

The Clarion

A magazine of student writing and art

Spring 2017

Freeport High School
Freeport, Maine

Cover Art: Lindsey Galletta
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—Abby Brier

love

There is a heartbeat in the soil
and the lilacs dizzying on beams of sunlight
and the sky is a bottomless bowl of cereal.

one color
 cannot be chosen
one sound
 cannot be distinguished

because the world has awoken.

the trees are no longer asleep
 but singing
and waves are colliding
 crashing together on universes of beaches.
there are dandelions to be picked and wishes to be breathed
and where are the pencils for me to write
a thousand and one words on your eyes?

but listen —
there is an earthquake
rising
deep in the lungs
quiet now,
 a thousand times softer than the breath of a flower
but rising slowly
— a murmur —
a lone G note
the bow shivering as it lowers toward the strings
the vibrations buzzing through your chest
a crescendo
a tsunami slowly rising
until the symphony bursts through the dam of your soft lips
the three words sending us tumbling into the infinite void of
stars

and,
 if you sit very still
you might hear the petals of the rose
unfurling

-Rhea Fitzpatrick

How to Have the Most Gorgeous Feline in All the Land:

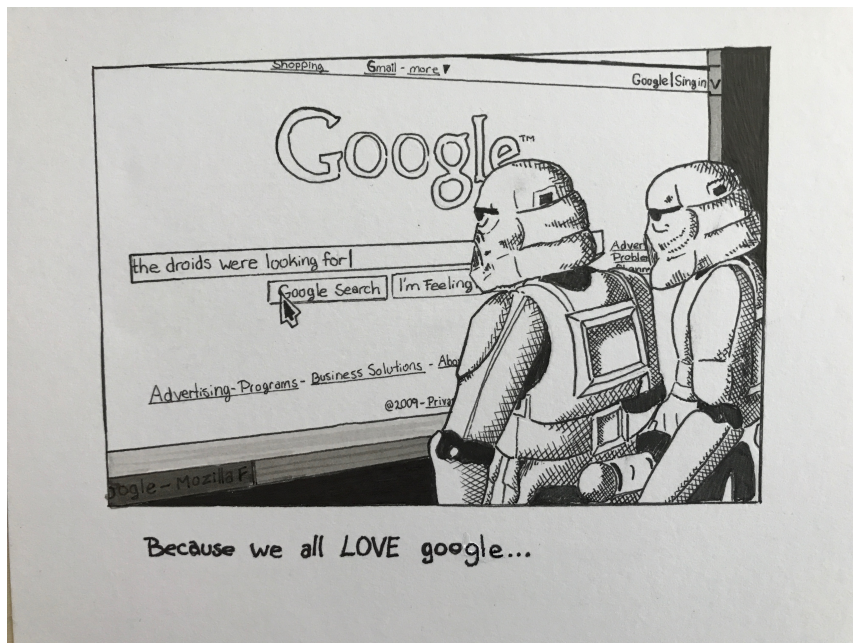
Not everyone can be as proficient as me, I know. But you can try. That's why I'm here to help. People laugh at me all the time but I'm thoroughly convinced that it is out of pure jealousy. The fact of the matter is, my cat, Whiskers, has the finest groomed coat of any mammal alive. I'm writing this to show to you how your fine feline can just graze the surface of the beauty that is Mr. Whiskers himself.

First and foremost, you mustn't be allergenic. For felines are very dusty creatures. I find this to be very common in most Americans. In fact, no one will ever come over to visit because they claim Whiskers makes them sneeze. A labor of love I guess... sacrifices.

In order to begin grooming your feline, you must have the proper tools. A brush will do but a shampoo for cats and a miniature bathtub would be ideal. Other than that mostly household items will do. Cats love to be pampered, seducing your furry friend into compliance can only be done using outrageous amounts of affection and possibly some catnip. Much like the process used by shallow males in bars across America.

Once your pint-sized puma has been lathered up and thoroughly scrubbed, light a candle, and massage him or her dry with a warm towel. Proceed to use a household blow dryer to fan the beast as you brush out its coat which should become silky and smooth. Follow this step with a few passes with one of those combs made for finding head lice. I've got a few from when I moved out of my parents house last month. Unfortunately I've spent way too much time between the ages of 25 and 30 with head lice, luckily that was when I lived at home. And I got to keep all the combs for use in my hobby. But I'm an adult now. I actually consider myself to be far more advanced than your typical 32 year old.

-Kyle Dorsey



- Dianella Steir



-Abby Brier

A Southern Lady Would Never...

A southern lady would never go for a walk without a pistol in her handbag.
You never know what might happen in those swaying fields when moonlight spills through
cottonball clouds.

She walks along the high road, petticoats billowing around her groomed figure, chin high,
eyes straight and glinting in the navy wind.

Her shoes, of course, are heeled boots, buttoned up to the ankle. They deftly tread
through the gravel, never wobbling, steady from years of practice.

She doesn't make a sound.

Her eyes riveted to the inky trees lining the river bed.

Watching.

Waiting.

Her hair is swooped up in an elegant wave over her forehead, speaking without words of
the elegant life she leads. Her mouth is a proper thin line, as is her rigid back.

Her fingers are grasping her purse, the contents of which are unknown to all but her.

If a sound comes, she is ready.

If a shadow comes bolting out of the night, she is ready.

She is always ready.

-Rhea Fitzpatrick

Something Old, Something Blue

It's been ten years since I've seen you
It's been ten years since I've seen you smile
It's been ten years since I've seen your hair blow stilly in the wind
You're such a painting
I can only see in my dreams
But you're here now, in front of me now
So can I take a picture
So you can be a
Beautiful painting on my wall
I remember those years, with you
Swinging on that broken down tire
In my back yard in Alabama
Do you remember that dear?
You were so wild and free
Until you disappeared and left the whole world
You left me
It's so weird to run into you
Your baby blues still price through my
Eyes, looking back the way I
Did back in high school
What a crazy time that was
Isn't it funny how long it's been
How are you now
Ten years since I last saw you
Ten years since I've last held you in my arms
So tight
Ten years since I've ran after you
Down by the grassy meadow
That is now overgrown
Overlooking the blue house, that has nothing going on
Until today
I will never let you go again.

-Natalie Pagnano

Rouge



-Sara Lano

Today's Headline

Leaning over the sink in the poorly lit bathroom, I saw it. The dark blue and purple contrasting with my light, ivory colored skin. I had gotten better at hiding them, but I knew I could only do so much with makeup. I took my makeup bag out anyway. It hurt to put the foundation on, smearing the light tan paste on my left cheek, then my right. My skin was uneven from the swelling, but at least it was returning to its normal color.

Friends had noticed them when we used to go out. Not one of them telling me to stick up for myself and leave the love of my life, but instead telling me my foundation was too dark, or “not my color,” knowing exactly what lay hidden beneath my new layer of

skin I had painted on earlier that morning. Nobody talked about it, but it had been weeks since I last saw them, I didn't know if they even cared I was gone.

Too scared to look back up in the mirror, I screwed the cap back on the foundation and threw it into my bag. I knew nobody was going to see me, but I needed to feel a sense of normal routine, a sense of humanity. Taking a deep breath, I looked up and into the sad eyes I've begun to recognize as my own. Today is a new day. With that final thought, I shuffled my way over to the door, in no hurry to see what lay hidden on the other side. My boney hand lingered on the oversized brass door handle. Taking every second of peace and quiet in, I mustered up all my energy and pushed open the door into the dark, smoky living room.

The fish tank's water was a murky green and filled with dead fish. The one plant sitting on the coffee table that was once a beautiful pink was now brown and wilted, old petals scattering the top of the table. The air felt heavy with anticipation. I knew he would be home soon. Looking down at the old, unpaid bills that were accumulating, a fresh, unwrinkled newspaper, with what I imagined was today's date, caught my eye. Inspecting it closer, I saw a picture of someone I recognized, but this girl looked younger... happier... Her face took up half of the first page, with the caption, "missing person". I heard the door creak open and I knew he was home.

"I thought you might like that, sweetheart." He sneered in a deep growl behind me, the stench of alcohol rolled off his breath with his next words, "Look, you're famous. You're on the front page of today's paper."

