic cars, cutting edge technology, incredible courage, and fierce competition are all terms that can be used to describe my favorite spectator sport: Formula 1.

Formula 1 or Grand Prix Racing is almost universally recognized as the pinnacle of motor racing and automotive technology. Since the sport's inaugural season in 1950, the cars and drivers taking part in grands prix have transfixed audiences the world over and have provided some of the most memorable moments of passionate competition ever witnessed.

From the first time I saw a grand prix, I have been captivated by Formula 1. The cars are magnificent having more resemblance to fighter planes than automobiles. The sounds made by their ultra high-strung engines, spinning at over 17,000 revolutions per minute, are mind bending, and the courage and skill of the drivers piloting such machines are simply awe-inspiring.

Unlike most American motorsport, which competes on oval race tracks in standardized cars, the Formula 1 World Championship is contested in vehicles of a team's independent design in accordance to rules set forth by the sport's governing body, in a wide range of environments in many countries ranging from multi-million dollar facilities in Turkey and Bahrain, to tracks in Canada, Australia, and the United States, to the far East in Malaysia, and timeless European circuits such as Silverstone, Monza, and the contorting and treacherous public roads of Monte Carlo. The drivers who compete in Formula 1 are just as diverse as the countries the sport visits. Men and women have competed in grands prix, many from Europe and South America, but drivers from North America, Asia, and Africa have also been

participants in the pinnacle of motorsport.

Watching Formula 1 is like getting a crash course in physics, computer science, mathematics, and aerodynamics. Technology has become such an integral part of the sport and the rate of development of teams with multi-million dollar budgets is so high that to the inexperienced viewer, Formula 1 appears to become a convoluted mess of numbers. The true Formula 1 fan, however, knows more than just what happens on the track. Formula 1 has a history richer than almost any other sport spanning 60 years of automotive design and tales of epic championship battles that live on decades after they occurred. Cars made over the years by teams such as Ferrari, McLaren, and Williams are almost as famous as the people who drove them. Drivers such as Fangio, Prost, Senna, Häkkinen, and Schumacher are remembered not only for their achievements on the track, but also for their character attributes as well as how their unique styles and personas left indelible imprints on the sport, transcending time itself.

As a Formula 1 fan of five seasons now, the excitement, history, and uniqueness of Formula 1 have made me set my alarm every Sunday morning, and I probably will continue to do so for the rest of my life.

*William Scarano, '10*



## Why?

Sometimes big revelations are the result of small questions. My passage to self-understanding began with a physical voyage to the summit of Mt. Phillips in Cimarron, New Mexico; it ended with unexpected conclusions in my journey towards personal growth.

My older brother and I moved with 35 pounds of equipment on our backs for the whole 65-mile journey. The terrain was a variable surface, with constantly changing incline and composition. Even the weather was against us, choosing to hail four of the seven days. We reached the base of Mt. Phillips on the last day.

After a few hours, I was standing 12,000 feet above sea level, viewing the world for miles around me. Jagged mountains covered in a sea of green trees fought for control of the horizon with expansive bronze plains to the east. I paused to ask myself "Why?" I realized that experiencing the amazing view before me did not fully answer this question. I was forced to delve into my own emotions. Prior to the ascent, I had heard of the people who could not meet the challenge of the climb and had quit. Even my older brother questioned my ability to overcome the hardships of the hike. I needed to prove that I would not break under the strain, and I did not. Ultimately, the successful climb lessened my self-doubt and strengthened my sense of identity. I learned that I could accomplish challenging goals that I had set for myself.

Through a clearer understanding of my personal boundaries, I can better understand the choices I will make in the future. I now recognize that a man with no base to stand on cannot build a bridge to an island.

"Why?" is one of the most powerful questions I have ever asked myself. That day on the mountain, I displayed not only my physical strength, but also the ability to find determination within myself.

*Matthew Mikula, '10*



Gateway Through Ft. Wadsworth

*Ms. Jeannemarie McNamara*

No Poet

I'm;; nO. ee(cuMMings)  
And Certainly – no Dickinson

I don't possess Poe's morbid ponderings  
Nor celebrate myself like Whitman

I never came to two diverging roads  
And I've no idea why the caged bird sings

But ask me about the folks above  
And I can tell you a couple of things.

