

Volume 62



Vignette 2023

Front Cover Art Inspiration

The Front Cover for this year's Vignette Magazine is a charcoal sketch entitled *Restful*. Sketched on an 18 x 24 Bristol Board, the thought process behind this drawing was focusing on the inevitable reality of getting older. As we get older, life becomes simpler, so it seems appropriate to have the older man rest in his chair with a cup of coffee and gaze at the dated television.

Jim Yu '23

Back Cover Art Inspiration

Included in the same series of charcoal drawings, the Back Cover was created to raise awareness to another reality: the lack of universal clean water for kids. Entitled *Thirst*, this 18 x 24 Bristol Board sketch depicts a young child drinking from a filtered hydrant to quench his thirst.

Jim Yu '23

*Vignette Literary
and Art Magazine*

2023

Volume 62

Saint Joseph

A College Preparatory School

145 Plainfield Avenue

Metuchen, New Jersey 08840



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Editorial

Art is an expression of creativity found through ideas, thoughts, visions, or experiences. These driving factors lead one to create something great, something significant, and something meaningful. The medium to captivate memories, emotions, or feelings is limitless, yet oftentimes executed in the form of paintings, sculptures, musical compositions, literary works, theater, and photographs.

Every year, the members of the Saint Joseph High School *Vignette* work to craft this literary magazine, a masterpiece and a work of art in itself. With the guidance of the *Vignette*'s two moderators, Mr. Paul Caruso and Dr. Robert Longhi '81, all twelve student's of this year's staff worked closely to organize the school's sixty-second volume. Although it is an extensive, year-long process, with several rounds of reading, critiquing, considering, editing, and formatting, it is a gratifying experience. The product emphasizes expression, creativity, and the arts, and is an encapsulation of the student body.

Giovanni Oliveti '24

The Eruption of Pompeii

You claim to be moved by the letters I wrote to you about the passing of my uncle and that as a result, you would like to know what anxieties and hardships I have faced. "Even though my spirit resists, I will begin to remember,"

I allowed myself the remaining time to study after Uncle left. I then took a bath, ate dinner, and then slept for a short while. The ground had been trembling for several days. That evening, it got worse, to the point where everything appeared to be turned inside out rather than just relocated. I took a seat there in the open space of the house with my mum. Since I was born 17 years ago, I'm not sure if I should label my behavior as persistence or ignorance, but I requested and read the book by Titus Livi.

The day's first hour had already passed. There was a strong and certain fear of destruction. Then, finally, leaving the town was enjoyable. Many came after us. After leaving, we encountered both amazing and terrifying experiences as we stood stationary. Despite being on the flattest plane, the wagons we asked to be used were driven in different directions. On the other side, a foreboding cloud could be seen. That cloud landed on the ground shortly after. Mother then begged, pleaded, and ordered me to flee. She tells me, "You are able. I am burdened by age and body, and I shall die well if I do not cause death for you." But I will state that if she is not with me, I will not be safe. I then persuaded her to continue. After some time, she gave in.

Ash was now falling. Then it is night, but it is not a moonless night; rather, it is a night in which all lights have been turned off and places have been shuttered. There are yells from males, infants wailing, and women screaming. Some people were shouting for their parents, their kids, or their wives, while others were identifying them by their voices. They were praying for death because they were afraid of dying. Many people were raising their hands in prayer to the gods, proclaiming that there were no longer any gods and that the end of the unending night was near.

Ash is thick and plentiful. We were now constantly brushing this off so as not to get hurt. I can confidently state that I did not scream in such dire situations. The cloud finally left. Next comes a real day. All had been altered, and everything was covered in tall ash that appeared to be snow.

Pet Sounds: A Misconception

A street - at night,
Desolate; solely walking is the lonely air that plagues it.
Marquees glimmer, but flicker - giving them some life, despite being half dead.
The night is young, the raindrops are cold,
So cold to numb us, but are we already numb?
I stare and ponder evermore, keeping running thoughts in mind;
Thoughts that fill the lonely street with a whole city of people -
Singing, dancing, playing,
But there is never anyone there - fulfilling these satisfactions,
Thus fulfilling society -
Ah, corrupt society - tumbling down like rain from a cloud,
As well as being bitter cold like young rainfall in a likewise night;
As well as being two faced like the flickering signs;
As well as acting as some other entity as if it is singing, dancing, or playing;
As if it is numbing us.
But maybe we are the raindrops,
Gathering at the bottom to make something new;
And maybe we are the cold ones,
Preserving the good that is left;
And maybe we are the numb ones,
Immune to the everlasting corruption of society -
Only showing our good face in this two-faced world.

Tyler Quesnel '24
Junior Poetry

Vietnam Journal

April, 1970

It was just a normal day in Austin, Texas, sunny and warm, like always. I loved Texas; it was my home and I had many great friends there. I had just turned eighteen about a month before, and up to this point, was just a normal kid. I played sports and hung out with friends. My life was pretty simple. Until one evening, when I came home from work to find a letter sitting on my counter and my mom crying next to it. She hugged me and showed me the letter; it was a summons to be drafted.

I heard a lot of things about this war, none of it was good. It was being fought in steamy jungles and in mountains with endless rains and hordes of bugs and snakes. My mom kept panicking, but my dad kept repeating to her that everything will be fine. Many days later I came home from work to see many of my friends and family at my small Texas home. My mom said that they wanted to do something nice for me before I went off to boot-camp. It was a surprise party and I ended up having a great night with all my friends and family. However, when my head hit the pillow, I could not stop thinking about leaving the next day.

Before getting on the bus to travel to Fort Hood for boot-camp, I gave one last hug to mom and dad. We were all in tears, but I stepped up into the bus without looking back. I was on my way to train to be a soldier. I knew when I got on the bus that life would never be the same. During the ride, I met some of my first bunk-mates. They were funny, but I could see in their eyes that they were scared as well.

Our drill sergeant met us as we got off the bus and he was loud, bald, tall, mean, and muscular. I knew this would be painful, but also necessary. We ran every morning from 5 A.M. to 7 A.M. We would eat some awful powdered eggs, overly salty hash, and stale toast. Until dinner in the late evening, we exercised and trained at an obstacle course. When night came, it was hard to sleep. I wondered the benefit of this training if I got killed on my first patrol. None of us could be made ready for that.

Fast forward six weeks and there was only one week until deployment. During my final family visit, my mom and dad could not stop looking at me. It was obvious. They were terrified that I might not come home. When it was time for deployment, I said goodbye to my family and friends. Would this be a final goodbye? Either way, I knew my life would be altered forever.

From the Journal of Sam T. Johnson

Jake Dayton '25
Sophomore Fiction

Sacrifice

The rain is pouring now, yet the pellets of the glistening water are moving oddly slow. Everything appears to be moving slower. The people around me stand proud on the street, soaked in blood and water, cheering loud enough to drown out the noise of the downpour. A drop of water fell to the ground, landing with a soft noise, something catching its fall, my blood. The war has finally come to its conclusion, with my destiny of death finally being fulfilled. There is no longer a need for this constant fighting, this constant bloodshed. The world and everyone in it can finally prosper. Things were always meant to end up like this.

I lay here, back cold on the wet pavement, drowning in a pool of my own blood. Why did I have to be the villain? I never wanted this. Who would ever want this? This life, this disgraceful death.

These people don't understand, they could never possibly understand. The stakes are way too high, yet they can't see it. They are blind to the truth, and I am the one who dies for their ignorance. Who else could have done it? Who could've come this far? Who else would have been able to stop this hidden totalitarian control once and for all? The senseless and brutal massacres of the masses had to be stopped. I did it. If slaughtering the few pigs at the top that caused this suffering saved everyone else, then so be it. They were the cause of too much death, war, and poverty, yet everyone trusted them blindly. I was the only one to see through the lies and deception, and humanity will now not perish, all because of my actions, me alone.

I'm dying for all these people. Why are the people I'm saving, also the ones who drove the blade through my back?

My name will be in the history books. I will be known forever; I will be timeless. Still, nobody sees my good deed. I acted as a hero, saving the masses, but will be put down in history as a villain. These people should be thanking me, but they cheer as I take my last breaths, letting the crimson liquid gush out of my back, flooding the pavement. They aren't even ending my suffering, just letting me patiently wait for my heart to stop beating. I don't even have the energy for final words, I can't open their eyes to the truth. They might never know why I did this, but it needed to stop.

