

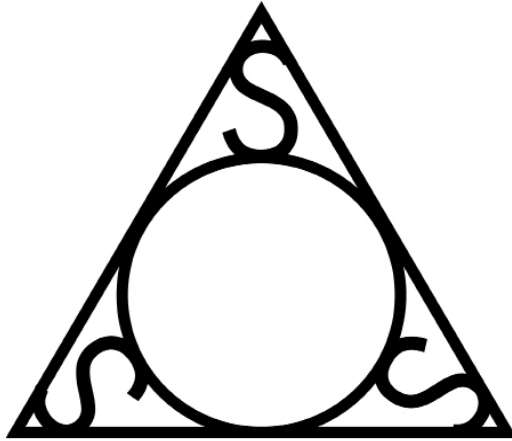


2022-2023

# Perspectives

Whitfield Literary Magazine





In 1993, Whitfield's art and literary magazine, "The Secret Voice," was founded. The faculty sponsor, Dr. Hays, a mainstay in the English department, along with a small but devoted group of students were determined to feature the creative voices of students who might not otherwise have been highlighted in the community. For 28 years, "The Secret Voice" club produced a curated magazine featuring student work reviewed and accepted by the club.

Now, "**Perspectives**" has embraced the immediacy and opportunity of an online format. It is our intention to publish a wide variety of artistic mediums in order to spotlight the incredible, diverse talent of our community.

**Visit Resources on Warrior Web and click**  
**Perspectives.**

# 2022-2023

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# Perspectives

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**Cover art by Cohen Panneri '24**





Lucas Babusis '24



Kaeden Anderson '24

## Back Steps Bee Storey '23

**T**he very first day we saw her, there was a cool breeze in the air as we were playing in the leaves. It was around the beginning of the second semester of second grade and with our puffer coats zipped up to our chins Benny, my best friend, and I were giggling while walking home from the bus. I remembered every day walking down the tallest hill at the top of the street, so steep that our short legs would falter if we didn't lean back a little bit. At the bottom of the big hill, the road curved away and opened up into a little park we liked to play in. When we rounded the curve we saw a girl about seven years old, meandering around all by herself. We kept our eye on her that day, she would walk in circles and then poke the ground a little bit with a stick she found in the dirt. We meandered ourselves, but as we walked home, we thought nothing of her.

A couple of days later, Benny and I decided on our walk home to show each other how



high we could jump off a huge stump near a corner of the park. After a couple of jumps, her red puffer coat shimmered in my peripheral as she came around from behind one of the large trees bordering the park. Benny and I thought that she was pretty. She had long brown hair, brown eyes, and whatever else I thought was pretty at seven years old. Benny said we would ask her to play tag, which I thought was an ingenious idea. We decided that whoever she tagged first would be who got to ask her to hold her hand. So slowly, Benny and I approached her. Then out of nowhere, Benny ran up to her and yelled “TAG! YOU'RE IT.” She looked deathly pale and we worried that she wouldn't want to play with us. Then very slowly a small mischievous grin crept onto her lips and she started giggling and running full speed towards

me. We played tag and she tagged us both multiple times. She was pretty easy to tag back, however, making it very hard for Benny and me to determine the situation. At the end of the day, neither of us ended up holding her hand.

For the next couple of weeks, we went almost every day to see her in the park. There were very few times we would have ever questioned how much time she actually spent there. The last time we saw her, Benny and I decided that we would play house. Whoever she chose to be the husband, could hold her hand. A half-hour later, while we were playing outside, she insisted that she would be the baby. “No you can't, there's no baby in this game,” Benny says. Her eyes started tearing up and her mouth turned down. Benny and I were so dumbfounded that we just let her stand

there. A couple of minutes later, Benny and I were husband and wife, I was the wife. Somehow I always got the short end of the stick, but we just went along with it for her. She took off her coat and underneath was a white t-shirt with a sparkly unicorn on it, which she insisted fit her baby character better. Benny and I played along but only for about ten minutes, we much preferred tag.

I tagged Jocie. We learned her name that day and she was ours. She said this was her baby's name as well. While I was running to tag her, I noticed a dark purple bruise on her arm. Then Benny, who was right behind me, ran sharply into her side. She grimaced and took a sharp inhale. He told her “you're it” but she just stood there holding her arm. When Benny stopped running around we both came

up to her and asked her why she had stopped playing. She took her hand off of where she was grasping and said “It hurts Benny!” He saw her bruise and slowly lowered his head and started walking away and mumbled something that sounded vaguely of an apology.

Benny and I walked Jocie home that afternoon. Once Benny started walking the other way to his place a couple of houses down, I decided to wait for her outside her house. Mine was just two blocks in the other direction. I had no idea what I was in for, for all that led me was blind curiosity. Jocie knocked on her glass-paneled back door but promptly sat down on the top of the concrete back steps. A deeper male voice shouted from inside “I’m working.” She got up and knocked again, then I heard slamming inside the house and the door slammed

open. A tall man with dark features stood in the doorway, with a dull but menacing look on his face. She just stood there. He grabbed her by the arm, yanked her toward the door, and bent her over. I was frightened and I flinched away, but he just pushed her back. Who I presumed was her father then proceeded to slam the door shut. She clutched her arm and sat down, small tears running down her face. She was so beautiful and delicate to me. From behind the bush, I was quivering. I slowly stood up and then ran to her. She had a bright look on her face when she saw me but quickly it turned into fear. “What are you doing?” she asked. I just stood there until she mentioned that she was cold and I realized how much she was shivering. She sat there in her unicorn t-shirt as I extended my puffer coat to her, noticing

she had left hers in the park. She zipped it up above her chin I remember thinking she looked like a penguin yet was praying she wouldn’t be cold anymore. I left her on those steps that night, and I regret it more than anything.