*Edward Zukowski, '10*



Geese Family

*Jonathan Vargas, '11*

**Contents**  
**Robert Frost Writing Contest**  
**First Place Winners**  
**2010**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Author/Artist</b>	<b>Page</b>
High School Hell	Christian Lewis, '10	78-79
The Concert of a Lifetime	Justin Chung, '10	80-81
The Lord is my Baseball Coach	Paul Nyitray, '10	82
The Writing Assignment	Christopher Andrus, '11	83
B.A.P.S. Swaminarayan	Hemal Patel, '11	84
Cut Short	Alexander Frey, '12	85
A Cursed Fate	Andrew Cinco, '11	86-87
The White Deer	Nicholas Annunziata, '12	88-89
Sunrise	Joseph Haddad, '12	90
I Am Why	Alexander Riviere, '13	91
Mind Game	Jonathan Teters, '13	92-93
World Citizen	Danil Kozub, '13	94
Spread Your Wings	Sean Pajak, '10	95



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

### High School Hell

**First Circle:** Those who failed to follow the Dress Code while at St. Joseph's are put in the first circle of High School Hell. Souls walk a bitter, icy plain that resembles the St. Joe's back acres as hail showers down upon them. Only shorts clothe these frostbitten sinners because they dressed incorrectly in school.

**Second Circle:** Those who were late to class run upon a distorted version of the St. Joe's track, with the tar melting from the heat of underground magma. Because they were late to class in life, the souls must attempt to sprint along the track while their feet get stuck in the volcanic tar and they can barely move.

**Third Circle:** The third circle of High School Hell is home to those who failed to complete Lunch Duties. The area is a dimly lit space resembling a cafeteria with a stench arising from the ground. Cafeteria garbage rains down upon these sinners and, because they did not clean up in life, they must clean for all eternity while being teased by the sweet smells from the real cafeteria above.

**Fourth Circle:** Students who did not keep cell phones in their lockers at St. Joe's must lie upon the floor of a classroom while their skin is scorched by sizzling phone radiation. The sinners wanted to keep their phones in their pockets during class and absorb radiation from the phones, so their wish has been granted in death.

**Fifth Circle:** Those who cut class reside in this circle, which is an eternal hallway with hundreds of small rooms on each

side. Spewing out of the keyholes are flames, accompanied by screams of pain. One sinner occupies each room and, with the ground and their hands on fire, must copy and re-copy onto a small chalk board the text of *Beowulf*, representing all the work they missed by cutting class in life.

**Sixth Circle:** Those who forged their parents' names onto documents are dropped into the sixth circle. Another long hallway, resembling St. Joe's science wing, is filled with the boiling ink that had been used for forgery. It burns and stains the sinners' skin as they tread the liquid for all eternity.

**Seventh Circle:** Students who cheated while at St. Joe's are condemned to the cruel state of life in "The Dungeon" under O'Neil Hall. The sinners sit upon benches, contorted, with eyes brutally stretched out of their sockets, representing how they stretched their bodies and eyes to see papers in their vicinity during tests.

**Eighth Circle:** Brutes who could not control their anger and fought with other students are placed into this circle, located on the St. Joe's tennis courts. Souls must fight to the death for eternity, attacking each other endlessly like Roman gladiators. Those who fought in life must fight in death.

**Ninth Circle:** The deepest pit of high school hell is reserved for those who attempted to bring drugs or alcohol onto St. Joe's property. It is located inside a fiery version of the gym. Across the floor are transparent towers resembling lockers, each housing one sinner. They sit over a white-hot steam vent that shoots smoke, ash, and magma through the tower, burning every inch of the sinners' skin. The rising smokes represents that which would burn from the drugs or alcohol brought into school.