-Laura Pierce

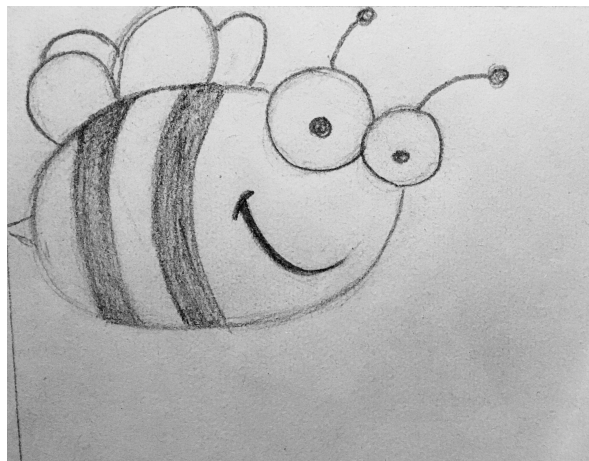


-Sadie Southall

How to Be a Savage

As you drive to school every morning always have your driver's side window down and your arm hanging out, even when it's the middle of winter and you think your arm may freeze off. When you arrive at school and pull into the student parking lot make sure to take up two parking spaces just so people begin to recognize your style. While walking into school it is a must, that you hold onto your backpack by only one strap, no matter how heavy your textbooks are it is much more important to look good. The office lady stops you on your way into the building and tells you that you are 3 minutes late say "yeah guy" as you grab your late slip. When walking down the hall you notice your shoelace has come untied, if other students are around keep walking and play it off as you had meant for it to be that way. Before you arrive at your creative writing class take your Poland Springs water bottle out of the side pocket of your backpack. When you open the classroom door walk to your desk stopping in front of it, flipping your water bottle to the upright position on the corner of your desk, and proceed to sit down. Once the half bell rings grab your backpack and move towards the door even though you know this is a full period class. If no one tries to stop you, keep walking and never look because a true savage does everything with complete confidence. Walk to the cafeteria and approach the study hall monitors desk, as you sign out to the library purposely forget your library pass because you're simply, too savage. Reaching into your bag pull out your "Make America Great Again" hat and place it on your head, remembering to tilt the brim 90 degrees to the right. Your friends are sitting at the front table, give them a head nod and migrate towards an empty table, just to remind them that you are truly better than they are. Grab a chair and turn it around so you are sitting backwards in the chair, even though this may be uncomfortable it is worth it in the long run. Once lunch rolls around, sign out in the main office for open campus and walk to the GPL. Before leaving the student parking lot place a orange construction cone in your parking spots to mark your territory. Drive over to the Mac Shack and wait for someone to order and pay in the drive through, quickly skirt in front of them picking up their order at the second window. With your McDougle in one hand drive past the "Do Not Enter" sign leading towards the Amanda Thai parking lot. Once you have created enough of a disturbance in town feel free to drive home remembering to keep your left arm out the window.

-Max Doughty



-Rhea Fitzpatrick

Kenya: A Trip of a Lifetime

On August 3rd, 2016, at 11:55am, I was boarding a plane to Dubai. It was nearly impossible to contain my excitement. I was one third of the way to my temporary home for the next three weeks. I, Hannah Bradley, was heading to Kenya!

Sixteen hours later, we had arrived in Africa. I stepped off the plane and took a deep breath of the crisp Nairobi air. It smelled cleaner, almost lighter, than the air back home. I was then whisked onto a crowded shuttle bus and relocated to another part of Nairobi airport. I was greeted to harsh white walls, angular metal ceilings and many other travelers. After waiting in line for what seemed like forever, my group and I finally were able to claim our luggage. We piled our suitcases, backpacks and plastic bins onto eleven luggage carts and made our way outside to the van that we would be sitting in for the next seven hours.

For the next two and a half weeks, I would be staying in an orphanage in a small town called Kakamega, surrounded by children whose ages ranged from six to sixteen. Ten other people and I would be running a summer camp for ten days- five days with the children who live at The Care Centre and the other five with high schoolers who would come the following week. We arrived on a Friday evening and the camp didn't start until Monday so we were fortunate enough to have two extra days to get to know a few of the kids. After breakfast the next day, a fellow counselor, Owen, and I were immediately included in an hour long game of dropkicking and head butting a foam ball to a small group of boys. I was amazed by how something as simple as bouncing a ball off my head or even my elbow at times made these little boys so happy. That was the case for all of the children there; there wasn't a time when I didn't see their cheerful, vibrant smiles or hear their uplifting giggles. These were some of the happiest children I had ever seen.

As the week went on, we noticed the children would hold our hands tightly or ask for a hug and even tease us; it was like we were their older siblings. One little boy in particular became very attached to me, and I became very attached to him. He talked to me about losing both his parents, how he was doing in school, what he liked to do during his free time and what he wanted to be when he was older. Eleven year old Moses Makasu became my non-biological little brother for the week. He would hold my hand every chance he got, hop on my back for a piggy back ride around the compound, catch me off guard by tickling me and playing with my hair, which he often told me to cut.

When camp came to a close, I knew saying goodbye would be extremely hard. I burst into tears when Moses came to say goodbye. I scooped him into my arms and squeezed him tightly. When his little feet landed on the ground again, he looked at me and said, "Please don't cry, I will see you again." Not only did this make me cry even more, but it helped me make the decision to stay in contact with him after I left.

When I came home, I told my parents that I wanted to sponsor Moses. We talked it over with the coordinator of the project and now I am proud to say that I am Moses's sponsor, meaning I will be paying to have him live at the Care Centre, have all his basic life needs met and to go to school.

After spending three weeks with children like Moses and seeing how little it took to make him happy, despite his difficult life circumstances, my whole perspective on life changed. I realized how much we take for granted and how the smallest things, whether it be tangible or not, can go a long way.

-Hannah Bradley

Namesake



-Maggie Riendeau

Flint Sparks Flame

George slowly strolled down the empty street in the direction of the Hazelbury Free Press, his place of employment for the past ten years. He could drive to work if he wanted, but only living a few blocks away, he preferred to walk and gather his thoughts on the topics he would cover in the day's editorial. The harsh morning wind snuck in between the sides of his overcoat and sent chills through his body. The temperature was the last thing on his mind, though, for today he was hopelessly transfixed on a pair of stories, both equally alarming and perplexing. On one hand, there was a story that had occupied the pages of the Free Press for months. A series of fires had erupted at a few of Hazelbury's most respected establishments, including a local brewery, the post office, and one of the three rather sketchy motels on the outskirts of the city. Luckily there had been no deaths and only minor injuries as a result. The consensus of both the police investigations and the media speculation was arson, but the many investigations struggled to find any valid connections between the three establishments. This left George and the other writers at

the newspaper paranoid, knowing that no progress was being made on the case. George feared it was only a matter of time before he would have to report on the occurrence of another fire.

Somehow, another story weighed more heavily on George's mind this morning. The infamous real estate mogul and self-proclaimed "richest man in town" Flint Brando was running for mayor. He was also the founder of the city's most prominent charity, the Flint Fund. Nobody was sure who exactly this charity benefitted, and most suspected it was just a tax write off for its founder. On top of that, recently the news had broken that nearly all the Charity's funds had been withdrawn and mysteriously lost. Everybody in the media was itching to point the finger at Brando and expose the truth, but nobody had the guts to launch an attack on the most influential man in the city. George was up to the task. He knew it was risky, but he had his mind set on writing a piece exposing Brando for who he really was: a corrupt, selfish, and relatively unsuccessful business person.

Flint Brando sat at his desk staring at the headline printed on the top of the newest issue of the Hazelbury Free Press. It read, "Flint Foundation fails, Brando's poll numbers continue to drop". He slowly filled with an intense and unrelenting rage. How could the most powerful man in the city allow himself to be slandered like this, Brando thought to himself. Deep down, though, Flint was panicking. It was only a matter of time. He'd tried to cover his tracks as much as possible, but if somebody managed to put the pieces together, his life would be ruined. The Free Press was becoming a danger to his existence and something had to be done. Brando opened his safe and removed the supplies he needed, he slipped on latex gloves and rigged a small watch with the necessary components. He then set out in the cover of the night towards the edifice which housed the town's most trusted news source.

The next morning George set off for work. Today, his pace was a bit more brisk. He was worried about the repercussions of the article he had published the day before, and he found the fact there had been little public reaction to his article rather unsettling. There was no wind, no chill in the air as there was the day before. Everything was eerily still and painfully quiet. Then, in the distance, echoing through the vacant streets, he heard the sirens. A shiver of panic ran through George's body as he turned the corner and gazed upon the charred remains of what was once the Hazelbury Free Press.

-Ben Sawyer

She is the Light



-Dianella Sfeir

How to Be an Asshole

First get yourself a girlfriend. For maximum asshole behavior, go after a girl that is already in a relationship. You will need to find an innocent girl, because your asshole nature will not phase a whore. Once your target is selected you will then need to find her snapchat username. First check in her instagram bio. If the target's snapchat username is not there check her twitter. If you cannot find it, ask around. Be casual, you don't want to draw attention. Once you have the username, add her. Phase one complete.