That night, over dinner, I told my mom what I had seen as she asked about my day. Something flickered inside of her eyes, you could see the rage rising up inside of her once I had mentioned Jocie. She began to tell me I should have never let her stay there alone and told me that I would go back tomorrow and ask her to dinner. The next day after school, Benny and I ran to her house but she was nowhere to be found. We slowly walked around to the back door, it was eerily quiet inside the house. There she was in her unicorn t-shirt and my puffer from the other night curled up in a ball on the

hard concrete steps. We told her that she must come to dinner tonight. Her cheeks were bright red and she was delirious. She was very weak and on our way home, she held Benny's hand and my shoulder for support. My mom greeted her and asked her if she would like some-

thing to eat. She happily nodded as my mom started to heat up some chili. As we all ate, she slowly began to thaw and regain the color of her cheeks. After my mom finished serving us, she triumphantly got up, put on her puffer coat, and started walking down the street. I

ran after her and yelled to ask her where she was going. All she said was "Now, go back inside and set Jocie up on the pullout." That was the evening that Jocie's life on the back steps ended and her life began. ■

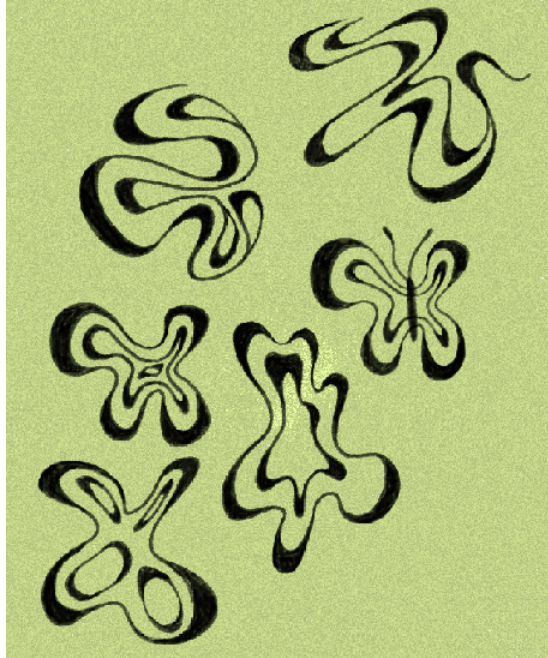


EJ Reinhardt '24

# Pressure

Lucy Heidenry '24

**F**uzzy 'round the edges  
A little topsy-turvy  
Swaying slightly on my feet  
The darkness circles  
    'round and 'round,  
Ready to force me to the ground.



Finley Wilkins '26



Lucy Gallagher '23

## Untitled

Cohen Panneri '24

**d**ots of light in a line  
aliens in the sky  
do they know something more  
are we living a lie?  
as they see us jumping and  
screaming  
do they hope we find meaning?  
or do they smile to themselves  
grateful we're breathing

# Never Touch a Black Woman's Hair

Mikki Norfolk '28

**H**ow many times do i have to ask you  
Do not touch my hair.

my hair is my culture, call it puffy, frizzy or fluffy,  
it speaks to me with the gift my ancestors gave  
i am rooted in my blackness, that is what the world first sees  
but do not swaddle me in your fear and uncertainty.  
when you come up and ask to pet me,  
because these naps of mine stick out like a crooked tree,  
do not be offended if i glare.  
because i have asked you before,  
Do not touch my hair.

i spent four hours last night,  
twisting my hair to perfection,  
ignoring being told i was not of god's good selection,  
because my hair is not "good" hair  
the kind of hair that will lay down my back, curls defined  
but behind the comments, i convince myself they are just blind  
so when i walk out of my house,  
drowned in despair,  
i do not need you asking if you may caress  
my newly designed hair  
because you make me question



if i should have just pressed my curls  
when the comb was hot  
so you may rest in contentment with the fact  
that you may not.

i do not think you are listening,  
no matter how hard you hear.  
you have no right to my body  
nor my hair  
be angry, yell, stomp, and sneer.  
but none of those will permit your hands to interfere  
with the coils I've been diligent to persevere

you make me want to burn the ends of my scalp  
some people talk about it and others will pout  
they tell me how "ethnic" i am  
and that i should be grateful  
but other people say the tight coils that bless my skull  
are too much  
but then go on to steal our locs, twists, the kink of our curls, our hearts and our souls

i do not care if you are offended  
by my glare  
because i have asked you five too many times now.

**Do Not Touch My Hair.**



Lai Jeon Williams '24



Erin Messias '27

## Chamomile Lucy Gallagher '23

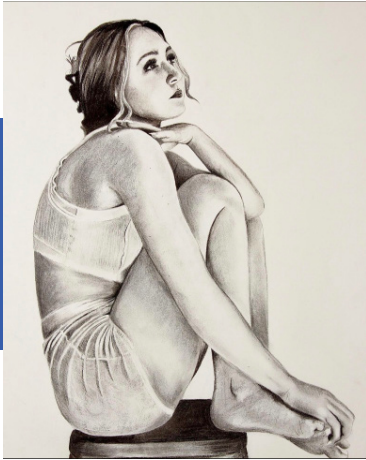
**S**mall, delicate white petals with a plump yellow center.  
The tea of green rolling hills,  
and  
cool, sweet-scented breezes drifting through ancient cemeteries.  
Of old wooden houses and dusty thatched roofs.  
Of clouds of baaing sheep beyond the moss covered stone.  
The tea of family,  
and of the beautiful Emerald Isle.

## Love Molly Rufkahr '28

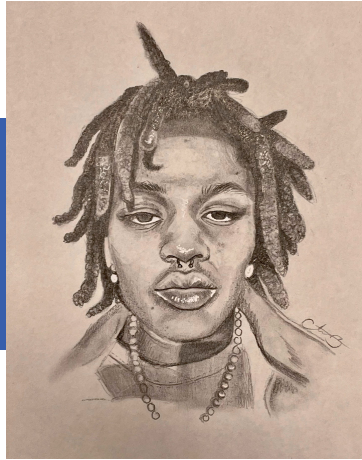
Love is confusing  
But with families  
Siblings  
Grandparents  
Parents  
Love is not hard  
You will always love them  
You might fight  
Or get mad  
But your love for them  
is always in your heart  
As their love for you  
is in theirs



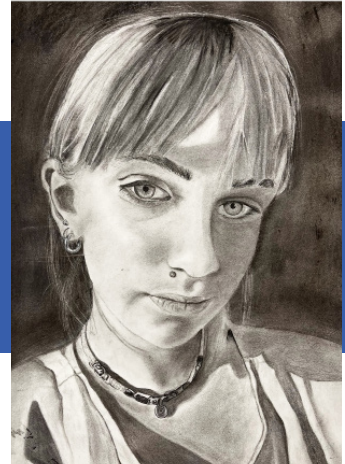
Juhi Roy '25



Char Baird '23



Char Baird '23



Emma Casado '23



## Three Faced Erin Messias '27

**F**rom soul to soul  
Never quite whole  
Treading the tightrope of existence  
I am a clown with a painted blue tear  
I am my own greatest fear  
I wear a mask of my own face  
Longing for a true embrace  
But never can I wash off the paint  
Anguished in this restraint  
Forever clawing through the folds of my brain  
A mutated manifestation of my past fame

**Cole Costantino '27**



# Reflecting Lucy Heidenry '24

Creak.  
Creak.  
Creeeeeeeeak.

