

VIGNETTE 2022
VOLUME 61

Front Cover Art Inspiration

The pencil drawing represents my collection of life's finest times. The half-eaten pomegranate represents the many luxuries taken for granted and the wasted opportunities that God presented. The open diary portrays the hardships, emotions, and accomplishments that are misplaced and lost to time. A cup of tea displays the simplicity of living and its good taste. The clock reminds us of the limited currency we spend.

Jim Yu '23

Back Cover Art Inspiration

The back cover art is a snapshot of our school's patron saint, St. Joseph the Worker, in his carpentry shop. This mural shines between the entrances to our dining hall and library, where it is admired by passing Students and Partners in Mission everyday.

Photographed by Giovanni Oliveti '24
Original Painting by A.M. Barker 1964

Vignette

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Volume 61

Saint Joseph
A College Preparatory School
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Editorial

The act of creating is simple. Expression, both visual and written, is gifted by the artist. The art of editing a magazine takes care and effort by many to produce a seamless singular entity – a volume of an art and literary magazine. The creative pieces offer a complexity that is nearly incomprehensible; being diverse, the selection process can sometimes be intimidating. A representation of creativity is an awesome challenge, but a rewarding endeavor from its process to its completion.

As we came to publish this year's edition of Vignette Literary and Art Magazine, our staff of fifteen students reflected on the sixty previous editions that led us to this moment in Saint Joe's history. We came to realize that we are connected to the writers, staff members, mentors, teachers, and Editors-in-chief of the past by the intrinsic pursuit and understanding of the creative process. It is this process which inspired us to continue creating editions during a pandemic and allowed us to bring to you the 61st Edition and latest addition to a prestigious legacy.

Abel Stephen '22
Editor-in-Chief

Brilliant Galaxies

Brilliant galaxies are being found
The universe richly abounds
But, the Earth lies in great distress

The stars shine glorious
The moon gleams mysterious
But our planet suffers with dire illness

A virus has changed life as we know it
It's catastrophic, it has no limit
Leaves us hopelessly breathless
The carnage it leaves-so endless

Our pursuit to defeat its deadly reach
Has limited the freedoms we once did teach
The government now tries to control
But that's not how our democracy rolls

Civil strife continues on the streets
With politics there's no wins- just defeats
The people cry for peace, betterment, and change
Yet those concepts are now foreign and oddly strange

Everything is changing too quickly
Laws are being passed too swiftly
Big Brother hopes we don't see
But that's not how it's meant to be

Let's start again from square one
Turn our eyes to God and his Son
Creator of Heaven and this Earth
Formed and loved us at birth

Let's focus on unity
And practice living in civility
Loving our neighbors
And extending gracious favors
Let's do good as God intends
Let's spread God's love, my dear friends.

Michael Lee '24
Sophomore Poetry

The Mask Maker

“What is it that I do?”, you say,
A question everybody asks,
But if you look behind me now,
You’ll see my wall is decked in masks,
They number now one-hundred strong,
And soon they’ll be two-hundred more,
And once the wall is fully filled,
I’ll pile new ones on the floor,
I carved them all myself, you know,
I wear one as we speak,
“The Mask of a Mad Poet”,
I’d like think it’s quite unique,
But I’ve seen it before somewhere,
I’m not sure from where or who,
But I copied it and carved it,
And I wore it just for you,
Every mask, my dear,
Is made bits of faces that I meet,
In books and films and TV shows,
And people on the street,
I throw them all together,
And I carve a mask so fine,
That in the end you’d never think,
It isn’t genuine,
I carry them all with me,
In grand and massive sack,
And I go out to the market,
With a hundred on my back,
And I don a different mask,
For every face in town I meet,
And I get such lovely compliments,
From people on the street,
“What a handsome face”, they say
“That face looks mighty fine”,
And not-a-single-one can tell,
It isn’t genuine,
“How’d I learn to carve them?”
That was a truth I’d only bring,

To corpses in the churchyard,
And to icicles in spring,
But just for once I’ll tell the truth,
My secret, I bequeath,
I had to learn to mask the fact,
I have no face beneath...

Timothy Horan '23
Junior Poetry



The Face of Time

Time and the elements have changed the face of this piece of art both literally and figuratively. The subject appears to be crying and the facial features are fractured and broken, yet the expression seems “alive,” perhaps a symbol at once of decay and endurance.

Mr. Paul Caruso

House of Art

On top of a small and rugged hill in my area, an abandoned house sits behind tall; enclosed gates. The windows are covered with dust and the dull, stone, brick exterior is damp from the recent rainstorm. Fallen twigs and leaves are scattered around the unkempt, patchy lawn in the evening light. I can feel the cold autumn wind rushing around me as I stand in wonder.

I slip through the high gates of the property out of curiosity and walk across the lawn to the rusty door of the house, being careful not to make a sound. As I open the door, it suddenly collapses in and reveals a dark and dingy interior. I examine the door and assume it was broken open and was never touched again until now.

I step inside and immediately turn on my phone flashlight to explore my surroundings. Once the light illuminates the place fully, I meet a long hallway and walk to the end until I come upon a room. As I walk, I see many portraits of obscure and interesting paintings hanging in frames on the walls. When I encounter a room, I approach a colorful canvas with a palette of several paint colors on a wooden stool. Adjacent to that, a sketchbook is open, filled with various pencil drawings and shapes crowding up the page. I flip through the pages and discover sketches of landscapes, sculpture dimensions, and portraits of famous people.

Across the room, I see completed stone sculptures of what looks like to be an elephant, a statue of Leonardo Da Vinci, and other unique creations. The rest of the room is scattered with paintbrushes, sculptural tools, and paint buckets lying around looking frozen in time. Finally, I take in my surroundings and leave the house quietly, inspired by ideas of impressive works of art in my mind.

Abhishek Borad '22

Senior Nonfiction

Down to One

I never thought he would leave. I took him for granted and never envisioned a day where I would be the only kid in the house. Having my older brother leave for the Army this summer was an experience I never saw coming.

My older brother was a homebody. He would always preach that he was never going to leave home. He was the one who never wanted to get his driver's license. He once told my mom that "driving is overrated". My brother was the family "buffer" - he ran errands with my parents, walked our dogs, and made awkward conversation when relatives visited. I could just be the younger kid who cracked a few jokes before making my escape from the house. When he got a job and his license, he gained independence and started to act more mature. Even though I could tell that he was getting independent, I still didn't think that he would ultimately leave.

He became the person I didn't realize I needed. At the time that he was living at home, he was just the annoying older brother who wouldn't let me play the radio stations I liked in his car. I would call him for rides and help when I needed it. When I left my baseball cleats at home the day of a game, I called him and he dropped them off. When friends needed to get home, I called him. I wouldn't ask him ahead of time, but just call him when I was in need. One time I called him as if my situation was serious, but all I needed was for him to bring me a bathing suit so I could swim in my friend's pool. He dropped off the bathing suit without any attitude, but I'm sure he was rolling his eyes at his younger brother. It was a one-way street in which I would ask him for favors. I wouldn't have been surprised if he refused to help me, but he didn't. He just helped and I never realized that I was relying on him.

This past summer, my brother left for the Army. He will not live at home any time soon because he signed up for the next five years. About a month or two before he left for the military, he started to go out every night with friends. One time I called him from a friend's house because I needed help sneaking back into our house. I figured he would pick me up and help keep the dogs quiet when I snuck back in. To my surprise, he was out again and couldn't do it. He was having a blast with his friends and was enjoying his last few weeks with them. Even at that time, I didn't understand that he was going to leave. I knew he was leaving. I knew the exact date he was leaving and I was even excited about the idea of him leaving, but my brain did not compute his actual leaving. The day he left I said a casual goodbye and went on with my day. My parents and grandparents were all so sad and emotional and I didn't feel the same way. I was excited to be the oldest kid for once and I was looking forward to driving his car one day. It's been four months since he left and now I'm the one walking the dogs and making awkward conversation when our extended family visits. The house is quieter and I can't ask him to pick me up or drop off any items I forgot somewhere. We don't have the family buffer anymore and it's a weird feeling to be the only kid left in the house. One day I will thank him for that time when he dealt with my requests without attitude, and maybe one day I can return the favor.

Drew Peters '24

Sophomore Nonfiction

A Case for Latin

Many people would argue that the Latin language is dead. After all, the Romans, the primary speakers of the language, are gone. In the wake of Vatican II, the Catholic Church sought a return to Masses said in the common language of the people. Most surprisingly, learning Latin is no longer a requirement for some seminarians or a Classics degree at some colleges. Why, then, should we care about a seemingly useless language?

There is a misconception here. Latin is not useless. It is quite useful. About 60% of all English words are derived from Latin. True, English is at its core a Germanic language. However, interactions between the Romans and their German neighbors to the north heavily influenced the English language. Additionally, the Romans themselves invaded Britain and remained there for a few centuries. Therefore, it is not unreasonable to argue that understanding Latin is key to understanding English. Many common words and phrases lend their origin to Latin. For example, verb, verbose, verbiage, and reverberate are derived from one word: “verbus,” meaning “word.”

Related to this idea, learning Latin teaches critical thinking skills. Latin is what is called an inflected language. An inflected language relies on the endings of words to provide grammatical context. Think of it as conjugating verbs in Spanish. For Latin, different endings indicate a different point-of-view (first, second, third), tense, and voice (active or passive), among other information. Likewise, nouns are declined as well. (There is a difference between conjugating and declining: Only verbs can be conjugated while only nouns can be declined.) To decline, students must identify how the noun acts in the sentence (subject, possession, indirect/direct object, etc.) and find the corresponding endings. Learning Latin is no doubt a challenge, but it is rewarding. As the poet, Virgil said, “Labor Omnia Vincit,” (Work conquers all).

Finally, if not for anything else, Latin is a beautiful-sounding language. For instance, think of the song “Ave Maria.” It is hard to admit that it is anything but beautiful. However, this only scratches the surface of the endless possibilities with Latin. A particular YouTuber, ScorpioMartianus, covers various songs in Latin, such as “You’re Welcome” from Moana and “Fly Me to the Moon.” Often, these covers are arguably better than their originals. He has also launched an effort to promote fluency by posting videos of him having conversations in Latin. Why? Well, like me, he believes there is a need for it.

Timothy Haklar '23

3rd Place, Junior Nonfiction



All that Remains

Brendan Walsh '22

Creation

Day one, His hands stretched out and words he spoke,
“Let there be light,” and he made light appear.
He separated light and called it “Day”
Day two, our God commanded that a dome
Divide the sky from waters down below
Day three, He made the land and harvested
The plants. They gave much fruit and life to Earth.
Day four, our Lord invented time and days.
Days five and six, God gave all life to Earth.
Day seven, God was pleased with all he made.

John Toolan '22
Senior Poetry

A Prayer for a Better Tomorrow

Dear Lord,

In the best and worst of times, you are my light and my salvation.
I turn to you, now and always.
I pray for the end of this pandemic and a return to a normal life.
I pray for the end of the suffering and sadness it has caused.
I firmly believe you always have a plan for us even when we don't see it.
I know you will give us all we need to persevere.
I thank you for your love and guidance through this dark time.
You always shine the light for us to follow.
I thank you for giving me the gifts of courage, wisdom, and understanding.
These gifts are a lifeline for me in times of struggle, especially now.
I pray that you continue to watch over us and care for us.
I pray that you always show us the way to your Kingdom.
I pray for you to continue to allow me to be a light on this Earth, following your
teachings, and showing others the way.
I ask all of this in your name.

Amen

Kyle Giuliano '24
Sophomore Poetry

Burning Memories

Dancing with my wife to the sound of swing
Those were the days when I had the world on a string.
I would come home each evening to the smell of pie
And children running up to me, ages three and five.
The names of those delinquents I fail to recall
But boy were they happiest when night did fall.

I spent most weekends near the window looking at the dreary weather
Reclined in a chair sinking further and further into the leather.
The sight of her smile and sound of her laugh always made me feel better
Yet leading up to her absence I always seemed to have upset her.
The reasons why I made her so gloom I can't recall
But I always found myself banging my head against a wall.

Did she leave me or leave this Earth I can't seem to remember.
Did she feel pushed away or lose interest in me altogether?
These questions and thoughts only plague my mind.
Why think about it to pass the time?
It is of no importance if I don't remember,
If only to make so miserable a December, or perhaps November.

Why should I even trust my mind at all?
If I can't even remember whether I played Football or Basketball.
If I spent my childhood with two parents or one,
Or if I ever truly loved anyone.
Why don't I recognize those who seem to be well acquainted with me?
Are they good friends or are they my family?

It's apparent stages of my life stray further away from me;
Whether my mother's name was Sarah or Clara still remains a mystery.
I struggle to look back on fond memories that would bring me comfort.
Glimpses of my life have become darker and darker.
It's fascinating how a mind can succumb to deterioration
And how it makes a person drift into isolation.

Jason Magistre '24
2nd Place, Sophomore Poetry

As We Go Our Way

...As we go our way,
I hope we experience radiant happiness
Amidst ominous clouds of sadness.
As we go our way,
I hope we learn to love others
Even those who seek malice upon us.
As we go our way,
I hope we find beauty in those
Whose beauty lies within.
As we go our way,
I hope we seek treasure
Atop the highest mountain.
As we go our way,
I hope we accomplish our goals
Surpassing the obstacles that once hindered us.
As we go our way,
I hope we lead lives of integrity
Instead of pursuing lives of dishonesty.
As we go our way,
I hope we think back to the lessons we learned
And embrace the future that lies ahead of us...

Miguel Castro '22
2nd Place, Senior Poetry

The Baker and the Flies

Once upon a time, in the village of Clearlake, there lived a friendly baker. He lived on the edge of the village near the forest which teemed with wildlife of all sorts. He made weekly batches of bread, muffins, and cakes, but he was most famous for his brownies which would attract villagers from the other side of Clearlake. Each Sunday morning, when he baked these brownies in the oven, the smell of warm, smooth chocolate would fill his humble house and pour out of his windows and chimney. The scent would emanate across the village, alerting the inhabitants that brownies would soon be for sale. The excited people would form a line outside his house, and they would all wear beaming smiles as they waited for the baker to open his doors. Every Sunday, the line wrapped around the baker's house, and he sold all his brownies before noon, leaving no customer dissatisfied.

One Sunday, however, something broke the baker's simple routine. For the first time, when he opened the doors to sell his scrumptious brownies, he saw no one standing before him. Instead, he saw a swarm of flies waiting outside the door. He stood in awe, stunned by both the lack of his usual customers and the arrival of his bizarre new guests. He realized that the flies must have driven away the villagers who normally buy his weekly treats. While he stood there contemplating what to do, the flies flew into his house. They gathered over his brownies and devoured them before the baker could even turn around to see what had happened. The flies fled through the window, having eaten all of the baker's product for the day.

To the distress of the baker, the flies returned week after week to not only drive customers away but also to steal all the brownies. The tormented baker set out to put an end to this weekly plague. On Sunday morning, right before baking his brownies, the baker laid a trap outside his door. He put a bowl of vinegar outside, hoping the strong smell would trick the flies into falling in. That Sunday, when the flies came out of the forest, they swarmed over the vinegar. There, they hesitated for a moment, as if contemplating whether or not they wanted to go to it; however, they quickly decided that the smell of brownies was much more entrancing, so they followed the scent down the chimney and into the house.

The following week, the baker was so flustered with the flies that he tossed a tray of brownies through the window. Feeling defeated, he watched as the flies swarmed the tray and promptly left. Soon thereafter, the villagers, having noticed the new lack of flies, hastened to the baker's house for the first time in months. The baker finally had his customers back, and they were more voracious than ever. He knew what he had to do now to keep his business going.

From that day on, rather than trying to trap the flies, or praying they did not come, the baker counted on the arrival of his weekly pests. He would make an extra tray of brownies early in the morning, then toss them out into the forest. The flies would leave seemingly content with their share of baked goods, and now the villagers could buy their brownies just like they had in the past. The baker saved his business by treating the flies just like any other customer.

Alejandro Ruiz '23
2nd Place, Junior Fiction



The Devil's Tower

Owen Crum '25

In Time

Born, raised, primed,
It was my time.
Thrown, orphaned, denied,
It was a crime.
Found, loved, limed,
Family was mine.
Schooled, learned, grind,
Wish I had time.
Grown, flown, climbed,
Golden was mined,
Laughed, sang, chimed,
All was just fine.
Failed, fallen, cried,
“It’s not my time.”
Freed, sent, slide,
I got my time.
Good, heart, mind.
Changing in time,
Knowing what’s mine,
Always my time.

Benjamin Beczynski '22
Senior Poetry

Time

A young man sits with an old man on an idyllic spring day.
The young man ponders trivial things while the old man naps away.

The young man says “Shed some light upon this life of mine,
Tell me how it feels to experience all that time.”

And the old man replies:
“Son, there is nothing in this world as strange as that ticking of the clock,
And even in my advanced age there’s only little I really know about life on this
rock.

I have watched wars and empires comes and go,
And I have seen great peace and prosperity grow.

I would laugh with friends and family year after year,
All those good memories and people I still hold dear.

I used to be young and boisterous all those years back,
Now all that energy and vitality I have come to lack.

Son, if there is one thing you must take away,
You must cherish your youth and family everyday.”

Christian Foster '23
3rd Place, Junior Poetry

Time Forever

Time.
Time is interesting to say the least.
It doesn't stop for anyone or anything.
It's ever-flowing, ever changing,
Like a long, winding river.
It takes from you,
But is also a forgiver.
Time heals all wounds,
But also leaves the deepest ones.

Things don't happen overnight,
They take time to change.
They can take a few seconds,
To a few million years.
That's okay though,
Because time has an endless range.

Many things are not balanced, however,
I must admit.
Centuries to form a civilization,
But only one day to destroy it.
The grievous events of one night
Could very well topple an empire,
Or being about a plight with no end in sight.
Repercussions of an event so far in the past.

No one knows when it started,
No one knows when it will end.
Everything and everyone you've ever known;
None of it lasts forever.
Time is the only thing that is infinite,
And it will stay that way forever.

Mihir Joseph '25
Freshman Poetry

Time: Friend or Foe?

Time: It's the greatest ally; it's the greatest enemy. Being given time to think or to make decisions is usually a great gift, however, this could result in indecision and second-guessing. The opportunities that time provides are endless. On the other hand, the future may seem far enough away that one throws away their present, or simply forgets to cherish it. Time can be one's greatest resource, yet it could, too, be a foe.

Most children do not understand how lucky they are. In terms of time, they are richer than any CEO or billionaire. Time provides opportunity. Simply put, the opportunity for opportunities. Those with clean slates can potentially achieve anything. With enough time, there is no telling what any given child, or even adult, may grow up to be. It may seem quite cliché, but the dictum "time is money" tends to be quite correct. Time can be spent to acquire money or resources, yet no amount of money can truly buy time. In this sense, time may be the most valuable currency in the world. It, however, is constantly being spent. Whether working toward a great achievement or just getting by, the passing of time is inevitable. Whether living an ideal life or living a life of great toil and hardship, the "wheel in the sky" never stops turning.

Nonetheless, for a person who has committed a heinous act that keeps them awake at night, time is but a prison. It serves as a reminder of their action, or actions. The same can be said for one who has lost a loved one. They, too, are imprisoned by time; they are to spend the rest of their lives without their loved ones. Neither time nor money, nor any resource can fix these maladies. Yet, in everyday life, a common downside to time is not being able to spend it well or choosing to spend it poorly. If one is unwilling to take bold actions, it is quite likely that their life may be punctuated by many periods of boredom or tedium. Now, a somewhat "boring" life may be perfectly fine for some, but for others, it may seem like an outright crime. Either way, it is quite clear to see that time has been and always will be one of the greatest motivators for the actions of humankind. After all, our goals and ambitions are all based on time. What good is an achievement if it takes twice as long as one had planned it to take? How much time is every achievement worth?

Time has many meanings, which change from person to person. It is quite impossible to equate time with any other object, physical or abstract. Moreover, it is just as hard to come up with an easy-to-defend conclusion about time. One thing is clear, though: being aware of the complicated concept of time and understanding some of its philosophical complexities certainly allows for the improved allocation of such a precious resource.

Ronan Pell '25
Freshman Nonfiction

Meaningful Vacations

In 2018, my family experienced a tragedy. My grandmother peacefully passed away from brain cancer at home, surrounded by all of us. That morning, January 6th will be forever etched in my mind. From that day came emotions and feelings I had never felt before. Even now, I sometimes think to myself, What would grandma have thought about that?