Why did I put my life on the line for these ungrateful miscreants? I shouldn't have. I should have sat back and watched them suffer in my place. Would I really rather that outcome? No, at the very least now I can die knowing humanity isn't being punished by those that have been manipulating their every move. They were a cancer that needed to be excised before they killed everyone. My sacrifice is necessary to attain peace for humanity as a whole. I am the hero.



SJHS 9/11 Memorial

A cross created from the iron recovered from the World Trade Center, commemorating Saint Joseph High School Alumni William Fallon '66, James Lynch '72, and R. Andrew Spencer '84. May they live on in our hearts and Never be Forgotten.

Ronan Pell '25

Dedication

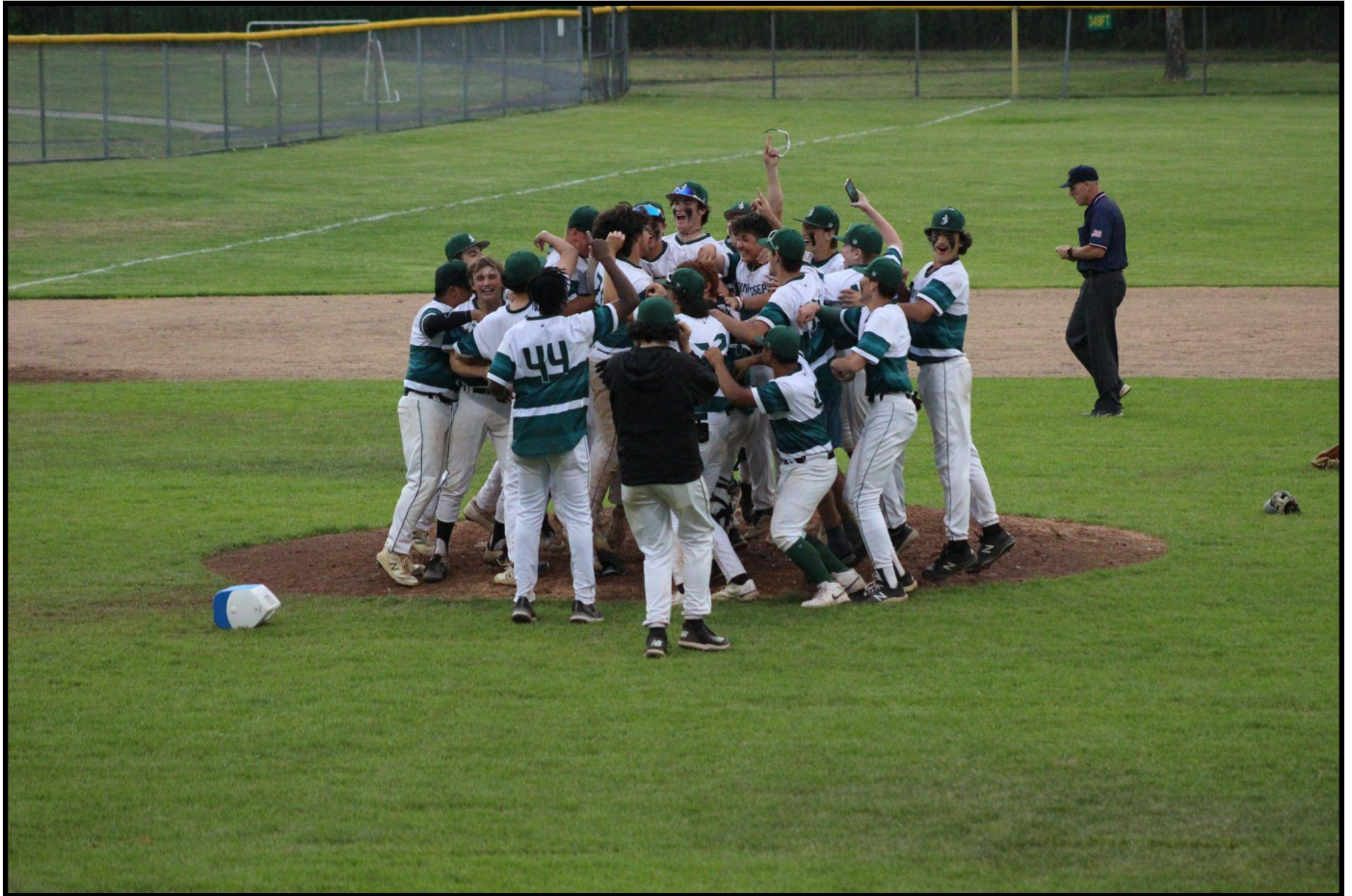
Throughout one's life they face opposition
Persevering becomes their main mission
No matter the obstacles one can envision
It must not lessen your ambition

Many people may have doubted
In your abilities they did not believe
The barriers imposed you surmounted
In spite of the doubts much did you achieve

No matter how much one can prove
They will always root for you to lose
The best way to respond is to continue working
For by your success they will be hurting

When they see you winning, they will try to bring you down
For they are losing and thus jealousy ensues
No matter what, like a king wear your crown
Be proud of who you are and you will never lose

Philip Frangie '24
Junior Poetry



JV Baseball Wins GMC

The Junior Varsity Baseball Team celebrates after winning the Greater Middlesex County Tournament in a thrilling final against East Brunswick High School with a score of 9-8 behind a 4-run 7th inning.

Andrew Hartong '25

Success and the Importance of Setting Goals

CEOs, professional athletes, celebrities, and politicians—figures we look up to and see as successful—don't generally get where they are by “going with the flow.” They set up goals and plans to achieve those goals, pouncing on opportunities and never ceasing to fight for those goals. Successful people generally know what they want and work unrelentingly to get it. Work ethic and dedication are, of course, major factors in success, but before they are ever taken into consideration, the goal they are based on must be set. Should one not set any goals, one will not find success in anything worthwhile. In order to find any type of success, one must, before all else, find personal definitions of success and set ultimate goals based on them. This is not to say that one should plan one's entire life today; it is simply to say that one should find future points of success and use them to give oneself a sense of direction.

It is not at all uncommon for one's outlook on life, and therefore goals, to be ever-changing. However, this should not be an excuse to not set goals. If one is unsure what one's definition of success is, one must, to maximize chances of completing goals later in life, work to achieve what one is certain of. For example, nearly anyone can be certain that commitment to one's studies can only serve to help. One can also be certain that maintaining physical health is an undoubtedly positive goal. Before one figures out more specific goals—and arguably, even when one does—it is paramount that one does not discard other possible goals. Considering the fleeting nature of life, one should always leave oneself open to as many goals as possible, such that the closing of one door does not mean the closing of all doors.

The first step for anyone who aspires to any degree of success, while attempting to keep as many doors open as possible, is to decide where they ideally see themselves in the future. The best way to determine the right goals is for one to imagine a perfect yet somewhat realistic life. Mapping out requirements of this life will allow one to create various goals, many of which will build on each other. This lofty, idealistic goal should not be the end-all-be-all; it should, at the very least, give a sense of purpose, direction, and motivation, creating one's own guide to life. No smaller goal is sustainable without this guide behind it. It is true that when one's long term goals or end goals change, their short term goals may be derailed. In the long scheme, however, the derailling of short-term goals is favorable to moving through life without purpose, direction, or motivation. To find any degree of worthwhile success, it is essential that one at least begin to make short term and long term goals. Life is almost never constant but the guidance supplied by goals is. Anyone who aspires to any level of relative success should begin by setting goals.

The Glorious Quest

In the Queen's Port, a large battleship, the Seeker, prepares for its journey. Men of great strength haul food and armaments up a ramp and onto the ship. The vessel is of pristine quality, built by Ranarland's finest, and unmatched by any other country, and its captain is an esteemed sailor, having completed far journeys expanding Ranarland's borders. Citizens of the capital flock to the harbor, and even the king and queen are seen on their palace balcony, overlooking the Seeker as it departs.