*Christian Lewis, '10*

## The Concert of a Lifetime

The rain fell in heavy drops, but it did not spoil our high spirits as we dashed to the Nicholas Music Center at Rutgers University. As we waited in the rehearsal room, I looked into their eyes and smiled; I was proud of them. We had spent the last six months arduously preparing for this moment. We were four rock musicians about to perform in a traditional Chinese music concert. Although the 2009 Joy of Summer Concert is now over, the events that preceded the performance had a profound effect on me and continue to shape my life.

Mr. Wei, the conductor of the International Buddhist Progress Society's youth Chinese orchestra, heard from my grandmother that I had formed a rock band. He was interested in having my band perform a specially arranged Chinese / rock fusion piece with the orchestra. Upon hearing a recording of the song, I began to doubt my ability to craft any sort of harmonic melodies on guitar. The differing tempos and unpredictable chord patterns of the Chinese music made playing along a game of musical cat-and-mouse, with me frantically fingering my guitar, searching for a harmonious note.

Further complicating matters, only the bassist and I could perform on the date of the concert; replacement musicians would have to be found and acclimated to the music. Turning down Mr. Wei's offer would have been an easy way out of the challenge this presented to my band-managing efforts; however, the performance offered me an irresistible opportunity to play a different genre of music. The music still presented me with an extreme challenge, yet as I continued

to listen to the composition, harmonies became easier to play. With the allure of experiencing and experimenting with new music (and the opportunity to play at the largest venue yet in my career as a musician), I began to consider Mr. Wei's offer more seriously.

At every orchestra practice, the bassist and I experimented with the music and our instruments, exploring beyond the limits of modern music in a melodic symphony of American rock and Chinese folk music. Next, I turned to reconstructing my band. I was able to discover two musicians by searching at St. Joe's. After we had practiced as a full band, Mr. Wei was so impressed with the sound of my band that he added two additional fusion-style songs to the program. Soon, the concert came, and the songs were a resounding success with the audience.

As I played the last chord of the final song, I realized that I had transformed into a leader, managing my band, rising to a challenge, and finding my own way in life. An unexpected result of the concert was my spiritual growth. As the son of immigrant parents, I, like the music, am a fusion of Chinese and American culture; however, the Chinese aspect of my persona had never been fully realized until my concert experience. Unexpectedly, the music bridged the gap between my cultural imbalances. Before the concert, I knew nothing of Chinese music, but after witnessing the audience's enthusiastic response to the songs, I realized that music has no boundaries. The many cultures of the world diffuse seamlessly into the landscape of music, creating a stirring and profound work of art unlimited in its potential to inspire.

*Justin Chung, '10*

## The Lord is My Baseball Coach

- 1 The Lord is my baseball coach; there is nothing I have not learned.
- 2 On dirt infields you let me play; to the batter's box you lead me;
- 3 You restore my confidence. You guide me through my at-bat for the sake of my team.
- 4 Even when I face a great pitcher, I have no worries for you are there with me; your glove and your bat give me courage.
- 5 You help me get a hit as my opponents watch; You apply my bat with pine tar, my poise overflows.
- 6 Only hard work and conditioning will pursue me all the days of my life; I will dwell in the Hall of Fame for years to come.

*Paul Nyitray, '10*

## The Writing Assignment

One day, a very handsome student walked into his English class. He quickly took out his textbook and notebook, eager to learn. He waited with his fellow classmates for the greatest English teacher in the world to arrive. The student began to write the day's date on the top of the notebook page when the master of English walked in. The teacher handed them a paper that described a writing contest in which all of the students were encouraged to participate.

"I'm not encouraging you to do this paper, I'm making you do it," said the admired teacher. He explained each of the three genres judged in the contest. They were poetry, fiction, and nonfiction.

The intellectual student decided to write a fiction story and immediately began to think of what to write about. The student's mind dreamt about heroic stories in which a two-foot man defeats a giant monster and a superhero defeats the Evil Madman and saves the 9<sup>th</sup> Dimension from certain doom; however, the student soon remembered that the story could only be a maximum of one page and sadly realized that he could not fit either epic story onto one page.

The student sat for about a week thinking of what to write about. Nothing came into to his mind, no creativity of any sort. The due date was nearing, the last day before his Thanksgiving break. Time was running out. He then thought of a story in which a man conquers his fear of the waiting room at the doctor's office, but in the end he decided it was too hard to explain. Then, on the second to last day before the break, an idea came to the student.