The wood panels of the old bridge you are crossing creak with each miniscule shifting of your weight. It is comforting; the bridge acknowledges your every step. It acknowledges your presence. Here, if not seen, you are felt.

You, undeniably, are here.

Yet as you lean over to look at your reflection in the water, you see the bridge. Barely distorted by the still water, it sits on a backdrop of sky, a few puff-paint clouds making the image picturesque. Shading the bright heavens is the shell of trees and their branches all around you. The trees make you feel protected. They shelter you with their spindly appendages.

It takes you a minute to notice it. So used to seeing landscapes, you study it, taking in its beauty, with a nagging feeling that there is something wrong. You blink.

You, undeniably, are not there.

You peek over the side of the bridge, noticing the beautiful landscape reflected into your eyes. There is an almost complete lack of movement in the reflection, in the reflected you. I stare back. No; you stare back.

You are unable to tear your eyes away from the you in the river. I seem; no; you seem—is it “I”?—especially captivating this time. I see yourself—you see—Is it “I”?—one of us sees, well, the other, blink.

I didn't blink.

Or did I? Was it you who didn't?

Either of us—both of us—bend down closer to the water. The bridge creaks as I—you—I?—adjust. It strikes sudden doubt into... they. The me down there and the you up here—we can't figure it out. Am they different? The supposed reflection? We are the same, right?

Are I—we mean, are you and am I—the reflection?

If I step away, will we disappear? Will they, will you, will I?

Is this world around you an illusion? Is mine? Are we even separate anymore?

If you step away, will you exist? If I? If either of us?

Am you... even... alive?

You shudder, and my breathing is shallow. The bridge isn't creaking anymore. For either of us. As long as I can see each other, you won't... I won't... we won't disappear. We won't find out who is real and who is the light reflecting off the still, undisturbed river below the bridge.

If either of us are real.

## Easy Sloane Shatzer '24

When my eyes are too heavy to fight  
I am unable to stave off the memories  
of our best moments

I fear this more than bouts of sadness  
and it gnaws as I wonder  
if that's as good as it'll ever be