Ranarland stretches far and wide, built by its great navy and explorers. Every government building displays a large, detailed map of the world, a testament to their explorative diligence. However a large gap taunts every great explorer. That gap is the Holy Sea. In Ranarland, no glory is comparable to finding the Land of Higher Beings, however, despite many attempts, the Land of Higher Beings and the Holy Sea remain unexplored.

A young weaponsmith walks along the beach, and there he sees it, the Seeker, tarnished and broken. Embedded in the remains of the ship, was a mighty fang worthy of a sea beast like no other. The weaponsmith took this tooth and labored hard to mold a weapon out of it.

Once again, a vessel prepares for the Holy Sea at the Queen's Port. Once a lowly weaponsmith, the glorious Captain Agir commands the crew of the Slayer. The citizens of the capital watch in wonder as the men carry Agir's signature harpoons, known for shredding beasts and boats alike. The harpoons were crafted from the gargantuan tooth Agir found in the wreckage, and they stand as the only hope of slaying whatever monster stands in their way. The Slayer set forth towards the Holy Sea, with the citizens, king, and queen waving goodbye.

The Holy Seas are more ferocious than anything Agir has seen or could have imagined. The men aren't braving the sea, they are surviving it. Rain beats down on the crew, and waves rock and batter the boat. Expert sailing and expert craftsmanship are all that prevent the Slayer from flipping over and dooming the crew. The true test, however, appeared as a fin that broke the surface of the water, before diving back down into the depths.

Agir desperately rallies his men and tries to maneuver the ship, but the sea beast was far too fast, and the sailors could see its gaping maw emerge from the murky depths. However, they were saved by a tsunami-sized wave carrying them just out of harm's way. The men pick themselves up as the wave clears and the boat steadies, and gaze in amazement at the colossal sea demon that nearly made them into snacks. Still, these men were trained well, and are the most experienced and able-bodied sailors of Ranarland, so they charge for the harpoons, and fire them at the floundering sea fiend. Many connect with the target and sink deep into its underside.

The monster recovers and charges straight toward the boat, and Agir takes it upon himself to fire at it, knowing there is no way to outrun such a predator. The sea demon leaps into the air, and opens its mouth wide, unveiling its sharp and deadly teeth, ready to sink into a new chew toy. Agir fires the final harpoon, taken from the same beast attacking him, and it sinks deep into the fiend's skull. Agir watches as the life in its eyes deplete, and it falls onto the Slayer.

He awakens, surrounded by some of his fellow sailors on a lifeboat. The crew sits in peace, the horrific storm disappearing with the death of the monster, whose humongous, scaly carcass floats alongside the splinters of the Slayer. Still, the sight of the colossal corpse was insignificant to the shimmering island that revealed itself to the remaining crew.

Burning Horizon

It was November 4th, 1274. The sun was high in the sky, the ocean was sparkling with rays of light. Far on the horizon, we could see the nine hundred Mongolian ships rapidly cutting through the waves pushed forward by the wind. I looked around at my fellow Samurai. We were all mounted on our horses ready to fight the Mongols. There was fear in the air. We knew we wouldn't be able to win this fight. We were the most skilled warriors in Asia, but there were only eighty of us and eight thousand of them. A single volley of arrows could deplete our forces. Our only hope was to hold the Mongols back long enough for our people to escape, and for the other islands to prepare for the oncoming horde

Most of us had lived on the quaint island of Tsushima for all our lives. We grew up together, trained together, and learned together. The village we had lived in for years was not far from us. Our families had hastily taken the necessities and went to the other side of the island in hopes of escaping. We, on the other hand, stood on the beach waiting for the enemy ships to arrive. The others did not seem nervous on the outside. They were well trained and maintained a calm composure. I was certain they were all fearing what was about to come. The sun was getting hotter. The heavy armor we wore seemed to grow heavier. The Mongolians drew closer, yet we stood on the beach like sculptures.

The ships were almost here. Our leader, Sō Sukekuni told us to prepare ourselves. We drew our blades. We could hear yelling from the ships. All of a sudden they released their arrows. It was almost as if the sun was being blocked by the salvo of projectiles. They were like clouds bringing a rain of death. The men around me fell. Only some got back up. We charged forward towards the shore as the Mongolians ran towards us. They were carrying swords, torches, bows, axes, lances, and knives. We had no trouble with the first of them, but they kept on coming. If you killed one, another would take his place. We were quickly overwhelmed. I fought and fought, one after another. I hit one, then a second, then a third. I was getting more and more tired. Once I killed the twenty fifth one, I fell out of pure exhaustion. When I struggled back up, the Mongolians had already passed the corpses at my sides and towards the now empty villages. I picked up my katana and stumbled towards the Mongols who were still fighting. There was a sharp pain in my stomach, a quick one. Then another in my arm. I fell to my knees and looked down. There were two arrows. I looked up. I looked at the beautiful land I called home. I saw the burning in the distance and the smoke coming up from the village. I stared at the one Mongolian who had his bow drawn. Our eyes locked from across the beach. Then, there was another sharp pain. I fell to the sand.



Fissure in the Sky

Taken in the Neighborhood of Castello in Venice, Italy, shows how narrow the alleyways between buildings are. Used for pedestrian circulation, which is essential in an aquatic city like Venice, the alleys are so narrow it is difficult at some points to have two people shoulder-to-shoulder walking forward.

Caeleb Chendorain '24

The Hollow Attic

The unusually cold winter air flowed past Robert's face. He walked briskly up to the stoop of the new, red house. Robert looked for a doorbell, but there was nothing except for the brass ring inside of the lion's mouth. *Man, Mike really needs to upgrade his house*, thought Robert. *Why won't he just install more electric things than just lights, heat, and AC?* After several long minutes, Robert checked the door handle and realized that it was unlocked. He creaked open the door and called out, "Mike, are you there? You didn't come to the door, so I let myself in." The cold air perforated through the warm house. Robert turned around and shut the door. He looked for the light switch and flicked it on. Nothing happened. *Flick, flick flick*. "Hey Mike, I think you forgot to pay the electric bill. The lights don't work." Robert thought, *Maybe Mike is sleeping. I'll go check*. The steps loudly creaked. Robert was trying to make as little noise as possible until he heard a loud thump.

Robert heard the noise and quickly ran upstairs. *Oh no, what if Mike fell off his bed?* That question was quickly answered when Robert ran into Mike's room, but it was empty. Dust covered the sheets. He then heard the noise again. *Thump*. Robert looked around. He then heard the noise again and looked up. The trapdoor to the attic was wide open, and the ladder was right next to it. Robert then moved the ladder over to the trapdoor and climbed up.

The attic was pitch black. Robert peeked his head up and saw nothing. The attic was empty, save for the two boxes full of old clothes. Robert looked around for what could have made the thump, but nothing was there. He climbed up and rubbed his eyes, adjusting them to the darkness. He opened his eyes and gasped.

The attic was empty. The boxes that were there two minutes ago had just disappeared. Robert blinked his eyes several times to make sure he was seeing correctly. Once Robert realized that he wasn't insane, he looked around. The darkness surrounded him. Robert decided to head back downstairs and leave. The trapdoor was stuck, and no matter what Robert did, the hatch would not budge. *Thump. Thump*. Robert looked behind him in horror. A black goop had appeared in front of him. Now Robert truly understood why Mike's house was abandoned.

Andrew Hoang '26
Freshman Fiction

Hollow Gold

Walking around a palace of gold.
Riches abound, treasures untold.
Nothing is out of my reach to hold.
It seems fortune is upon me.

Yet the smile pasted upon my face,
Bearing both elegance and grace,
Actually harbors an empty place,
So vast, no riches can fill.

Darkness seeps through my gilded frame.
My wealth brings both pride and shame.
I search to uphold my good name.
Happiness eludes me.

But wait! Despair has not won here.
I'll strive to make the solution clear.
To make a spark of joy appear
And fill my hollow heart.

Like a knight on a quest, I wander.
Seeking an answer, I ponder.
This moment, I will not squander.
In my pursuit of true happiness.

However short, however long
This journey, whether right or wrong,
Will take me out among the throng
Of lonely people like me.

I meander. I ramble. I lurch.
For a single answer, I do not search.
I merely wish to leave my perch
And find what makes me.. me.