Later that year, my mother and grandfather decided it would be sentimental to visit places that had had a special connection to my grandma. We visited Curaçao in May, a small island country off the coast of South America. Our relatives from the Netherlands live there and it was a place my grandparents had visited often in their younger years. Meeting my family and learning about what Curaçao is like was interesting to me; I had never been to Curaçao before, so it was a completely new experience. I'll never forget the vibrant, crystal clear waters and the late-night, tropical breeze which flowed over me as I slept outside in our hammock each night.

In June, we visited St. Kitts and Nevis, the place most connected to my grandmother. She was a first-generation American, and both of her parents were from the islands. Meeting some of the very people she knew proved to be quite an eye opener to me, as I got to know a part of her life that I never had before. St. Kitts and Nevis was an exciting place for me, too and one which I hope to visit again soon. Attending the banquet and listening to the music of the island was special to our family. It reminded us all of grandma and her effect on us. The soft brown sand of the Nevis beaches and the large variety of foods I had never tried, let alone seen, before are the most memorable for me.

Finally, in August, we visited Bermuda, a place I was much more familiar with. I had been to Bermuda three times before, and I already had fond memories of the island. Because my grandma's older sister and her family live in Bermuda, it didn't feel like that much of a vacation. However, Bermuda was where I probably had the most fun. The beaches in Bermuda were incredible, with such a large variety of sizes and intensities. The water was always warm and it was never humid there. Every night, I was surrounded by my extended family, all of us playing games, talking, and laughing with one another. The times I spent with my family there were some of the best times I have ever had.

The trips my family and I took that year meant something dear to each of us and our extended families and friends. All of those trips were a culmination of what it means to be together and the legacy my grandma has left behind. I know she was looking down on all of us from above, and still does today, a smile on her face.

Owen Griffin '24

3rd Place, Sophomore Nonfiction



The Seas of Poseidon

Jason Magistre '24

Uncle's Gift

My socks were dangled over the fireplace.
When I looked inside, you should've seen the look on my face.
Disappointed, I rummaged through the gifts under the tree.
To my surprise, there were none for me.

All except for one wrapped neatly aside.
I slowly opened the gift, already knowing what was inside.
I remembered that tight stitching.
That familiar feeling was always bewitching.

They were the socks that my uncle always got me on Christmas Day.
Instead of sulking, I shouted, "Hooray!"
For it is winter when my toes grow cold.
The socks kept them insulated like a firm stronghold.

My socks cushioned the soles of my feet.
To prevent sores as I traversed the rough concrete.
Those socks itch my legs like an untreated rash.
I still love them even though they tickle like a mustache.

I wore those socks throughout the year.
The holes in my socks were severe.
By the time next Christmas came.
I wished I had a new pair of socks again.

Jason Park '24
Sophomore Poetry



Feline Kinda Hungry

Timothy Haklar '23

Spirit of Sumo

In ancient times the heavenly Kami, known as Amatsukami, were held to be nobler than the earthly Kami, known as Kunitsukami. It was in these times that sumo was practiced not as a sport but as a ritual that honored all Kami alike. The green harvest match, referred to as Midori Shukaku, was held in small villages. The match honored the Kami of the earth in hopes of a prosperous harvest. The Shin match was held for the New Year and honored the heavenly Kami.

During these ancient times, a powerful Shogun of the East sought to unite all of Japan under a divinely chosen Emperor. The noble class supported The Shogun of the East. They supplied his army with the finest armor and the sharpest weapons. The army was unstoppable because it was blessed by the Amatsukami. With each military campaign, the army became more infamous and earned the name “The Army of the Rising Sun”. While many Shogun generals fell to the Shogun of the East, three powerful Shoguns of the West would not yield. They too, were powerful and their armies were blessed by the Kunitsukami. The earthly Kami were long resentful of the Amatsukami’s claim of superiority.

Although the three Shogun of the West’s armies were twice the size of their enemy, they were poorly trained. Many of the soldiers were farmers who had traded in their hoes for spears. Many warriors fell on each side. Locked in a stalemate, both sides met to negotiate. The generals came to an agreement that the war would be decided with a sumo match. Being a ritual that honored the earth and heavenly Kami alike, sumo seemed the fair choice. However, the Amatsukami were determined to not lose their claim of dominance. They disguised a powerful spirit as a human to wrestle for them. Meanwhile, the three Shoguns of the west searched high and low for the best Wrestler. While scouring the countryside, they heard tales of a small village with prosperous crop yields even during famines. The village claimed they were blessed by the earthly Kami because the local wrestler performed magnificent displays of sumo at the yearly harvest festival. They sought out the wrestler, Wakatakazuna, and he agreed to go with them.

The three Shogun of the west arrived first at the mountain where the sumo match was to be held. The sumo ring was on the highest peak, where heaven and earth touched. Soon, the Shogun of the East arrived. The mountain shook as his wrestler, the disguised spirit named Gherofuji, approached. The two men entered the ring and pre-match rituals were conducted. The confident Gherofuji scooped up a giant boulder of salt and threw it in the air to cleanse the ring. As the two sumo wrestlers stomped their feet for the ceremony, the earth quaked. Finally, the match began. They ran at each other and thunder erupted as the two colossal men collided. Wakatakazuna went for an underarm grab and Gherofuji shoved at him. Wakatakazuna dodged the thrust but lost his grip. They locked up again, but Wakatakazuna held his ground against the disguised spirit. Both of them grappled for an advantage. Wakatazuna thought he had found his opening and attempted to pull Gherofuji down, but Gherofuji didn’t budge. Then Gherofuji overpowered Wakatakazuna with rapid, powerful pushes. Wakatakazuna was up against the edge and could not cede another inch. He reached for a grip on Gherofuji’s belt. Summoning all his strength he pulled Gherofuji for a reversal. Gherofuji stumbled, but kept his feet in the ring. Wakatakazuna moved lightning fast and got behind Gherofuji. Directing all his strength into one attack, Wakatakazuna shoved the spirit out of the ring. The disguise spirit had been beaten.

Dalton Vassanella '23
Junior Fiction

Treasure

While sailing out at sea;
A voice called out to me,
It told me to go towards northern land;
To find treasure buried in the sand,
It was not like a pirate story;
I did not find fame, riches, or glory,
What I did find was quite amazing;
At it, I could not stop gazing,
The object I found was made of wood;
It reminded me of my childhood,
It was carved from a twig;
It was not that big.
In the past, this one small thing;
Made me feel like I was a king,
I remembered ruling over the land;
With my empire that I planned.
I once waged many wars;
Even against the dinosaurs.
In my kingdom, I was respected;
I was not neglected,
But I had to mature;
I was no longer pure.
My memories became a fog;
And then I found my Lincoln Log.

Brian Zafian '22
Senior Poetry

Life on the Ground

I am a rock. Windy shores, a vast ocean, the crash of waves, tall cliffs, that is what I knew. Every day the cliffs were dotted with travelers who all came to conquer a great challenge. They brought their ropes, helmets, and friends and attempted to scale the massive bluffs. In the evening more came to admire the beautiful sunset on the beach. For a rock, it was a good, peaceful life.

It was a normal day when it all changed. I felt the waves on me, the sun beating down on me, and heard the casual chatter amongst the climbers when the ground started to shake. Dust sprinkled down from the cliffs above. All I could see were the shadows of falling objects. All I could hear was the resounding crash of the falling objects and the frantic screams of the climbers. When the dust cleared and I could see clearly again, I saw the scattered bodies of climbers who didn't survive littering the beach. Their companions helplessly stood above them in shock, anger, and sadness. I wanted to get up and help them but I am a rock, I have no legs to walk to them, and no arms to comfort them with. Instead, I watched as the dead were carried into the ocean by the tide, some with their companions clinging to them. By the time the people with loud sirens and flashing lights arrived, most of the bodies had drifted out to sea, and the sun had disappeared.

For weeks, people searched for the bodies of those who perished with little luck. As time passed, fewer boats came to search for the dead, and soon nobody came to the beach anymore. Each passing day seemed endless. When those people died, my perception of my home changed. I no longer appreciated the ocean or the cliffs. I missed the people who climbed the cliffs, their hopes of reaching the top, their persistence in reaching their goals, and the way they cared for each other. The optimism they once brought to this place was now lost. My existence became nothing but staring into the deep abyss of the ocean waiting for life to change.

One day somebody came before me. It was the first time I'd seen someone with the same fire and ambition in their eyes as the climbers on that fateful day. He stepped forward and suddenly I was in his hand, rising upwards. He ran towards the cliff that had been empty for what seemed like an eternity, and when he reached the bottom, he placed me in his backpack. I couldn't see outside the bag, but it felt like we were ascending as if the boy was climbing the cliff. I could sense his body moving, his arms reaching for each new ledge and his legs searching for balance along the precipice. Surely this boy wasn't climbing this cliff without proper climbing gear. But when I could no longer sense the boy's sudden movements, he opened the bag and pulled me out along with a sandwich. To my amazement, we had reached the top of the cliff, a cool breeze wafting over me and the boy. He put me on the ground and sat down next to me, freely eating his sandwich as we watched the sunset. I had always seen others succeed in climbing the cliff, but never imagined I would make it here one day too. I took in the sunset and the new environment the boy had introduced me to with delight. His aspirations and innocence gave me a new beginning and appreciation for human passion.

Justin Lee '23

1st Place, Junior Fiction

Lost Balloon

Robert walked home with his balloon, but a big gust of wind separated him from it. Robert's red balloon did not fly away, but instead floated just out of reach. Robert tried to grab it, but each time he did, it floated a bit farther away, forever out of reach. Robert ran after it, but it started gliding away, and no matter how fast he ran, Robert's ruby red balloon was just out of reach.

Robert ran far past his house, and had to stop to regain his breath. Robert's rebellious, ruby red balloon stopped too, taunting him from just out of reach. He growled and swiped at it, but he missed. He grabbed his shoe from off his foot and took aim, but it only brushed the string of his resilient, rebellious, ruby red balloon. Robert dived for it, but it floated just out of reach. He got up and stomped after it, failing again and again with each swipe.

He pleaded with it, "Stop running from me!" but the rambunctious, resilient, rebellious, ruby red balloon only went faster.

He yelled, "I'm not trying to hurt you!" but the radical, rambunctious, resilient, rebellious, ruby red balloon kept moving.

Once again Robert stopped, out of breath, and once again, the object of his desire stopped too. Robert looked up at the ravishing, radical, rambunctious, resilient, rebellious, ruby red balloon, and ran away from it as fast as he could. He hoped to never see or think of it ever again and scrub this bad day from his memory, but the ridiculous, ravishing, radical, rambunctious, resilient, rebellious, ruby red balloon followed him. No matter which corner he turned and which obstacle he weaved through, it was there, stalking him from just out of reach.

Finally, Robert collapsed to the ground, and the round, ridiculous, ravishing, radical, rambunctious, resilient, rebellious, ruby red balloon loomed over him, blocking out the sun from his face. Robert climbed to his knees and looked up, taking in the sight of the rotund, round, ridiculous, ravishing, radical, rambunctious, resilient, rebellious, ruby red balloon. Robert had no words to say, just looked somberly at it. He climbed to his feet, staring at the radiant, rotund, round, ridiculous, ravishing, radical, rambunctious, resilient, rebellious, ruby red balloon.

His face lost its sad complexion and he accepted that he could never have it again. Robert's rich, radiant, rotund, round, ridiculous, ravishing, radical, rambunctious, resilient, rebellious, ruby red balloon moved closer to him, tempting him to grab it, but he did not. The balloon finally flew up and into the sky, out of reach, where it had been all this time.

Vincent Smythe '23

3rd Place, Junior Fiction

Darkness of Day, Light of Night

Twilight appears; its light will fade,
With colors like those of Van Gogh,
Light of the day and darkness of the night will trade.

Deep reds pervade,
Painted bordeaux,
Twilight appears; its light will fade.

West, the sun cascades,
To rise anew tomorrow,
Light and darkness now trade.

Apollo ends his crusade,
With movements allegro,
Twilight appears; its light does fade.

Consuming is the shade,
Left only is afterglow,
Light and darkness did trade.

Gone now is sunset's serenade,
Darkness has bested its foe,
Twilight's light did fade,
Darkness of day and light of night trade.

Ronan Pell '25
1st Place, Freshman Poetry



Blonded

Alex Hawryluk '22

The Man Who Saved the World

On October 27, 1962, the world could have ended from nuclear war if one person was peer pressured into making the wrong decision instead of making an informed decision. The Cuban missile crisis was a one-month and four-day stand-off between the United States and the Soviet Union. The United States had sent Jupiter nuclear missiles to Italy and Turkey in 1961. This made the U.S. able to hit Moscow with a nuclear missile before they had time to react. In response, the Soviet Union sent medium-range nuclear missiles to Cuba, who was its ally. When the United States discovered these missiles, President Kennedy disagreed with the rest of the military leaders on invading Cuba, and instead decided to set up a blockade around Cuba. This blockade wouldn't let any ship suspected of carrying weapons pass. The blockade was put around Cuba on October 22, 1962. But the Soviet Union continued to send ships to Cuba with weapons. On October 27, a small group of Soviet submarines was able to make it past the blockade. But one submarine, named B-59, was discovered by 12 American warships. The American ships pursued B-59, and the submarine dived deeper underwater. To have the submarine resurface and identify itself, one of the United States destroyers started dropping dummy explosives into the water. These explosives were not powerful enough to damage the submarine, but the submarine crew didn't know that. B-59 had also lost contact with Moscow a few days earlier so they assumed that war could have started. The submarine was armed with a nuclear-tipped torpedo. The flotilla commander, who commanded the group of submarines, named Vasily Arkhipov was aboard B-59. Arkhipov was born to a peasant family near Moscow in 1926. He went to naval school in the Soviet Union and graduated in 1947. In July of 1961, Arkhipov helped fix a cooling system

failure on a nuclear submarine which could have led to a nuclear meltdown. Now he was the flotilla commander on B-59. In the extremely hot submarine, the captain started to get anxious with what he thought were real explosives going off around the submarine and decided that they should fire the nuclear torpedo. The political officer also agreed, which would normally be enough to fire the torpedo. But since Arkhipov was aboard, and he was flotilla commander, the captain also needed his permission to fire the torpedo. The captain, political officer, and Arkhipov began to argue with only Arkhipov not agreeing to launch the torpedo. Arkhipov remained calm throughout the argument in the submarine. With the reputation he gained from the previous incident on the nuclear submarine, he eventually was able to persuade the captain that the explosives did not mean that there were other attacks against the Soviet Union and that he should surface the submarine. B-59 surfaced and were escorted away from Cuba. When they arrived back in the Soviet Union, the mission was seen as a failure and the crew members faced disgrace from their superiors. One admiral said it would have been better if the crew had gone down with the ship. Not until 1991 did documents revealing what had happened inside the submarine and that the submarine had a nuclear torpedo were made available. Arkhipov's ability to assess and evaluate the situation he was in and remain calm under extreme pressure from both his peers and events around him led him to a conclusion that may have saved the world. Arkhipov demonstrated his ability to work and form informed opinions and make well thought out decisions should be what leaders strive for today.

Michael Armao '25
Freshman Nonfiction

A Walk Down Memory Lane

Sometimes I reminisce about the past.
How life is short and how it won't last.
My mind is filled with wistful times,
When my grandma sang me nursery rhymes.

Oh, how I wish to go back to the good old days.
The past is gone but the memory stays.
As when my mind strays far away,
It longs for those simpler days.

When I was carefree and had no troubles,
I was just a little kid blowing soap bubbles.
I miss the times when I watched morning cartoons,
Or played with legos on those sunny afternoons.

I miss those days when I used to believe,
In Santa Claus, the Easter Bunny, and the Tooth Fairy.
Now that I am older, I'm less naive.
But I'm burdened with expectations and responsibilities.

Looking back on my childhood,
The days were long and life was good.
Although those days can never return,
I can't help but daydream and yearn.

I hold these memories close to me,
It contains the moments of what used to be.
These thoughts give me feelings that I can't explain, but who cares?
I'm just taking a walk down memory lane.

Arthur Yuen '25
2nd Place, Freshman Poetry



Breaking the Fourth Wall

Jason Magistre '24

Analysis of "Paint it, Black"

"Paint it, Black" is a song about grief, but more specifically the seven stages of grief. The song was performed by The Rolling Stones and was released in 1966. Throughout the verses, the "main character" goes through the seven stages of grief, or at least most of it. There is, however, a deeper and more sinister meaning to the already dark song.

In the first verse, the man is going through the emotion of anger as seen by his aversion to bright colors and symbols associated with happiness. His grief is so great that he can't stand to see other people enjoying themselves. Rather than try and move on, he blocks out everything else and only focuses on his loss. This directly correlates to the stage of grief that involves anger, completing one of the five. Furthermore, it can be interpreted that by wanting everything painted black or monotone, he no longer wants to see or feel anything anymore, setting up his thoughts in the next verses.

In verses two and three, the emotion of depression and denial are portrayed, and the song takes on a darker meaning. As the man places flowers on his lover's grave, he reflects that even the flowers had to die to be used and both will never return to life. This leads him to rationalize that death is just a normal part of everyday life, comparing it to the birth of babies, but ultimately proves futile as his rationalizing won't bring back the dead. Nearing the end of the verse, the man thinks about "fading away" to escape his grief and despair. This is where the song really takes on a darker tone; the man implies he'd kill himself to be free of the pain, saying that it's hard to live and function under such crushing heartbreak.

Finally, the emotions of blame and shock are realized in the man. Additionally, his grief leads him to delusion and bitterness. The man laments that he never saw his lover's death coming and is pained that he could not do anything to prevent it. This shows deep regret and frustration in his inability to save or protect what he holds dear. Eventually, this leads the man to delusions: hearing her laughter and voice before dawn, implying that he frequently dreams of her, only adding to his heartache. Whether he's asleep or awake, the man's dead lover is always on his mind, only fueling the vicious cycle of grief he is going through.

In conclusion, "Paint it, Black" is not just a song about the death of a loved one, but an intricate account of the effects of what that does to someone close to them. It accurately intertwines and flawlessly connects each verse to the stages of grief and is sure to portray each emotion. What seemed like a generic sad song, is found to be even more ominous and grim.

Joshua Peter '23

1st Place, Junior Nonfiction

Stages

Trapped

Alone I'm scared with no one to turn to
Not a single soul knows what I'm going through

Can I tell someone I wonder

Will they believe what I say

Or will they shut me out

Like they do everyday

Tired

I'm exhausted all the time

I'm frustrated by failure

Worn out, I'm fatigued, for time is my jailer

Can I tell someone I wonder

Will they believe what I say

Or will they shut me out

Like they do everyday

Angered

Am I angry at myself

Am I angry at others

Or is this just how I am

A man rude to his brothers

Can I tell someone I wonder

Will they believe what I say

Or will they shut me out

Like they do everyday

Defeated

Am I truly broken

Do I need fixing

Or am I too far gone

Like a ship that is sinking

Jake Stellatella '23

2nd Place, Junior Poetry

Stained by the Earth

In the Great Plains region, a Lakota father and son were preparing the fire for an oncoming buffalo herd. A strong gust of wind blew through the air. It was the afternoon, and the sun was shining down on the pair. Winter was coming, and more food needed to be stored.

There was no talking between the two until the son asked his father. “Father, why do we hunt buffalo?” The father told the son, “We hunt buffalo to survive. They feed us and clothe us.” Now the son didn’t question further, and silence once again filled the air.

“Father,” the son asked again, “why do we hunt buffalo?” The father once again answered, “We hunt buffalo to survive. They feed us and clothe us.” But this time, the son did not remain silent.

“Why are we hunting the buffalo? They are our friends. They feed us and clothe us and we worship them but yet we hunt them. The Chief told me that Inyan created the rocks and the trees and the buffalo and the rabbit with a spirit like us.’

The father paused for a moment. He was still crouched down, his hands hovering over the trap. Snow had started to fall on the green grass of the plains.

“We hunt to survive. The grass grows in the spring greener than before. Flowers and bushes bloom and the animals come out of their hiding places. There is no more cold, and the snow is pushed away. But when the winter comes, the trees and the grass and the flowers die. And when the grass and trees and flowers die, the animals hide and we are left with no food. And then we must kill to survive. Our spirits are created pure. Should we blame ourselves for being stained by the earth?”