He decided he would write a story about a very handsome student who was given a writing assignment by his outstanding English teacher. So the student got to work. By the time he had written four hundred and twenty three words, he had created a masterpiece. The student wanted to be able to write more, but the single page could not contain all the genius the student wished to record onto the document so he had to settle for a shortened version. Nonetheless, it was still a great short story, to be remembered for many years to come. It was a story about nothing, and that was the true value in it. The student learned from the master that a masterpiece does not need to be lengthy or dramatic, but that it can be great in its own way.

*Christopher Andrus, '11*



Bochasanwasi Shri Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha (B.A.P.S.) is a socio-spiritual Hindu organization. Because it was founded with a focus on spirituality, B.A.P.S. reaches out in the world to help the spiritual, moral, and social challenges and issues of today. It cares for all people; class, creed, color, or country does not matter. In fact, it was commenced by Bhagawan Swaminarayan (Lord Swaminarayan, 1781-1830) in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and later established by Shastriji Maharaj (his spiritual successor) in 1907. B.A.P.S. has over 3,300 centers around the world that have received accolades and awards with the United Nations. Abdul Kalam (former president of India) said, "Those who wish to sincerely serve society must be spiritually pure and only those who are spiritually pure can sincerely serve society!"

The international scope of the organization's work is impressive. There are more than 7,215 weekly assemblies for men, women, and teenagers as well as 5,400 weekly assemblies for children. More than 55,000 people volunteer worldwide, providing over 12,000,000 annual hours of service in eight hospitals and healthcare clinics. Seventy-six medico-spiritual conferences have enlightened over 20,000 doctors; 33 disaster relief operations have been successfully managed.

B.A.P.S. Charities (a nonprofit organization) is committed to serving others and improving other's lives. Our beloved guru, H.D.H. Pramukh Swami Maharaj (the spiritual leader of the organization) said, "In the joy of others, lies our own." With this maxim in mind, the volunteers of B.A.P.S. never grow tired of providing humanitarian service to the organization in over 160 diverse fields. Some of the projects they have worked on include building and managing permanent institutes, funding projects, executing on-going programs, creating public awareness, organizing annual walkathons, and setting up annual health fairs. In service to the environment, they coordinate recycling projects throughout the world.

The members of B.A.P.S. commitment to the public reflects their respect for the dignity and integrity of the individuals they serve. They believe that everyone has a heart large enough to care about and share with someone, somewhere, somehow. No one takes the responsibility of being the head of this organization because the volunteers know that they are providing this service to please God, not themselves.

*Hemal Patel, '11*

Throughout the ages, many men and women have lived epic, productive lives that have led to varying degrees of fame and recognition. Many of those great people have died too early, before their potential was reached, and one is left to wonder what could have been had they not perished so young. Three great men in history fit this role perfectly – Alexander the Great, the Macedonian king that conquered the known world; Don Juan of Austria, the brilliant and bold admiral who defeated the Turks at Lepanto; and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, the *wunderkind* who is among the brightest and most prolific composers of all time. Many have pondered what would have been if these men had not died so young, and how the modern world would have been different as a result.

There has been much speculation about what might have been had Alexander the Great not died of fever in Babylon in 323 BC. He had already executed a remarkable feat, conquering the Persian Empire that stretched from Egypt to the Indus. With his conquest came the spreading of Greek culture throughout the lands. Had he not died, perhaps Rome and the rest of Europe would have become another Hellenic state. In such a world, the social fabric would have been altered, perhaps without the rise of English, or any modern language, to prominence. The arts and religion would have been alien to those of today. Alexander's recovery could have meant a more unified world, but one wholly different from the present.

Don Juan was an illegitimate son of the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, which made him the half brother of Philip II of Spain. He led the Holy League fleet expertly at Lepanto, the battle won largely because of his bold streak. Despite Juan's celebrity, Philip disapproved of Juan's recklessness, since the battle may have gone the other way and meant disaster for Philip and Europe. Don Juan was stationed in Flanders to put down the Dutch Revolt, where he died of sickness in 1578. The divergence that might have taken place if he was instead kept as an admiral, namely as leader of the Spanish Armada, could have meant Spanish dominion of the Americas.