Wait for her to snap you first. It will most likely be a mass snap sent to all her contacts. Possibly a cute video of her dog, or an embarrassing video of her friend. Respond with a fire selfie. She may or may not respond back. If she does, keep the convo going. You must be casual, don't draw attention. If she doesn't respond that's okay too,

there will be more opportunities. Wait a few days to snap her again. You will then snapchat her asking a question related to school. A few options are: "What was the homework for calculus again?", "Do you know what time sports awards starts?", etc. Be casual, you don't want people to get suspicious of your intentions.

Once you've established a causal streak with the girl, ask her if she wants to study for the history test after school. If she hesitates, beg. Tell her you're awful at history. She will cave. She's a nice girl. Nice girls always cave.

When you stay after school with her, you must meet in a public place. You have to be casual, don't draw attention. She will be nervous. So act nervous. It will make her more comfortable to see that you're nervous too. Don't make the moves. You must be patient. Once you're done studying, act very appreciative. Tell her she's a good teacher. She'll think you're nice. Before you leave ask for her number. If she gives you a weird look, fumble over your words. Claim that it's just in case you need help again. She'll smile at your awkwardness and put her contact in your phone. Phase two complete.

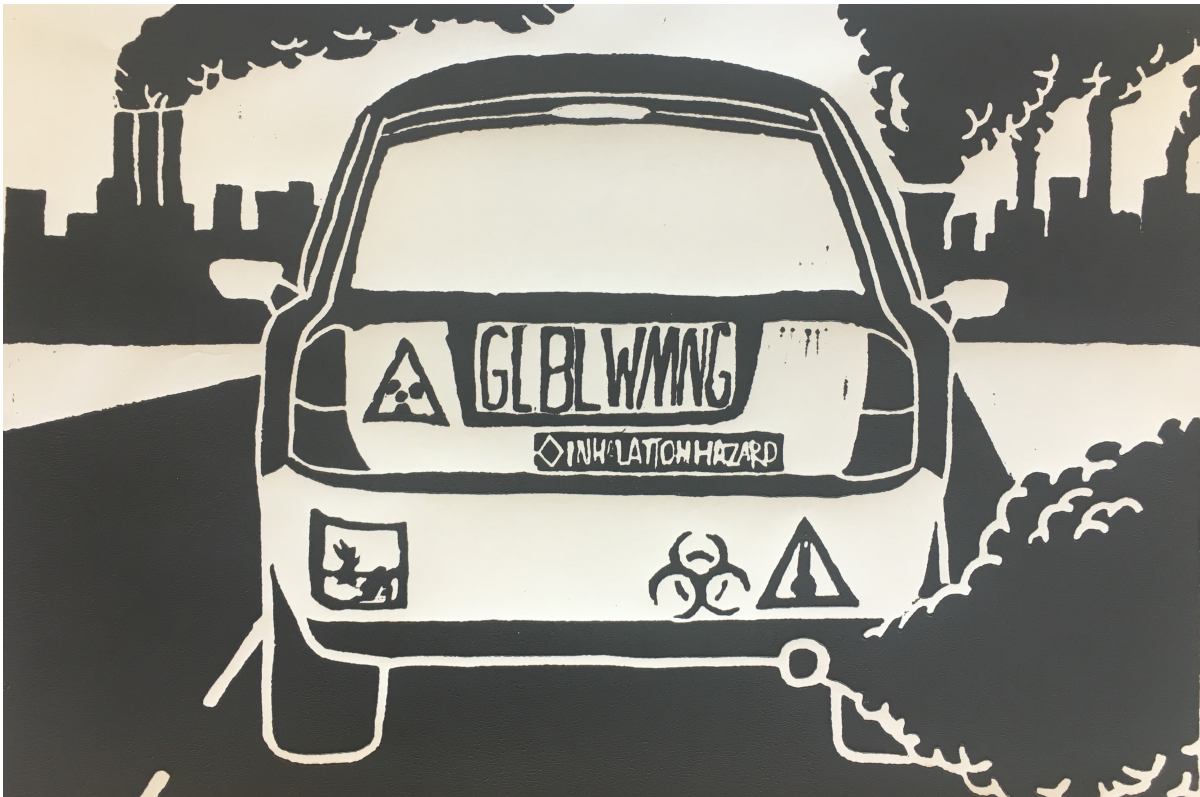
Don't text her. When you see her in the hall just give her a smile and keep on walking. You don't want to appear too eager. After a week or two goes by then text her. Ask her another history question. She will give you an indepth answer, making sure you truly understand. Give her your thanks. Then ask her how she's doing. At this point you will have gained her trust, she will see you as a friend. She will start to open up to you, this is when you pounce. She will talk to you about a variety of things, however, the most important part of this phase is to become a good listener. Allow her to talk about whatever she wants, always appear interested in what she has to say. By doing this, she will then feel valuable and wanted. You will become everything her boyfriend is not.

Your target will start coming to you for everything. You will become an important part of her life. When she comes to you about her unloving boyfriend, encourage her to break up with him. Tell her that she could do so much better, that she deserves the world. After she breaks up with him, confess your fake feelings for her. Tell her that you've never felt this way about anyone, that she is one in a million. Ask her out on a date, and don't take no for an answer. She will accept, after all you're the one she's been longing after for weeks. She'll be thrilled that you feel the same way. Phase three complete.

During phase four it is important that you do not under any circumstances catch feelings. Assholes do not have feelings. So, sweep her off her feet, always surprise her, you must be charming all the time. She will begin to fall foolishly in love with you. Fill her head with lies, and always make unrealistic statements about your future together. Keep this going for a month or two. To be a true asshole one must be committed. Once you know that you have her wrapped around your finger, crush her little heart. Start to distance yourself. Don't be so quick to reply, start to pick random fights with her, and above all, make sure she's last on your priority list. Do this for a couple of weeks, she will think that it is just a rough patch. Phase four complete.

Phase five is the last and most important phase of becoming an asshole. You can complete phase five in multiple different ways, it's a stylistic choice. Phase five is when you break her heart. This is the time that a true asshole is born. How you choose to complete this phase will dictate the type of asshole people perceive you as, so be careful with your choice. For example, one might break her heart by purposefully flirting with another girl right in front of her. When she confronts you about it, publicly humiliate her by saying you were never even together. It is completely up to you how you break your target's heart. However you break her heart, make sure you're an asshole about it.

-Jordan Randall



-Alex Les

Summer Has Ended

It usually hits you like a freight train, knocks you on your ass, and proceeds to punch you directly in the face. Your nose is broken, blood is streaming down your face, and you haven't even made it through the lobby yet. By the time you get yourself cleaned up, you have accumulated 2 essays (due tomorrow), a paper that your mom needs to sign, 3 materials list and a few extra pages of homework for good measure. What the hell just happened, you may ask yourself. Well I certainly haven't been talking about your good old neighborhood bully, nor have I describing the chronological events of an actual freight train reducing your mere flesh and bones to a pile of mush right there in the tracks. That would probably just kill you. Similar to torture, the event I'm truly describing is, in fact, much worse than being hit by a train, as it likes to stretch each minute of the day into agonizing hours of pure fiery hell. This, my friends, is the beginning of school.

Although my coming to terms with the end of summer didn't end quite that badly, that's usually how I imagine it to be. Of course I really do enjoy school, but the end of our 2 ½ months of freedom can be crippling. By the time we hit high school, our summers are usually packed full of activities, camps, family weekends, and of course, work. This is an aspect of summer that I have noticed change. My summers aren't like what they used to be when I was 6 or 7. Although I can't put a finger on the exact moment I knew thing had changed, I can describe the slow phase of understanding how I've grown. Back in the days of old, I didn't care what I was doing in the summer. Heck, I didn't know what time it was half the time. All that mattered was that I had fun. I had all the time in the world to do whatever I wanted. However, things started to change when I was 10. I went to my first sleep away camp. Now this was still fun, but all of a sudden I had a date to remember. A date that meant I had to stop and go somewhere for a certain amount of time then come back. My summer began to grow in complexity as I began doing more things. I had a summer schedule that started as soon as school ended. By the time I was 14, I had a job interview at Winslow Park in Freeport. I met with my soon to be boss and walked out of there with my first real job. Not only did I have a schedule to go by, but I had a summer job. These ideas of responsibility and obligations that I had previously known now plagued my summer. Because of this, the shock that is often associated with the end of relaxation and the beginning of early mornings is at least slightly mitigated. Even if this is true, I can surely pick out a single moment this year that signaled the end of my warm weather fun. High school soccer.