City of Quartz

This is an age-old tale, told to me by my father.

Fixed upon what we would now know as the border of Yemen and Oman, stood a kingdom made of quartz and glass. Through many generations of blood shed and intense labor, it was completed. King Rutherford started every morning the exact same way. After dragging himself groggily from his chambers, shrugging off the previous night's ale, he would venture to stand on his balcony in awe, aloof to his subjects below. One morning at the apex of his amazement, he let out an ecstatic declaration. "I have truly created a sight more magnificent than the heavens!" After he ambled back inside to his cozy sitting room he heard a booming voice. He had been used to hearing voices from the ale but this was different. "You have sinned against me and my Church. You have claimed your domain, created by people, is greater than the heavens, created by your God." The king did not dispute it. "I will not lie to myself or others." The voice spoke again, "You must repent." The king affirmed that he would not. With that the voice silenced, there was nothing more it could do. The water of the seas began to recede.

Later, the king retold the events to his wife, who was certain it was the voice of God and that his wrath would be brought down on them but he was still unconvinced. Rutherford fell peacefully asleep that night, totally assured of his land's security. He was awoken the next morning to a thud on the walls. A tsunami had hit yet they weren't obliterated. Later in the evening at the weekly banquet between his family and the family of the aristocrats, he made a fool of himself. He climbed atop the table and rocked it, shaking his fist and raising unforgivable words against God. The monarch believed God to have failed. He thought himself invulnerable, but his wife knew otherwise. It was but God's warning. The next morning, under the cover of a dreaded rainstorm, the queen traveled from home to home telling each denizen of the impending doom. In turn they spread news as well. But the homeless chose to stay. They all gathered at the main entrance and the queen had the gates opened. Rutherford, who was unaware of his wife's departure, woke to a raging storm. One that ripped trees from roots and shattered buildings. But when the clouds parted, the castle and the wealthy's estates all remained. Once word reached the king of his people's exodus, he was furious. He could not take out his anger on his staff nor the rich, so he channeled it at the impoverished. He had his guards take them to the grand chambers. There he harnessed his rage, blaming them for the state of the kingdom. Exclaiming that they brought down their gods on him. They all stood with blank faces and filled with the Holy Spirit told him "There is but one God, our God." After sufficient shouting he ordered his men to take arms. As they brought down their swords, a mighty thunderbolt hit the castle turning it into slag. The homeless ascended to the feet of God and Rutherford descended to the lap of Luther. The once transparent city, now a molten river of ash and brine. The queen and her people began a new life.

Harrison McCormick '26
Freshman Fiction

Life

Life is what you do
What you participate in
And what you are actively involved in
Life is your day to day living
How you work
And how you act
Life is your relationships
Your family
And the people you surround yourself with
Life is your mind
What you think
And how you adapt your attitude
Life is what you perceive
What you see out of your own eyes
And how you see it
Life is Your own book
Live it to the fullest
And keep writing while you can

School Success

School success
Is built by your attitude
And how you go at things
School success
Is shown by effort
And how much you put into each and every activity
School success
Is expressed by demonstrating
Aloud and through your work
School success
Is maintained by studying
And working in your free time
School success
Overall leads to success
In your life and beyond
School success
Brings opportunity to
Your life in all

What The World Could Be...

The world could be,
A place of joy and tranquility.

People are its fate,
If they just weren't filled with such hate.

Learn to follow the Golden Rule,
Not just when you are forced to in school.

Give up the fight,
Replace it with love and light.

Jesus lived and showed us the way, Live as He did each and every day.

Go into the world and leave your mark, Bring all people out of the dark.

Shine your light bright,
So everyone has you in their sight.

Be the example for all people to follow,
Actions are everything, empty words are hollow.

God made the world for you and me,
What a great place it could be.

Kyle Giuliano '24
Junior Poetry



Cinque Terre

A scenic and colorful picture captures a small, coastal town along Cinque Terre on the 6th day of the Origin's Club Italy trip in 2023.

Elikem Amenuever '25

Today's Society

This day and age, we live in hypocrisy
We live in a time where people hide themselves
And are able to hide behind a screen
We live in a time where it is acceptable to hide while our Identities just want to scream

We live in a world where there is a consistent Mask that holds everything by the throat
We live in a world where we walk around afraid We walk around caring about what the other Billions of people care about us

We live in a world where society is broken Where people are full of hate
We live in a world where people care Solely on reputation and mask
The true person who is on the inside

We live in a soulless world where
Truth is nearly impossible to come by
We live in a world where the person
Who sits next to you does not even
Care to know your name none the less your personality

We live in a world where the relationship
With God is deteriorating
We live in a world where people think
It is okay to pull away from the lord
Who sacrificed himself for the benefit of others

We live in current state of the world
That masks the truth
We live in a world that hates Honesty and compassion
We are certainly not living in the way of Christ

Matthew Kosuda '24
Junior Poetry

A Respite from Life

Nestled deep in the recesses of the forest was a lake, still and clear as crystal. The morning sky, a kaleidoscope of pink, purple, and blue hues, reflected clearly off the surface of the water. So too did the trees, whose bright shades of red and yellow provided a stark contrast to the watercolor palette of the sky. The trees, which formed a perimeter around the lake, were teeming with wildlife. Birds roosted on the branches as they sang their sweet odes to nature. Squirrels ran up and down the trees, bringing with them freshly found acorns to their burrows. A family of deer feasted on the evergreen grass while a nearby bear laid in the shade, content to spend the day dormant.

The scene represented nature at its purest. Unmarked by the march of civilization, it was as if the Garden of Eden found its place on Earth once again. No roads, no bridges, no factories. Not a single trace of humanity's presence could be found in the tallest of trees or even the tiniest of bushes. In this corner of the world, nature triumphed.

Far along the outskirts of the lake was a student, who sat atop a giant rock. Clad in a white-button down shirt and navy-blue pants, with his jacket hanging over his shoulders, the student stared longingly off into the distance. His eyes, which bore dark circles under them, conveyed a sense of weariness and fatigue, a result of his ventures the month prior. An argument with a friend, a failed exam, and the death of a relative were just some of the many things the student suffered through in the prior month. Now here he was, basking in the scenery in a futile attempt to get away from his hardships, away from his tribulations. Away from life.

As time passed, the student's body seemed to become more at ease. His shoulders loosened, his breathing became less erratic, and his eyes, which before emanated a sense of fatigue, now conveyed a feeling of awe and astonishment at the sight laid before him. Seeing all of the animals and the trees and the lake in harmony with one another brought a tear to his eye, for it was everything he wanted his life to be like. No trials, no tribulations, no turbulence. Just peace. and an eternal state of bliss. It was as if he could stay here forever-

RING!

RING!!

RING!!!

The sound of his phone snapped the student from his blissful daze. Lamenting the fact that the alarm had disrupted his calm state of mind, the student reached into his pocket to open his phone. It was a call from his parents, reminding him that he will be late for school today. Upon receiving the call, the student jumped off the boulder, put on his jacket, and headed down the narrow path through the forest that would lead him back home. He looked back to catch a glimpse of Eden one last time: its crystal-clear water, its beautiful red-and-orange colored trees, its harmonious habitants. All of it. The fatigue in his eyes settled back in as he turned away, back to his hardships, back to his worries.

Back to life.



Simone Kicking a Soccer Ball

In Pisa during the Italy trip, the tour guide Simone played soccer with the students.

Arthur Yuen '25

Age

As we age
There are more things to ponder
As we age
We must find what lies over yonder
As we age
Responsibilities are greater
As we age
Persistence cannot waver
As we age
We feel melancholy
As we age
We feel rather jolly
As we age
Some things we won't comprehend
As we age
We must learn without end
As we age
Stopping seems forbidden
As we age
We must find what line hidden

Owen Griffin '24
Junior Poetry

Personal Innovation

Admiring the innovations around me, I would always go to my dad, an engineer, for explanations of how they worked. Seven-year-old me wanted to know how my phone could remember my fingerprint or how Google Home devices worked. He never gave me the answers right away; instead, he'd lead me through the thought process of an innovator. These daily conversations exercised my brain and fed the innovative, creative, systematic, process-oriented mindset I've always had.