Mozart was one of the greatest composers of all time and one of history's prolific geniuses. His over six hundred works include numerous concertos, symphonies, and operas, many of which are considered masterpieces. If he had not died in 1791, he may have continued the proliferation of classical music, perhaps even composing the first piece of the Romantic era instead of Beethoven, whom he may have taken on as a student. Surely his legacy would have been more complete, his genius and talent fully exposed, which would have undoubtedly left a mark on music and the imagination.

These men should serve as examples of the great effects of brief yet fulfilled lives. We can only wonder what impact they may have made on the world had they lived longer lives.

*Alexander Frey, '12*

## A Cursed Fate

Gemini, The twins. Brother and sister, Destinies divided.	His journey begins, The search endures. The longest trek of all, Leading to a burning City of Gold.
Growing together, Learning together. Never knowing, What Fate has in store.	The gates were blown open, Houses were in flame. Where was the castle, Where was his sister?
Their parents of love, Gone away forever. Selfish adults' reason, Split Gemini apart.	He ran through the streets, Looking for a sign. Up above, in the sky, A Great Spiral Tower of Gold.
The brothers' anguish, A never-ending search. "One day I will find her, And bring her home with me."	He ran to the tower, Avoiding all obstacles. Nothing would stop him, Till his search was complete.
Crossing the land, He searched far and wide. The brother gets desperate, Till one day, a sign.	The door cracked open, There, was a girl sitting alone. Flowing golden hair, Eyes set like stone.
As the story went, "The Green Country is angry, The citizens are in revolt, Everyone hates the Princess of Gold."	He broke through, Shocking the girl. One look at each other, And they knew who it was.

In all the chaos,  
They talked so much.  
They told each other everything,  
Hoping time would stand still.

But time kept on,  
The enemy would come in.  
The brother thought up a plan,  
A plan that could not fail.

"My sister, I love you,  
But we cannot leave  
together.  
Run to the hills as me,  
And I shall die as you."

At the time of execution,  
The brother said the  
infamous words,  
"Ah, it's nearly tea time",  
With that, the axe came down.

The sister watched,  
Pain welling inside her.  
Her newly found brother,  
Sacrificing his life for hers.

Before she could be found,  
She ran from the town.  
She wanted to cry,  
To give up in sorrow.

She knew wouldn't,  
She did not want to die.  
Her brother had died for her,  
He had taken her evil.

Swearing to never forget,  
She went on her way.  
Not looking back once,  
She prepared for the road.

No matter how hard,  
No matter how harsh,  
The Twin of Gold never once,  
Forgot the words of her love.

"Live on forever,  
Never give in to anything.  
You are the strongest,  
You are the most powerful.

"I will protect you from all evils,  
I will vanquish all in your way.  
To protect you from everything,  
I will even become an evil.

"When we meet again,  
In a place that is our own,  
I hope to play with you,  
And see your smiling face again."

*Andrew Cinko, '11*

## The White Deer

I walked through the woods on Christmas Eve and kicked the fresh, white snow up into my face. The air was cold as I left the warm house, filled with smells of a Christmas feast on my search for the family tree. I looked for the tallest and fullest tree in the woods as my mom directed. The deafening silence of the woods was broken by a loud crunch. As I paused to get my bearings, in front of me stood the grandest Christmas fir in the woods. I stretched out on the cold snow and began sawing at the base of the tree when I heard another crunch in the snow. I peered through the prickly fir tree, extending my saw like a weapon, expecting to see a bear that broke its hibernation. Through the trees, looking in my direction, was the most beautiful albino White Tailed deer. My dad had talked of seeing one in these woods as a young boy but I never believed him. Her eyes were bright red and she had a small patch of brown on her back. She nuzzled the snow with her snout and tossed it at me in a playful way. I smiled, knowing she could do no harm, and returned to cutting the tree. Sweat began to form on my brow as I feverishly sawed. I hit a knot and my arms began to tire. My chest ached as I deeply inhaled the cold air. I lay on my back under the tree to rest for a moment and opened my eyes as the branches began to sway gently across my chest. Ever so gingerly, the deer was pushing the trunk of the tree with her head; I could see the sinewy muscles in her hind quarters rippling as she dug into the snow-encrusted earth to stabilize herself. I rolled out from underneath the tree just as it fell to the ground. She gave me a soft grunt, looking over her shoulder as she disappeared into the whiteness of the forest.