Much to my surprise, preseason sports were scheduled to begin a cringe worthy three weeks before school. Now I love soccer, but after playing in a spring league, and also a summer league, the last thing I really wanted was to work myself dead for three weeks straight in order to get in shape for soccer season. When August 15th came around, let's just say that I wasn't exactly happy to start a school sport. I knew too well that school itself would soon follow in its wake.

My alarm went off at 4:00am. After a fair amount of fumbling, I managed to turn the wretched thing off. I slept for another 5 minutes before my 5:30am alarm rang. My hand darted from the warmth of my covers in vexation and soon found my phone, once again turning the damn thing off. I have another hour and a half to get to the field. No problem. My heavy eyes fell once more. This didn't last long before I was awoken for the third and final time. It was not an alarm, however. It was instead my mother rapping

vigorously on my door. "Preseason honey!" She said with irritated enthusiasm. I reached for my phone to check the time when my stomach sank. It was 6:54. "Shit.". In approximately 15 seconds flat, it looked as if a tornado had hit my room; The covers thrown off my bed, clothes strewn about the floor, soccer gear in all places but where it needed to go (my bag). I guess I should have gotten ready the night before. It was 7:01 when I drove into the Morse street parking lot. I jumped from the car with my gear bag in hand and one cleat on my foot, hopping, skipping, and jumping towards the grass. I had made it! Maybe I could be on varsity after all. But before I could even finish my thoughts of punctuality, I heard another car pull up. It was my coach. "Morning Ben!", He said sprightly. "You can take some shots if you want. We won't start until 8:00". I figured this was a pretty good explanation for me being the only person there for the first day of preseason... "Sounds good, coach" I mumbled with joy. Summer has definitely ended.

-Ben Monaban-Morang



-Abby Fortune

The Nurse Left Work

The nurse left work at 5:00. She got into her car at promptly 5:05 p.m., and arrived home at 5:30. When she stepped through her front door, she slipped off her shiny black clogs and placed them neatly on the rug. Her papery blue scrubs were removed with care and placed into the washing machine to remove the day's germs. The nurse changed into her pajamas and sat down with her fresh-from-the-microwave dinner. Tonight it was Marie Callender's pasta primavera. She ate it cleanly and carefully, using the the new cutlery she had received as a housewarming gift. The pre-recorded Wheel of Fortune was shown on the little television. It was like this for her every night. Not the usual routine for a young, successful nurse, but then again, what is considered usual?

The attacks began on a brisk winter night. More emergencies lead to later shifts for her... and so did the loss of nurses. The first stabbing was a surprise. The young blonde in the pediatrics ward didn't see it coming. The second attack—an awful reoccurrence. Mrs. Collins at the front desk knew she had a bad back but the pain brought from the recently-sharpened paring knife that carved under her scapula was incomparable and unforeseen. The third stabbing and finally the police were on the case. This time it was the nurse's boss, a shock that rippled the community.

The nurse worked day and night, aiding in the efforts to save her colleagues but the impeccable and clean incisions located in the in all the right places lead to ultimate death. She would then return home, slip off her black clogs, wash her blood-sprayed scrubs, carefully eat her frozen dinner with her mother's old forks and butter knives, and watch her recording of Wheel of Fortune. She performed at home as if it had been a normal day. Her routine remained nearly unaffected.

There was now a cop at the edge of every unit, every ward, every exit. Guards monitored the security cameras closely, though they had been tampered with in the previous incidences. The fourth stealthy murder turned small-town hospital tragedies into a high-profile case. The nurse was promoted for her many hours and to fill the empty slots. The recently-graduated med-student was moving quickly in the ranks. Suspects and motive were yet to be determined. Investigations were slow and the trail was about to go cold, despite the great body of people now working to solve the most chaotic of crimes the people had faced. This, however, gave the crime-artist more places to hide.

The nurse left work at 5:00 for the first time in days. She was back on her usual schedule for the time being. She slid into her car at promptly 5:05 p.m. and arrived at home at 5:30. When she stepped through her door and slipped off her black clogs, she realized something was different. Something was unusual. Her lights were on. The nurse never left her home without turning all of her lights off. Never. A police officer emerged from her kitchen. That's when she knew. Although, it didn't prevent her from doing it yet again. A simple slice and twist and the officer was no longer her issue. She removed her passport from her bureau, neatly packed her bags, and stepped into her car at approximately 7:00 in the evening. The full moon made for beautiful scenery on the ride to the airport. She already had a nursing opportunity in Brazil, a lovely country with extradition laws protecting its citizens.

-Maggie Riendeau



-Alex Les

How to Make Waffles

Upon waking up, you aren't greeted with the familiar smell of bacon cooking like you are most Sunday mornings. In the living room the fire is raging in the wood stove but no one is sitting and drinking their morning coffee. Walk into your parents room, your mother will be crouched over the bed, she glances at you, her eyes have red rims around them, just like the night before. The drawers of your dad's dresser are still half opened from where he furiously grabbed his things and ran out the door. Look at your mom, realize there is only one thing to do: make waffles. Run down the stairs, take a stool from the island and place it next to the counter, from there reach up and grab the old recipe from the cupboard. Its messy, in cursive that your grandmother wrote, the paper is stained all over from the weekly use every Sunday morning. Gather all the ingredients and place them on the counter, slowly try to read the recipe and mix all things in precisely as stated. You will read the 3 cups of flour and even though you're not sure, you swear it says to add 2 cups of salt, and you do. Next pour in the milk until it looks like enough because you don't know where the measuring cup is, and Mommy never used it anyway. The waffle

maker is in its usual spot, it's heavy but after trying multiple times, you manage to put it up on the counter above you. The milk jug spills onto the counter, it goes all the way to your mother's car keys, but your fathers are nowhere to be found. Clean it up, it will make your mother feel better. Pour the batter into the waffle maker, it might not be thick enough but maybe this is how your mother makes them. Go wake up your sister, daddy always turned on the coffee maker but maybe she will know how. Pour in the 6 scoops of coffee then add in the 3 cups of water, 2 scoops for every cup, just like you learned from him. Set the table and don't forget to fold the napkins. When your mother hears all the clanging of dishes she will come down. Place a waffle in front of her, she will smile at you, her face will be full of surprise. She takes a bite and winces but keeps a warm smile on her face. Take a bite too, it will taste of pure salt. Hand her the coffee, "it's very dark," she will say. She will take a sip anyway and that wince will once again appear, but still she will keep the smile. "Let's go to the diner," your sister will say, agree with her. Notice how you are still in your footie pajamas, but it's okay because holding your mother's hand as you walk out to the car is all that you are focused on. At the diner you realize the fourth chair is empty, but it doesn't matter. Even though you don't have waffles or your dad reading the newspaper, you don't really mind because the red rims have been gone from your mother's eyes and you hope they don't return.

-Mikaela Fleenor



-Maggie Riendeau

Earbuds

Hearing voices in your head used to be called witchcraft— today, it's called the earbud. Earbuds have allowed us to leave behind the boring sounds of everyday life. Awkward conversations? Avoided. Enduring the compulsory silence of a high school study hall? Just plug in those earbuds for an escape. High school is incredibly dull without a soundtrack of young love, alcohol, and rebellion. However, adults should know that there are many benefits for them as well. If they utilized earbuds as extensively as teenagers do, maybe they would finally have a grasp of what it's like to be a teenager.

Upon their introduction to earbuds, adults will struggle with the solitude that earbuds promote. They are used to talking— constantly. The absence of small talk can be traumatic. Someone must explain to them, calmly and clearly, that no one will miss the sound of their voice. Once they regularly wear earbuds, they will begin to pick up earbud culture (also known as teenage culture). The adult will shortly learn the proper way to sit while listening to music: shoulders hunched, eyes downcast, legs folded or resting on the closest table. They need only look around them for inspiration, as there are many correct versions of this posture. In time, they will pick up their own style. Maybe they will become a one-earbud dangler. Maybe they will upgrade to headphones (bluetooth?). One thing's for certain: once they're hooked on earbuds, there's no going back. Adults will look back at all of those years of awkward conversations and wonder how they survived.