I can't remember a time when I didn't want to be an engineer. Even at a young age, my hobbies reflected my passion. Scrolling through Kickstarter, watching videos on how things are made, and writing in my "invention journal" were all ways I spent my free time. Hours of these activities allowed me to identify two aspects of every good invention: A good invention meets an unmet need and appeals to a large market. Having figured this out early on, I've used it to help invent *myself*. I've related and applied those aspects of a good invention to different areas of my life to become a person who meets the needs of others and appeals to large markets.

My leadership positions and involvement in my high school's Campus Ministry have helped me better understand human needs. I have traveled to Dunlow, West Virginia with several other Council members to help people living in dreadful poverty. I've had the honor of helping those with special needs through an event we organize called "Falcons and Friends." We have raised funds for programs that house the homeless during an event called "Cardboard City." I was assigned Head of Spirituality for the Council, making me responsible for events associated with holistic living. I created and single-handedly led the "Gospel of John" club, which aims to help students better understand Scripture. Charitable, spiritual, and holistic living has been a principal focus for me, as it further supports my passion for using my skill of innovating for the greater good. I didn't *run* for President of my school's Campus Ministry; the club's moderator *chose* me out of the 16 Council members. This is because they recognized how well I meet the needs of others, just like a good invention.

To appeal to different markets, a good invention must be versatile. I'm not Superman, but there are many qualities and skills I've worked on to contribute to society in different ways. Throw me behind a piano, and my eleven years of practice will show. Stand me in front of a crowd, and my time spent working in guest services and as a server will display my ability to be personable. Place me on a sports team, and the athleticism I've built by playing four sports over the past thirteen years will present itself. A quick look at my transcript will show how well I excel in challenging coursework. These skills are great to have, but it's the qualities I've gained from them that make me truly versatile. Music has helped me see the world more artistically. Sports have trained my leadership abilities. The jobs I've had have shaped me into someone who is mature and well-spoken. Studying has made me intellectually sharp, especially in mathematics and science. My broad spectrum of skills and qualities hasn't made me into Superman, but it's helped me contribute to society in various ways, just like a good invention.

My constant desire to improve myself and the world around me reinforces my love for innovating. Innovating is my opportunity to contribute toward the greater good. I want to research, I want to create, and I want to put my exercised, engineer-like mind into action. The college I attend will receive this thoroughly developed invention of myself (so far), who will take every opportunity to impact today's growing world of innovation.

Robert Ilcyn '23
Senior Nonfiction

The Stranger's Knock

Grady was a small community where everyone knew each other. So, when a gray-haired man wearing a long black coat arrived in the neighborhood, George instantly recognized that the man was a stranger. George watched from the upstairs window as the man meandered down the street, going from door to door, knocking and briefly talking to each person who opened the door. Quite strange behavior indeed, George reckoned as he watched the man slowly work his way down the street, gradually making his way closer to George's house.

The man moved slowly, and by the time he was near George's house, the sun hung low in a golden sky. The man finished speaking to a neighbor two houses down. As their neighbor disappeared back inside his house, the home phone rang and George's Grandma, who was watching him while his mother cooked dinner, answered.

George was consumed now, his imagination running wild. Soon the man would be on their doorstep. Who was this stranger and why was he going from door to door? Perhaps he was a wandering salesman with magical wares, potions that could make George taller or stronger. Perhaps the stranger was looking for a brave young man to join the war effort overseas.

Finally, the doorbell rang, and George ran downstairs to greet the stranger. He ran past his mother in the kitchen, and then passed by his Grandmother in the living room. She ordered him not to open the door, but George wasn't listening. All he could think about was meeting the mysterious stranger. George threw the door open, and crisp autumn air spilled into the house.

"Hello, young man." The stranger said politely, his eyes old and face wrinkled, "Sorry to bother you, but does a Martha Wolf live here?"

"George, I told you not to get the door." His Grandmother scolded.

The man looked over George's head, "Martha, is that you? It's me, Bernard Winkle."

"What are you doing here, Bernie? It's been so many years?" Grandma inquired.

The stranger smiled, "Forty years or more, but I remember those summer days like they were yesterday."

"Oh Bernie... please just leave."

"Those were days of roses and sunshine, and never was there a cloud in the sky. Back then, I was so foolish and impulsive," the Man laughed, "I guess that I still am."

"Please, Bernie..."

"Do you remember those days when we drove around in that old convertible with the top down. The signs along the highway all seemed to say 'caution children at play'."

"I was Juliet and you, my Romeo," She said in a whisper, "But we are much too old now. Are we not near the time when one takes in their sails?"

"And why should I take in my sails just because Terminus wills it? As long as I have a breath in my body my dreams will further shoot. My love knows no bounds."

"I knew if I looked into your eyes I wouldn't be able to say no." She said and grabbed hold of the stranger's old weathered hand. Then, together, they disappeared into the sunset.

Dalton Vassanella '23

Senior Fiction 31

A Sleepless Night

The itch that is suddenly on my back.
The pillow heats up and won't cool back down.
My stomach rumbles, yearning for a snack.
My smile fades, I begin to frown.

I close my eyes but they will not stay closed.
I check the clock, It is somehow midnight.
Without the blanket, my feet are exposed.
My phone notified, my room gets bright.

My blanket is now halfway off the bed.
My bladder is full, I can not keep still.
The hair in my eyes is from my bedhead.
My head begins to ache, I need Advil.

After hours and hours I finally seem to snooze.
But morning comes minutes later and gets me in my blues,

Another night, even more tired than the first,
I get less and less sleep as the days go by.
The stress is too much, I feel cursed,
How could I stop this? Maybe a lullaby.

I'm in this cycle that's awful and grim,
All I am asking for is a little bit of sleep.
I have discomfort on my body reaching every limb,
Nothing seems to work, not even counting sheep.

I hear every sound and creek,
It's keeping me awake.
I have to get up so I can take a leak,
Then my body hurts more, I feel it ache.

If I'm so tired all the time, why can't I seem to rest?
If anybody has any tips to sleep then please, be my guest.

City on a Hill

Matthew Chapter Five

Verse fourteen

A city on a hill

Cannot be hid - it is visible, it is seen.

What does this verse actually mean?

I am a light

In a dying world

The aim is to project it bright

To every needy boy and girl

How do I do this

You ask of me

How do I make an

Impact powerfully?

With a small city of cardboards

Constructed with love

Warm beds sacrificed

God watches from above

Though the concrete is prickly

The ground ice cold

The sacrifice is worth it

A sight to behold

A group of young men

Shivering for a cause

It won't be forgotten

Await heaven's applause.

Michael Lee '24
Junior Poetry

Unfriendly Hour

It was a frigid and gloomy night when I arose to my decrepit father calling my name. He seemed to be in a frantic search for help, though his words were incoherent. Slowly, I began to comprehend his words as his tone of voice grew louder. I was very tired due to my sudden awakening, though I was able to hear him say, "Quickly hunt for me Keith, I need food!" This was the oddest task my father had ever presented me with, especially considering the hour. He repeated incessantly, uttering the same sentence over and over. I obliged the request after threats of punishment and his transition into soft spokenness.

Reluctant to accept this difficult hunt in the adversity of the dark, I told him, "I will try my best father." He responded in a strange manner and followed me as I was packing for the hunt until I had left.

Exiting the house and traveling in the cold and snowy forest were the hardest parts of the entire journey. I paced across the forest, shivering, in search of buck deer with which I could cook venison stew before dawn. The environment fatigued me, and I began to feel that everything around me wasn't real. Continuing further into the woods, I began to see paranormal hallucinations; my vision blurred. I became overwhelmed with a sense of fear, so I began clutching my rifle. In my fear, I was able to notice a deer at a distance that I could kill it at. It seemed to be a daunting task due to the deer being nearly out of my vision, but I was approaching it at a good speed. Closing in on the deer, I was presented with an open shot. Doubt clouded my mind, fearing that I would miss the shot and have to search for another deer. Still approaching, I contemplated when I should kill the deer. I wanted to be certain that this was the one. As my steps halted, I aimed down my sights at the lone deer who stood dead as stone. A loud bang extruded from my rifle as I witnessed the majestic beast fall.