I wrapped up the tree and headed home. I could see the yellow glow from the windows as a beacon in the darkening afternoon sky; a storm must have been approaching. Nearing the house, I could smell the ham and turkey, bathed in butter, cooking for the holiday dinner. My father was playing Christmas

carols on the piano with my sisters singing out of key. Hopping onto the porch and dragging the tree behind me, I heard a small crunch in the crusty snow. In the distance was the White Tail, nudging the snow with her snout. I smiled as I entered the warm house, knowing the joys of the holiday were once again being shared with my family. Crossing the threshold, my sisters shouted with delight and I looked again at the albino. I felt sorry that she was alone on Christmas Eve and wondered if she would speak to God tonight, as my mom said all the animals could do.

After our meal, we hung our stockings by the fire and I mentioned the deer to my dad. He puffed gray plumes of smoke from his pipe and said, "You don't say" as he looked at me with a raised eyebrow. My mom shuffled the girls off to bed with giggly excitement of Santa Claus. I began to follow when my dad asked me to stay and help with a Christmas Eve chore. We donned red plaid jackets and headed out to the barn as the snow started to fall. He handed me a sack of apples while he grabbed a salt lick and headed out to the edge of the woods, not saying a word. I placed the apples in a clearing I made as dad hung the salt lick on a tree. We walked a few steps and dad softly made a clicking sound with his tongue then told me to watch. Out of the forest came the albino, and with her a doe, just as white as she. My mouth fell open as I looked at my dad. He placed his arm around me and said, "I met her momma when I was your age on Christmas Eve. Ever since then, your Grandpa and I always came out here on Christmas Eve to give them their Christmas gift. Now we can do it together." I stared at the deer and she picked up her head from the apple pile and walked over to me, nudging my arm with her snout. I stroked her head in amazement and my dad just smiled, making gray puffs of smoke from his pipe. I guess she wasn't alone after all this Christmas, or any Christmas here after.

*Nicholas Annunziata, '12*



## Sunrise

To watch a sunrise  
And see it set,  
Humbled by its divinity,  
Yet surrounded by sanctuary  
As light penetrates the shadows of night.  
The definition of beauty seems to rewrite,  
The vibrancy of colors makes one wonder.  
All beings come alive from the dark  
As if the sun is a life-giving spark.  
On this God given day,  
We are blessed with heavenly display.  
To whom we send our prayers,  
To whom no one compares.

*Joseph Haddad, '12*

## I Am Why

I am overused by three year olds who try to understand the world around them. I am underused by teenagers who do not know how to communicate with their parents. I am the cry of young soldiers who find themselves in a senseless war zone. I am on the lips of parents who have a child who is terminally ill. I am whispered by the bystander watching the Twin Towers crash to the ground. I am shouted by the people who have experienced the devastation of Hurricane Katrina.

Three-year-olds simply want to learn everything they can; therefore, they constantly ask why. They want an answer to what we might think is pointless, but to them is the center of their world. Many years later, they become teenagers who do not want to ask their parents anything due to embarrassment, judgement, or fear.

The soldiers who are put in positions that require them to take a life ask why. They wonder why they have to kill someone who did not do anything to them. The parents of sick children ask why their child became ill, and not someone else's. They ask why their family has been made to suffer so much.

The people who watched the Twin Towers fall ask why. They want to know why they had to witness that tragedy, and why the terrorists chose to attack us. Similarly, the people who had to move out of their homes because of Hurricane Katrina ask why. They wonder why the water overflowed the levees, destroying their homes. The Katrina victims ask why their lives will be forever affected by this hurricane.