Teenagers often use earbuds to liven up the monotony of high school, and adults would gain much by bringing this game-changer to the workplace. At high school, the second a teacher starts talking, the earbuds go in. How else is one supposed to suffer through eighty-minute classes? How can one do work in (shudder) a completely silent classroom? In addition, earbuds have decreased the wasting of time that used to be rampant in schools everywhere. No more useless daydreaming, no more foolish note-passing. The second a student has completed independent work, it is very simple for them to immediately switch to another productive activity, such as watching Netflix on their laptop. The earbuds are already plugged in, which saves so much time. The transitions between activities on the laptop (from doing schoolwork, to listening to music, to watching videos) all happen seamlessly. This decrease in the wasting of time would do well if implemented in the adult workplace. There would be no need to be distracted by a chatty co-worker's idle prattle. Drama between co-workers will be virtually eradicated because there'll be no reason for co-workers to talk to one another about anything unrelated to the workplace. Another convenient place in which an adult can utilize the effects of earbuds is during a family car trip, in which earbuds are usually very irritating. Someone always blasts music so loud that the whole car can hear it, and tensions rise as the other family members attempt to hold an awkwardly loud conversation over the cacophony of rap exploding from little Jimmy's earbuds. These days, however, the adult simply sets up their own music! No more G-Eazy! No more fighting over politics, no more exhausting conversations about school— the car is filled with the placid sound of silence.

-Lily Horne

In the Back of the Schoolbus

Are you thinking of me like I'm thinking of you?
In your bed head hair and tired eyes.
God, probably not.
I'm probably alone in my wondering
a fool
Writing fool's poetry
On the foggy window.
All the questions I want to ask you are pooling behind my lips.
What music is playing in your earbuds?
Is that paint on your sweatshirt?
Are we neighbors?
Why do you never smile?
Do you need a hug?
I want to hear your voice
And your opinions of society
I want to know all your weird quirks
What makes you laugh? What embarrasses you?
I just want you to know that you have a very nice silhouette
Your nose and chin and lips standing out against the rising sun.
Maybe someday I'll read you this poem
And we'll laugh
And wonder
How we never talked to each other
In the back of this schoolbus.

-Rhea Fitzpatrick



Untitled

It is an indescribable feeling every time I strap in. Each run is a new adventure, even more exciting than the last. Snowboarding is remarkable. My quirkiness impacted my style of snowboarding. Most people knew me as a very shy and quiet kid off mountain. I had a lot of friends, but I am an only child. I was taught to do everything on my own. This has affected me in a positive way. I think and act for myself, and it really shows in my snowboarding. Snowboarding allows me to show my independence and free spirit. Snowboarding is my natural stress reliever.

My parents always thought that I was a loner. Once the snowboard season came around, it was the only thing that I wanted to do. If no one was up for it, I would go out and ride on my own. I was never afraid. Actually, I enjoyed it a little more. It was just peaceful and allowed me to get closer to nature in the best way possible. But sometimes getting close to nature can be a bad thing. I have gotten lost several times snowboarding. Going off the trails and doing my own thing is fun and awesome but can also get me into sketchy situations. Figuring my way out of the woods and safely home is another adventure: one that has honed my resilience and developed my ability to problem solve.

All of my life I have been snowboarding in Maine. My perspective on snowboarding all changed when I went to Colorado this past spring. This was a big step for me because it was my first time traveling out west and was my first time traveling alone — a lot of firsts for this 16 year old. Landing in Colorado and seeing these huge mountains as I stepped outside of the airport put me in a whole new world: I was speechless. This part of my life really taught me a lot about myself. I met some really amazing people and saw a new part of the country. It was truly a life changing experience, and one that I don't think I will ever forget. My trip showed me that I make my own path, and I shouldn't always stay on the trail because the real adventures happen off the trail.

-Nick David

Helen Never Looked Good In...

Helen never looked good in the water. It was just me and her driving down the road hand in hand when a spiffy looking BMW pulled up on the left side. I knew what was up so I slowly started to come to a stop in the middle of the highway.

It was a bright night, the moon was out and you could see all of the highway and the water the followed it on the right. The water sparkled against the moon and looked inviting but that was not the case because it was 2 in the morning and the temperature had dropped to about 30 degrees. This was the weather that any car guy lived for. This was boost weather. Boost weather for those that don't know is when the temperature outside the car is cool or cold it makes the engine stay cooler which makes it easier for the car to make more power that makes the car move quicker.

The BMW revved their engine. The turbo sounded pretty big because the whistle the turbo gives off was louder than the engine itself. I revved Helen. I did a nice steady climb to rev limiter to where Helen started shooting fire out of the dumpout on the hood. It was loud as hell, both cars spitting fire and crackling off the empty night sky. Then

nothing just the waves splashing against the rocks and 2 cars idling side by side on an open road.

One honk, I took my eyes off the BMW and focused on the road ahead. The second honk I matted it and held in the clutch. Then the third final honk. I dumped the clutch and let Helen's all wheel drive launch system assist me to get the best traction on the hole shot, and we took off. Tires screaming, boosts spooling, exhaust popping. I had the hole shot and was now buses in front of the BMW pushing about 140 at this point just about 5 seconds into the race using about all the 20 pounds of boost she could give. Then the unexpected happened a loud bang from the right front was heard. Only one thing went through my head it was the tire. Helen shot hard to the right and smashed into the guardrail that didn't seem to slow us down a bit. Then we decided to smash into the sand after flying 20 feet down from the road. Then from there we flipped through the air and rolled into the ocean landing on the roof and slowly sinking into the ice cold dark water. Helen not too excited, hissed against the cold water moving into the engine. Boost season was now at an end for Helen.

-Eric Pelletier



-Ayanna Hatton

Maple

I sit on the porch behind my house; the wood around me turns a darker color. My tears form a small circle around me. A ball sits in the backyard, and I hold a red collar in my hand. My hand starts to resemble the color of it because I am gripping the collar so tight. If I was not holding the collar, my dog, Maple, would come over to me. She would sit next to me then proceed to rest her chin on my leg. If I continued to be still and not pet her she would bring her paw up to me asking if I would pet her. I would tell her a joke and I would laugh, her expression would not change. Was this what a dog was for? Listening? Now I have no one to listen to me. When I was four I was running in the backyard with Maple when my foot caught on a rock. I flew into the ground and the first thing I saw when I looked up was Maple. She was sitting next to me licking my newly opened knee. I wiped my eyes that were filled with tears because she had made me forget my pain. Now she was gone.

-Ayanna Hatton

How to Get Your Way

First, you gotta know what you want, think hard because it has to be worth it in the end. You're going to put up a good fight and it's not going to be over ice cream, it's gotta be over something cool that'll make all of your friends jealous, like the new Polly pocket play set. Once you're locked in on your desired want, you need to get your puppy face on, make sure you look as sweet as candy. Brush your hair, maybe even your teeth if you really wanna impress your mom. But beware, you can't go in and ask yet. You gotta butter her up. Make her feel good about herself. Ask your mom how her day was, even though you don't care. Tell her she looks beautiful, maybe add in that you noticed the house had been cleaned. However, you're still not done. The next step is to now make yourself sound like the most angelic child around. Mention how you're getting all 4's in school, even if it's not true; parents are suckers for good grades. Reveal to your mom that you haven't drawn on your wall in a long time and that you remembered to use paper. Ignore that you drew a purple potato next to your bed two nights ago, she only needs to know that you're improving your art skills. She'll love that you're an overachiever. Once you have her in a good mood, slowly shift the conversation. Not too fast, but enough so that you're on a new topic about something you actually care for. As soon as all is in order, bring up how you'd appreciate a new toy. That you've earned a new toy because you're a hard-working first grader. She'll reject your request the first time, but it's okay. She doesn't understand, she's not as smart as you are. So now your mission is to get her to comprehend that you deserve this new toy. Start to beg, she'll yell at first but you just have to show her who the alpha dog is. Repeat that you deserve this toy and when she still says no, begin to cry. This way she'll know you mean business. When she yells at you to stop, don't, do continue because you know it's getting to her. When she becomes frustrated still don't stop. She'll scream at you and when she does run to your room, she'll feel bad about her aggressive actions and apologize telling you she didn't mean it and that she'll take you to get that new Polly pocket set you deserve.

-McKenzie Rogers



-Simon Handelman

How to Be an Actor

You're in the fifth grade. You hear that your small town school is putting on a play for the first time, and you're ecstatic when you hear it's the production of *Grease*. You love *Grease*. You grew up watching that movie, quoting it endlessly with your mother. Sandy was (and still is) your dream role. You audition, read some lines, and by the end of the week, you find out that you're cast as Rizzo. You're heartbroken; you can't believe that you didn't get the lead. What's even worse? One of your closest friends got the part you so longed for. But, you suck it up and have fun anyway. You're too blonde to be Rizzo, so you make the bold decision to dye your hair brown. You end up using too much of the mousse, and your hair turns out a nice red-brown color. You love it.