That I'll only have faded memories  
holding a chimeric feeling  
in its absence



Juni Asikainen '23

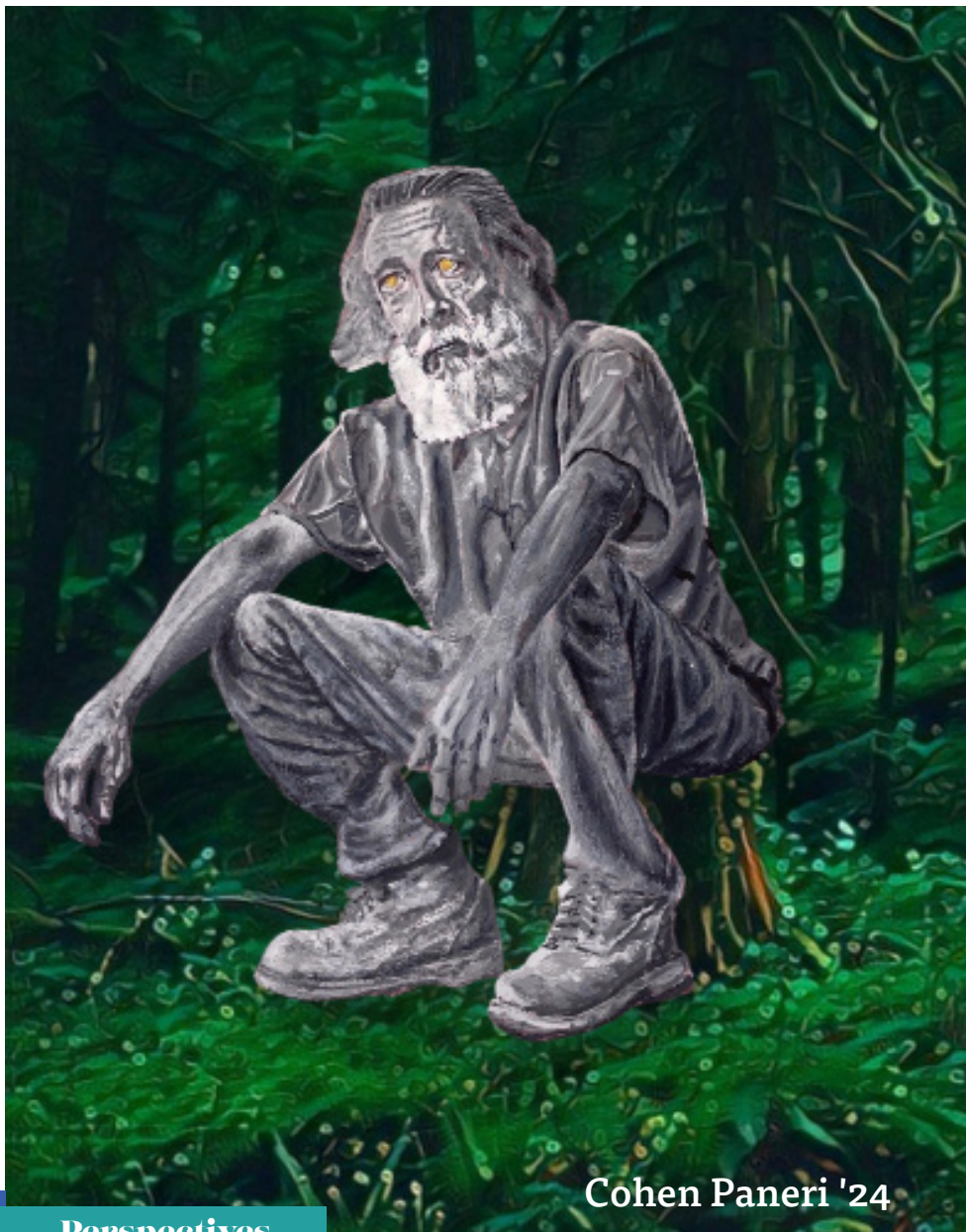


Rosie Davidson '26



# April is On the March Tomas Casado '27

**A**pril is on the march  
It's appeleting into a green arch  
It grows into a flower, everlasting life of bees  
Until they see the grundendull, until they see me  
A flower it once, a flower it will,  
but a flower for now it grows a bill  
The shower is rain, is what they have say  
That brings the life of many, here with us today  
The rock rolls, will it ever stop,  
momentum says no, until it will drop.  
It tumbles forward, left, front, and right.  
But never behind you, for the rock is time.  
Time moves on, and the flowers will die  
But they know they'll be back,  
So they never once cry.



Cohen Paneri '24

## From the Apple Tree Cohen Paneri '24

**F**rom the apple tree grew stars, stolen from the night sky.  
I stared, thirsty for their wonderful light.  
Though my eyes could keep nothing for themselves,  
they did their job right, and funneled in the infinite bright.  
I knew I had to have one so I climbed with all my might.  
I got to a generous branch, reached out with one hand, and held on tight.  
It burned me as I plucked it so I threw it to the ground.  
I slid down the tree and quickly turned around.  
On the ground was just an apple, as plain as could be.  
I looked right back up, and the stars I could see - in the branches and nestled in leaves.  
How could this be? How could this be?  
The star that burned my hand was an apple, a rosy red delight.  
So I climbed the tree again, this time to a new height.  
Now I didn't pick the star, I closed my eyes and took a bite.  
Crunch and so sweet, a plain apple, not light.  
I stumbled down the tree, and laid back ill-content, but with a smile across my face.  
The flavor of light should not be certain.  
Tasting a star would be a waste.

# Untitled

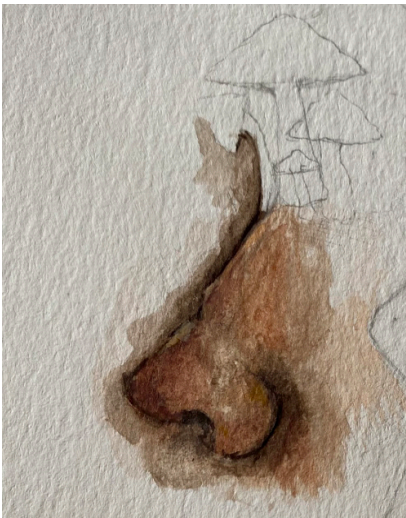
Charlie Staley-Brain '23

**T**ach to her innocence  
the earth opens an eye and takes a breath  
and i leave my legs that are not mine  
and i rise to a feeling of open-neck-wounds  
and my eyes open and the roots seize  
the swell of waves eats the spring  
and i peel away my fingernails  
and i plunge into a sweet darkness  
please take my breath when i open my eyes



Kaeden Anderson '24





Cole Costantino '27



# Aphrodite Cole Costantino '27

**I**ntimate it is to eat a piece of fruit  
Strong jaw unlatch, teeth clash  
Saccharine flesh, always leaves a  
mess  
Sweetness ruin thy chin and fingers, glacé thy  
lips, ceaseless linger  
Ancient, archaic, hair of honeyed gold  
Tale as old as time, shines within every soul  
One Deity of many, we have one word, you  
have plenty  
Sliced gift from a parent  
One who was not taught love, proper  
Set forth apology, unspoken  
A heart never remains unbroken  
Gently it rests  
Pearl in its shell, gifted  
Soon to be strung and grace thy neck  
Triumphant bites, teeth bared  
All the sudden too aware  
Flow-free like ichor, pour  
Dribble down my chin, fill my pores  
Born from first murder, reveals it all

Sovereign of whom and who doesn't fall  
Golden apple, golden hair, are you truly fair?  
Strong, sure, strength in envy, strength in  
sadness, strength in plenty  
More than visual, more than beauty, yet who  
are you truly?  
Atalanta, Pygmalion, Eros, Psyche, Trojan  
War, fall the mighty  
Victims to you, your glorious fruit  
Golden apple, golden hair, reveal your truth  
Is it omen, sin, something beautiful that  
blooms from within?  
Blossoms between one another, siblings born  
of same or different mother?  
Together in life, wholly committed, together  
in death, eternally smitten  
Achilles, Patroclus, victims to you, Ares,  
Hephaestus, victims too  
Victims to you, you haunting muse, deadly  
nightshade, deadly fruit

# Among the Void

Noah Lett '28

I go to the place where the gravity is strongest, The Mariana Trench. I cling to a piece of metal in the pitch-black water. I focus all my power to my left hand as my right tethers me to the ground. At first, I didn't know what to do but then I decided to slam the ball of intense electricity to the sea floor. Blasting the dust and sand in the air as the blue shock wave spheres around me then moves away and dissipates. For a bit, I sit there holding onto the metal pipe in the darkness then a violet-purple vortex appears. I get pulled through. Then I'm in a black void with no color. I am only able to see my own arms and legs. I see movement, then more, then more. Then it stops and I hear a deep voice say "You should not be here dragon" slowly in my ear. I dart around as fast as I can but see nothing.

"Do you know who I am, young dragon?" The deep voice says.

"No, I do not," I say.

"Then I will teach you" The voice says.

Then a humanoid figure reveals itself. It's a man and he must be at least 9 feet tall but not a normal person who is shriveled and unhealthy. He has broad shoulders and a strong Viking-like physique. Then before I realize

I am being crushed by something invisible. I realize that this is the doing of one being, Exar Kel.