When the father finished speaking, the son was silent. They continued working the traps, and when they had finished, the father and son got up and walked away, silently, while the snow continued to fall.

Marcus Justiniani '25
1st Place, Freshman Fiction

One Last Call

It was dawn on an early July morning on Saturday at my lake house. Yesterday evening I had decided to go fishing on my new boat which I had purchased for that exact reason. Before I went to sleep, I had set up my rods and reels with a brand new line and I rigged up different lures which included many different soft plastics and hard baits. As I connected the motor to the battery, I heard a loud splash at which I rapidly turned my head to a giant large mouth bass jump out of the water. At that moment I was determined to catch it because I now know that there are fish of that caliber and size. I only fished my lake once because I owned this house for only a month. As I parted away from the shore I went to the patch of lily pads across the lake. The first lure I decided to pick up was my lucky soft plastic worm with a black and blue color scheme. The first cast I made was that I decided to bomb the worm right into the center of the lilies. After giving the worm a couple hops along the bottom I felt something nick at my line. Knowing it was a bite due to the repetitiveness I immediately loaded up and set the hook into a small bass hiding in the lilies. I reeled him back into the boat with ease due to the size of the fish and let him back into the lake. The question of whether that fish on the first cast signifies good or bad luck throughout the day crossed my mind and lingered with me during the rest of my excursion. After about an hour later I moved towards deeper waters where I began to use my diving crankbaits to resemble baitfish. The question in my mind quickly turned into its bad luck and I’m not catching anything else. After another hour of patiently waiting I felt something take off with my bait and it was another bass, but this time it was a little larger than the first. Almost 5 hours have passed since I left the shore and because I haven’t eaten breakfast and it was getting close to lunch I decided it was becoming time to wrap up my fishing trip. On my way back I was passing where I saw the mammoth bass jump out of the water and suddenly determination took over my thought. Turning towards where the rods layed on the boat deck I was picking between many lure choices, but my lucky black and blue soft plastic worm. Casting it pin-point, right where I pictured it came up after letting it sink for about 5 seconds and giving it one hop along the bottom I felt a subtle nip at the bait. In a flash my line took off and I set the hook as best I could and after he was hooked. I saw my line go opposite of the boat and about 20 yards out I could see it was the giant bass, looking almost identical to the same one. It was the hardest fight of my life, feeling very back and forth between the fish and I. After around 5 minutes of keeping him hooked I pulled him into the boat. It was the biggest bass I’ve ever seen and the feeling around me felt so surreal. I was shocked at what just happened but enjoyed the moment as best as I could. I let him back into the lake for someone else to catch him. Whenever I go fishing now I will always live by being patient, and knowing that even when in doubt always make that one last cast.

Jason Nawrocki '24
Sophomore Fiction

Now Hear This!

I am not like most people; I am different. I was born with a genetic mutation called Connexin 26, which causes hearing loss. My mother would call my brother's name when he was one year old and he responded. When she would call my name, I didn't respond, so I went through hearing tests and the doctor told my mother that I was deaf.

Two years later I got my first cochlear implant and at that young age, I didn't remember much, but the doctors inserted a magnet in my head and put a wire through my cochlea, the part of the ear linked to hearing. Another year later I got my second implant on the right side. The cochlear implant is a mini-computer that picks up sound and processes it through the auditory nerve. While most children learn how to speak at an early age, I first had to learn how to pronounce sounds, so I went to auditory-verbal therapy. I also went to a special school that helped me identify different sounds and taught me to speak properly. I also mastered reading lips, and I can repeat what someone says by watching his or her mouth.

Throughout elementary school, I was always fussy about keeping one implant on. I hated wearing it because it was very heavy and annoying; however, when I was around 12, the battery in one of my implants died and my world became silent. After that experience, I became paranoid whenever my implant battery stopped working and I also grew anxious about losing the device because, without it, all my hearing was gone.

Trying to hear in noisy environments may be easy for most people but me? Forget it! I would constantly ask friends to repeat what they said. Thankfully, there's an option on my cochlear implants where I can press a button to switch to another program that fades out the background noise, making it easier to hear the person I'm trying to talk to.

When the pandemic hit it wasn't a challenge at first, but when I had to go to school in September of that year, I had to try to learn in an environment where everyone wore masks that covered their mouths, preventing me from lip reading. It was very hard on the first day of school and I felt so tired and lost. My parents ordered window masks for my teachers that worked better than cloth masks because I could hear better and they made lipreading much easier. Regular masks made it even harder when I was trying to talk to my classmates because they often mumbled and the mask prevented me from reading their lips, so I couldn't understand what they were saying.

Later that year, the whole school shut down and would go virtual. That was my first time using Zoom. Even though students and teachers didn't wear masks, the smaller computer screens made reading their lips difficult and the video quality made hearing more challenging. Without the cochlear implants, I probably would not be able to attend St. Joe's, and I wouldn't be as academically successful or socially and athletically involved with the school. The cochlear implant technology is great and I'm so grateful that it has changed my life.

Devon Kiessling '24
Sophomore Poetry

My Life With Tourette Syndrome

Living with Tourette Syndrome has become easy for me. Okay, maybe not easy but manageable. I was diagnosed when I was seven years old. I think most people's impression of Tourette Syndrome (TS) is a child who curses a lot or makes uncontrollable noises. It's not just that though, the tics can be physical and vocal. I used to jump a lot, turn my head, or make weird noises. At first, I only wanted to be a regular and normal kid.

Early on, I would combat the tics using competing responses. I could sense the tics before they occurred, which made them easier to control in the future. I underwent therapy to aid me in recognizing the behaviors and emotions that would trigger the tics and intensify them. Once I began to identify these negative feelings and emotions, I learned to control them, along with the Tourette's. Although I still have tics, I have learned to manage them with the assistance of competing responses. While there isn't a cure for Tourette Syndrome, I have learned to live with it.

I wanted to raise awareness for Tourette Syndrome and share my story with others who are similar to me. I became involved with the New Jersey Center for Tourette Syndrome and helped raise money for one of their fundraisers. I looked online to see prominent figures that also have TS, and I enrolled in leadership seminars. The inspiration from other peoples' stories allowed me to see my Tourette's in a better perspective. I began to see TS as something that made me different and special, rather than isolated and different.

Above all, I want people to know that I am a regular kid, but also unique and special. I might have a few tics here and there, but it is nothing major. I am filled with sorrow when I think of kids who have tics and don't have the opportunities that I do. I am blessed with having sympathetic friends and family who understand what I am going through. I am not bullied or teased about having Tourette's, which makes me sad for those who are.

I want everyone to know that being different isn't a curse or a problem, rather it is a blessing. If everyone was the same in the world, there would be no creativity or individuality, which especially defines my generation. I pray that everyone who feels lonely realizes that they always have someone to turn to, whether it is family, friends, or God. No one is by themselves in this world. We need only to find those who accept us and love us for who we are.

Christian Concepcion '24
1st Place, Sophomore Nonfiction

Falling Back

Roses are red
Violets are blue
In the beginning,
It was just us two.

Put a smile to my face
Stuck on like glue
Love was a race,
And I had no clue

Roses died
Your intentions faded
I asked if you were down to ride,
didn't know the expiration was dated

We got old
Things got colder
Lies were told
We shrugged our shoulders

Sitting in my room
Thinking about you
Seeing violets, I was blue
Hoodie smelled like your perfume

It's a new year
I'm back where I am
Glad I went through that
Just to hold your hand again.

Giovanni Guerriero '24
Sophomore Poetry

Falling Up

I woke up on a cold hard cement floor with my head ringing, interrupted intermittently by flashes of memory from the previous night. I looked up and was greeted with the sight of a decrepit room, covered in graffiti and foreign writings. A single bare bulb served as my only source of light. An old, rusted metal door was sealed shut on the other side of the room. The floor was littered with black grease stains. Upon looking up, I noticed the ceiling was cloaked in darkness. I put both hands on the floor trying to push myself to my feet, and slipped, hitting my chin hard. A woozy feeling set in and my vision was filled with fleeting spots. I looked down at my hands and felt sick to my stomach as I discovered they were covered in a viscous layer of blood. The light flickered briefly before returning to its dull state. I glanced up at it again and for the first time realized that it was floating, with the familiar glint of a metal wire above absent. An acrid scent filled my nose, and I recoiled, cringing at the smell. Smoke curled up from the floor, enveloping me, and obscuring the room in a haze. The light from the bulb was warped by the rising smoke, illuminating the tendrils snaking their way to the ceiling. The smoke disappeared into the void and I came to the startling realization that the void was closer. I desperately looked around, searching for anything that could be used to escape my prison. My gaze fell upon a grimy, cracked hammer. After getting back to my feet, I walked over to the tool and picked it up, staining the faded wood a dark red color. Then, I walked over to the door to inspect it. To my pleasant surprise, the door wasn't nearly as sturdy as I'd suspected from my view on the floor. The metal had buckled under an unknown force, and was unstable. I lifted the hammer past my head, and swung it into the door with full force. It bounced off with a resounding clang. I was initially disappointed, but upon further inspection, I realized the hammer had made a small dent in the already deformed metal. I allowed myself to feel a little hope as I repeatedly struck the hammer into the door, making progress little by little. Dripping with sweat, I looked up in exhaustion, and was greeted with the sight of the void barely a foot above me. Frantically, I started pounding the door at an urgent pace. My muscles finally gave out and I sank to the floor in despair. A million thoughts raced through my head, as I tried to figure a way out of the room. At last, I came to the realization that there was no escape other than through the door. The hammer clattered to the floor as my hands began to shake. I looked up again and saw that the void was now at my standing height. Fear paralyzed me, and I felt my breathing get harder and my heartbeat quicken. Suddenly, memories flooded back. Memories of good times and of people cherished. Memories of triumphs and losses. Memories worth living for. With a renewed vigor, I sat up, clutched the hammer until my knuckles were white, and began to repeatedly hit the door with the last remnants of my strength. With a final strike of the hammer, and a loud scream, the door clanged open, and I peered beyond my prison for the first time. An abyss stared back. Suddenly, an invisible force nudged me forward, and I fell headfirst into the dark. I tried to scream but it was swallowed by the vacuum. With a gasp, I realized I was falling up.

Francisco Tellez '22
3rd Place, Senior Nonfiction

I am Peruvian

The bell ringing, desks and chairs moving across the room; it was every kindergartener's favorite, lunchtime. Who could not love lunch? I asked myself while finding a table to sit with friends. We all found a table and sat down, where it came for the big reveal, what did everyone bring for lunch. One by one everyone pulled out their sandwiches, and it was finally my turn to pull out my lunch. I opened my container to see a cau cau; which put a big smile on my face. As I dig my fork in for a bite, I look up to see everyone leaving the table and shouting, "Gross, what is he eating." Was there something wrong with me? Am I not allowed to eat?" Questions like these were constantly floating around me; while the answer was so simple

Throughout the years of my life, I've been recognized as a normal American being, or so I thought. In middle school everyone was just kids, we had nothing to worry about, and going to school was something I enjoyed. As the years went by, it was time for me to take on the next step, high school. Everyone I went to middle school with ended up going to the same high school, but I decided to go to another high school. On my first day, I told myself "It's just school, I can just meet people in my classes and make some new friends". Man was I wrong. Everyone already had their friend groups, but this wasn't going to stop me from making new friends. I was wrong again, not only did I not make any friends, but I was given new nicknames. I was now known as "Mexi" and "lawnmower".

These nicknames stuck with me for two months, which felt like an eternity. No one spoke to me, everyone just moved away from the lunch tables whenever I opened my lunch; it was always "go back and mow my lawn". It got to a point where I changed my whole character. I got a different hairstyle, wore different clothes, and I stopped bringing my mother's cooking for lunch. This was okay for me because people were talking to me, for once I thought I finally made friends. Once again, I was wrong. They continued addressing me as a "Hispanic", "lawnmower", and "Mexi". I wasn't going to let things happen on repeat, it was time for me to be the proud Peruvian I am.

I am Peruvian and of Incan descendant, my parents were born and raised in Peru. They had to take on adult roles at a young age, and they always worked hard, even to this day. All Peruvians go through this process because they have the Incas blood in them so that their hard work can benefit and be used for the next generation. My parents came to America to provide a better life for me. I realize now I could care less about those nicknames and bullying because they don't have the Peruvian work ethic that my parents and ancestors bestowed in me.

Though my parents wanted me to live a different life than theirs, I am willing to work hard, take risks, and do what is needed for success. People in Peru aren't able to have the opportunities my parents provided for me, so the things I will accomplish aren't just for me, but my country.

Gianmarco Iparraguirre '22
3rd Place, Senior Nonfiction

In a Little World

While waiting to leave, I wandered about my surroundings until I discovered something that caught my eye. It was a small terrarium, a glass box containing a small ecosystem, pressed up against a window of a quiet science classroom. It had seemingly been left there long ago, as many plants and small insects could be seen inside. The panes of the container were foggy, reducing the outside environment to the plain blue color of the sky. With nothing else better to do, I went to look at it, but as I observed the life within, I soon found myself lost in thought, fixated upon the environment.

I pondered over the tiny and microscopic organisms. I was taught that their small and simple forms can hide unexpectedly complex systems, carrying out functions that differ vastly from humans. Their size made me realize that this space was the world to them, however small it may be. I considered their vast numbers, and how a miniscule army hid within these walls. I grew to appreciate how far life has gone since then.

I tracked the small insects roaming about. I learned there was a chain in which these organisms followed, a hierarchy that comes with each ecosystem. Their behavior fascinates many, being the topic of study all over the world. Yet, they do not know it, only performing what they know. But, I appreciate the similarities they have with us.

I studied the plants growing within the environment. I knew they have been here the longest, having grown to this state over time. Their functions are vital to this world, and the help to add to its natural beauty. Without them, this world wouldn't be the same, and many may not even realize it. I've appreciated the work they do.

It was at this time that I realized how long I was immersed within the small realm of the terrarium. Looking around, I found a nearby clock that hung on the wall. The time displayed that it was nearly time for me to leave. As I go to the door, I look back once more at the ecosystem and its inhabitants. No longer waiting, I left, leaving them in their little world.

Elijah Levantino '22
2nd Place, Senior Nonfiction

Beauty is in the Eyes of the Beholder

As the newly wed entered the apartment on Delancey Street in Brooklyn, Hip Hop music could be heard faintly from an adjacent room. Nothing seemed to be in order. Dirty clothes captivated the floor, used dishes present on the kitchen counter, and arbitrary lights were turned on. Before she went on to deal with the great, scattered mess, she opened a set of curtains to deliver an energizing aura. Taking a deep, heavy breath of air, the rays illuminated her. Glancing toward the Williamsburg Bridge, her eyes lingered, finally spotting a large, blue tarp, tented against the concrete. Six men, wearing dark colored hoodies, surrounded it. Some wore the famous brand Supreme; Others Timberland and FUBU. The figures looked ordinarily genderless in their common street attire. Recalling her objective, she shrugged and refocused on the messy room.

After some time passed, she began vacuuming underneath the bed, and felt as if something was oddly blocking her path. Taking out her iPhone 7 and turning on the flashlight, she realized several Sprayground brand GUBs (Graffiti Utility Backpacks) opened, their inner contents visible. Krylon, Molotow, Iris, etc. You name a color, and there was at least one bag that exteriorly contained every imaginable one. Glistening as bright as moonlight, one content stood out the greatest: A spray can of neon acrylic Montana Gold. Peeking out of the GUBs were more white surgical masks and bandanas in fluorescent colors. Pulling a bag out to further inspect, even more became visible. Spray bottles interiorly aligned the bag perfectly, leaving no room for a finger to slip in between. Contemplating if her boyfriend found an affection towards backpacks, she took one out to question him later. Pushing herself from out under the bed, she keenly noticed her fiancé's new shoe rack, containing the original 1970 Van's Airwalks. Knowing the hefty price tag of an estimated \$15,000, she noticeably gasped and felt an aggravated fury flow through her body, like the Nile River during the rainy season.

As she finished tidying up the small apartment, she walked back over to the window, planning to close the shades. However, she instinctively realized a change: The figures were now folding the tarp, implying a conclusion to an event. A military-like precision and rapidness were evident.

In a matter of a few seconds, one person placed a tarp into a shopping cart and began to roll off. The other members walked collectively behind, and then suddenly parted. With the tent gone, a masterpiece was unveiled. The wife gently placed her cleaning supplies on the ground, and walked over to a nearby drawer, pulling out camo binoculars. She focused the lenses, and saw it: A backpack laid on the ground near the mural, as if being a souvenir for the first discoverer.

Instantly, she realized that her husband was secretly Banksy, the most infamous street artist.

Michael Weikum '22
1st Place, Senior Fiction



Green With Envy

The techniques used to produce this Saint Joseph color-themed piece are called spiral stitch, netting stitch, and peyote stitch. I utilized spiral stitch to create the necklace rope, netting stitch and further embroidery while capturing the green tiger eye cabochon, and peyote stitch to create the toggle closure. These techniques date back to the ancient Egyptians and can also be found in Native American artwork. The materials used are precision cut silver Japanese Delica beads, Swarovski crystals, a green Tiger's Eye Cabochon, and a large Hematite bead. Green Tiger's eye is largely a protective stone that wards off evil spirits and negative energies. Hematite is said to keep us grounded and safe. It is supposed to strengthen our connection to the earth and provide us with a sense of safety and security.

Frau Jones

Besieged

The man in purple arises from His throne
and from His high castle looks upon His own.
A mass encircles the citadel,
holding the purple man in a cell
debating his fate unknown.
A great Knight kneels before the man.
“Answer me lord, your wish is my command.”
“Sir Peredur, my wish: set me free!
Drive every man, woman, child out to the sea.”
Out the great Knight rode for the crown’s land.
From His high castle the man looks down
to find brave Peredur fighting for His crown.
But the tired serfs are sick of his rule
and bold Peredur is caught in a whirlpool.
The great Knight struggles on the ground.
“Useless knave, lowliest of man!
In this hour I gave thee one command:
‘Drive every man, woman, child out to the sea.’
And now the waves rush towards me!
I, the highest upon the land!”
A maimed Knight limps into the hall.
“My lord, I have been spared to tell you all.
Your people wish to be set free too.
Accept this demand and they shall serve you.
Else your choice shall be your fall.”
“Curse you, the gallows shall be your fate!
None shall question my mandate!”
A sound came from the great hall’s door.
Before his feet a servant fell to the floor.
“Sire, the serfs have breached the gate!”

Matthew B. Imhoff '23
1st Place, Junior Poetry

The Cold War

The Cold War was the term that was used to describe the tension between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republicans (USSR or Soviet Union) and the United States. Unlike other wars, the Cold War was a war of technological advances instead of warfare, hence the name “Cold” War. The war was known to last from 1947 to 1996. It was a time in which many revolutionizing advancements were made, multiple wars raged, and the world was almost destroyed beyond repair.

One of the Cold War’s well-known accomplishments was the Space Race. The Soviet Union and the United States were fighting for the glory of accomplishing their goals in space. On April 12, 1961, Yuri Gagarin became the first man to reach outer space on Vostok 1. This was a massive achievement for the Soviets in the War. However, President John F. Kennedy motivated the US government, and on July 20, 1969, Neil Armstrong became the first man to walk the surface of the Moon. This was one of mankind’s greatest achievements, and secured the victory of the United States in the Space Race.

The Cold War also sparked many other conflicts in different countries. With the Soviet Union pressuring other countries to practice communism, the United States opposed them and tried to prevent the spread of communism. This rivalry became so immense that it triggered war. The root cause of the Korean and Vietnam wars was the Soviet Union attempting to force communism onto these countries. There were numerous other wars in different parts of the world, but they all stemmed from the Cold War.

Perhaps the most terrifying event of the Cold War was the Cuban Missile Crisis. The Cuban Missile Crisis was the closest the world has ever been to a nuclear war. In 1962, American surveillance planes discovered that the Soviet Union was constructing nuclear weapons at a base in Cuba. This was perilous for the United States since Cuba was only 90 miles away from Miami, and was also relatively near most major US cities. President John F. Kennedy ordered for a naval blockade to prevent ships from reaching Cuba. For a few days, the world was closer to nuclear war than any other time in history. However, a few minor events caused the Soviet Union to back down. Even to this day, the world has never been closer to nuclear war than it was during the blockade.

The Cold War was one of the most influential wars in history. A war fought with actions rather than violence, this war was one like no other. This war was so delicate that the slightest change in a minor action could have produced a completely different outcome than the present one. It was a time period of revolutionizing advancements, raging wars, and rigorous struggles between capitalism and communism.