Now you're in the sixth grade. *Grease* was the highlight of your school experience so far, and you didn't think any play you would do next could top it. You were right. There's a new director, and he has the idea to do these sort of "Fractured Fairytales": Goldilocks goes door to door selling products to the Big Bad Wolf; sort of an *Into the Woods* vibe where all the fairytale creatures interact. You're given a couple of leading roles, but on the night of your show, the three separate fractured tales are mixed up in their usual order, so you have no time at all to go from Baby Bear to a farmer with a bipolar chicken. You come on stage five minutes late, to find everyone laughing at your improvising castmate. You're mortified.

You're now in the seventh grade, and after the events of the previous year, you have no desire to do the play again this year. You don't have any friends who participate in drama, and nobody thinks it's "cool". You completely disregard your passion for the next two years.

You finally reach high school. You don't have any close friends anymore, but make a last minute decision with a new friend and try out for the spring One Act play. You two get the smallest possible roles, but you don't care, because the entire experience is intimidating and you had no idea what you had gotten yourself into. You spend hour after hour stressing over time limits and set moving; you can't believe you decided to do this. But there was no greater feeling than the pride you felt when your school won Regionals. It made it all worth it. So you stuck with it.

Two more years passed, and you found a family with these theater kids, and you had basically devoted your life to the fall musical and spring One Acts. You never get lead roles, because there was always someone better. But that was okay...for a while. You get yelled at for never being loud enough and talking too fast on stage. You cry with your castmates when you lose at States each year to a funnier play put on by a richer school. But you continue to do what you love with the people you love because you can't imagine your life without out it. Your junior year, you finally get more than one line in the One Act. You get a whole scene. A whole scene. You have a little hope. Then, the fall of senior year rolls around, and there are finally no more upperclassmen to cast their shadow over you. You finally have a chance to get a lead in the musical. You're super nervous to sing on your own in front of people, but you do it anyway. You're so anxious, because this is your final shot. You love singing and acting, and a lead is all you've ever wanted. Then, the cast list is finally released. Your eyes scan the paper, but your heart drops when your name isn't towards the top of the sheet, but about halfway down. Yet again, you are another backup female dancer, with only a couple lines. Yet again, you've received the role of a character who has no impact on the story whatsoever. You feel let down for a couple of weeks, but then you get over it. The musical does really well, and you're so proud that you got to be a part of it. You can't wait for what the spring play has in store for you. This isn't the end of your acting journey...there's always college.

-Claudia Labbe



-Catriona Gould

How to Be a Senior

You've made it through three long years, dealing with the same group of kids you've been stuck with since freshman year. Your senior year is now here and you expected it to be the best year yet. Less homework, less classes, senioritis, senior privileges, senior parking lot. But no. It's the complete opposite, besides the unbearable amount of senioritis that seemed to infect you the day after school started.

You've waited your whole life for this one year and now that it's here you don't understand why everyone looked forward to it so much. Making your way through your last year in high school you will encounter multiple different phases. Phase one beginning with the new freshman, this is the year that the freshman will appear to have gotten much worse. Or maybe it's that your senior class also got worse. Both you and the freshman will enter the school thinking you are in charge, that you are the best. You'll spend your time walking from class to class through the hallways having to listen to the constant commotion and arguing over absolutely nothing at all. It will be the first month of school and you'll already be to the point where you want to drop out and not have to deal with the continuous whining of not just those in the grades below you but those that are seniors too. It won't take long before you are forced to go to senior/ junior assemblies where they will over use the line, "you guys are the ones everyone looks up to." Sitting there you will think to yourself, "would I look up to the kids sitting around me as an influence?" You want to think yes but you're not all that sure you'd be able to, instead you sit still, playing on your phone pretending to listen to the same speech you heard last year as a junior.

Phase two, the time in your life when you realize that senior year is going to be the year of many emotions. Stress has always been a factor in your life but don't worry.... It will get worse. It will begin with being overwhelmed with the amount of homework you didn't think you would have to do, but continue to put off until last minute. Adding onto that you will also have everyone you know asking you what you plan on doing after high school and not knowing that answer will make you feel like you're falling even more behind. To make it even better you now have to work outside of school a bit more in order to start saving up more money to pay for college. Working every night after school will surely take a toll on you. Trying to keep a social life will seem near impossible, and less sleep will feel like the only option to get it all done.

Phase Three, you'll begin to get a hang of the whole no life just success factor. After all you do want to attend the best college and get the best education to then further and better your future. And clearly you won't be giving up all social factors, you do have the summer to party, plus we all know what college is really for. During this phase you will begin thinking of where you actually want to go, whether you want to be as far away from your parents as possible, or if you want to be close so you can still have them cook for you. God knows the diet of ramen noodles and take out won't be a choice, freshman 15 is NOT and never will be an option. Now that you have all your college stuff figured out you can move on to senior projects.

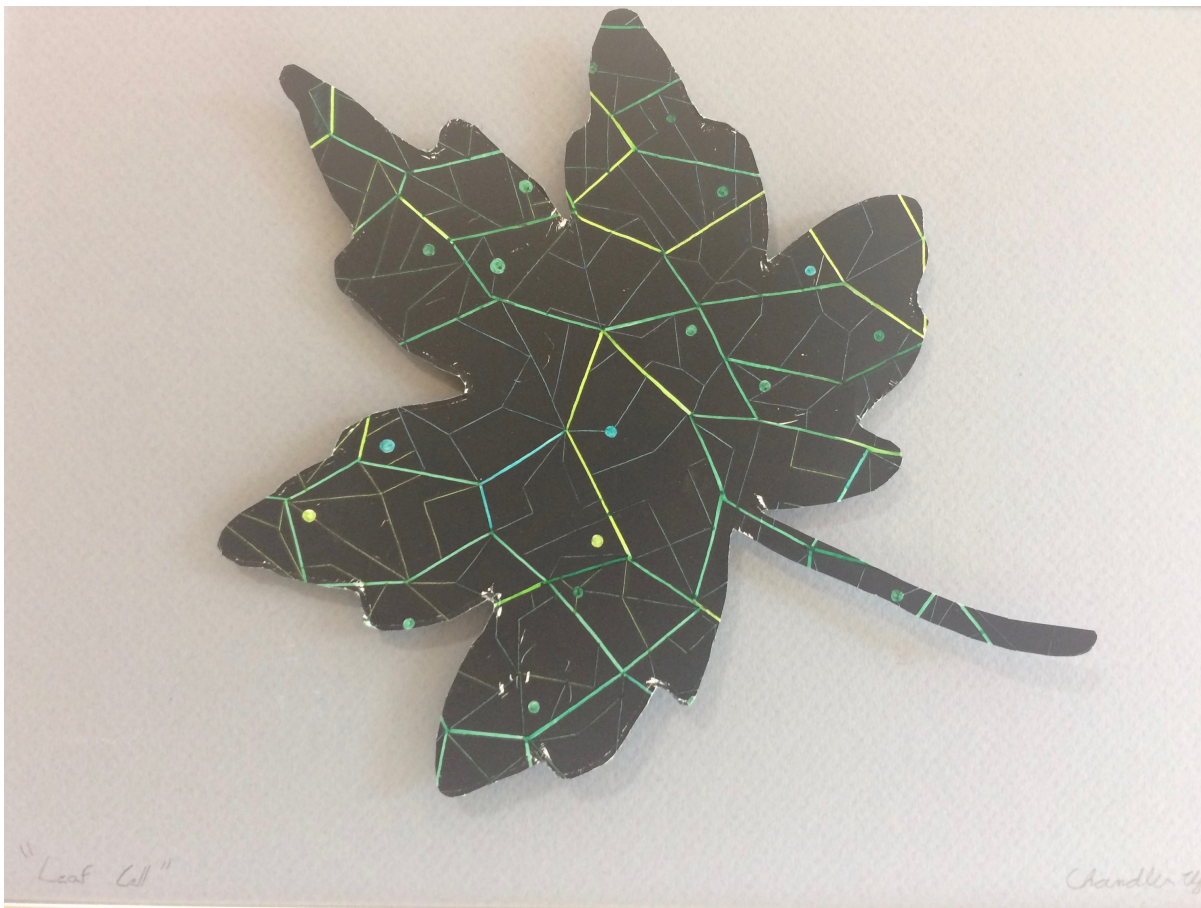
Thus bringing us to Phase Four. Senior projects. A time when you can pick to stay in school and do less work, or to be done school early and have to bullshit your way through some stupid camping trip keynote because you wasted away your project time sleeping in and watching netflix. Of course you'll pick to do a senior project. And obviously you're going to pick to do it with your closest friends making it even harder to get the project done to your best abilities while also knowing it was going to be broadcasted on the T.V. You will approach the day before the first check up and you'll make up some bogus excuse as to why you haven't started and all the things you should be doing but haven't done yet. This will carry on for the month until you finally realize, it's now or never. You now have to go on a camping trip that you didn't plan for at all, while also trying to accomplish the keynote that you will have to present on stage, with the stage light blinding you and the 60 or so eyes staring right back at you. But don't be nervous. They will tell you it's better to not read directly off the keynote but you haven't prepared for this and you will stand there reading word for word. Try not to look directly into the eyes of your project supervisor who is now sitting there wondering what happened to all the things you said you were doing at the check ups. Once you're done talking, turn to the audience and ask, "is there any questions?" Pray that no hands will go up, but watch every teacher in the building raise theirs. The first question is asked, look to your partners in hopes that they will answer. Now, that will only work for about three questions, so once it's your turn to answer just mash everything that was previously said into one. It will make it seem like you said more, making you look like you had some idea of what was happening. Look around one last time, and even though you see at least two hands up in the back, say thank you, smile, and begin taking your microphone off.