I break out of the hold and then immediately clap my hands together, encasing myself in an electric field. "So, this is what Exar Kel looks like honestly thought you'd be taller" I yell while staying ready for him to appear. In a split second, he appears and then goes for a punch in the stomach, but I jump back, and Roundhouse kicks his shoulder. I decided I have no choice but to use Shockwave.

I sit down crisscross calming my mind and channeling my power. When I open my eyes to see him standing ten meters away and I realize that he is frozen, I get up and channel the last of my power to my fist as I run, then jump up spinning in a 360 rotation to gain some momentum to my fist then send it right through his chest.

"So, this is him, eh?" Kel said with a large bit of cunning. "The boy destined to defeat me. Honestly, I thought you'd be stronger." He said as he grabbed hold of my neck and held me five feet above whatever I was standing on. Kel threw me to the ground, I'm not sure what that is but that's what I'm going to say. Then he jumps as high as he can to crush my ribs but I roll away as it slams into

the ground so hard, I could see the ground moving. I get up and run away to try and get out but am stopped and pulled into the air then slammed to the ground again. I try to get up but can barely manage to breathe. Once I realize what is holding me down, I know I will never escape this invisible grasp. "Do you know where you are?" he said. "What's your name, boy?"

In a shriveled airless voice, I say "I do Kel I'm in THE VOID" I said with cunning.

"Well smart boy," said Kel. "So, what is your name, boy," he said in the scariest voice possible.

"My name is Leonidas Peruveos," I said with what little confidence I had left.

Oh," so you're his son," he said emphasizing the word his.

"I'm whose son" I questioned.

"Korvus, the son of King Korvus, my favorite kill," he said

"Your favorite kill? You didn't kill him, Exar Kunos did." I said.

"I killed him when my army invaded Oraborus." And before I was able to say anything he continued. "How else do you think he died? Exar Kunos is a weak henchman with no sense of skill. Your father was a true warrior whom none of my men could kill" he said.

"So, you killed him, you took him from

me."

"Yes, I did," he said.

The second the words left his mouth I darted toward him as fast as I could but then I saw his huge fist flying on its way to my stomach. In an instant, I was laying in the void with Exar Kel standing over me. I jump back and try to stay standing straight but fail miserably and fall on my butt back to the transparent ground with a purple tone.

"Now let's end you the way I did your father," Kel said chuckling.

"No," I said then realized I barely made a sound.

"Yes, most mortals would never stand a chance against your father. I thought his heir would be the same alas I was wrong." Kel began to move closer and put out one hand. His gravitational power was so great I could physically see the gravity compress in his palm. As I saw him begin to form a fist with his hand I grew angrier and angrier every second. So much so I could feel my power come back to me. Suddenly I feel so powerful, I feel like I could defeat an entire army with just my left pinky. I look up at Kel's eyes staring about a foot above my head. I can only see his eyes so I assume he is at least confused. I Look up to see a massive ghost of a human with arms but legs that are cut off mid-shin, with

a lightning-colored blue essence and outline. The ghost was so muscular thought it was The Rock until I saw its Dragon head, lined with teeth bigger than my hands and a thin-ish, long beard and mustache. I feel his power surge through me as I look at the ground like a mirror and see my eyes the brightest lightning blue they've ever been with little bolts moving away from them. I look at my hands and see the same thing. Lightning radiates from my hands. I stand up tall feeling like I just woke up from the greatest nap ever. I stand back and put my hands together as fists with my knuckles touching then rip them apart causing a similar effect to my Shockwave to move earlier but this time the sphere of electricity is lethal. The instant that it touches Exar Kel he drops to the ground on his knees and then says,

“No”

“It can't be not him not now,” He said, almost sounding scared. I began to wonder who was ‘Him’? I decided not to focus on that and just fight Kel. I channel power to my fist and punch with all my might. My fist lands on Kel in the center of his chest. He recovers after some stumbles and fades to dust. How could he just disappear like that? There is no way just one punch defeated him. Unless he's behind me. I use Shockwave to make myself faster and manage to dodge a gravity