Why is the sky blue? Why do you put so much pressure on me? Why do I have to kill? Why does this have to happen to my child? Why are they targeting us? Why couldn't the levees hold up?

I am why.

*Alexander Riviere, '13*

## Mind Game

Detective Miller could not make any sense of his situation. The killer who he had been trying to locate had been eluding him for longer than he could remember but now the crafty criminal had done something that seemed like an extremely foolish move. He had left a clue for the detective, a clue that Miller had inferred would lead him to the next target. But if the criminal had covered his tracks before, why would he get sloppy now?

*He's playing mind games*, thought Miller to himself as he examined the odd piece of evidence. The clue was not much but was significant because it did not fit in with the crime scene at all. The clue was an earring, no bigger than the size of the nail on his pinkie finger. It was found on the latest victim's face, and while most thought that it was simply a signature left by the criminal, Miller was convinced it was more.

"Still looking at that earring, eh Miller?" said Johnson, one of Miller's coworkers. Miller gave him an angry glance and walked away. He knew this was important, but no one else seemed convinced. Johnson had a point though; Miller was not going to be able to find the mystery man by simply examining the earring. With that thought in mind, Miller left to consult every detective and forensics person he knew. This killer was not going to get away this time.

The long hours of the day dragged on and Miller had no luck getting any information from the earring that had been left behind. The case had taken a toll on him and many of his peers had begun to think that he was obsessed with the case. With all that had happened, Miller was ready to agree with them. Much to his wife's dismay, he had put his life on

hold to solve the case that had been evading him for far too long.

Miller returned home to find his wife getting ready to leave the house. The detective put a hand against his head and cursed under his breath. Tonight was their anniversary and he had completely forgotten. He was about to sneak out of the house without her noticing to go buy a gift, but it was too late. An argument ensued that made Miller hate the evasive murderer even more than he had before. He was done pursuing that maniac.

With this decision, Miller and his wife were able to reconcile. They made a decision to go out to dinner and the detective began to feel that his problems may be over. Miller smiled at this wonderful thought, but his thoughts were intruded on by a question from his wife.

"Have you seen my earring anywhere? I can't seem to find it. I've looked everywhere I could think of," said Mrs. Miller.

The detective stared at her as his mouth dropped. The pieces of the puzzle fell right in to place. The target of the next attack was none other than himself. As Miller stood in astonishment, he heard the closet door open behind him. He seemed to have pieced things together too late.

*Jonathan Teters, '13*

## World Citizen

I look around at my friends and see one thing,  
Proud people represented behind every face.  
But I am lacking, no culture to call my own  
For I am but a mutt, too mixed to be defined.  
I am not belonging to one nation, but to the world,  
A global ambassador,  
All nations represented equally –  
A world citizen.

*Daniel Kozub, '13*



Spread Your Wings

*Sean Pajak, '10*



## 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.



## Vignette Literary Magazine Awards

1995:	NCTE - "Superior"
1996:	NCTE - "Above Average" ASPA - "Second Place"
1999:	NCTE - "Excellent"
2000:	NCTE - "Excellent"
2001:	ASPA - "First Place"
2002:	ASPA - "First Place"
2003 :	ASPA - "Second Place"
2006:	ASPA - "First Place with Special Merit"
2007:	ASPA - "First Place with Special Merit"
2008:	ASPA - "First Place with Special Merit"
2009:	ASPA - "First Place with Special Merit"

---

## Colophon

The *Vignette* is published annually each spring by the literary and art staff of the *Vignette* at St. Joseph High School. Copies are distributed free to all students and staff at SJHS.

The body copy was set in Book Antiqua 10-12 point. Headlines were set in Book Antiqua 12-14 point. The *Vignette* was created using Adobe Illustrator, Adobe Photoshop, and Adobe InDesign.

The cover was designed by Kevin McCartney, '11. Folios were designed by the *Vignette* staff.

The magazine was printed by Fast Action Print with a press run of 1,000 copies. It is comprised of 95 pages using a 5.5 x 8.5 inch format.

Thanks to Dr. Martine Gubernat and Mr. George Miligan for their guidance and support.

# St. Joseph High School

A Brothers of the Sacred Heart School