Phase five is complete and Phase six is coming in fast. Once senior projects are done you will then follow through with the bitter-sweet graduation. Walk side by side trying not to let everyone see through the smile that's showing both your success and your excitement to get out of this school and away from everyone else. You will be able to hold

it all in until the moment you have to walk into the crowd and hand your parents a rose. It's in that moment you'll break down crying at the thought of leaving your family and not having them there to do everything for you. Quickly dry your tears and make your way back to your seat. The names will begin to be called, and when yours is announced, you will want to run across the stage, but instead you will do as you worked all month practicing. Now here is the part you can't mess up, left hand up to grab the diploma, right under to shake hands, head turned looking into the crowd, and smile. The perfect picture to forever hang on every family member's wall. It's official. You are no longer a senior, you are now a freshman. You will have gone through your senior year thinking you can't wait for it to be over, but once it is, you'll wish you could go back, even for just one day. But that's what senior year does.

-Alex Washburn

Leaf Cell



-Chandler Wyman

How to Get Scars

When you are around five or six you get your first bike. You have just recently learned how to ride your bike. To learn, you use an old rusted bike that doesn't have any tires. Stick it in your dirt driveway and start cycling like you are on a real bike. Do it for a couple of days in a row, and then have your dad and mom buy you your own bike without training wheels. It needs to be pink and blue with a white basket on the front to bring things to and from your grandparent's house. Spend a lot of time with your brother riding that bike. Go play cops and robbers with him in your long dirt driveway. Sometimes you and your brother will bring out walkie talkies and act like you are police officers. Start having high speed chases with imaginary thieves and speeders. Swerve out of the way of your big black dog so you don't run him over. The big black dog will try to race you, at times he will be faster than you. He will always have to be in the front of the pack when riding bikes. You will drive up to your grandparents' house and speed down the huge hill. You will try to miss holes and loose rocks so you don't go flying. One day you will be out there by yourself. You will hit a soft patch in the dirt and catch air. Your bike will start to tilt sideways until you are fully off and sprawled out across the dirt. You will sit there for maybe a minute until you realize what happened. Immediately start screaming bloody murder and crying so people can hear you. Your dad will hurry outside and come straight to you. He will pick you up and bring you inside and clean you up. You will have a nice open cut on your right knee. Your dad will help clean it off with a washcloth while you sit on the couch in a pile of tears. He will put antibacterial ointment on a large band-aid and put it over the cut. The sting will cause you to cry more than you already are, but the pain will eventually go away. Your eyes will clear up and then you will pull yourself close to the edge of the couch. Pull yourself up using the side of the couch. Limp a little. It will hurt to bend your leg fully. Your knee will slowly heal throughout the week and your scab will eventually disappear. A couple of months later go up to your grandparents' house, but this time leave the bike in the garage. Your brother will go up too, but instead of walking he will ride up on his bike. Hang out and have a fun time full of love and laughter. Agree on a time to leave with your brother. When it becomes that time, start packing up and heading out. Your brother will want to race you down to the house on the bike. You will book it down the hill. Your brother will shortly come up behind you, towards the end of the hill, and pass. As he is passing, slightly trip over his back wheel and slide down the rest of the hill on your right side. Warning: there will be a large amount of blood. Your brother will race down to the house to get your parents. Once again your dad will carry you inside. Have your dad take you into his bathroom and stick you in the bathtub to wash all the blood off. Make the transparent water turn completely red. Sit there while your dad tries and picks all of the rocks out of the right side of your stomach. Have him go to your right knee and pick the rest of the rocks out of there. Clean yourself up and put band aids all over your body. Heal everything up for about a week or two. A scar will appear after the healing process on your right knee and another one on your right hip. Those scars will stay there forever and become a part of you.

-Ireland Hall

Strong Backbone



-Sara Lano

My Name is Christopher

We had been trying for half an hour to find the stupid route that would take us to National Park of Sedona. When we realized that our GPS showed routes completely different from reality, we knew that something was wrong. My mother drove while my grandfather slept like a dormouse in the passenger seat. My grandmother, as always, looked out of the window and marveled at everything that the beautiful landscape showed us of the Arizona deserts. For my part, I could not wait for the moment when I could go and get to the bathroom. I should listen to my mom more often when this things happen...

Mom was also getting impatient, just like me. We are not very good at waiting. Every now and then she was tapping the poor GPS gadget that I thought it could not stand any longer. My mother was not willing to buy a better one, as a good frugal person, she will not let go of the money unless it is necessary.

I remember when we entered to the second-hand store two days ago, and the gentleman was showing us all the different GPS models, already used, that according to him, still served. My mother just picked the cheapest one, paid for it and left. My grandparents just laughed at her daughter's stubbornness when she did not want to spend any more money and now we are lost in the middle of nowhere.

"I told you mom we should have bought a new one". My mother blinks at me through the rearview mirror, not in such a terrible way but enough to keep my mouth shut.

"When you have a job and you earn your own money, you can buy all the GPSs you want, but now I am the one who decides." I sighed. You can never argue with Mom.

My grandmother laughed and made that gesture with her shoulders like "what you're gonna do now. Uh?". After that she looked back and stared into space, as if she was trying to remember something.

"Was not there a saint for the lost drivers?" Grandmother suddenly said. I had no idea what she was talking about.

"I did not know there were saints for the disoriented drivers," I answered. My grandmother continued.

"Yes... there is a legend that says when truckers get lost, this entity sends them a signal to find their way back."

"Mom, you should get one of those instead of a junk GPS." I laughed at my own comment.

"Ha ha, very funny, although it would not bother me if a signal was sent at this very moment". Relatable I thought.

My grandmother was now shaking Grandfather's shoulder. He had not stopped snoring since he fell asleep.

"Hey Silvio! Wake up! "My grandmother yelled.

After a few shakes and some coughs from my grandfather, he finally woke up.

"What do you want, Alda" his voice sounded hoarse, more than it is already.

"Do you know the name of the truckers saint, the legend of the entity that guides them to their way back?"

My grandfather scratched his head and looked at the ceiling of the van, trying to remember.

"Ah! You mean Saint Christopher. He is a Christian legend, but it's not for the truckers. " Quietly we listened to him tell the story of Saint Christopher.

Tells the story of an old boatman around the third century, I think. He had agreed to take a child across a river and oh boy... What he didn't know was that the heave child turned out to be Christ with the weight of the world on his shoulders! Over the years the saint happened to be a urban legend and generally the truckers who travel long distances they would pray to this saint so they won't get lost in the way." By the time my grandfather finished, he took a bottle of water and took a big sip. My grandmother smiled smugly when she knew that she remembered that fact. I kept thinking about the story and decided that I was going to pray to Saint Christopher. I'm not one of the most religious people, but what would I lose If I try?

No more than five minutes had passed and the GPS went off.

"I cannot believe you bought that piece of trash" said grandpa angrily. "You should make better investments Viviana."

My grandmother and I laughed softly and when grandpa heard us, he also began to laugh.

"You see, Mom? I'm not the only one who thinks the same"

My mother laughed at grandpa's comments and shook her head.

"You're mean to me."

As we travelled, we saw a car parked in the distance.

"Maybe they're lost because they did not buy a GPS in a not really trustable second-hand store," said my grandmother.

We pulled up behind the car; a very nice and well-kept blue Chevrolet. How could it not be covered with dirt driving in a place as dry and arid as this?