Devraj Patel '25
1st Place, Freshman Nonfiction

Winter

The cold winds sweep the landscape.
The darkness covers the sun from the other seasons.
Change is upon us during winter.
The bright, sunny colors of the other seasons have escaped.

Distress is presented, as winter covers the landscape we have known.
Days become shorter.
The morning sun rises earlier.
The sky becomes darker as we are shown.

Our days of brightness and youth are over.
For mellowness and harshness would now approach.
New birth for the year now awaits us.
The time in our lives pass over our shoulders.

Birds migrate and people prepare for shelter.
As cold weather starts to come down.
The trees start to get covered with snow.
As snow on the ground begins to enter.

The whistling in the trees matches the fire
As we warm up to the bitterness of the blizzard
Spending time with loved ones as the holidays begin,
When we bundle up with our coats and attire.

As we complain about the numbing temperatures and we are starched.
We do not appreciate the blessing we are bestowed upon.
Appreciate all the time you spent with your family and friends this season.
Before you know it, it's over, here is March.

Justin Hawryluk '24
Sophomore Poetry

Christmas Comes to the City

The breeze winds its way through the alleys
The lamp floods the street in light
The river's flow is the only sound
The busy city is at rest tonight

The Cathedral's bell tolls
Twelve times it rings as the snowfall starts
A small flake falls onto my hand
Soon it will cover all the city parks

The square is approaching
The sounds of life grow nearer
So many colors, so many smiles
The light snow makes the main evergreen glimmer

More people file out of the Basilica
The air is filled with cheer
I stand in a winter wonderland
My heart feels at whole here

Bence Kovacs '22
Senior Poetry

How Data Science is Evolving the Stock Market

As we progress through the era of AI, also known as artificial intelligence, it is apparent that humans have turned yet another sector over to data science: the stock market. Data science, which is the use of algorithms to discern patterns in data sets, has proven to be more reliable than humans in making the right decisions regarding financial trading. In recent years, there have been many ways in which data science has revolutionized the market.

When trading, perhaps the most valuable knowledge to possess is how the market will behave in both a short-term and long-term. The task of anticipating these trends has been assigned to a category of data science called big data analytics. Researchers analyze the factors that cause the prices of stocks to be volatile, including supply and demand along with societal and political trends. Using their findings, they build predictive models that can spot whether or not a stock's value will rise or drop.

Because of data science's capabilities to estimate the value of stocks ahead of time, it has become a common adviser for many individual investors. Using the patterns spotted by the AI software, machines can now tell people the reasonable price at which to buy and/or sell certain stocks based on the aforementioned factors. This reduces the amount of risks that investors have to take and increases their chances of receiving higher returns.

The abilities of AI trading systems are beneficial to private investors, but even more so to large companies. Recently, many corporations have transferred trading responsibilities from humans to robots. For example, in 2019, JP Morgan implemented its first AI robot to handle financial trades within its global equities algorithms business.

Because of its increased accuracy in calculating the fluctuation of the stock market, AI devices have become instrumental for all traders. The next big step for data scientists will be improving the percentage of times that AI models are correct in their predictions until it is close to 99%, to remove all uncertainty from the market.

Armon Singh '23
Junior Nonfiction



Gold by Design

Ancient Greek currency makes up this wall of gold and glass. The design is meant to showcase the coin pieces in an unbroken pattern, as secure as gold is to the market.

Mr. Paul Caruso

Louder!

I keep my eyes shut to block out the light, but my attempts to block out the sound prove futile. The cheers of the crowd consume my ears. The thuds of their unsynchronized feet break my focus. All I can hear is them getting:

Louder

Louder

Louder

Louder

Louder!

“Snapback into it!” my subconscious tells me. I heed its advice and open my eyes. The blinding brightness from the beams of light all around, shock me into self-realization. I’m here for a reason. The king of these people is a fraud, and I am here to dethrone him; in a battle to the death! Two marble gates as large as a house slowly open to reveal the biggest con of them all, King Draven. He’s covered in a set of pristine chainmail armor; in one hand he wields an iron sword with a golden handle and sharp silver hilt and in the other hand a circular copper shield decorated with symbols of war... just my luck. I look to my right hoping to see weapons of equal caliber; I see nothing. Panic shoots through my body as I realize I might have nothing to defend myself with. I look to my left and to both my disappointment and relief I see: a copper chest plate, one size too big; a rusted mace and chain, with sharp spikes covering the mace; and a rock with a sling, an insulting reference to the story of David and Goliath. Clearly, the organizers of this duel have it out for me, comparing me to David and King Draven to Goliath. No matter, for I will prove to be the victor. I clamp the heavy chest plate to myself and grab the grip of the mace and chain. To insult the organizers, I keep the sling and stone in my pocket-as if I was telling them I would use it. The sound of a hundred trumpets blaring a high C note fills the air. It’s time.

Aarav Zutshi '23

Junior Fiction

Relationships

Relationships are like flowers,
Please water them every hour,
A garden lacking water will wilt,
A relationship without care,
Will have you full of guilt.

Saying hello everyday,
Or at least “Hey, by the way”,
Will keep people in the know,
That you care for them so.

So take a second every hour,
To put water in your flowers,
‘Cause if you’re flowers don’t wilt,
Your relationships won’t have guilt.

Emmanuel Brito '22

Senior Poetry

June Day

I had begun that June day the same way I had done every other morning that summer. At daybreak, I awoke, coaxed by my alarm, and got up from bed. I brushed my teeth, changed my clothes, and put on my sneakers. Outside, I finished my warm-up, a short jog followed by some dynamic stretching, and was now ready for today's run. But what I saw along that narrow country road reminded me that despite my familiar routine, my circumstances were anything but familiar. Faintly beaming through the valley's thick morning mist, I could spot sets of headlights by the dozen from cars that had likely been parked long before sunrise.

It had been two days since I departed from the Center of Faith Justice in New Jersey on a nine-and-a-half-hour car ride to Dunlow, West Virginia. It was the job of us student volunteers to assist the Dunlow Community Center, which acts as a local food repository, in organizing and distributing its available resources, namely through food lines, and today would be our first line. With this challenge on my mind, I continued my run.

Afterward, I arrived toward the end of breakfast, grabbed something to eat, and sat down with everyone else. When the subject of me being late was discussed, I was surprised by the interest in my running. Eventually, I was asked why I run, a seemingly trivial question; however, I couldn't muster more than some conditioned response and vague sentiments.

We split into groups to prepare, and when the first car pulled up to the lot, each station loaded different goods from food to furniture into the vehicle. One by one the cars came and went, and all the while that question lingered in my mind. As I carried heavy boxes of food, a monotonous and tiresome task, I couldn't help but wonder why I had signed up to do this for a whole week of my summer vacation, and more mysteriously, why I enjoyed doing it.

At that moment I understood that the answer to both of these questions—why I run and why I serve—are intrinsically connected. Life would be more convenient if I didn't run. Without the commitment, I'd have more time to myself, and I'd certainly be more comfortable at home on my couch than during long runs in the wintertime. Similarly, I know how much I would love a single day, let alone a whole week, of extra time off from school. Yet I find myself drawn to these activities and consider them not as mere avocations, but as serious passions.

Unlike other sports where a victory is strictly defined as the winning team or athlete, in running there is an emphasis on self-improvement, with runners proudly walking away from a race with personal bests instead of medals or trophies; a more satisfying prize. Although I find purpose in running through the satisfaction of self-improvement, I don't believe running to be a purely self-centered quest. Rather, by trying my best, my efforts could serve as a catalyst for someone else's breakthrough, whether they be a teammate or a competitor.

With service, I can directly improve the lives of others and help create a more equal starting line for all.

After miles of cars and hours of work, the food line that Tuesday came to a successful end and was followed by a second larger one on Thursday. In total, over 60,000 pounds of food and supplies were donated that week.

At dinner on the night before we left, I asked to lead group prayer and began with a passage often repeated by my freshman cross country coach, Br. Richard Levin: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith" (2 Timothy 4:8). We had won our battle against injustice and poverty. Yet that week we had only finished our leg of the race. Wherever I go, I want to be the one to carry on the baton.

Joseph DeRosa '22

2nd Place, Senior Nonfiction

A History Rediscovered

Place on an ancient map,
over the mountain, beyond faithful fields,
A kingdom so attractive fell to scraps
Broken inside their very own shields

Minds of man that chaos blighted
And the fair kingdom's shining future is vandalized
Only few of its records recited
And its dormant potential in thought realized

Here I went to sight the kingdom
to see proof of its existence
not for any recognition or income
Just to see if it needed assistance

When I arrived, the resting grounds were pretty.
Barely signs of chaos, but more rather like a heavenly pity

Steven Podczewinski '22

3rd Place, Senior Poetry

Mom

She yells at me to get my grades up.
We quarrel whenever I go out with my friends,
Sometimes I hate my mother but I still love her.
She'll give me a myriad of chores,
And has bizarre rules that I need to follow.
Sometimes I hate my mother but I still love her.
She doesn't talk much to me if it isn't bickering,
And she doesn't say many words of support.
Sometimes I hate my mother but I still love her,
But she leaves work at 9 and comes home at 7.
When she finally comes home, she makes dinner then passes out on the couch.
Sometimes I hate my mother but I still love her.
She can't come to many of my games but when she does,
She's the first to cheer when I get a hit.
Sometimes I hate my mother but I still love her.
She works long days to send me to private school,
And to let me do the things that I love.
Sometimes I hate my mother but I still love her,
As I've grown older I've began to understand,
That all she's ever done was because she's loved me,
I love her.

Ryan Kim '22
Senior Poetry

Rescue Me

There he sat, eyes wide open,
amongst a sea of the other unwanted.
On four legs, he stood uncertain,
floppy ears and tail pointed.

A majestic dog, his breed was Beagle
the chest held high - so regal.
Spotted coat of black, brown, and white,
the moment I saw him, it was love at first sight.

Into a room, we went to play,
full of joy, his past far away.
Chasing a ball in the room, he roamed,
It was him whom I wanted to take home.

Four years together with my furry best friend,
praying that this time will never end.
Did I rescue him, or did he rescue me?
Together, we live happily.

William Kwiatkowski '24
1st Place, Sophomore Poetry

A Chilly Halloween Night

The wind blew the leaves across the street, The yellow street lights shined, and the moon lit up the night sky on this chilly Halloween night. If you looked around, the children had smiles on their faces, bags filled with candy. James and Billy were dressed as their favorite horror movie characters. James as Jason Vorhees and Billy as Micheal Myers. These kids were not the nicest of kids. They picked on younger kids any chance they could. Even on this Halloween night, they were up to no good. They have already taken all of someone's candy, and were about to steal another. "Hey Will, whatcha got there?" Will Hardgrove began running with his bag of candy when he saw the boys. He didn't get far after tripping on a stick on the sidewalk. Billy and James laughed and pointed. They then walked over and ripped the bag of candy out of poor Will's hands

"Thanks!" said James sarcastically as they began to walk off. "You guys will pay for this one day!" Will said, with tears streaming down his face. The boys ignored him and started getting more candy from each house. The boys hit every house on the block except for one at the corner. The house was disheveled looking, boards on the windows and deteriorating paint on the outside. The boys didn't notice, too focused on more candy and stepped right up to the front porch. Billy went to ring the doorbell but then hesitated when he saw it was rusted. "Ew," he said. James pushed him aside and clicked the button. Nothing happened. He clicked it again and no sound was made. James began to get angry and decided to just knock. So he struck the door with his fist. The door creaked open. The lights were on, with a bowl of candy sitting on a lonely table at the end of the hallway. "Trick or treat!" Billy said with a voice crack. No one came. "Let's just go in and grab that whole bowl, no one is even here anyways," James said ambitiously. Billy just looked at the bowl with a nervous look. "Y-you go first though," he muttered. "Baby," James snarled. James stepped in, looking around cautiously and tip-toed his way to the bowl, Billy nervously followed. As he got inside more he heard the Television playing loudly in the room next to it. This didn't stop him. He put both hands on the bowl, and yanked. The bowl didn't budge, somehow stuck to the table. When James attempted to remove his hands they didn't budge either. He yanked and yanked but his hands were stuck to the bowl, which was stuck to the table. James began to panic and started running back for the door. It was shut and locked from the outside in almost an instant. Billy started banging on the door. "Let me out!" he yelled. A hooded figure emerged from the distant darkness of the hallway and approached James, who was still stuck to the bowl. "Help!" he squealed. The man grabbed James and covered his mouth. Billy watched while clinging for the door. "I've seen what you have done," said the hooded figure with a deep voice. He then tied James up, covered his mouth with duck tape and placed him right next to a skeleton holding a full bowl of candy just as James was. The hooded figure approached Billy and gave him James' candy bag. Find Will Hardgrove and give this to him, or else you are next. Billy, speechless, nodded quickly and ran out the door. "Candy is for the children who are nice to others James," Said the masked figure. He then blew out the candle that lit up the room. Leaving nothing but darkness to the creepy room.

Edward Avallon '25

2nd Place, Freshman Fiction

The Special Forest

Once upon a time, in the Early Middle Ages, there was an abnormal forest that took up hundreds of acres throughout the countries of France and Germany. This forest bore sweet and amazing fruit that communities around would harvest as soon as they were ripe. The craze for this delicacy grew nation-wide, and everyone wanted to get their hands on it. A local feud between two neighboring communities spurred because of the obsession with it. These battles that commenced were violent and unrelenting. There was no sense of mercy throughout these fights, that eventually both sides didn't even have enough men to continue this war. Therefore, they made an agreement to end it and share the precious good.

During the season in which this fruit grew, both sides were eagerly ready to start picking. They waited, and waited, and waited even more. But unfortunately, nothing sprouted after the inhumane war that just occurred. You see, while these horrible events were ongoing the senses of the forest knew that the gourmet fruit had become a problem. So, because of this war, it didn't grow anymore. Farmers stood among the grounds of the forest in boredom, and wondered if the fruit would ever come. After 3 months, they gave up and inevitably accepted that it wouldn't return.

The two communities that fought for nothing, felt bitter and sad that so many lives were lost over something that didn't even appear. This taught them the lesson of how important it is to share what nature gives you, and to not refer to violent actions if your greed is taking over. After the fruit was gone for good, a community full of friendship thrived even more than before. The fruit never sprouted again hundreds of years later, and now this tale is something that is used to promote friendship instead of violence.

Troy Boucher '25

3rd Place, Freshman Fiction

Summer Storms

The stormy, gruesome rains and winds of hell
Did rage across a gray yet pretty sky,
And all the children playing games could tell
the powdered snowflakes raining from the sky,
were acid leaves on which our souls would fell,

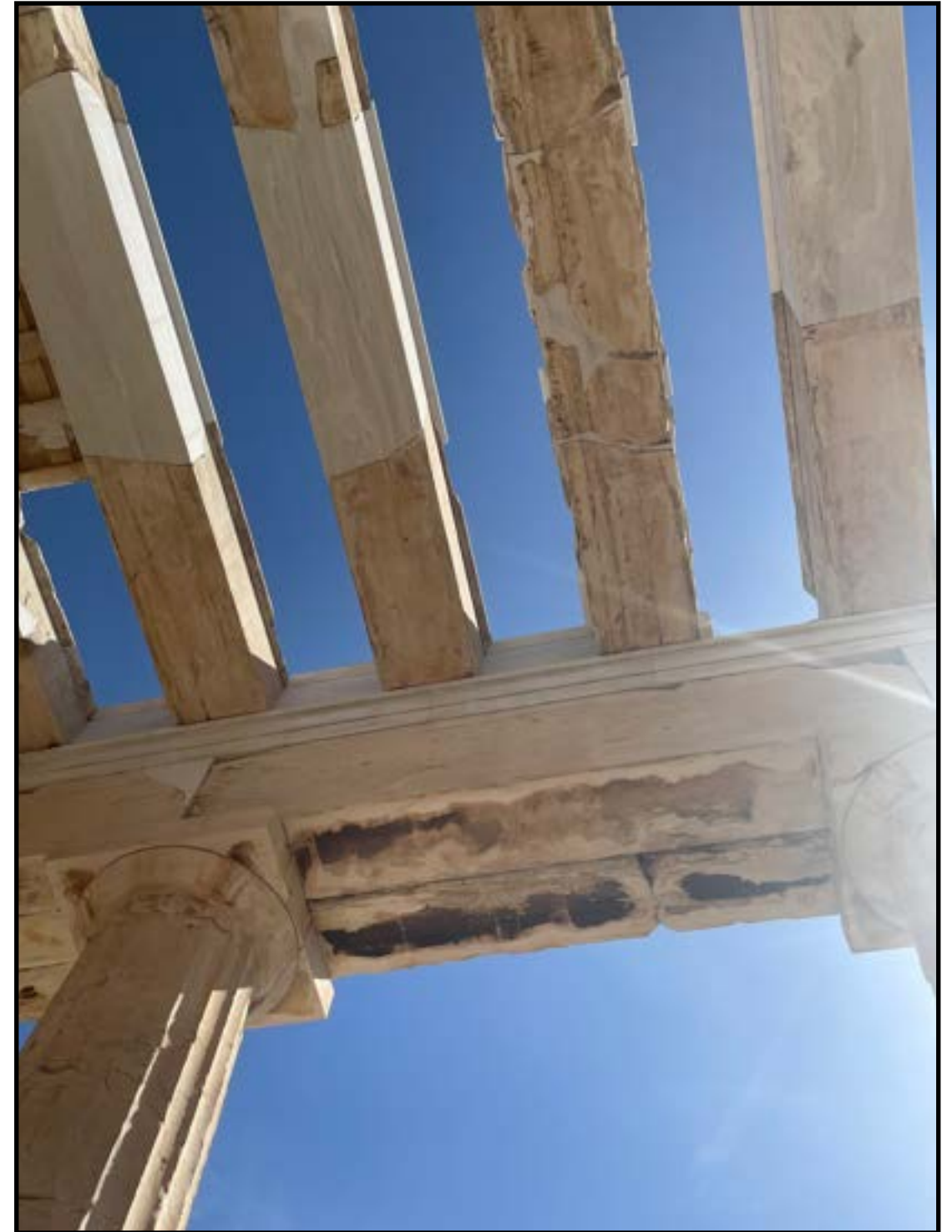
What mighty storms and torrents had arrived.
A boom of thunder showed the storm shan't quell,
A silent terror, a booming whisper, a killing radiation,
Yet spread across a dying land, whose fate was all but well
As lightning sent a shiver down my spine.

As nature's morning star*1 sighed in pain,
the clouds condensed and piled upon themselves
and formed a storm that beguiled even her gaze.
I sat behind a window by myself,
embraced the kiss of Thanatos*2,
And watched the 'summer weather' pass me by.

1 * Mother Mary

2 * the Greek God of death

Abel Stephen '22
1st Place, Senior Poetry



Look to the Sky

Jason Magistre '24

On The Run

“Wilson, Wilson,” a discordant voice echoed through my head, jarring me awake. This had been a frequent occurrence ever since that horrid night. I never thought that the people I held closest to my heart would leave me on the side of the road, like discarded trash. That's when it all began. This figure would lurk in the shadows, haunt my dreams, always stalking around me like a predator to its prey. I always just thought it was from the sudden heartbreak and extreme stress that washed over me when I realized I was on my own, but it has been relentless ever since then.

I've been trapped in the frigid weather of mid-winter with no shelter or food. I can't stop though, I have been forced to keep moving, like a sick and twisted game of tag. I feel as though I can't let this thing touch me. Although this conclusion is based on my gut feeling, this thing feels dangerous. Whenever it gets in my field of view I feel impending doom shake me to my core. I am getting tired, and weak, and I'm going insane. If this keeps up I will soon be dead. I don't wanna die, and that's why I'm on the run. Waking up to the creature's voice wasn't a rare occurrence but today something was wrong. More wrong than usual. I still can't seem to figure out what is going on, but I'm scared. Terrified. I feel the pit that has been resting in my stomach has expanded. A feeling of despair lurks in every cell of my body. I now see why.

The shadow is behind me, too close. Closer than ever before. As I have started running, a sense of familiarity comes into my head. I've been here before. I am home. The park where I used to play pickup games with my friends is to my left and my old house is three houses down on my right. I don't know how I ended up here. I've been running for what feels like forever from this monster. It's as though it led me back to where I grew up. Why? As I look back I realize I have made a mistake stopping to think. It is now face-to-face with me. Extending its ghostly arm toward my shoulder I fall back knocking my head, and my vision slowly fades to black.