Skimming the deer was uncomfortable, as my father had only taught me how to do it once. I made uneven cuts of the ribs and heart of the deer which were vital to accompanying the stew while cooking. I made the final incisions and packed the meat into the bag for the journey back home. I left the remains of the deer in the forest. Walking home felt about as comfortable as my previous, grisly task, even if I would be able to go back to sleep without any interruptions. Upon arrival, an ominous feeling settled in, and I was unsure of what could've happened. After being out of the house for nearly 2 hours, I opened the door to find my father unconscious on the ground. He was unresponsive, lying next to an open cabinet containing some of his medication. Then, it hit me. I realized that he was calling me to grab his medicine, not food. I realized that I shouldn't have jumped to conclusions. I called 911.

Routine

Another day, another challenge
Enough to tip the balance
Traveling home with no motivation,
Only sleeping in my desperation,
Living life is like a cycle
That can make us fall down spirals
With no way out of our troubles
Only concerned inside our bubble

Cannot pop it without the courage,
And to this I do encourage.
The more you work, the more you're nourished;
the more you learn, the more you flourish.
Never stop to ponder past mistakes;
This is the cycle you must break
Breaking conformity is how you'll awaken
Then, you can go and seize the day

Never will there be a perfect time
To make your move, to start your climb
When the barriers block your vision
Turn the doubts into ignition
The world will become your audition,
a chance not attained through submission
Another day, another challenge
Today, I'm going to tip the balance.

Ryan Xavier '24
Junior Poetry

Cocoa Beans

The rich taste is undeniable
The amount one craves is unquantifiable
The source of this delight is cocoa trees
The C-spot reviews would all agree

Reece's, Snickers, and Kitkats receive tons of fame
But there's no doubt Hershey is the best in the game
Lancaster, Pennsylvania is the home of this candy.
An entire theme park because of it, isn't that dandy?

Over 3,000,000 million a year visit this special place
To learn its origin and ultimate trace
A mixing of cocoa beans, sugar, and milk forms a smooth square
The taste of this recipe is something one can't bare

The creamy candy makes one's taste buds tingle
The cocoa, sugar, and milk all intermingle
This candy can turn a frown upside down
Hershey's Milk Chocolate bars are the best in town

Jack Pallotta '23
Senior Poetry

Pie

Pie is a delicacy that many people eat. There are many different flavors and types which are all delicious in their own way. Pies can be bite-sized or shared. From blueberry to pecan, they can be savory or sweet depending on preference. The type of pie that is consumed depends on the crust that makes up the base. It comes from the word “Magpie” which means a bird that hides goods or food in its nest.

Pies were originally made by the Early Romans who learned about them from the Ancient Greeks. They were originally made in “reeds” which were not made to be eaten with the filling inside, but only to hold it. The first pie recipe was recorded in the 14th century by the Ancient Romans which was for a piece of rye-crust goat cheese and honey pie. The earliest pies were popular in Europe. The crust was originally called the coffin and made up more of the pie mass than the actual filling. In the medieval ages, pies usually contained a variety of different meats like lamb, beef, chicken, duck, and ham. The first fruit pie was made in the 1500s for Queen Elizabeth I. Pie was brought over by the early English settlers and evolved into what it is today.

Pies with meat such as rabbit, chicken, beef, and lamb are popular in the United Kingdom and other countries in that region. Australia, South Africa, and New Zealand civilians like to eat them as takeaway snacks. Pot pies, which are made up of different meats, mashed potatoes, and mixed vegetables, are popular American Dishes. Pies with different fruits are popular in the United States and apple pie is a traditional choice among people.

Pie has been around for many centuries and is still loved by millions of people across the world. It has had many different renditions and varieties that people favor in different countries. It originated in Europe and was popularized in the Americas by European settlers, spreading it to the Native Americans. This made it an extremely popular dish used for barbecues and American gatherings.

Nathaniel Yee '23
Senior Nonfiction

The Power of Recipes

Wintertime can be brutal, with sub-zero temperatures and driving snow. On these days, the aroma of my mother's signature pot pie warms me. If I've had a hard day at school. I instantly feel better with a handful of the dining hall's hot-from-the-oven chocolate chip cookies. Familiar foods are soothing, and I love how my favorite recipes bring back good memories and make people feel happy. The first recipe I made was Kraft Mac and Cheese from a box. I added water to the pot, then awkwardly carried it to the stove, sloshing water onto the floor with every step. Next, I pushed the wooden stool close to the stove to watch the noodles dance in the boiling water for the next ten minutes. My sister helped me drain the water before adding milk, butter, and the packet of fake cheese. My family pretended to enjoy it, acting like it was the best thing they'd ever tasted. To me, it was! Although my palate has grown, I will never turn down a bowl of those delectable orange tubes as they always transport me back to my seven-year-old and newly independent self. Another personal favorite is S'mores. Not only do they satisfy my sweet tooth, but I know of no other recipe that brings people together like S'mores. Sitting around a campfire, trying to roast the perfect marshmallow, or blowing out someone's marshmallow fireball is fun. Plus, the combination of tastes and textures is magical. Everyone has their own roasting technique, and it's always a discussion. For example, my stepmother puts her chocolate inside her marshmallow before roasting, and my sister spreads peanut butter on her graham cracker. Making S'mores helps me feel more connected with my family and friends, which comforts me. I have become a connoisseur of wings, ordering them whenever possible. Even Santa knows this and thoughtfully left a wing sauce recipe book in my stocking a few years back. Since then, I have made all of the sauces in the book, from traditional buffalo to garlic honey mustard. I even adapted one of the recipes into my own and better version: Biggy's BBQ Wings. Named after my dog. Biscuit. My entire family loves to cook, making our annual trek to Martha's Vineyard doubly fun. At the end of each day, my Aunt Emily's kitchen becomes the hub of activity. We swap stories from the past, play cornhole in the yard, blast 80s music, and enjoy appetizers while the adults prepare the evening meal. It's noisy and chaotic, and I find this connection special. Emily asked me to make my wings this summer, and I was proud. For two summers, I worked at the Northfield Drive-In. The owner even inquired if they could use my BBQ sauce in the concession stand, and, of course, I was happy to whip up a few batches for the customers' enjoyment. When someone ordered it, I felt accomplished. At home, my wings have become a holiday expectation, adding to the festive mood, and making everyone happy. especially my dad. I look forward to passing my recipe on to my children and grandchildren someday. I am sure my college roommates will come to love my special sauce too. Creating Biggy's BBQ Wings taught me that while successfully making a finger-licking concoction is an accomplishment, the steps I took to get there were equally rewarding. I realized trial and error are necessary, flexibility and innovation are essential, and fun matters! I've always loved to bring my family and friends closer together whenever and wherever I can. If there's one thing that I hate most is the fear of missing out (FOMO). Best of all, it turns out, like Mac and Cheese and S'mores, my recipe is the perfect way to make connections and spark memories of belonging and joy.

Robert Kenyon '23
Senior Nonfiction

Monarch

Damn her for ruling the way which pains me.
A tyrant who clutches every heart string.
None of my soul aches 'til the queen has flee,
And those kisses resonate with a sting.

Under this complete majestic power,
Stuck in her poison, I become decease'.
Pungent, yet delicate as a flower,
Let my gentle touch not disturb her peace.

Empire in orange, too hot to feel.
'Extinguished, not this flame, as she brings light.
Innately, the sun has begun to heel,
Proficiently, she creates day from night.

Placed in the palm of my hand the queen lies,
Ultimately giving me butterflies.