"Honey?" mom suddenly said "Can you go out and ask if they are lost too? From all of us you are the one who speaks English the best, so I will charge you this." As if I had the option to say no, I thought. I sighed, unbuckled my seatbelt, and got out to walk to the car. I saw a couple that looked about forty or fifties through the car's window and when they saw me, they lowered it.

"Good morning"

"Hello there" said the man.

"Well ... we were wondering if you are lost."

"No, luckily not." answered with a really cheered voice.

"Well, in that case, is it possible that you could help us? We are going to the National Park to see the Grand Canyon." Oh man, this was so embarrassing!

The man now looked at me very excited.

"Oh! So are we! Of course, no problem! We just have to configure my phone's GPS and you can follow us behind. Sounds good?"

"Sounds great, thank you, sir!" I smiled and went back to the van.

"They're going to guide us," I said at last.

* * *

We were driving behind the chevrolet for at least forty minutes until they stopped at a motel. The man told us that we should continue straight ahead until we see the

entrance of the park. Sounds good, I guess. We thanked him again and said goodbye to the nice couple. And just as we had been indicated, we came across the famous park. Once inside, we parked and I ran to the bathroom because I could not stand it any longer.

We boarded the buses in which would travel along the edges of the Grand Canyon. We had finally arrived, thanks to the nice random couple that had helped us. The bus made stops for other people to get on, and in one of those, the man who had helped us with his wife got on. He recognized us, smiled and sat down next to us.

"By the way, is your name Christopher?" My grandmother asked the husband.

The man looks at her surprised.

"Indeed," he replied. "How did you know that?"

I suddenly looked up from my phone, my mouth wide open.

"You're not serious, are you?" My grandmother asked with a nervous laugh.

"I swear!" The man took his wallet and showed us his ID.

"My name is Christopher," he said.

Holy cow...Just as if it were a sign from God.

-Dianella Sfeir



-Owen Patrick

Tomato

I absolutely, one hundred and fifty percent cannot stand tomatoes. The red ones, orange ones, green ones, yellow ones, big ones, little ones, any kind of tomato is evil. However, I like ketchup. Isn't that weird? How a person can abhor tomatoes, but appreciate the taste of ketchup? I know a guy who hates chocolate but loves a good chocolate cream pie. People are strange. Tomatoes are gross.

The other day, I went upstairs to mom's room to tell her I was headed to school, and oh by the way, have a good day. I heard a little bit of whimpering as I approached her door so I quietly slowed down and pressed my cheek to the wall. There was about an inch thick sliver of light separating the doorframe and the door allowing me to peer into mom's room. She sat at her vanity, in front of the half-oval mirror. Her shoulders

hunched, and a hair brush gripped in one hand. In the other, was a clump of her mousy brown hair, not a lot, but enough to be troubling. I could tell she was trying to stifle her sobs, she would occasionally bring her fist containing the hairbrush to her mouth as if to shove whatever cry might escape her lips back inside of her. Her eyes were squeezed shut, but black snakes ran down her cheeks, staining their bright red tomato color. Before I could turn away, she took a deep breath, her short, choppy gasps slowed, and she opened her eyes slowly. Lifting her thick heavy lashes, she looked at herself in the mirror. I could tell she was assessing the patch of bare skull where the chunk of hair had detached itself. Then, almost as if I made a sound, her eyes snapped over to mine.

But that was a few days ago. She's fine now, I know she is. She told me so! Just like she told me dad will come home soon, and that tomatoes aren't good for you anyways!

-Jessie Gray



-Nick David

How to Fly: A Child's Dream

There is nothing quite like it. Flying that is. You can really only fully experience and appreciate the feeling while you are in the act, soaring above everything else. If you haven't flown you should definitely try it, and if you've tried it and failed then you should try again.

First you'll want to find a nice place with vast amounts of uninhabited land all around, a soft field of wild hay preferable, just in case something goes wrong. But don't worry it won't. Hopefully.

Start by running. Just kidding. Flying really takes no effort at all, even when you are small and young. Especially when you are young. You can fly at any age, but it is best, and easiest, when you are between the ages of five and ten. When you are young you have all the skills and attributes that you need to fly, and the trust to try this feat achieved by so few.

Once you've got the ideal spot, test your landing: make sure it is soft, yet solid enough to warn you that you are back on ground. Usually tall grass and late summer ground is the best combination. But it's your choice.

Close your eyes. Visualize the place you are surrounded by, and in. Make sure that you know it. Fully. Now feel exactly where you are in the place. The grass, coarse against your hands, arms, legs, and torso. It is tall, at least to your hands, but probably to almost your neck. Feel the earth, cool in the shade of the grass, under your bare feet. Then, just decide that it is not there.

You are taking off. That tickling you feel all over is the wind, the open air, not the grass anymore. You are soaring, not envious of the birds, but experiencing their freedom. You are above the world looking down. There's your house, the school, that lake you go to, the ocean, the horizon, from a new view.

Once you have seen enough from the air and are ready for firm ground, just fly on over to that field. Land, not too fast, but fast enough to keep it exciting. You are back. Take a breath, and look out at the world from this different, grounded, perspective.

Well, there you have it. That's how you fly. Have fun, and always remember to come back down.

P.S.

Should you get discouraged just remember that all you need to have is a handful of trust, a bucket of hope, and a whole mind of imagination.

-Bennett Hight



-Min Wu

Glow

Her hair was littered with sunlight crystals
 her skin speckled like the night sky
 she was a constellation,
 made up of tiny lights
 that shone brighter
 than anything else
 in the entire universe.
 it mapped out her skin in gold and amber
 yet she could not see any of it
 as for a reflection does not hold beautiful things,
 neither does a picture.
 and so she walked about,
 bathed in a light
 she will never know
 she possessed.

-Ava Fox



-Zoe Fox

Late July

It was a humid July night, when young Bobby slept peacefully in his rocketship sheets. It was approximately 8:15pm. Bobby was always asleep by 8:00pm. His moon shaped nightlight was always set on a timer to shut off at 8:20pm. But on this humid July night Bobby's night light shut off at 8:19pm for the first time. Bobby's eyes flung open, he was now no longer asleep, in fact he was very much awake.

Bobby wasn't sure what to do at this point. It was now 8:45pm, and Bobby has already played with his Leggos, read his book, and pestered his dog. Bobby was a good kid, he never did anything too bad, mostly because he was afraid to go outside. Everything he had ever known was inside this three bedroom house. Bobby didn't have any siblings, his parents planned to have more kids, but time got in the way. Bobby always wanted to go outside, but his parents told him stories of the creatures that lurked in the darkness. But on this humid July night, Bobby became more curious than ever about the world around him. So curious, that he found himself walking out the front door. It was now 9:27pm.

Bobby didn't know where to go or what to see, so he turned left onto the sidewalk. He walked far into the dark, with only the streetlights to guide him. At 9:50pm, Bobby strayed from the familiar glow of the street light and wandered into the woods. It was now the faint sound of a guitar that guided Bobby through the woods. I wasn't long until Bobby found himself eavesdropping on the withered old man strumming his guitar in front of a glowing fire. Next to the man with the guitar, was a another much younger man with a woman sitting on his lap. It was 10:01pm, when something tickled Bobby's nose, causing him to sneeze. His cover was blown. The man with the guitar stopped strumming, and the woman got off the younger man's lap. The young man picked up his rifle and pointed it in Bobby's direction. Bobby crawled out of the woods, revealing his identity. The man put down his gun, and beckoned him to the fire. Bobby sat next to the man with the guitar. The woman handed him a cup full of watered down hot coco topped off with a slightly mangled marshmallow. Bobby thanked her with his eyes, and sipped his drink slowly.

Bobby wasn't much of a talker, in fact Bobby really never talked at all. His parents gave up on him talking when he was three. They told him "you can have anything, as long as you say it out loud". But Bobby was happy being quiet.

The man sang songs of the "good old days", and he dedicated his songs to his past lovers. The younger man and the woman, talked into each other's ears, saying things that Bobby couldn't understand. But Bobby watched, listened, and sipped his coco. On this humid July night Bobby's eyes grew heavy, and he fell asleep on the mossy forest floor.

At 4:46am, Bobby was awake once again. His new acquaintances from the night before, had cleaned up and left, as if they were never there. But the fire's embers still glowed bright. Bobby knew he'd better be getting home now, but something deep inside him didn't want to go back. Bobby walked back to the road, and stuck his thumb out, like they do in the movies. The movies where all Bobby had ever known of the outside world. At 4:59am, a woman in a 18 wheeler Coca Cola truck pulled over, and unlocked the passenger side door for young Bobby. Bobby climbed into the seat and slammed the door. And just like that, at 5:19am, Bobby's life would never be the same again.

-Zoe Fox