“ Beep beep, beep beep.” my alarm startled me. I now know that my horror had just been a nightmare. Relief is all I can feel now, free of torment. But why do I feel restrained? Why is everything in my room missing? Why are my walls white? Why does my arm feel as though I was pricked? Ohh, the medication finally kicked in.

Tyler LeBrocq '25
Freshman Fiction

Fugitive

The country was riddled by gut-wrenching terrorism,
and all its inhabitants had a surge in patriotism.

The hunt for the man was now in session,
and it was to be done in rapid succession.

Days turned to weeks turned to months turned to years,
but the man responsible just seemed to disappear.

The people prayed for the victims at church,
and behind the scenes, a woman led the search.

Then, in a compound, a six-foot-tall shadowy figure was spotted,
and immediately he was a person of interest, so his location was plotted.

The woman approached her boss and made her case,
and in just hours, the team was in their Virginia Beach base.

Nearly ten years had passed,
and the man was spotted at last.

The mission was not over yet,
since they still had a man to get.

Swift training was all the team would need,
and they were all ready to make the man bleed.

They flew to Pakistan, the heart of the fight,
and in just minutes, SEAL Team Six was nearing the sight.

Disaster struck quickly, however after a bird crashed,
and terrorists and soldiers began to clash.

Forty chaotic minutes went by,

And with a body bag in the chopper, the team was in the sky.

The president walked out with blood rushing to his head,
and he made the announcement: Osama Bin Laden was dead.

“USA! USA! USA!” was the chant all day,
knowing that six feet under, the man responsible will lay.

Akshat Neerati '22
Senior Poetry

Parrl's Journey

Parrl started to rush through the deep Canadian mountain forests. His feet plunged through the snow as his breath crept thick clouds in front of his face. As he was sprinting at full speed his boot caught on to a long one causing him to tumble down. His face curled up into his chest, his leg flailing around, kneeing himself in the face creating a black eye. His body finally came to a halt, when he bashed into a tree, breaking a few bones in his lower ribs. The red-eyed beast was nowhere to be seen now. Parrl lifted up his cargo pants, only to see gash marks it had left for him.

“Créature muette, you gave me a tiny scratch you creature!” He muttered to himself as blood started to gush out of the so-called “tiny scratch” on the upper left leg. Parrl pulled out his 10 inch wand and summoned his satchel over.

“Vienso,” he shouted, pointing his wand at it. The bag began to float over, and Parrl started to look ferociously for his healing ointment, for he needed to patch up this wound or else he’d be dead in 30 minutes with the extreme cold. After two minutes of searching, he finally found his penicillin for common wounds like these, liquified Fafnir scales. He soothed it right on the cut and it started to heal up, but would definitely leave a scar there for the remainder of his life.

Parrl set up a campsite to stay for the night until he could continue traveling in the morning, when all of a sudden he heard branches snapping. The bloodshot red eyes from the beast were staring right into his own, only 10 ft away from him. He slowly moved his fingers to his wand and the moment he gripped it.

“AUGUE!” He screamed, sending a gigantic fireball shooting right towards the beast engulfing in flames. The horrendous catastrophe was finally over, and he could finally go home now. Parrl eventually made it to a nearby village called Madeline, where he settled in and purchased himself a motel room for the day. For his journey was not complete, his people were in danger and he needed to get back to them before they were finished.

Aidan Thompson '22
Senior Fiction



A Car of the Future or of the Past?

Alex Hawryluk '22

Halloween

Halloween has always been one of the most unique holidays. From the trick or treating to the costumes, there's no other holiday like it. That begs the question, how did Halloween come about? The holiday's origins lie within the ancient festival of Samhain. The Celtic festival had people wearing costumes to scare off ghosts and lighting fires. The festival dates back to around 2,000 years ago. They believed that near the start of winter, which they associated with death, the ghosts of those who had passed away would return to the land of the living and cause chaos/ destroy crops.

Due to this, they would make sacred bonfires and make sacrifices, such as animals, to their deities. They would also, as I said before, dress up to celebrate the event. After the Roman Empire conquered the majority of the Celtic land, they combined two of their own festivals, and kept the tradition going. Around 609 A.D, the Pope created "All Martyrs Day", to later be known as "All Saints Day". Although it was originally set to be on May 13, it would later be moved to November 1st.

"All Saints Day" would also be called "All Hallows", and the holiday's celebration was similar to the Celtic festival. Eventually, the night before it would be dubbed as "All Hallows Eve" and after that, what it's referred to as today, "Halloween".

Although Halloween was less celebrated in England, due to strict Protestant beliefs, it became popular in the 13 colonies, specifically the southern colonies. Colonial Halloween wasn't exactly like the original Halloween, though. They had their own adaptation of it, holding public parties where they would tell scary stories, sing, dance, and sometimes even cause some trouble. In the late 19th century, there was a mass migration of Irish immigrants that came to America and helped further popularize Halloween.

Halloween isn't just dressing up, though, trick or treating is also a big part of it. Borrowing from foreign traditions, Americans started dressing up and going door to door asking for food. This tradition became what we now know as "Trick or Treating". Trick or Treating was always a thing, but didn't really become popular until the 1930's when it became a widespread phenomenon in the U.S. Surprisingly, before the 1930's, Trick or Treating was more commonly associated with Thanksgiving, rather than Halloween, although that tradition had children dress up as beggars and beg for food. Sadly, Trick or Treating wasn't accepted by everyone. On October 31, 1948, members of the Madison Square Boys Club protested Halloween, holding a banner that said "American Boys Don't Beg."

In conclusion, Halloween has a rich and very unique history, starting as a Celtic festival, and eventually evolving into the holiday that we know and (somewhat) love today.

Alejandro Tellez '25

3rd Place, Freshman Nonfiction

Memories Never say "Goodbye"

Have you ever had someone in your life that was so close to you but you had to say goodbye for good? I have had someone in my life who was extremely close to me and influenced my life so much. Although his equal love of fine-cooked meals and fast food always made me smile, it was his love for sports and his family that made him a very special person. Sadly, not too long ago, I had to say goodbye to the person I had a special relationship with.

Sports were a very important part of our relationship, including bowling, golf, and baseball. Both of us were very passionate about all of these sports. We participated in bowling and golf and loved to watch the Yankees play baseball, his favorite team, on the television. Bowling was a huge part of our lifestyles. From the minute I looked at his bowling ball, I knew that it was the sport that I want to pursue. He started me as young as possible, training me since I was seven. He taught me everything I know today about the sport including both the technical, physical, and mental parts of the sport. We both participated in leagues for another seven years, also competing in an adult-child tournament together. We loved to go golfing together on the weekends we weren't bowling. Golf was very important to him, as he was the captain of his senior golf team for about twenty years! I have been golfing for just about four years now, and I am really starting to pick up the game. Although I am not the best golfer, it was a good way for us to spend time together. In our downtime, we both loved to watch the Yankees. I'll remember watching the games as much as I remember him wearing his favorite Yankee cap every day. Sports meant a lot to us and it is something that I will cherish forever.

As we both got older, I started to have more responsibilities, while he couldn't do as many things as he could when he was younger. I began cutting his lawn when I was thirteen. I always looked forward to helping him out because I wanted to show him how much I appreciated all he had done for me. He taught me how to start the lawnmower, and mow the grass evenly. After I had finished, he would always make me the best homemade lemonade. I looked forward to this every time I went to cut his lawn. Even though he always knew the answer, he would still ask me "What do you want to drink?" and I would always respond with "Fresh lemonade please". His unforgettable chuckle seemed to always be heard every time I asked for his lemonade. I knew he liked making it for me just as much as we enjoyed drinking it together. It was a ritual that became more than just mowing the lawn.

My Grandpa was someone who thought of everyone else first before himself. From his first day to his last day, my Grandpa had the biggest heart in the world, never saying no to anything we asked from him. He took care of my sister and me when we were little kids and helped raise us to be the people we are today. From taking my siblings and me to school, off to extracurricular activities, then watching our sporting events, Grandpa consistently was a part of our daily lives until the end of his life. Grandpa, even though I had to say goodbye to you, I will never forget all of the memories we have made together. You will always be an inspiration to me and I will be your biggest fan.

Evan Chin '24

Sophomore Nonfiction

Countless Fishing Trips

Ever since I was a little kid me and my father have gone on countless fishing trips together on his boat. Going fishing is something we both love and enjoy so going on those trips together is always great. My dad is a fishing boat captain and owns a fishing business, so he is very experienced in the boating/ fishing industry. There was one night that my dad decided to take me and one of his friends out on the boat to do a little bit of fishing. It was a nice day, sunny, slight breeze, not a cloud in the sky. We went down to the dock and loaded the boat with our bags, the fishing rods were already on the boat. While on our way out to the fishing spot we were all talking about how we hoped we were going to catch a bunch of fish and just all around have a good day. Fishing was great, the fish were biting and everything was going well, until we were reeling one fish in and you could feel the wind shift and start to pick up and blow harder. Dark Clouds started to appear over the horizon and seemed to be moving our way. As they moved in the sky darkened until it seemed to be night time. At this point it was pouring, all you could hear was thunder and lightning. We sat there fishing in the rain for about 5 mins until the waves started getting big and it was getting very rough out. My dad started up the motor and we were on our way home in the middle of a huge storm with the waves building into the 4-5 foot range. It was not by any means nice out and the three of us just wanted to get home, but of course that couldn't happen without us having to put up a fight. We were going full speed on our way home when all of a sudden the motor died and the engine bay went up in smoke. As we lifted the hatch covering the engine a cloud of smoke burst out and under it you could see orange flames. At this point we were a drift, dead in the water with nothing to do but hope we can fix the situation. My dad immediately put out the flames and cleared as much smoke as possible. He started playing with some things on the engine and went back up the bow to try and start the engine again. Nothing. The motor cranked for about 3 seconds but wouldn't start. I looked over to my right and through the clouds and fog saw that there was a big cargo ship coming directly toward us. We probably had about 1 minute before the cargo ship would run us over and tear our boat to pieces. My dad sat there fanning the motor trying to clear the smoke so he could see what was going on, once the smoke cleared the messed with something on the motor and went to try to start it again. The cargo ship was super close at this point, we had about 15 seconds. The motor was cranking for about 5 seconds and wouldnt start. My dad did it again, nothing. On the 3rd crank the motor finally turned over and was able to drive away with minimal room to spare. We made it back to the dock safely even though the weather was bad.

Andrew Bouchard '25

2nd place, Freshman Nonfiction

Daydreams

I daydream of a technologically advanced civilization, living in cities in the sky. The cities are all independent, with pipeline systems for transporting water and steam. Even though these cities are independent, they trade with each other and travel around the skies with airships powered by steam engines and balloons filled with helium. These cities have buildings and homes where people live, even though the cities float in the sky. They stay afloat using helium filled balloons for buoyancy and steam powered rotors to control altitude.

The reason this civilization of people chose to live in the sky is because the earth below them has flooded and is now completely an ocean. There is no land to be found, and the ocean is filled with ferocious monsters who would attack the city if it floated on top of the water. The civilization had adequate warning of the impending doom that would come with the flood, so they developed new technologies to start a city in the sky. Through their hard work and innovation they were able to save their civilization from the catastrophe that destroyed their old homes.

This civilization refer to themselves as “steampunks” because they use steam power for powering almost all of their devices. Their cities are filled with intricate pipe systems to move this steam around to power their homes, refrigerators, and even the rotor blades that keep them high above the expansive ocean below. The steampunks burn coal in large boilers to create the steam they use, so they often send expeditions down to the ocean below to mine the coal they use. These expeditions are very dangerous since they have to avoid the many creatures in the ocean. After the coal is mined it has to be dried so that it can be burnt in the boilers. Sadly, this civilization of steampunks does not exist, and is merely just a concept I often daydream of.

David McCray '24

Sophomore Fiction

Defeat in Victory

Silence. It was all that seemed to remain amidst the rubble and ruin of that once thriving village. Ever since the firebombing campaign ended a few days ago, the Earth was tormented by those terrible sounds; the anguished screams of the fallen, the crackling of the flames, the crumbling of the village houses. The cessation of those horrible sounds provided a momentary and much-needed repose for anyone fortunate enough to survive the “rain of fire” that befell their village. However, no one had been lucky enough to survive. No one was there to mourn the fallen. No one was there to bury the dead. No one was there to bask in that moment of serenity and ease. It was just silence, still and ever present.

But it would not last for long. Suddenly, the sound of a chuff, chuff, chuff could be heard from above. As time progressed, the sounds seemed to increase in volume, as whatever or whoever was emitting those sounds were slowly making their descent from the skies. Soon, helicopters could be seen descending from the skies. Dust and dirt swelled from the ground as if they were greeting the airborne machines. With five loud thuds, the helicopters announced their presence to the dead village.

Once they had touched the surface of the earth, a platoon of eight men emerged from each helicopter. They slowly made their way to the village. What they saw filled each and every one of them with a mixed bag of emotions. Anger that they were forced to do this, sorrow that they were responsible, guilt that they would have to live with this. Though they were the soldiers that took part in the firebombing campaign that decimated the area, they took no joy or jubilation in their victory. Of course they wouldn't. What victory was there that justified the deaths of thousands of innocent men, women and children? No victory, if you asked any of the soldiers.

A few minutes after the five helicopters made contact with the surface, a sixth one followed suit. Out emerged the General, the man responsible for the operation that bombed this village. He had come to inspect the results of his operation. Minutes before his arrival, he had heard reports from his underlings that the firebombing campaign was a success. It had achieved its goal. During the intermission in between, the General pondered over whether to employ this

strategy towards other villages. If the reports were proven to be true, victory would be secured for their country. Finally, after many years of war, they were about to prevail against their mortal enemy.

However, any feelings of hope and optimism that the General once had were crushed when he entered the village. As he walked through the ruins, the General was greeted with one unpleasant sight after another. It made him want to hurl. Charred bodies were littered across the streets. Some of the bodies held anguished expressions on their faces long after death. In one corner of the village there was a hospital, and in another there was a school directly adjacent to it. Both were decimated from the bombing, with nothing but the foundations remaining.

For many moments the General just stood there, taking in the sights that he had seen. Sooner or later he would have to report the results of the bombing to his higher-ups. But right now he was so morally disgusted with his decisions. How could I have approved of something like this? Was there another way? Will I ever get over this? These were all questions the General asked himself as he contemplated the consequences of his decisions, his actions. Of his “victory.”

Nicholas Justiniani '23

Junior Fiction

The Moonlit River on a Illuminated Night

In the dark night
A stream flows silently
It had the reflection of the moon
On its surface, lit
But underneath darker than the night itself

The glare so magnificent
Brighter than the floor surrounding it
Its luster was that of a newly shined metal
Those who witness it will be overcome with calmness
To some it's reflecting is better at night rather than day

The cause of the luster
The bright light in the night
Who knew the one with such dark craters
Could make such a nice night light
The moon is the cause for this glorious occurrence

Although bright not bright enough to reach the sleeping creatures
Underneath the flowing water
They lie sleeping or swimming
As they look up to see the faint illumination of the night
This is where they lie until the light of day emerges once more

The moon so bright yet not as bright as the sun
It illuminates the silent river surface better than the sun
As you approach the end of night
The illumination of moon dissipates as well as the darkness
Goodbye moon and the once lustrous river surface

Gavin Rivera '25
Freshman Poetry



Innocence

Alex Hawryluk '22

The Recruits That Saved the World

Once upon a time there was a young traveler named Marcus who enjoyed sightseeing and going to different parts of the world. While traveling he ended up walking into a strange forest. He looked at his map because he didn't recognize the area he was in, it didn't appear on the map. Marcus thought it was just a mistake because he bought it from a village he just passed. Traveling through the forest without a care in the world he stumbled upon something he couldn't imagine.

"W-what is that?" said Marcus as he gazed upon a strange looking object. He went to examine the object but as he got closer it jumped out at him. It was a monster! Marcus fell over in fear but quickly got up and started running. As soon as he gained enough distance from him and the monster a fairy appeared from one of the trees.

"Hello, what is your name, young traveler?" said the fairy. Marcus was shocked and confused about what was happening. "M-my name is Marcus, w-what is going on here?" said Marcus. "This forest has all kinds of weird creatures and monsters. To survive here you're gonna need powers." said the fairy. "But I don't have any powers," said Marcus. "Oh is that so? Well I can give powers to anybody who is determined enough to defeat the evil lord Clageter who has been terrorizing this forest for ages. Clageter plans on taking over the world with his minions, so we need all the help we can get. Are you up for the challenge?" asked the fairy. "Of course I am up for it! If I can save the world from destruction of course!" Marcus replied. "Oh so you're the eager type are you? Perfect just what we need. I will grant you your powers then you have to get stronger and defeat the evil lord Clageter."

"Alright!" said Marcus as the fairy granted him his new powers. "You will be granted the power of a swordsman," said the fairy. "You will learn new things about your powers the stronger you get." Marcus said "This is great! I'm so ready to do this." As he charges in to fight the monster he ran from. "Wait no! Don't run into battle like that! You're going to get yourself killed!" Shouted the fairy at Marcus trying to stop him. As Marcus tried to fight the monster he quickly realized that it was a lot stronger than him. He couldn't get away as easily because it called for help. After getting severely injured Marcus found a way to escape. He made a run for it and found a cave that was pretty safe. He decided to go into the cave and take a break. Marcus soon fainted from his injuries.

Marcus woke up to find the fairy hovering over him. "W-what are you doing here?" said Marcus, confused that the fairy was with him. "I saw you run into battle and couldn't do much to help you so I healed all your injuries for you." said the fairy. "Oh ha, thanks for that." said Marcus. "Look, don't be so reckless you can get killed," said the fairy. "Yeah, I learned that the hard way," said Marcus. "Listen, if you want to defeat Clageter you're going to have to form a team of warriors." Said the fairy. "Okay so where do I do that?" asked Marcus. "There's a town full of warriors to the west." said the Fairy. "I'll be going there I guess," said Marcus. Marcus started to follow the directions while thanking the fairy for healing him. The fairy said "Hey wait, don't forget me! I'll travel with you and help you along your way! Oh did I forget to mention, my name is Fiona. Happy to be traveling with you Marcus."

The new pair Marcus and Fiona made their way down to the Warrior's town. When they arrived at the Warrior's town they instantly began going door to door asking the Warrior's if they wanted help taking down evil lord Clageter. They all said they couldn't and that he's too strong. The two were starting to lose hope in finding people until they found a huge house full of outcasts. The town didn't like them because they had powers nobody else had. Marcus and Fiona got excited and asked them if they wanted to help take down Clageter. They all had different skill sets of powers they could use to easily take down Clageter. After a while of convincing all the outcasts reluctantly agreed. Marcus and Fiona were ecstatic.

The newly formed team began talking about plans to find Clageter's castle and take him down. The team made their way back to the forest to take down his minions to get stronger and grow together as friends. Marcus found the monster he tried to take down alone before and with help from his team they took it down easily. Fight after fight they felt themselves getting stronger. Marcus found new ways to use the sword. The healer Kiri made her healing stronger, and the archer Cole got magic spells to put on his arrows from Myra the mage, who also got stronger spells. As they got closer and closer to Clageter's castle the whole team were best friends and could almost read each other's minds in battle. They helped each other perform multiple attacks and combos to deal maximum damage. As they appeared at Clageter's castle the team got nervous but reassured themselves that they could do it. After a fierce battle against Marcus' team and Clageter they came out victorious saving the world.

Avery Cambero '25
Freshman Fiction

Sea of Sylvanus

Just two winters ago, on a Monday eve, I guarded the cabin I claim as my home,
Entombed by the leagues of a vast sea of mighty evergreen,
For miles my heart and soul cannot be heard or seen -
That is, unless there were some other soul, who would challenge my own.
That thought which stemmed from my core,
The thought which, if there were a slight crackle, would turn into more -
Would linger in my mind as I lay in solitary and bore
That is, until I picked up what seems to be a note, a whistle, from a mouth not
my own.
In great horror and question my mind raced itself
For all the birds asleep in the midst of night,
All mammals in their annual winter state,
And no other man dares enter the vast nothingness in which I encounter no
plight.
My mind, still pondering, had me deeply wondering,
What could be lurking among the sea of Sylvanus that I stay -
And to myself I kept mumbling -
“Why me?”
As I tried to find the light in the black void of my soul and thoughts,
I searched for the light of hope that might stem from my head -
Ironically, I found not a light of hope but a distant light in the forest,
Appearing to be a nightly apparition of a couple of jackals.
My senses and fears slowly but surely plagued my mind and soul,
I no longer felt the wonder that was present before -
I was sure that what I had my eyes on was here for my essence,
Me and no one more.
The temptation birthed from curiosity got the better of me,
For I found need for answers in what I had to see,
Temptation brought me closer to the figures staring at me.
As I walked closer, the less jackal but more man they seemed.
In fact not man, but a woman, and not just one, but a mother and daughter,
stared into my soul -
With sunken, flaming eyes that ripped me apart,
Faces that seemed to be burnt to a crisp,
And worst of all - a stench like none other.