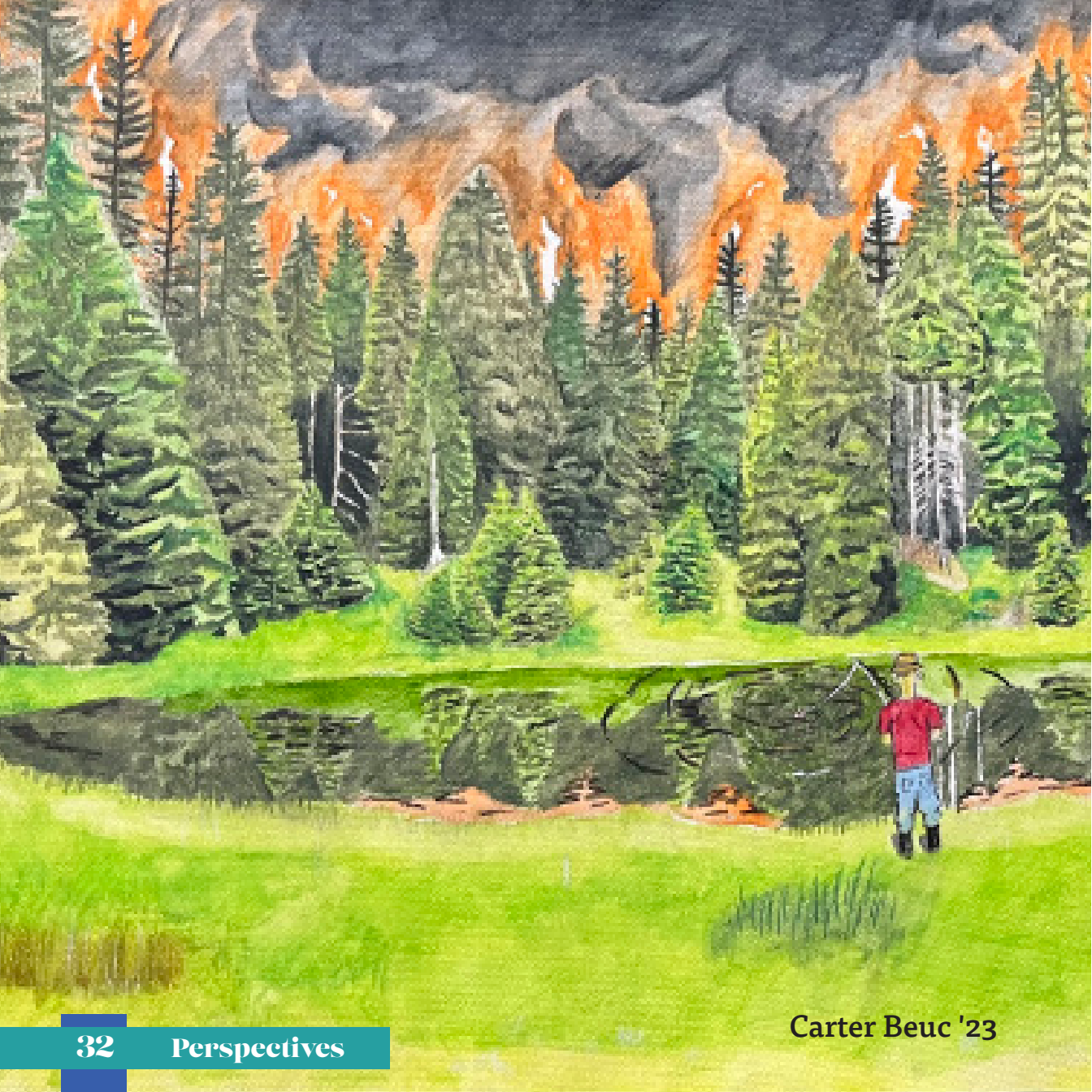
wave or something invisible that wooshed by my head. I turned to see him there. I run at him as fast as I can. I know you're probably thinking Lee why would you just run at him, but I have a plan. As I run I prep my body for the upcoming combo by channeling throughout my whole body. I jump into a lightning power punch. Sounds cool right? Sorry this is a book, can't hear you but I'm sure you said yes. Kel blocks It the instant I go for a low roundhouse kick. It lands, forcing him to lose his balance. I throw a jab, then an uppercut, and end with a jab, also lightning powered. I hop back and hook kick as high as I can get but still only hit his shoulder. I'm gonna go for the Storm-fist. I put my hands together to form a sphere and focus all my power on my right palm and a gathering of lightning begins to form. I cock my hand back to get as much power as possible then launch my hand, palm first as fast as a rocket going to the moon. It hits him so hard he falls back to his knees but still manages to stand up. Then he stands up and says “I will get you dragon I will not let Draconis pick a child to host his power” He takes a step back fading into the black dust that gets blown away by an invisible wind. ■

# Homecoming

Rosie Davidson '25



-Rosie



# Not a Poem (In Response to Roe v. Wade)

Lucy Heidenry '24

I don't have enough  
energy to write an angry  
poem, a tired poem, or any  
poem.

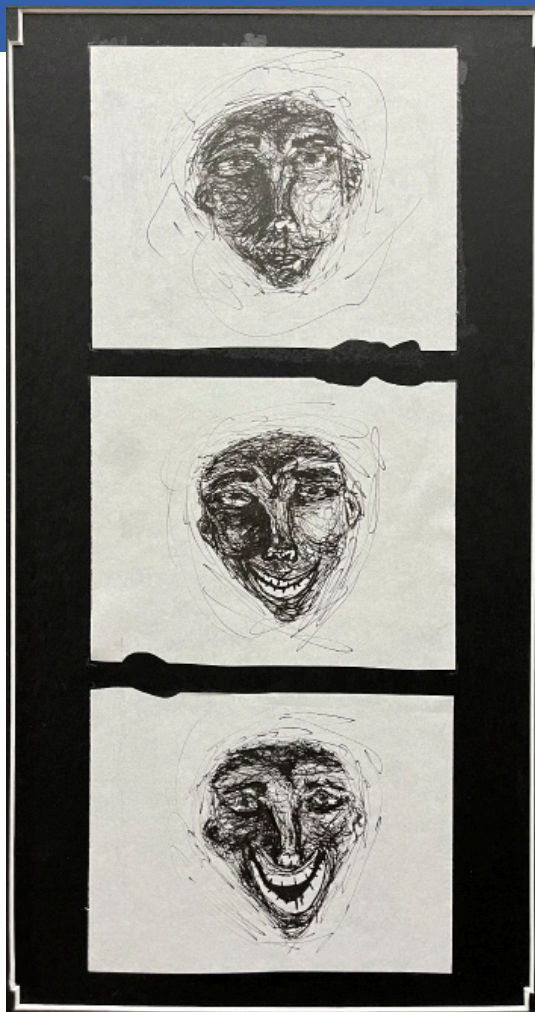
I, sixteen, cannot yet  
drive. Yet I am aged  
with the barrage  
of bad news, of pain  
new and old. Of problems  
piling onto other  
problems, with no word  
of any solution.

Today marks  
the millionth final  
straw. You can't  
break what's already  
broken.

One day I will close  
my eyes for the final  
time. My biggest regret:  
the problems I could not  
solve for those who  
come after. At least I  
will not bring any more fragile  
lives into this world. Unless,  
of course, they  
make me.







# Don't say Gay

Emme Starkey '28

**D**on't say *Gay*  
Because pride is to be denied  
Don't say *Gay*  
Because the person inside has been pushed aside  
Don't say *Gay*  
Because our children will see  
Don't say *Gay*  
Because unworthy you'll be  
Please say **Gay**  
Because we deserve to be heard  
Please say **Gay**  
Because it's just a word  
Please say **Gay**  
Because we're being killed  
Please say **Gay**  
Because we matter.





Tomas Casado '26



DSt Louis

Lucas Babusis '24

Lucas

# Literary Escapism

Isabelle Zhang '24

When I jump, I know I will land in the fresh pages of a story I have yet to explore. The virgin spine will split open with a resounding crack and the untested thread which holds the covers together will be stretched to its limit. The looping gs of Times New Roman will raise their tails to receive me and the fresh, untouched sheets will flutter in anticipation of my arrival. I believe there is nothing more exhilarating than diving headfirst into a new book.