Tanner Tighelaar '23
Senior Poetry

Life's Mystery

Life is a mystery far and wide
But how can we decipher
The roaring tide
The Sun and Moon will rise each day
Bringing along with it
Fruitless pay
Many a mind will struggle to wonder
Trying to look over that yonder
But what if we find
That the answers we seek
Of love, loss, hope, and hate
Were never meant to be our fate
That is the secret
That most will rate
Choosing to ignore or endlessly debate
So listen up you hopeless old chap
And hear the wisdom
That sits in your lap
Live your life to fullest you can be
Always stopping to help up
A poor old worker bee
Love without hate
And pick up your crate
Just as He said
For one day you may find
The answer unraveled
Just like this rhyme
That coast to coast
We all must travel

Andrew Azzinaro '24
Junior Poetry

Monstrous Unconsciousness

As I'm running through the forest
Chased by a beast most abhorrent
Emotions flooding in
Thoughts of all my sin
Then I am tripped by a tree
As I was beginning to flee
I get a quick glance at the creature
Seeing its monstrous features
I hurriedly get up
Then the beast's actions very abrupt
Grabbing me roughly
I, screaming not so subtly
Praying as I scream
Hoping that this is one bad dream
It seems I will surely die
Then I slowly arise
From my bed drenched in sweat
Now knowing that there was no threat
Then at my mirror, I stare
Relieved now knowing that it was just a nightmare

Matthew Robertson '25
Sophomore Poetry

Monsters

When I was a child, my father would always warn me of the Ông ke. A hideous monster with nine straps and twelve eyes that carried three leather sacks. The sacks would contain the tortured souls of misbehaving children and if you listened ever so carefully, you would hear their muffled cries for help. I was terrified of *him*. During many sleepless nights, I would lie in wake. My eyes would frantically dart across the seemingly dark abyss. When it stormed, my heart would jolt with each thunder. My imagination went wild and the darkness was my mind's canvas. Ordinary objects became distorted and twisted. A simple branch outside my window would turn into long, bony fingers. The howling of the wind would sound like cries for help, and the shadows cast by simple household items would morph into an unnerving figure that resembled that of the *Bogeymen*.

For all my life, I was raised in a humble village that was located in the rural side of Vietnam. My parents were hardworking rice farmers. Neither had a formal education, but they possessed tremendous knowledge and wisdom that was learned from their best teacher and mentor: Life. On sunny days, my grandpa would take me to the family's rice paddies and show me how to harvest rice. I would always watch with great curiosity as my grandpa showed me the various techniques on cutting and cleaning the rice plants. On rainy days, I would sit next to the fireplace while my grandma would teach me how to weave baskets with intricate designs. On special occasions, my father would take the family's motorbike and take me and my mother to the nearby city. I saw the bustling markets and smelled the distinctive scent of spices, smog, and burnt gasoline everywhere I went. For a long time, things were good, but things slowly changed. Helicopters with foreign markings flew above of our village. Strange orange gases rained down on our paddies and people. Our crops died, and many people fell ill to a strange sickness. As the days went by, we saw many military convoys pass our village. I saw the same, grim expression on all the soldiers' faces. The local city was soon abandoned and instead occupied by the military. *Are we at war?* I thought to myself. My worst fears would soon be confirmed when I woke up to the loud booms of what I thought was thunder. Except, it sounded more like explosions and I heard the echoes of gunfire in the distance. My dad suddenly burst into my room and yelled at me to get up as he dragged me by the wrist out of our house. A small military truck awaited us with two armed men guarding it. We were being evacuated, and everything after that was a blur.

The human mind has this amazing capability to protect itself by erasing traumatic memories. I wish I can tell you what happened next, but after all these years, I'm still trying to put together the pieces. Although, I can't say for sure what happened after that fateful night. I can tell you this: When I was a teenager, I was warned of the foreigners. They were green monsters with many straps and carried weapons of mass destruction. I was terrified of *them*. On many sleepless nights, I would lie in wake. I would confuse thunder for explosions, branches for barrels, and the howling of wind for jets. The shadows cast by simple household items would morph into figures that resembled the foreigners. For the rest of my life, I was no longer afraid of the hideous monster who once lurked in the shadows of my imagination, because I knew that far more terrifying things lurk just beyond yonder.

Arthur Yuen '25
Sophomore Fiction

Night of Dansk

The night was gloomy
This room at Dansk felt so roomy
For I stayed, due to the rain
Underlying was an arising pain
I shouted I screamed, I couldn't withstand it
I cried and felt the need to sit
I sat and stared at the calming rain
But still, I felt this egregious pain
I felt restless, fetching painkillers
I stumbled and tripped past great pillars
I lay on the floor staring at the ceiling
Crying and groaning, I hated how I was feeling
The pain getting worse
I yelled out, "God please lift this curse!"
Regardless of the plead
This curse was far from the creed
Not even my unwilling faith could help
I proceed to let out a sharp yelp
Thoughts quickly flow into my head
As I arose from my terrible dread
I needed to relieve this pain
To get rid of this horrible strain
"What was this pain I wondered?"
Then suddenly the rain began to thunder
This pain was miserable I began to give in
I waved the white flag and I didn't win
I open my eyes and scratch at the door
But the door didn't give, I tried more and more
I finally pushed through
Now I truly knew
After looking around I saw graves
For I just experienced the night I died
In the roomy room of Dansk

Alexander Bonifacio '23
Senior Poetry



Storm

A sight of darkness as a storm began to brew in Vermont

Alejandro Tellez '25

A Sweet Melody Once Played

A sweet melody once played in the depths of grass;
Flowers danced in the tranquil breeze.
Trees slumbered through the springtime,
While the songbird's tune was a broken record.
The essence of life wafted around each being,
Sprinkling major chords throughout.
But nature, the composer, could never have
Predicted a new presence, a lifeform so destructive.
Grass pleads and suffers from the climbing heat.
Trees are abruptly awoken with a vile haze,
Shrouding flowers with no remorse.
Mankind has released its own essence of life;
Nature, the composer, could never have
Heard this song of anguish with its blind eyes.
This sweet melody that once played is now a distant memory.

Giovanni Fighera '26
Freshman Poetry

Mind over Matter

If I were to choose a song to describe to someone who couldn't hear music, I think I would choose "*My tears are becoming a sea*" by M83. This song alone can provide so many emotions, and it can be interpreted and felt in so many different ways. When someone can listen, watch, read, or just take something in, it should be known as an important and powerful thing, as it can inspire someone to do something incredible.

This song can be described with so many words, with the way it makes me feel. The first part is an initial build up to the climax, with the synth slowly fading in and getting louder and louder. It feels almost like a pulse, one long ethereal tone that slowly drills at the silence in the very beginning. Then the only lyrics of the song are sung. "I'm slowly drifting to you, the stars and the planets are calling me, a billion years away, from you, I'm on my way, I'm on, I'm on."

All while these are being sung, the synth gets louder, progressively until the lyrics end, and the song climaxes. The bass, synth, treble, act as one bubble that pops, and every sound combines and shoots like a gun into your ears. Everything hits a massive crescendo, as you try to take it all in. The music is so powerful because you can imagine yourself in any dramatic situation and picture something happening, and it becomes twice as powerful. To me, this is seen as a motivator, and I imagine winning a gold medal in rowing. Because rowing is as important to me as it is, the song makes me feel like I can achieve anything within the sport. The song makes me think of victory, triumph, and success.

To me, success is important because it proves to me that I can achieve anything, and no matter how difficult it may be, the end result and product can make someone's life, or change it, regardless of what they're doing. Emotions are so powerful in the human brain, and using them to your advantage can feel like a cheat code.

Andrew Eisenhart '25
Sophomore Nonfiction

Art and Data Synthesis

The slang of the insistent bell assaults my ear
Just like the pistol shot — the race is on!
The murmurs vanish; silence all I hear.

LeGrange, Maclaurin — names and jargon blend
to make the math exam a mangled mess.
Yet there within the mess I see a plan,

A pattern surfaces, I do not stress;
I seek for images I can connect
To figure out the path that is the best.

I use my heart and mind to help affect
Solutions with an absolute return.
I sit back in my chair and take a breath.

I use the strategies that I have learned
For math and art — they really are the same —
Computer science, writing — my mind churns

‘Cause analyzing data is my aim;
My superpower since I was a kid,
I'm driven by my passion, like a flame.

Connections in the data are well-hid;
To find and comprehend them, aptitude
Is needed, forcing my mind off the grid.

Just like computer science trends include
Analysis of the design, my mind
seeks patterns art reveals in solitude.

The parallels in math and art align
In ways that are not obvious to most —
In math, exact; in art, interpretation is fine.

I'm not like other students, not to boast,
But data sci and art go hand-in-hand,
They make me stronger — my unique approach —

Reflected in this Terza Rima innovative plan!