“What do you expect of me?” asked I to the apparitions -
To which their response was unclear, only a slight tune whistled by the little one -
Following this a satanic screech let out by the mother, then after, a blink from my
eyes,
A blink that would bring me back to my cabin
I sat in a cold sweat as I almost regretted falling asleep, as the same thing
repeated itself nightly -
That is, the ghostly apparitions that plagued the woods that surrounded me,
The woods that entombed me,
For miles, and miles.

Tyler Quesnel '24
Sophomore Poetry

A Place After

In a fantastical land far from the human eye's reach, lie pleasures and joys
that people couldn't possibly teach. The unceasing surface of the world is
covered in a silky white fog, incomparable to anything ever before touched.
There are floating posies sprinkled in a gaiety of yellowed powder. The
preeminent smell of these flowers is one with the spirit of a million roaring stars.
An almost holy mist forms in the air, setting a positive and buoyant mood across
the land. There is a certain sense of nature, without the mark of a Mother.

The sky's lighting includes each color of the rainbow, glimmering jointly,
creating a gleaming, vibrant sky. This animated atmosphere reflects over the
majestic world, giving the region a confident feeling of comfort and glee. Whilst
filling the darkness with a glistening sense of hope and light, this skylight shines
on the rest of the world with gracious, heartwarming rays of certitude and safety.
Such a wondrous, creative place cleanses one's sinful soul with its pure beauty.

The colorful hospitality of the land gives it all the liveliness a world could
have. Each speck of this infinite realm sends blazes of wind and light throughout
this nirvana. There is no night, and there is no day. This place bathes in
tranquility and nothing more. The jubilant land consumes any evil that dares to
step foot in it. This utopia that stands out in the depths of sorrow and gloom,
contains playful elements of whole-heartedness and eternity, which may still
resume.

Thomas DeAmorin '24
2nd Place, Sophomore Fiction

Land of Apathy

I'm just singing to my showerhead at 4 AM
I'm just listing off my issues to an object who can't respond
But the music nowadays, just doesn't seem to click
The lyrics that I want to hear, I'm not ready for it
The saddest of words are the ones that never published
And the saddest of days are still a couple years away
There's a ghost town near a bay that still has some soul
But no one ever talks to them so they're stuck in their homes
But why do I feel just like them
Social interaction with no genuine reaction
When I say that I feel just like them
Everyone's a therapist, what happened to my friends
Come and see, come join me in the land of apathy
There's no time for anger or joy when you live in apathy

Stephen Horan '25
3rd Place, Freshman Poetry

Looks that Kill

Peyton and his friends were fatigued and angry after the longest week of school. They complained about how their teachers crammed in multiple tests in the unbearable late spring heat just before the school year was ending. All of Peyton's friends were too tired to do anything active as the harsh sun would wear them out too quickly so he was left alone with all of his thoughts. He soon left outside and went on a calming nature walk to think alone. He often did this to get his mind off of whatever was angering him. He would walk for hours around the forest's path except for the chrysanthemum pond. It was a beautiful pond surrounded by chrysanthemum's, had light blue water that almost glowed as the radiant sunlight hit it, had a waterfall that made beautiful sounds as water crashed into the pond, and was closed off by dazzling, large, and healthy trees that never seemed to die.

Despite its beauty, it is said to be the most dangerous place in the world. Rumors spread around the small town that Peyton grew up in that anyone that enters the pond will be lost forever and never be found. A woman who had once snuck out at night, contrary to her personality, wandered in there, and after she went missing a search team member disappeared with her. Since then, it has been ingrained in everyone's mind that there is an angry spirit in that pond. Peyton was never superstitious and always scoffed whenever someone told him to avoid the pond when he would go on a nature walk. He always believed that there was a scientific reason behind absolutely everything and Peyton decided to go into the pond to prove how silly the adults were acting in the town. He walked into the beautiful circle of trees and chrysanthemums and admired the beauty of a pond. Peyton then sat and admired the scenery and then something strange happened. A vulture holding litter in its mouth. Disgusted by the person that would litter in such a beautiful area he carefully approached the animal and quickly ripped the piece of paper out of its mouth. He looked at the paper and saw the most beautiful woman in the world on it. She was smiling at the camera with her two friends. He then questioned the odd circumstances of how he acquired his photo but he assumed that it was a crazy coincidence. He then left the pond and thought about all the nonsensical claims made by fully grown adults.

Peyton went home and told nobody of the strange but cool experiences that happened at the pond. It was late so he put the picture on his bedside table, shut out the lights, and slept. Peyton was soon woken up by a beautiful voice outside his window singing. He looked at his phone and it was 2:30 AM. He swung open his window and saw the most beautiful woman in the distance, similar to the woman in the photo. He grabbed the photo and his phone and ran out of his house chasing after her into the forest. Peyton was excited to see the woman with his own eyes as he thought that the photo was a sign of them being soul mates. Blinded by love, he ran into the pond where he was never seen again. Soon after, a vulture picked up a photo of a beautiful person smiling with her three friends, one of which is Peyton.

Owen Smythe '24
1st Place, Sophomore Fiction

Oh, So Many Places to Go!

My room is a microcosm of the world. A map dominated by a vivid blue and a shamrock green occupies my wall, inviting pairs of curious eyes to explore. A vibrant globe rests on my bedside table, slowly spinning around its tilted axis. A voluminous atlas, littered with lines, assorted colors, and peculiar sounding names, lies open on my desk as I dream about where to go next. Italy? Egypt? Tuvalu? Oh, so many places to go!

Born into a family with a passion for travel, my interest was, in my eyes, inevitable. Sure enough, travel has engrossed a large portion of my life. From weekend trips to temples around the tri-state area to week-long excursions through the picturesque hamlets of northern India, my parents have always emphasized the value of exploration and discovery. After all, it *was* solely through their travel and their endless curiosity that my parents arrived in America, a land of freedom and opportunity, so many decades ago.

When I travel, I am constantly reminded of how expansive, diverse, and fascinating the world around me is. Who knew that the Pyramids of Giza aren't the only pyramids in the world? Or, who knew that people from Texas don't actually say "howdy" when they speak? Through travel, I have the opportunity to immerse myself in different cultures, lifestyles, and cuisines of people from all over the world. However, whether I am developing friendships over dinner at a roadside stall or sitting with someone from half a world away, I always aim to refute the stereotypes propagated by society and broaden my understanding of those different from me.

While travel has greatly contributed to my renewed outlook on the world, it has also strengthened my passion for geography and cartography. From rest stops along state lines to visitor centers at airports, I always pick up a map for my collection. When observing maps, I cease to be amazed at how imaginary lines drawn centuries ago can determine the course of history or how a single line can separate a seemingly identical group of people. Over the years, my collection has grown to over twenty-five maps, each from a different geographical area and historical period.

As I age, I aim to bridge the gap of differences between people through travel, a mechanism for discovery. Although the world is divided by language, race, and cultural barriers, humanity will always be united by one shared love: exploration.

Animesh Borad '22
1st Place, Senior Nonfiction



Docked

Jason Magistre '24

What if the Union Lost the Civil War

It is a warm day in the beginning of July. The battle of Gettysburg begins. The union forces make a crucial mistake by leaving a Gap in the front lines. With this mistake, Confederate General Robert E. Lee's army flanks and surrounds the majority of the union forces. The Union troops are forced to retreat into Washington DC, with only a small amount of troops remaining. Lee takes the capital quickly. Following this crushing defeat, Union President Abraham Lincoln resigns, and the Union quickly makes peace with the Confederates. The Republican Party's popularity is very low, with new ideologies rising following the defeat. The peace treaty is signed by the higher up generals. With the defeat, Britain, France, and Russia vow to recognize the Confederate states but only upon one contingency: that the South outlaws slavery. With this opportunity of an alliance between the countries, President Jefferson Davis signs the treaty, though segregation is instituted With Washington DC in a vulnerable spot for invasion, they move their capital to Philadelphia. With their new alliance, the Union also created an alliance with The German Empire and Austria-Hungary. There are some skirmishes along the border of the Confederate States of America, but there is no big conflict yet. The Confederate States are worrying that the Union, with its massive industry, will grow more powerful than them and that their recently obtained allies will not go to war with them. The South, not wanting to risk defeat, chooses not to go to war. Woodrow Wilson is elected President of the Confederate States of America, following Theodore Roosevelt's election as president of the Union. With the loss of popularity of the republican party, Theodore Roosevelt runs for the Whig Party. Then, on June 28 1914 Archduke Franz Ferdinand is assassinated in Austria-Hungary. Austria-Hungary blames the country of Serbia for the assassination, as the assassin was a Serbian nationalist. They send Serbia demands for annexation. Serbia and its allies, Russia and France, begin to mobilize for war; the Union does the same on its border with the Confederate States of America. The British do not want to join the war, but Germany trying to get around France's fortification invaded Belgium. This brings Britain, Canada, and India into the war. The Union quickly takes all of the major cities and ports in Canada, driving them to surrender and the Union to occupy Canada. The union starts to make gains near the Mississippi River, but the Confederates start to build tactical trenches, allowing them to greatly slow down the Union. The British help the Confederacy by cutting the American ports off from trade. Weakened by a revolution, the Russians surrender. Consequently, the Union starts a push to take Nashville. An intense battle occurs in Nashville, continuing until the end of the war. With the German troops free of Russia, they start to push into France. The German troops are tired of fighting, though, so they begin to mutiny. With no end in sight, except for their own loss, the French surrender and are occupied by the Germans. With its now freed-up troops, Germany starts to ship out troops to the Union. The Union, with German help, starts to push into the Confederate States of America. The president of the south, Woodrow Wilson, leaves to go to Great Britain. Britain, left without allies, surrenders. The Union Annexes Canada and the Confederate states. Later on France's population vies for revenge and votes in a dictator that promises just that. The Royal Family narrowly escapes with their lives, fleeing to Australia.

Joseph Miller '25
Freshman Fiction

Atomic Antiquities

In the event of a catastrophic nuclear war, the US government has made numerous contingency plans to protect the government. For example, in a post-apocalyptic scenario, the National Parks Service would be in charge of establishing refugee camps. The Department of Agriculture would be tasked with feeding what is left of America and has therefore spent millions of dollars researching food preservation techniques and building up large stores of food. The United States Postal Office would not only be in charge of delivering mail as per usual, but they would also be assigned to catalog all deaths, provide sufficient triage data and notify next of kin of their relatives' death. In a post-apocalyptic world, the US government might very well endure, but would American culture survive?

In the lengthy list of old Cold War-era contingency plans, the US also made it a priority to preserve various artifacts. Naturally, documents such as the Constitution, Declaration of Independence, and Bill of Rights are the priority in the government's plan for the protection of artifacts. However, of a large list of designated artifacts, only three are known to the public. However, known artifacts are merely esoteric. The three include: Japan's surrender documents, Abraham Lincoln's autopsy records, and a log of wood from an old Revolutionary Warship.

These artifacts, while esoteric, *do*, of course, have their individual and distinct meanings. Many may argue that these artifacts are not especially important to save, especially considering the use of valuable government resources to protect them. However, they signify a profound idea. It is not merely enough to save the American government and people; we must also protect what truly makes America special: our unique yet distinct culture. It is not enough for just the people to survive; there must be some goal greater than mere preservation. We must strive to continue to ceaselessly strive for improvement and never forget the trials and tribulations we have overcome. Artifacts, even seemingly inconsequential ones, remind us of the past, from which we can derive many lessons. They will allow us to better prepare ourselves for the uncertain future of the post-apocalyptic world.

Joshua Oliveira '23
2nd Place, Junior Nonfiction

A Glacial Night

It seems within an arm's reach
This thing I've been looking for
Those giant, blue and white blocks
Combined with the sound of a kayak's oar

Just a bit closer
Till my eyes fill with glee
Those colossal icy structures
Floating on the deep blue sea

And as I turn the corner
In my soul, a burning fire ignites
“Finally,” my heart says,
“I am seeing them tonight”

Lucas Estela '24

Sophomore Poetry

The Swarm

On the great plant of Titan, a devastating war raged, known as the Schism. Three sisters wished to help their people gain the upper hand by going on a great voyage. Their names were Sathona, Araush, and Xi Ro. Sathona, was the most clever; Aurash was the navigator; Xi Ro was the knight. Out they went on their voyage to the deep ocean, to find a forgotten power, long lost. They traveled and traveled until they came upon the deepest and darkest section. They sank into the depths until they encountered the Leviathan. The Leviathan warned them that the deep had nothing for them and that to venture further into it would be to cause the death of the universe. Araush stepped forward and told the Leviathan that she wanted to see where the whispers led. So, she told Sathona to dive deeper. Deeper and deeper they went until they came to a place of absolute darkness, where their whispers became louder than ever.

A low voice rumbled and said, “I am Tap, the Ravenous”. With that, this unknown force had introduced them to the very ancient powers the sisters had come looking for: the morphs. Each of these morphs came with special powers, which would ultimately change the trio forever. Sathona took on the morph of wisdom, increasing her wisdom and cunning tenfold. Her title also changed to Savathun. Araush took the king's morph, gaining the power to take or steal other creatures' souls and take their bodies for her own in order to build an army. Her title was changed to Oryx. Xi Ro took the knight morph, allowing her to become the best fighter in the universe. She changed her name to Xivu Arath. With their new powers, the sisters went on to create their brood, which they called the Swarm. The Swarm would go on to conquer the known universe.

Matthew Hohmann '24

Sophomore Fiction

What the Government has Done

The year was 2050, and a tyrant overthrew the US Government. From that day on, mysterious occurrences have been all too present. Disappearances of children have occurred so frequently that they have become commonplace. I am one of these kids, and I know the truth behind all these incidents.

One in ten children disappears from their homes by age ten; after five years, they suddenly reappear. Not one civilian knows why the disappearances happen or where the children go. Parents who lost their kids never realize it happened, because they forget they ever bore them. When these teens show up again, they return to their "biological parents." However, they can't recall their past and can solely recognize these people.

The perpetrator behind the lack of remembrance is the government. The government sedates members of the family and injects them with a serum. Afterward, the agents that sedated the family members kidnap and transport the child or children to a military institution. In this institution, the kids are brainwashed and are modified neurologically. They are put into solitary, strapped into a chair and a screen is placed in front of them. For the five years the children are there, they are desensitized and neurologically manipulated. In this manipulation of their neurological function, they become more intelligent, demonstrate a higher ability to learn, and become hyper-aware of everything around them. After ten years pass, the now teens are again sedated, have their memories erased, and are sent to the doorsteps of their "family."

However, when I awoke, I recalled everything. The torture I had experienced, the things I had been forced to watch, the surgeries I had been put through... The people who said they were my parents were not. My parents were loving people, both in the field of medicine and science. These new guardians of mine were in military and intelligence fields of work. I hid everything I knew from them, because I understood that they were there solely to see if I remember anything. I didn't expose my knowledge to them, because I overheard them saying that they must "silence" me if I remembered anything. I chose not to expose this until the last leg of my life because of the consequences. Now that I am in my eighties, I am no longer afraid of this and am prepared to face the consequences, with the hope of a change coming from my death.

Ryan Muce '25
Freshman Fiction

The Importance of the Electoral College

Our electoral process is unique because the final result of the Presidential Election is based on the electoral votes rather than the result of popular votes. By definition, the popular vote represents the votes cast by each U.S voting citizen. Thus, the higher the state's voter population, the more popular votes it has. In contrast, the Electoral vote represents the number of votes assigned to each state by the Electoral College.

So what is the Electoral College? The Electoral College represents the process established by the United States Constitution mandating that each state gets a number of electors equal to their number of members in the House of Representatives and one for each of their two U.S Senators. The Electoral College was created in 1804 by our founding fathers as a way to balance the state and national government, with the goal of stabilizing our democracy and protecting the rights of the minority. This process was based on the Twelfth Amendment, which provides the procedure for electing the President and Vice President.

There are a total of 538 electoral votes in an election across the United States. Each electoral vote depends on the population of that particular state. The 538 votes first consist of the State Senators that have a total of 100 votes. Then, the House of Representatives holds a total of 435 votes. Lastly, Washington D.C. has a total of 3 votes.

The two states with the largest electoral votes are California, a Democratic state, and Texas, a Republican state. California has a population of 40 million people, which allows them to have a total of 55 electoral votes. Each electoral vote consists of 2 senators and 53 members of the House of Representatives. Accordingly, Texas has a population of 30 million, and they have 38 electoral votes. Their electoral votes consist of 2 senators and 36 members of the House of Representatives.

Another component that goes into American elections is "swing states." The term "swing state" refers to states that could reasonably be won by either a Democratic or Republican presidential candidate. These states are usually targeted by both parties when campaigning, especially in competitive elections. Recent swing states include Florida, Wisconsin, and Virginia. It is important to note that swing states can change from election to election. Typically, though, if a candidate manages to win all of the swing states in addition to their established party states, it is likely that they will win the Presidency. It is important to remember, a candidate must get 270 electoral votes in order to win the Presidency.

Voting is a right and a privilege that shouldn't be taken for granted. Many people have fought and died for this very opportunity. So, if you don't like the beliefs of a candidate, don't complain and do nothing; get out there and vote! Do it for yourselves, but more importantly, do it for future generations.

Avery Small '24
Sophomore Nonfiction

Sinking

Imagine the struggle of trying to keep a sinking ship afloat with nothing more than a plastic cup, while also trying to read a story aloud to people who do not speak your language. That is a daily struggle for people like me, having so much to say but not knowing how to say it, aspiring to do so many things but having no drive to do it. Many people go day by day with these exact feelings; they spend so much time trapped in their own mind trying to solve a problem that they eventually lose track of what the problem was. Then, when they want help or want someone to understand, they can't explain it, because they simply don't know how. Most people dismiss this as laziness or just it is something that must be overcome. Not many people seem to understand the complex emotions and thought processes these people go through. Professionals try to explain it to others, but one who does not experience something can only understand so much about it. Our minds, as humans, are like calm continuous rivers, and for most people that river flows forever and ever, uninterrupted; but for about 3% of people, that river contains boulders that diverge its path into smaller rivers that can send one in a totally new direction. Rather than continue flowing, that river eventually becomes a vast ocean with violent waves that never cease.

Now, keep those two pictures in your mind. Which river would you put your boat in? You most likely chose the calm continuous river, however, in life, people do not get to choose, and some people are stuck with the other river. The people on that other river are people who suffer from ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder). Every day, they ride this river, never knowing where their mind may drift at a given moment. For those who don't understand, ADHD is so much more than the lack of focus. For example, sometimes one with ADHD can become too focused on a specific topic and forget about everything else. They can also lose motivation to complete a task simply because someone interrupts them, fall into depression for long periods after being reminded of a traumatic event, no matter how long ago it was, or spend so much time planning and preparing for a task that they eventually lose track of the task and do something completely different. The saddest part is that instead of people trying to understand or help those with ADHD, many people ostracize and dismiss them, for reasons that they cannot control. It is no different than people being criticized for their race or where they come from.

Evan Harris '22
Senior Nonfiction



Enshrined in Water

Brendan Walsh '22

Defining Music

The Oxford Dictionary defines music as a “composition of vocal and instrumental sounds in such a way as to produce beauty of form, harmony, and expression of emotion.” However, music is much more impactful its definition suggests; it’s an escape— an escape from the harsh reality that we live in day-to-day. As soon as one dons a set of headphones, their problems, concerns, and worries are put on hold. Songs evoke memories and myriad emotions, whether they are upbeat songs that we actively enjoy listening to or melancholic tunes that serve as coping mechanisms.