Until I hit 3rd grade, I struggled to read books that weren't entirely comprised of pictures. Though I was born in the US, I spent the first five years of my life overseas, and I didn't learn to read, write, or even speak English until I started kindergarten in America. As a result, my reading and writing comprehension skills were incredibly poor - and they'd probably still be, today, had it not been for the intervention of my best friend. She'd observed my literary shortcomings and, deeming that I needed to be challenged, handed me the 500+ page, single-spaced monstrosity known as children's author Rick Riordan's most underrated book, The Red Pyramid.

The Red Pyramid was my first love. The moment I opened the cover, I was a goner; Sadie and Carter Kane had taken hold of me and I was free-falling into the world of Egyptian mythology at record speeds. After completely devouring the Kane Chronicles, I moved on to Riordan's other works; when I ran out of those, I bravely ventured into the Fiction section of our school's library and

checked out a pile of Fantasy-Adventure books. That marked the point of no return; from then on, I became known as the girl who always had her nose in a book. It's been nearly a decade since then, and my love for reading has only grown. What began as a silly challenge to get over my dependence on picture books has matured into a lifelong passion and obsession.

I love books for the escape they provide. I could be having an utterly terrible day, but once I curl up with a good book, all my troubles are forgotten. My most potent home remedy for any sort of distress is to read: if I'm angry, I'll compulsively buy the first trashy romance book I find on my kindle; if I'm sad, I'll work my way through the pile of unread YA dystopians on my shelf. And if I have been dealt a blow that leaves me chronically, incurably sad, I'll grab The Red Pyramid and consume the entire book in one sitting, closing my mind to all thoughts but the page in front of me. I rely on the exhilaration of these stories to provide temporary reprieve from my ailments.

It seems strange that I would describe such a mundane hobby as exhilarating, but I am being completely honest when I say that reading is the most mentally stimulating thing one can do. The feeling of finishing a book is irreplicable; the dizziness from sitting still for so long coupled with the adrenaline rush of closing the cover creates an emotion so raw and overwhelming that it is entirely unmatched. I believe everyone needs an interest that exhilarates them the way that reading exhilarates me.

# If I Believe Gabrielle Williams '26

If I believe  
And have a dream  
Maybe I can fly  
like a free bird instead of a caged one  
Maybe then I'll be heard when the day is done  
If I was allowed to just talk for a minute  
If they would listen and just get to know my name  
Then maybe they won't perceive me as insane  
Or as hot-headed as hot sauce or "slap ya, momma"  
Maybe then I'll be known for more than just ghetto drama  
Maybe then black men and boys won't be thugs  
Because everyone is scared of what they're going to do  
Just when they look at you  
Why is it that we're only seen for the bad and not the good  
How is it that more and more each and every day we get misunderstood  
They have eyes but not a vision  
Ears but won't listen  
And their mouths speak lies like re-runs every night on television  
We have been mistaken for an adjective and not a noun  
We are judged in this world and  
According to them, our greatness is nowhere to be found  
They've tried to hide our history but we know the pages  
We've been trapped for years in this concept and it hasn't changed in ages



We are victims in our lives but suspects in a case  
6-foot, black clothes, and a brown face  
They tell us we're free then cage us in lies  
Tell us to calm down then tomorrow one of us dies  
Our story has tried to be written yet no #2 pencil stands a chance  
We use a permanent black marker for each and every stance.  
Perfect doesn't describe us but neither does violent  
They try to say we're loud but they mean powerful  
since we're never silent  
We are too much for this world which is why they want to remove us  
We have made it our own instead of following the status quo  
And we always take it to 100 instead of the boring 5 and below  
We have never stopped fighting and our voices will never grow weak  
And since we're so loud and ghetto we don't even need a microphone to speak  
We shout "Black Lives Matter" and march on the streets  
After our blood has splattered we mark them with our feet  
We will never be done fighting  
As long as they are still fighting too  
This life we live is a battle and each one gives me deja vu  
But within these battles, we still smile and have fun  
And we refuse to stop "till victory is won."

# Southwest

## Sloane Shatzer '26

How do I document all of it  
Can I journal the watermarked desk  
Photograph the lipstick stain on the wall  
Or trace the scratches in the door

Even then, seasons change  
Papers rip and photos fade  
And I cannot hold it all  
I cannot even bear to lift it

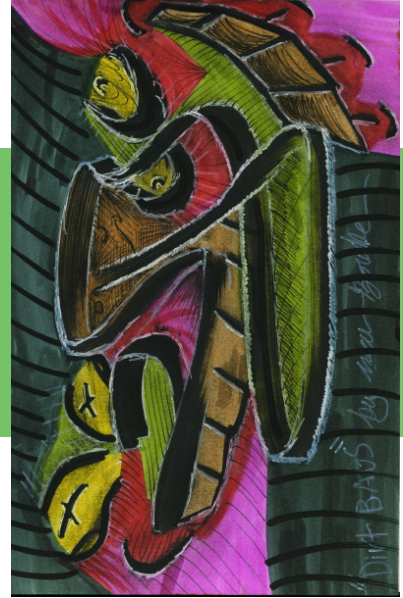
So I take my Smurf's cup  
An acorn from elementary recess  
My rusty engraved charm  
And his last polaroid picture

Wondering how I take my whole life with me  
I want to bring the place, the people, the feeling  
But I'm flying southwest  
And all I've got is a carry on



Lucy Gallagher '23





Noah Bourke '23





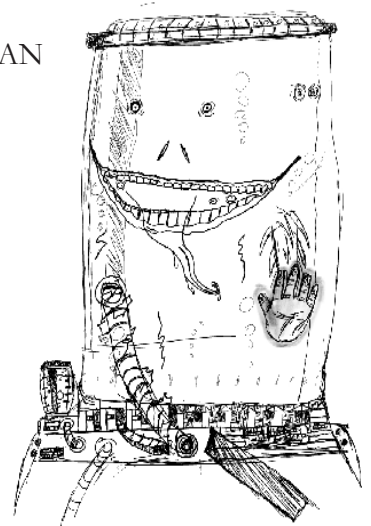
Emma Casado '23

# THIS POEM IS SCREAMING

Charlie Staley-Brain '23

**I**HAVE THIS JOY INSIDE OF ME  
IT IS SURROUNDED BY  
THE QUIET ICE OF IDEATION  
BUT I DONT CARE  
NONE OF THAT MATTERS TO ME  
BECAUSE UNDER THE DARK BLUE-PURPLE  
I CARRY A RAINBOW SUNSET  
NO AMOUNT OF BULLETS OR MEDICATION  
CAN TAKE IT FROM ME  
I AM HOLDING IT  
LIKE A DROWNING MAN  
HOLDS THE LIFEGUARD  
I AM THE LIFEGUARD OF MY OWN PRIVATE OCEAN  
I AM DROWNING  
I CAN BREATHE