The music industry’s influence is largely underrated. Music is the rhythmic heartbeat of America, and it keeps society thriving. Music does more than provide entertainment; it inspires creativity and brings out the real YOU. Music can also promote political ideals and uplift people advocating for a certain cause. Music ignites passions and rouses the inner patriotism from deep within. For example, the Star-Spangled Banner unleashes that American pride that so many citizens hold dearly. The art of music brings people together as a community. People become more relatable when they share the same favorite artist or song. In that way, music is unifying and harmonious.

On a more serious note, music can sometimes save lives. It tackles depression and helps people cope with trauma. Oftentimes, the lyrics in a song can have a tremendous impact on the listener, possibly altering their attitude or perception of a dark situation. The music and words of a song provide the listener with comfort and a sense of security. Music is like a warm blanket on a rainy day;- music is quite therapeutic.

Music allows a person to time travel; a song from the old era reminds us of our grandparents; a fresher beat takes us back to yesterday. One song might remind us of a grand occasion, while another song may remind us of a happy moment. Music is all around us, and it affects each of us in ways we are able to and unable to comprehend.

Michael Lee '24
Sophomore Nonfiction

Why I Think Classical Music Should be More Popular

I love classical music, and I have come to think of it as my passion. Although this three-century-old style of music still attracts popularity, it goes underappreciated for the most part. I think that the personal and emotional aspects of classical music, in addition to the skill required to write for orchestras, create an emotional story. Both reasons contribute to why I think classical music should be more popular.

I find that pop music is very impersonal and relies on ecstasy or depression for the most part, while classical music offers a wider range of emotions for audiences to relate to. While Beethoven was going deaf, he became depressed and came close to committing suicide, but he found hope in Napoleon’s fight for freedom from monarchies, and he wrote his third symphony, which is arguably the best symphony ever written. Beethoven's Symphony No. 3 offers listeners a sense of lament, joy, excitement, urgency, and curiosity, allowing the listener to feel as though they’re listening to a story.

Shostakovich famously wrote most his seventh symphony during the Siege on Leningrad, and after its performance, the starving Soviets found hope to fight against the brutal Nazis. Listeners can hear the marching of the Nazis with french horns, the notes emulating the sounds of bombs, sirens, and fear, and turmoil is rampant until it is squandered. Mahler’s sixth symphony, nicknamed “The Tragic”, incorporates three hammer blows in the final movement, and at the climax of the symphony, when victory seems imminent for the hero of the symphony, the final hammer blow ensues, and the entire orchestra dies. The tragic failure of the main character leaves the symphony unresolved, giving listeners the idea that not every story ends well, and there are defeats that everyone must endure.

There is also the extreme craftsmanship that one must perfect to write a comprehensive work. While artists today have producers make songs for them, Beethoven famously said that he never wrote a proper fugue. Even a master such as Beethoven, a man who wrote two of the greatest symphonies ever, even while deaf, struggled with aspects of music. Brahms worked on his first symphony for fourteen years before finding it good enough to publish. Orchestration, thematic development, structure, and counterpoint are all aspects of classical music that aren’t fully appreciated in modern music, where themes are simply repeated. After the failed premiere of his first symphony, Rachmaninoff fell into a deep state of depression, and, with the help of his therapist, wrote his second piano concerto, which was an amazing success. It is very emotional and arguably the greatest piano concerto. His story, and others, show that not only did composers deal with the struggles of writing music, but they also had mental barriers to conquer.

These two aspects of classical music are what make me interested in this style and never fail to give me excitement while listening to it. I think that these aspects have not been incorporated into modern music, and without them, music loses much of its meaning.

Thomas Ogrodnik '24
Sophomore Nonfiction

The Basement Story

This story starts off back in 1930. The Saleari crime family had just moved into a small neighborhood in Laketown and began setting up shop right under everyone's noses. They bought a house on a quiet street and started unpacking. It was a big house with 10 bedrooms, more than enough space for them. They' were in the business of bootlegging, and business was good. The family owned a restaurant close to the main street, using it as a hangout and a place to distribute from, but the house was where the important stuff was stored.

We fast forward a little bit, and the family holds a lot of power over the town. For a while, they were uncontested in their power, until now. Just a few days ago, a rival family moved in on the other side of town. In the beginning, the Saleari's had thought it would be fine, however they were wrong. The family that moved in was called the Mindacino family. The Mindacino family attempted to dislodge the Salearis' grip on the town. In the beginning, they couldn't do it. But there was a key turning point. One day, when the Saleari's were all in the main house, they heard a knock on the door. One of the goons went to open it, and as soon as he did, a gunshot blast sounded and all hell broke loose. It was the Mindacinos coming to raid the house. The fighting went on and on. When it finally stopped, all the Salearis had either run from the house or were dead. As if things were not bad enough, the very next day, the mayor of Laketown made an important call and asked the federal government to help stop the organized crime, destroying the peace of their small town. Soon enough, FBI agents descended on the town and began cracking down on the well known crime families in town. The remaining Salearis had an ace up their sleeve, though. They had an informant, who tipped them off that the FBI was going to start looking around their house, so they got some construction workers to make a quick wall for them. They stashed all the incriminating evidence against them in one room and sealed it off. This secret room was in the basement so that no one would question it if it didn't have an entrance. And that was what saved them. As hard as they tried, the FBI agents were unable to put together a solid case against the Saleari's. With no case, the FBI backed off and left Laketown. After that close call, the last of the family decided to skip town and leave the basement with all the evidence, since it was too risky to try to remove it all ,in case they were still being watched.

Logan Rotunno '24
Sophomore Fiction

Zofia Bosak

My name... is Zofia Bosak. I was born in Wroclaw, Poland and am the oldest daughter of Jan Bosak. I have a younger sister named Elżbieta Bosak (Ela) whom I would protect with my life. My father was the former commander of the Polish Special Forces unit GROM. He was a very talented soldier and saw that same talent in me. Because of this, he favored me over my sister, causing them to grow apart. Even so, I began my training.

I attended my father's military school along with Ela. I was pressured to perform on every level, a burden my sister was not able to cope with. On a school trip to the Masurian Lake District, I almost lost my life... Three boys from my class took turns trying to drown me "for fun". This experience marked me with a deep mistrust of others. To deal with this growing anxiety and pain, I pushed myself even harder. I trained and trained to ensure that I could rely on myself for protection. I asked my father to show me more ruthless techniques. And he did.

The morning after the incident, my father took me to a shooting range, where he had leashed two stray dogs to a target post. He told me that one of the dogs was really sick and that I needed to end its suffering. He gave me two minutes to make a decision. This was meant to teach me the skills necessary to survive peril, and withstand dangerous situations. This training haunted me for years. While there were moments in which I hated my father, I also felt a sense of comfort hearing his validation.

When I came of age, I enlisted in the army and passed the GROM selection tests with the highest possible scores. Soon after, I was deployed in one of my most notable exploits, a rescue operation in Guatemala, codenamed Red Agatha. A disastrous tropical storm formed a sinkhole in the middle of the city. I was assigned to protect a team of engineers examining the perimeter. During a sudden landfall, I hitched a child on my back and ran as the ground disappeared from under my feet. I gripped the edge of this new void with my bare hands and hung for the next half hour. After I got back to safety, I single-handedly evacuated hundreds of civilians from the area and later received a medal and promotion to the rank of Second Lieutenant.

For the first time since the cruel incident at Lakeland and my father's brutal training, I decided to let down my walls, and I developed close ties for the first time in a while. I met my husband during a rogue operation in Mali, where we mistook each other for hostiles. While I was challenged by my squadmates on the field, I discovered the true kind of specialist I aspired to be. At the peak of my career, I flew back to Poland for my wedding ceremony, which was intended to be private, but my father had other plans and turned it into a marked celebration.

My sister had been given the prestigious offer to join Rainbow in 2017, and I saw no reason to stay behind. I personally reached out to Six and became an official member of team Rainbow, and in late 2020, I was placed on Team Mira for the upcoming Six Invitational. In early 2021, We faced off against Team Ash in the first match. Despite the efforts of Team Ash, they were unable to defuse our bomb within the allotted time, winning us the match and many more to come.

Alexander Kozak '24
Sophomore Fiction

A Collection of 2 Sentence Horror Stories from the Creative Writing Club

Black Lightning

There are many natural phenomena that humans simply cannot understand. One of these is the making, and even existence, of black lightning. There are many tales told from generation to generation, of unbearable storms that ravage the land as far as the eye can see. It is known that anybody who experiences these storms firsthand does not live on to tell the story. People doubt the storm even exists, but that hasn't stopped others from trying to find the storm and learn what makes it so special. One man, named George Beth, claimed he witnessed the storm and lived through it. Everybody, from scientists to the average person, was skeptical of George. George, now deceased, was missing his left arm, which people believed he was born without, yet he claimed it was amputated due to injuries from the storm. George was also missing his left eye, which he kept covered by a black and gray striped eyepatch.

George was interviewed about his experiences and described the storm in immense detail. He claimed it was a "great force angered at human's evils." He described the size of the storm's lightning as "stretching as far as my eye could see." George stated that the lightning strikes were ginormous and lasted as long as five seconds, as pure black electricity struck the areas beneath the storm. The lightning strikes exploded the ground beneath the storm and set surrounding areas ablaze. George claimed that he survived the phenomenon by locating the extremely small eye of the storm, containing a being he claims was a god inside. The god said, "If you offer your repentance, the storm will recede." The god also told George, "if you tell another soul, you will be killed immediately." The very day after the interview, George was killed in a horrific car accident. Researchers found there to be no malfunctions in George's car and that he wasn't under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Scientists and researchers are still perplexed by George's story and debate on whether he was telling the truth. The mystery of the storm of black lightning remains unsolved to this day.

Adam Cannizzo '24
Sophomore Fiction

As I tucked my son into bed, I remarked at his quick growth.
As if on cue, a shrill scream rang out as he burst out of the child's chest.
Elikem Amenuvor '25

When my friend and I came into the room, everyone's faces lit up.
I guess they were a bit surprised to see me dragging him by his feet.
Thomas DeAmorin '24

I was reading the newspaper when I saw a headline that said I had been murdered.
I looked closer and realized the paper had tomorrow's date.
Dalton Vassanella '23

I went to get a drink from the fridge, and an hour later I wasn't feeling too good.
I guess there's a stomach bug going around the blood bank.
Thomas DeAmorin '24

Last night, I awoke to shadows being cast on my bedroom floor.
I live alone.
Zachary Kovacs '24

After being a faithful Christian all my life, I died and went to the afterlife.
My heart sank as I saw Zeus in front of me, his eyes filled with fury.
Arthur Yuen '25

Last night, I saw flickering lights coming from the house across the street.
Today, I found out that it has been abandoned for 25 years.
Zachary Kovacs '24

She was just an ordinary suburban mom...
Then bodies started appearing
J. Mellon '23

St. Joe's Creative Writing Club

Planet Nine

Parker knew nothing of life on Earth. The trip to Planet Nine meant that he was to be born and raised on the Nix Space Shuttle. He was born in an artificial womb on the space shuttle, a designer baby engineered to be tall and slim with sun-colored hair. In place of parents, Parker was raised by the ship's artificial intelligence. Similarly, his name wasn't chosen by parents, but by the scientists who created him. The name they chose was Parker Copernicus Galili. The scientists created Parker for one reason: to reach Planet Nine. There was a time when people did not know if Planet 9 actually existed. Study in the field of astrophysics had backed up the mysterious planet's existence, but it had never been observed by any telescope. A comet entered the solar system, confirming the presence of a gravitational field belonging to a planet about the size of Mercury. Although Planet 9 is too far for the sun's warmth to reach it, the planet should be at an optimal temperature for life, kept warm by the work of nearby stars.

Once Parker reached Planet 9, he was instructed to send a message indicating whether or not Planet 9 was suitable for colonization. The voyage to the mysterious planet would take 67 years. Parker filled his odyssey through space by studying astrophysics and observing the colors of the galaxy. Often, Parker would sit at a large observation window, gazing out into the vast universe. Swirls of cosmic colors and stellar lights filled the horizon as the ship floated by celestial bodies. He counted constellations and watched stars burn in a kaleidoscope of colors. According to his studies, the universe was continuously expanding, faster than any ship could travel. Parker would be floating through space most of his life, yet he would never see all the universe had to offer.

The journey was supposed to take 67 years. However, thirteen years into the cosmic voyage, a distortion in space brought Parker to Planet Nine, 54 years early. As the spaceship floated closer, Parker became the first person to see the dark planet. He watched from his large observation window each day, as the Nix Space Shuttle floated closer to the dark planet. It was completely black, almost invisible in the void of space. Stars reflected off the planet. Red and yellow light outlined the dark planet. It was finally time for Parker to board the landing capsule.

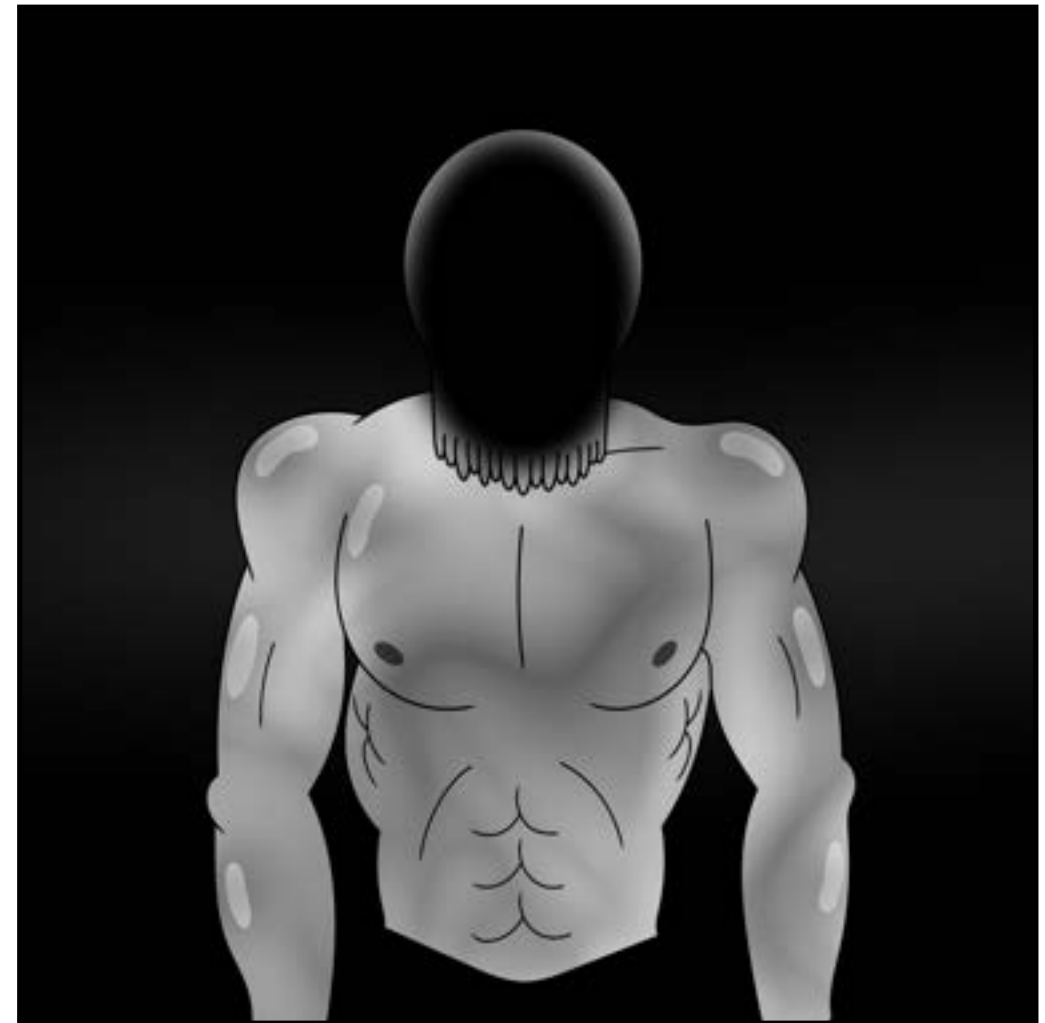
Black dust kicked up as the capsule landed on the planet's surface. Parker adorned his spacesuit and paused. Then, for the first time in his life, Parker left the spaceship. Finally off the shuttle, he was faced with vast, endless terrain. Cosmic lights overhead shed light on the barren planet. In his arms, Parker held a canister filled with millions of algae spores. The algae, like Parker, had been

created and designed in a lab. Slowly, Parker walked across the surface until he reached a lake in which he released the spores. The next week, Parker busied himself by analyzing the planet's black sand. At night, Parker would walk across the planet, watching cosmic clouds filled with every color in the void of space. Finally, after a week, Parker opened the hatch and stepped outside. He pulled off his helmet and inhaled the fresh oxygen that the algae had created.

"Planet Nine is a suitable location for colonization," the words caught in his throat. Being alone, he didn't use his voice much.

Dalton Vassanella '23

Junior Fiction



The Alien

Alex Hawryluk '22

The Bowl

Runners lined up at the start

One fateful day in Holmdel Park.

The official loaded his pistol

And with one blow of his whistle

He gave the command,

“Runners, on your mark.”

The gun fired and the runners flew

Within a few seconds, they were out of view.

Their energy was consumed by hills

And many lacked the skills

Needed to conquer this obstacle anew.

With mile one complete,

Some runners met their defeat.

Mile two wasn’t kind either.

Many runners hoped for a breather

But little did they know, they were about to be beat.

The next obstacle was called The Bowl.

This was no hill with a standard roll

But a steep declination into an inclination,

Which surely served as an intimidation

For the runners, who would rather stroll

The runners sprinted downhill

But many hit a wall uphill.

The incline slowed many down

And the realization came all around

That only the strongest will have their goals fulfilled

Mile three was the real test.

The runners were in dire need of rest

But the only obstacles here were mental.

The runners’ efforts would prove to be consequential

As there were no more hills in need of conquest

As the runners finally saw the end of the course

Their speed matched that of a race horse.

Runners crossing the finish line looked dead.

Although they felt proud, the same question ran through their heads,

“Why do I do this sport?”

Michael-Tristan Almonte '24

3rd Place, Sophomore Poetry

The Master Craftsman of Rhodes

In the town of Rhodes was a master craftsman named Myron. One day, Myron heard the tale of Ales, the first automaton. Built by none other than the god of blacksmiths Hephesuts, Ales was a mechanical warrior. Ales was built by the order of Zeus, king of the gods, in order to protect the island of Crete. The large automaton stood watch over Crete day and night until it was defeated by a mere mortal. The mortal defeated Ales by unscrewing a bolt on his heel, causing the ichor that powered Ales to drain out. Myron, marveled by the story, was disappointed that the glorious machine had such an obvious weakness. The following night Myron tossed and turned in his bed. All night long, his mind wandered to thoughts of Ales, the fallen automaton. Plans for a new automaton began to form in Myron's head. Finally, his excitement overtook him. Myron disappeared into his workshop and began building a better automaton.

Being the best master craftsman and blacksmith of Rhodes, Myron had amassed a substantial fortune. He burned through much of his money, buying up all the nearby copper and iron. In his workshop, he melted the metal down inside a vast cauldron, and mixed it into bronze. His workshop doors were sealed shut. Outside the workshop, one could hear the hammering, which rang out day and night for weeks. As the colossal automaton took form, the project required more bronze. Out of money, Myron melted down a great bronze statue of Hephaestus. With the assistance of his apprentice, Lear, Myron worked day and night for three more months. Then he ran into a dilemma. While Hephesuts had used ichor to power his Automaton, Myron had no way to power his superior creation. The master craftsman of Rhodes looked to another source of godly power. He devised a plan to steal the nectar of the gods. Being too exhausted from months of nonstop work, Myron sent his apprentice.

Lear was a young man, lean and crafty. He was able to use his cunning to sneak up Mount Olympus. At the peak, Lear caught sight of a goddess. Charmed by her beauty, he lost sight of his mission and revealed himself to her. At first, she was angry that a mortal had intruded upon Mount Olympus, however Lear was charming. He managed to calm her with compliments, then told her of his mission. The goddess was fascinated by Lear. She offered Lear the nectar of the gods to fuel the automaton. She also gave him a choice. Lear could bring the nectar back to Rhodes, or he could drink it and gain immortality. Quickly, Lear drank the nectar, turning his back on Myron. Lear stayed atop Mount Olympus as the Goddess' attendant.

Weeks went by and Myron believed his apprentice had perished. He grieved for his apprentice, but grieved more for his invention which he believed would never be completed. Myron, alone and desperate, melted down the giant automaton's left hand. He rebuilt the Hephesuts' shrine and prayed to the god of blacksmiths to bless his automaton with life.

The blacksmith god looked down on Myron with anger. First Myron had believed he could build a better automaton, then Myron melted down the god's

statue. Worst of all, Myron had tried to obtain godly power on his own by stealing nectar. Finally, Hephesuts could ignore no longer as Myron insulted him by begging for help. In a fit of rage, he smote down the master craftsmen of Rhodes. After killing Myron, the god looked upon the Automaton Myron had created. Sudden regret filled the god. Myron's automaton was truly better than Ales. The god rebuilt the automaton's left hand and then brought the lifeless automaton to the coast of Rhodes, where he left it as a statue. The colossal bronze automaton became a landmark of Rhodes, and became known as the Colossus of Rhodes.

Dalton Vassanella '23

Junior Fiction

Dear Lord, Thank You

Dear Lord, thank you for blessing me with a healthy and loving family to return home to every day of the week. Thank you for providing me with an incredible spiritual, academic, and athletic education here in the St. Joseph community. Thank you for listening to me when I need someone of great hospitality, sympathy, and understanding to turn to. Thank you for keeping me out of harm's way and guiding me on a path that I should be on. I'm eternally grateful for the presence that you play in my life.

Troy Boucher '25

Freshman Nonfiction

The Day Death Died

“This is a terrible idea,” Caleb warned.

“He will never know,” Seth said, opening the garage door. “After all, how would he find out if we put it right back when we're done?”

As the garage door rose, natural light spilled in. Seth ran his hand over the jet black fender of his father's Indian Chief motorcycle. The classic 50s Chief was a pioneer of American motorcycles. The refurbished motorcycle featured meticulously cleaned whitewall tires and polished black fenders. Seth threw his leg over the motorcycle and sat down on its leather seat. Seth fixated on his fingers as he stretched them out, then curled them around the handlebar. Caleb sighed as Seth smiled ear to ear.

“Just one lap past Jude's house.”

Caleb frowned at Seth's plan, “If your dad finds, out he will kill you.”

“He won't find out.”

“What if you scratch it, or dent it, or...”

“I know how to ride. That won't happen.” Seth pulled his helmet over his face, muting Caleb's objections.

Realizing his friend wouldn't listen, Caleb climbed onto the motorcycle behind him. Seth revved the throttle, and the old machine roared to life. Dark black fumes spilled out of the back exhaust, as the motorcycle sped out of the garage. It barreled down the driveway. Seth turned onto an almost empty road. Of course, he wanted to push the motorcycle's limits before stopping at Jude's. The sensation of power willed Seth to go faster. After about ten minutes of riding at almost 80 miles per hour, Seth returned to the plan. He turned onto Timber Hook drive. The motorcycle stopped right in line with the front of Jude's house. Seth revved the engine one last time before he turned it off. After removing his helmet, Seth stretched his neck. As planned, the loud hot rod had drawn attention. Seth pretended not to notice when Jude looked out the window. He stretched once more, then pretended he was about to drive off.

Jude opened her window and called out to him, “Hey Seth, what are you doing out here?”

“Oh, hey Judy,” He smiled, “I was taking a ride on my motorcycle. Thought I'd try a new route.”

“That's cool,” She replied, gawking at the black hot rod.

“Want a ride?” Seth asked, his face in a wide devilish grin.

“Really?”

“Come on,” Seth patted the passenger extension behind him, and Judy ran out to meet him.

Caleb complained as Seth's hand phased through him, “I would have moved. You know I hate it when you do that.” Seth Ignored Caleb. Judy couldn't see or hear Caleb, being that he was a ghost. So, it would have looked weird for Seth to apologize. As she approached Seth, Jude's eyes widened, and her face turned white. Seth turned around to see a tall figure in a dark black robe,

surrounded by a dark aura that seemed to suck up the sun's light. Seth glanced back toward the house. Jude had already run inside and shut her windows. Everyone reacted the same when confronted with Death.

Caleb gulped, “I told you.”

Though Jude had been unable to see Caleb, the hooded harbinger could. However, before the Reaper could speak, Caleb vanished into thin air.

“You're in big trouble,” roared Death.

“Come on Dad,” Seth frowned, “You didn't need to scare Jude like that.”

“Get on the bike. We are going home. Now!”

The Reaper climbed onto the motorbike and Seth sat behind him. Being the passenger on a motorcycle was emasculating to Seth. Seth held unto Death as they accelerated down the road and turned onto the highway. Embarrassingly, he held on tighter as his dad, much like Seth, pushed the motorcycle to its limit. The way the motorcycle was made also made it harder to stay on. The authentic 50s seat had placed style above safety. They approached a sharp turn, and Seth tried to hold onto his father, but his grip failed him. He was flung from the bike and crashed into the asphalt. His skin and clothes tore as he rolled across the ground. Struggling to lift his head from the ground, he looked up at his father. Death turned his head to look back. The distracted Reaper was focused on his injured son, and didn't notice the roadside barrier until he slammed into it. The metal barrier dented and parts of the motorcycle flew off. It was a bad crash and after a few seconds of delay, the whole bike caught fire and exploded. Seth pulled his helmet from his head as he struggled to his feet.

Although Reapers could live for a very long time, they were still mortal. It had been that way ever since someone had tricked the first Death, a Reaper named Alam. When the first Reaper approached an ancient warrior, he didn't run. The warrior greeted Death, but presented the First Reaper with a moral dilemma: How could someone immune to death preside over life. Alam thought for quite a while and then decided to give up his immortality to become a better Harbinger of Death. Then, as the first Reaper relinquished his immortality, the ancient warrior killed him. The role of Death required a new host and after Alam's death, it became passed down his family's bloodline.

Dalton Vassanella '23

Junior Fiction

Callidus Saves Athens

Once, in the well-known city of Athens, Greece, there was a child named Callidus. He lived only with his father who had told him that his mother had left in order to find her passion in the world when he was just a kid. Growing up, Callidus was incredibly clever and intelligent. He was able to get out of a lot of situations due to his wits and was constantly forming solutions for different problems in his life. In school, he was always the smartest student and was always finding ways to outsmart his teachers. In his free time, he would always exercise his intelligence by creating ideas for different tools that could be used in everyday life. However, he was bullied and berated constantly due to him being frail and weak in a city that consisted mostly of warriors.

His father, while being a kind-hearted person, also expressed his wishes for his son to become a warrior, as at the time, Athens was at war with a neighboring city and needed many men for defense. Callidus himself wanted to help out, but instead of fighting, he wanted to use his intellect. He had created many schemes and gadgets that he thought would be useful for the army but no one would hear him out as he was a child. Callidus would spend most of his days hanging around the private rooms that the army used to discuss their plans, hoping he could get in on the action.

One day, he stayed a bit too long, and as the warriors filed out from the room, they spotted him. Gazing upon his short and skinny stature, they began laughing and jeering at him for trying to be a part of the army's plans. Feeling miserable, Callidus fled to the enormous temple of Athena in hope of getting comfort from his prayers. As Callidus knelt before the shrine of Pallas Athena and started his silent praying, he felt as if the wind stilled a bit. Then, all of a sudden he felt a burst of energy around him and saw a blinding light even through his closed eyes. When Callidus had concluded his prayers and opened his eyes, he saw standing before him the regal figure of Athena fully clothed in armour. Athena explained that she had heard his prayers and had come down from Olympus to check on her son. Callidus gasped at these words as Athena continued to smile, her eyes twinkling. Athena explained that she had met his father through a war, where she fell in love with him due to his strength and courage. They had Callidus together in Athens, Athena's patron city, but she couldn't stay as Zeus had forbidden her from mingling with mortals.

Callidus was glad to have finally met his mother but then felt saddened again as he realized why his father had wanted him to become a warrior. When he conveyed his feelings to his mother, she smiled once more and reminded him that she wasn't only the goddess of war, but also wisdom. With her final words before parting, Athena blessed Callidus and told him to save the city. Hurrying home, Callidus gathered up all of his plans and ideas and got ready to confront the army. Composing himself, he flew off to the private rooms where the warriors were just about to end their meeting. Huffing and puffing, he presented everything he had to the head of the army who listened intently, sensing the blessing of a god upon Callidus. Once Callidus had finished, the chief began

giving new orders to all of his soldiers who reluctantly complied. The war turned on its head, and Athens fended off the neighboring army. Seeing how useful Callidus was, the chief made him the leader of strategy which his father was immensely proud of.

Callidus became known as one of the greatest men in Athenian history and although he never interacted with his mother again, he knew she was always watching over him.

Aryan Jeena '24
3rd Place, Sophomore Fiction



A Decimated Athens

Jason Magistre '24

Temporary Escape

A long day at school and a homework-filled night
Nothing but notebooks and pencils in sight
Write faster and faster or the work will be late
There's no way you can finish at this haphazardly rate
You submit the assignment with few minutes to spare
Put your notebooks away and stand up from your chair
Not a bone in your body can stand being awake
Sleep's the only cure for your school-made headache
You lay yourself down and settle deep into bed
Readjusting the pillow to cradle your head
Your thinking starts to slow as you drift into sleep
Your worries wash away with no thoughts left to keep
You start to dream and live life with ease
You get to exist and live as you please
The stress of life can't weigh you down
No homework, grades, and school around
Sometimes there's nightmares, but those ones are rare
They give you a real thrill, but often a scare
Dreaming is an escape from the reality we attend
But good dream or bad dream, they all come to an end

Matthew Brattole '23
Junior Poetry

A Scary Surprise

Sally and Mrs. Chipley sulked down the street, engulfed in drowsiness after their long trip. They were drenched in the pouring rain. With all of the strength they had left in them, they looked to find Aunt Sarah's house. Mrs. Chipley moaned, "This is the house: 937 Tyrennial Boulevard." We looked up, and were taken aback by the size of the house. They trudged their way up to the door, remembering why they had come.

Mrs. Chipley and Sally were exhausted, but they knew that they needed to be fast. Mrs. Chipley dug through her alligator handbag, and found the key Aunt Sarah gave . She took out the rusty, old-looking key, wondering if it would work on the fancy-looking lock. With her hand quivering from exhaustion, she was able to open the door of the house. Sally and Mrs. Chipley then opened the door, waited for it to creak open, and then entered the mansion.

Sally flipped on the lights and was astonished by the inside. However, the lights flickered off within one minute. Mrs. Chipley got out a flashlight from her handbag. She looked at Sally, who seemed to be concerned, and said, "It must be the rain causing this power outage. Just be patient, it'll be fine in a bit." Sally and Mrs. Chipley were looking around the house that they would be spending about six months in. Our home, at 113 Greenview Drive, was destroyed in a powerful hurricane that had demolished our neighborhood.

They kept exploring the house with the flashlight when they heard water dripping. At one point, Mrs. Chipley even heard a wailing noise. "Did you hear that noise, Sally?" Sally was confused. She hadn't heard anything, but Mrs. Chipley swore that she heard it. Sally shook her head and said, "I don't know about this. We should just get out of here." Mrs. Chipley responded, "Yeah, something about this place seems-off." "Honestly, I don't think that this place is scary," continued Mrs. Chipley. Sally "Yeah, we are probably just paranoi-" Sally was interrupted by the sound of glass shattering behind them.

Sally and Mrs. Chipley yelled as loud as they could, but it resulted in the following words, "Sally, Tanisha, is that you? It's me, Sarah." She looked at Mrs. Chipley and Sarah, who had faces filled with terror. "Sorry for the noises, I was having a bit too much fun!" Aunt Sarah pointed at speakers in the rooms that played noises as they passed by. Mrs. Chipley said "Why did you do that! Were you trying to scare us to death?" After a pause, they all started laughing about it. Sally said, "Not gonna lie, you did a pretty good job!" Aunt Sarah smiled, and said "It's late, and you guys look exhausted. Let me show you to your rooms." Mrs. Chipley replied, "What's the point of sleeping now that your prank left us wide awake?" They laughed, and headed down the flight of stairs to the bedrooms.

Devraj Patel '25
Freshman Fiction

Hikes With my Granddad

My Grandad and I were not always close, but a few summers ago, I remember our first hike in jockey hollow. We ended up getting lost and it took us a while to figure out where we were. When we got back to the car, we got in and laughed as we went back to pick my sister up from her soccer practice. I specifically remember the sense of peace and quiet as we walked the paths. The next weekend, my family was all gathered at my aunt and uncle's pool. My Grandad came and pulled a chair beside me. He asked me if I had enjoyed going on the hike. I said yes, but not because I actually enjoyed it, more because I didn't want him to feel bad.

He asked me again if I wanted to go next weekend, and those weekends soon turned into weekdays. Before I knew it, my Grandad and I were going almost every day. I remember the moment not wanting to go and complaining, even though I had nothing else to do during those days. When I look back at it now, I realize that it was a blessing in disguise. My parents told me, "if you don't go, you'll regret it someday."

When I look back, I only remember the things I learned, the peace of being out in nature, the conversations we had, and how much my Grandad enjoyed being there, with me. It made me feel loved. That was one of the best things he did. It breaks my heart to not be able to go with him anymore. I learned so many things, whether it be about nature, grammar, music, fitness, education, or money. There are just too many things to count. When he was in rehab after his injury, he worked so hard. I remember every time I saw him, especially after everything happened, he said one thing. With how difficult it must have been for him to even speak, he could always manage to muster up the strength to say my name. "Andrew."

Andrew Eisenhart '25
Junior Nonfiction

Remember

Alone I walk along the shore
Remembering those that came before
All passed on, onto the next life
One with hope not filled with strife
Alone I walk along the shore
Remembering those that came before
My friends are gone, I miss them dear
Oh to only have them here
Alone I walk along the shore
Remembering those that came before
To keep my head and my heart true
Is quite a challenge I say unto you
I'll remember them, and their hearts of gold
Even when I'm gray and old
Alone I walk along the shore
Remembering those that came before
My journey is over, it's finally time
To see my friends for one last ride
Alone I walk along the shore
Remembering those that came before

Jake Stellatella '23
Junior Poetry

Brotherhood

Brotherhood deeply bonds individuals even though they're not each other's blood.

They see past their own differences and make each other family.

The search for acceptance is something everyone looks for.

Many of us ask the question, do I want to be liked or do I want to be loved?

For some, this tug of war between admiration and benevolence may last for a lifetime.

But for those who understand brotherhood, let go of that rope and no longer cower in the crowd. Instead they stand tall and look upon each other with dignity and loyalty.

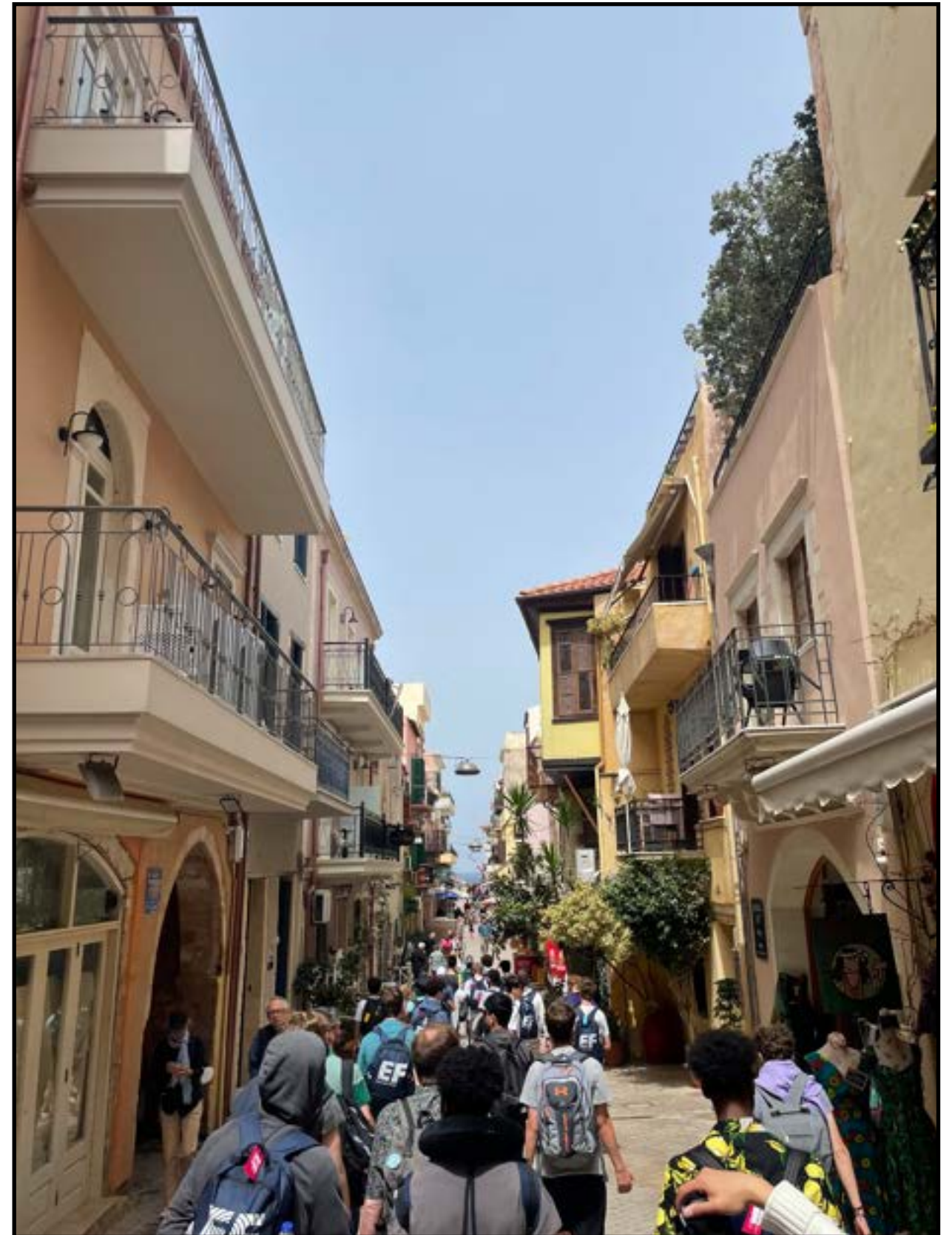
They work together and look out for one another.

Through all this, once they were boys, but now they are men.

These men help run the world and make an impact in people's lives.

By using unity and brotherhood, men are truly given the opportunity to make a difference.

Nereo Rossi III '24'
Sophomore Poetry



That Which Lies Ahead

Jason Magistre '24'

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Policy

All students enrolled at Saint Joseph, 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 school's Robert Frost Writing Contest. 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 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 are not returned. The editors and advisors reserve the right to edit manuscripts for grammar, spelling, punctuation, and clarity.

Colophon

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

The cover was designed by Jim Yu '23. Folios were designed by the Vignette staff. This magazine is comprised of 116 pages using a 5.5 x 8.5 inch format.

Thanks to Mr. Paul Caruso & Dr. Robert Longhi '81 for their guidance and support as well as to the members of the English Department for their assistance with submissions. Thanks also to Ms. Nadia Salzer and the students in her art classes for sharing their work.

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Vignette Awards

- 2021: ASPA --"First Place with Special Merit"  
ASPA -- "Outstanding Photograph"
- 2020: ASPA --"First Place with Special Merit"  
"Most Outstanding High School Literary-Art Magazine"
- 2019: ASPA --"First Place with Special Merit"
- 2018: ASPA --"First Place with Special Merit"
- 2017: ASPA -- "First Place with Special Merit"
- 2016: ASPA -- "First Place with Special Merit"
- 2015: ASPA ??First Place with Special Merit"
- 2014: ASPA -- "First Place with Special Merit" &  
"Most Outstanding Private School"
- 2013: ASPA --"First Place with Special Merit" &  
"Most Outstanding Private School"
- 2012: ASPA --"First Place with Special Merit"
- 2011: ASPA --"First Place with Special Merit"
- 2010: ASPA --"First Place with Special Merit"
- 2009: ASPA --"First Place with Special Merit"
- 2008: ASPA --"First Place with Special Merit"

Dedication

This year marks the Brothers of the Sacred Heart Bicentennial, as well as the 60th anniversary of Saint Joseph in Metuchen, NJ. The Bicentennial is a celebration of two hundred years of service by the Brothers of the Sacred Heart, with the mission of moral, intellectual, and religious development as vital today as when it began with founder, Father Andre Coindre. The anniversary is not simply sixty years of a school, or standing buildings, but a legacy of brotherhood, rich in history and tradition. Dedication is synonymous with devotion, and so it is fitting that this year’s Vignette is in honor of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart.