EJ Carter '26





# Untitled

Erin Messias '27



# Summer

## Emme Starkey '28

**H**er long hair, planted with flowers  
Her golden-brown skin was as rich as soil glowing in the sun  
The dress she wore was a plain purple with specks of white.  
The heat from her smile was strong enough to make others melt away.  
Her blue eyes, a perfect contrast to her skin, were evident as the sky.  
When she walked, people always followed.  
She was bright, warm, and sweet, she was everybody's favorite.

I watched, jealousy crowding my thoughts.

My pale white skin is covered with freckles just like the dots on her dress.  
My teeth chattered due to the temperature of my skin. Others disowned my  
white hair and cold eyes.  
When I greeted them, they cringed, shuttering from my temperature,  
themselves.

“Goodmorning, Winter” she smiled toward me.  
I threw her a glance of admiration.  
“You as well, Summer” I managed to sigh.

# The Secret History: A Musical Analysis

Mackenna Reiter '26

12 Études, Op. 25 - No. 11 in A Minor

“Winter Wind” by Chopin

Chopin’s “Winter Wind,” depicts the plot of *The Secret History* by Donna Tartt, through its descending piano notes and layering of instrumentals. The music at timestamp 0:00 - 0:22 demonstrates *The Secret History*’s exposition which begins calmly and shows Richard, the protagonist, getting into Hampden College and joining the small Greek class. During timestamps 1:28 - 1:42, the background piano is descending rapidly with a light melody laid over top. This melody represents Richard’s unreliable narration as he states, “does such a thing as ‘the fatal flaw’...exist outside of literature?...mine is this: a morbid longing for the picturesque at all costs” which indicates that the rest of the story he is about to tell is going to be idolized and transformed into something ‘picturesque’ (Tartt 7). At the same time, the reader sees the actual events in their most sinister light, represented through the descending piano keys.

“Sometimes” by Nick Lutsko

Sometimes by Nick Lutsko is able to provide insight into the character of the protagonist in *The Secret History*, Richard Papen. Richard had grown close with his Greek class and had worked with them to kill one of their peers. The group was mostly led by Henry and towards the end of the novel, Richard comes to the realization that “Bunny had come to [him], and [he] delivered him right into Henry’s hands. And [he] hadn’t even thought twice about it” (488). Richard learns that, as Nick Lutsko puts it, “You’re no hero to this story/ You’re just another wretched pawn” (2:22-2:25).

“Who are you, Really?” Mikky Ekko

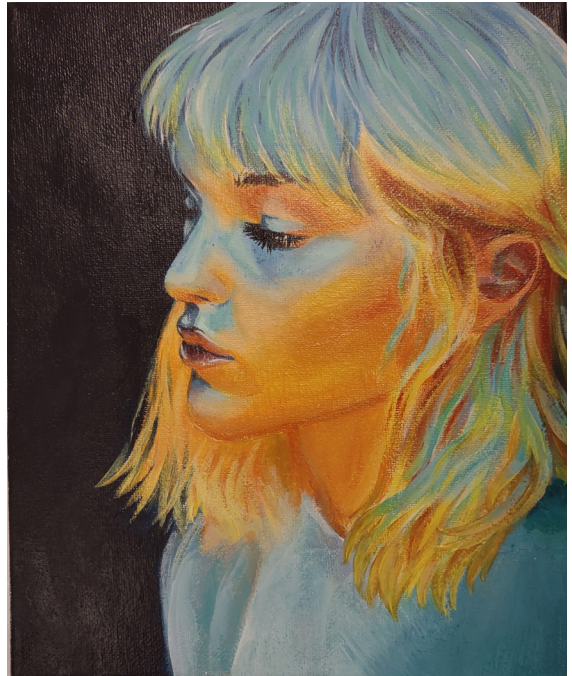
Another pivotal character in *The Secret History* is Henry Winter, one of Richard’s friends from Julian’s Greek course. Over the course of the novel, Richard slowly discovers Henry’s true intentions. Much like Richard, Henry has a fatal flaw, which is his

need for control despite its repercussions which can be ultimately chalked up to his selfishness. The song Who are you, Really? by Mikky Ekko perfectly encapsulates it with the lines “So you feel entitled to a sense of control And make decisions that you think are your own”. (0:25-0:30) Henry has seen the world as “stale and colorless” and he felt “dead in everything [he] did” until the first murder that he committed. (493) He selfishly decided that it was his choice for Bunny’s life to end. Henry was revealed to be much more manipulative and selfish than was ever indicated throughout the novel and he “know[s] that [he] can do anything that [he] wants” (493).

“Cocaine Jesus” by Rainbow Kitten Surprise

The tone of *The Secret History* is one of memorialization and idolization and those tones correlate with the song Cocaine Jesus by Rainbow Kitten Surprise. The novel in and of itself is a memorial of Richard’s love for his friends despite what they’ve gone through. It is his greatest story and, as he puts it, “This is the only story I will ever be able to tell” (4). The lyrics “Would you remember the times/ Oh the times that we believed” correlate to Richard and Henry’s “sudden sense of richness of the world. Its

infinite possibility.” (1:40-1:43) (493) The tone of idolization throughout the book is apparent in which Richard describes the events in critical detail creating this picturesque story rather than a list of events. This is Richard’s “fatal flaw” of “the morbid longing for the picturesque” (7). He hopes that his friends “miss me sometimes” as the song says because this was “his story” (1:35) (4).



**Lizzie Pruett '26**





Cole Constantino '27