Up Cycle

With this jewelry piece I wanted to challenge myself to only use materials that I already had in my “bead stash” or laying around the house. Having grown up in Europe, I feel very strongly about living sustainably. Passing down items, recycling and repurposing materials is near and dear to my heart. As an artist, I also want to reflect this in my work. When I came across a bunch of soda-can pull tops on my kitchen counter, the idea of upcycling them in my next jewelry piece was born. For this piece, I crocheted the pull tops together with some leftover fuzzy yarn from a winter scarf project and later embellished the chain with swarovski crystal drops and bicones, bringing all the materials “full circle” by making something new out of something that might have otherwise just been thrown away.

Paintings

A figure sits atop a withered wooden stool, the flow of time has not been kind to the person, their features are sunken and distorted from a lack of care. They sit within a cold room, heavy blinds fall over the many windows so no light may seep in, sickly yellow lighting fills the room from light bulbs above. Along the walls are stacks and stacks of filled canvas, all displaying a mess of watercolor paint. Not a single canvas has a defined shape, they all blur and blend together to create an utterly forgetful display, the mundane, repetitive work, if it can even be called work as that implies effort, that goes into these paintings cannot be determined by looking at them. Perhaps each blotch of light, faded colors were put there with purpose or intent, or maybe it was haphazardly thrown together. The colors of the paintings don't work well together, none of them flow or work in harmony, rather they all clash and compete to see which can be the most overbearing. The paintings are numerous, countless, worthless, and yet in front of the figure stands a brass easel stand. The stand is chipped in numerous places, it leans a little to the left and threatens to fall over and collapse at the gentleness of a touch. Atop that easel is a blank canvas, the figure lifts a brush which has been dipped with a color that is not important, and rests it upon the canvas. The figure continues, sometimes gentle and meticulous with its movements, other times sporadic and clumsy with others. As the sun sets outside, the figure gets off of the decaying wooden stool, in front of them is another watercolor blur, not proud of their work but not disappointed, the figure picks it up and rests it by the others, leaving the room as the moon rises. He will continue tomorrow, and the day after that. Filling the canvases up one by one until he paints his final piece. This final piece will not be unique or different, it will not have shape or purpose, but rather it is the last, and that is it all it is.

Peter Lomauro '23
Senior Nonfiction

The Mysterious Portrait

Painted in 1503 and among the most emblematic portraits in the world
Holding so many hidden meanings and details
Charcoal underdrawings
Valleys, mountains, a river and a bridge
The absence of eyebrows
A blank stare
The enigmatic grin
Perceived as the peculiar depiction of a woman
Possibly an unofficially officially commissioned painting of Lisa Gherardini
Allegedly a depiction of himself as a woman
Potentially unfinished
Once hung in Napoleon Bonaparte's bathroom
Stolen from the French Museum by an Italian thief in 1911
Splashed with acid and hit with a rock in 1956
Spray painted in Tokyo on tour in 1974
Hit with a ceramic mug in 2009
Smeared with cake in 2022
Hung under many layers of bulletproof glass, sensors and patrolled security
Possessing the highest known insurance valuation
Underwhelmingly smaller dimensions
Housed in the Salle des États, Room 711 in the Denon Wing
Visited by nearly 10 Million tourists every year
The Mona Lisa by Leonardo da Vinci

Giovanni Oliveti '24
Junior Poetry

The Greatest Use of Music in a Movie

Music is without a doubt an integral part of most movies. Music can help portray emotions that a director cannot get across with just imagery or be used to bring the emotion of a scene as a whole. It creates a rhythm to scenes and segments, and can comment on the action or characters. Music provides a crucial undercurrent of emotion that can benefit any meeting, event, or experience, so picking the right music for the type of scene is incredibly important. Colorful, quirky, unique director Wes Anderson uses music as a big tool when making his film. In arguably his most ambitious film to date Wes Anderson has 1 scene in particular that I believe does this better than any other scene I have ever seen.

Elliott Smith - Needle In The Hay in *The Royal Tenenbaums* Bathroom Scene

I believe this is without a doubt the best example of music in any movie scene ever. This is maybe not a popular pick but it is a very personal pick for me as this scene has actually brought me and many others to tears. In this scene Richie Tenenbaum stands in his bathroom alone and looks at himself in the mirror. He is having another depressive episode. He takes off his tennis wristbands and headband and begins to cut his long hair and beard with scissors. He then takes off his glasses revealing the terribly dark bags under his eyes that don't even look sad, more tired. He begins to put shaving cream on his stubble and does a single swipe with the razor. Still looking at himself with the depressive eyes and now 3/4 covered face with shaving cream he softly says "I'm going to kill myself tomorrow". He then removed the blade from the razor and the audience is shown flashbacks of Richie as a child, his bird, his dad, and his mom but most importantly mainly focusing on his stepsister who he has been in love with since childhood. The flashbacks are rapid and are meant to represent how he doesn't think about the cutting but is more thinking about the memories. At the end of the flashbacks we are shown the sink which is disgusting, covered in hair and his dirty accessories. His wrists are also shown and they are shooting blood. He passes out and a kid walks in on his lifeless body. Then we see him being rushed to the ER in the hospital, doctors covered in blood.

The entirety of this scene is scored by "Needle In The Hay", the first track off of singer/songwriter Elliott Smith's 1995 self-titled folk rock Album (Elliott Smith). "Needle In The Hay" was released as a single on an ep of the same name (Needle In The Hay) in 1995 then was later released on the album. This song is perfect for what the scene represents because of the main idea of this song. Looking for a needle in a haystack is a common phrase used to describe a search for something that is pretty much impossible to find, like finding a very small needle in an enormous space. Richie Tenenbaum and Elliott Smith may not be searching for exactly the same thing but in the end they are both just looking for their pain and sadness to end. Like a lot of Elliott's songs, Needle In The Hay seems to be about drug use, mainly heroin. Lines about going to "see the man (his drug dealer) who's going to make it all ok" and him "taking the cure, so I can be quiet whenever I want." Heroin is an extremely sedating drug so likely to make one quiet until the high begins to fade. Smith had a well-documented drug habit and had been seen wandering the deserted subway tracks in Brooklyn late at night. He'd been using heroin while living in Portland, but he'd begun smoking crack by the time he'd moved to Los Angeles in 1999. He forgot lyrics to his own songs and fell asleep on stage, and he'd been found in bar toilets passed out with needles hanging out of his arms. He'd become increasingly paranoid. The biggest reason this song is perfect and is insanely emotional with the scene is because Elliott Smith in 2003 reportedly committed suicide. He was apparently found with a knife in his ribs, he had stabbed himself. Even though this was about 2 years after the movie it just adds even more to this wild, emotional tear jerker of a scene.

Donte Mills '23
Senior Nonfiction

Neural Networks (Part 1)

UN investigators recently discovered a network of illegal uranium trafficking between Peru and Russia. In the mines of the Andes Mountains, Peruvian nationals were extracting uranium and exporting them to Russia for enrichment. Uranium mined in Peru for military purposes was being exported illegally, the UN report concluded.

On Tuesday, the Security Council will hold its second UN meeting on illegal exports of the highly enriched uranium (HEU) during 2017, following a 12 January meeting about the same topic in New York.

The UN, which will debate the topic on Tuesday, determined in November 2017 that the illegal diversion of HEU "threatens to undermine peace and security in the region and world at large."

Back then, the Security Council said it had made little progress in the investigation, despite clear evidence of the involvement of people within the control of the General Directorate of Nuclear Energy (DINE), Peru's state nuclear energy agency. The heads of the Directorate are accused of being the ones who directed the illegal activities.

The DINE has been accused of attempting to cover up the case by the US, India and the UN. It did so by simply refusing to cooperate.

Peruvian President Pedro Pablo Kuczynski – a former Wall Street banker and prominent World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) official – is facing the threat of impeachment, after the details of the illegal export of the uranium were exposed by the Wall Street Journal in October.

He has claimed that he was unaware of any illegal activity in the nuclear energy sector. Kuczynski, in fact, is still attempting to hang on to power as the new Congress prepares to vote on whether to censure or impeach him.

The US will be represented at the debate on Tuesday by US Ambassador to the United Nations, Linda Thomas-Greenfield, who will be joined by staff from the US Department of Energy's Office of International and Nuclear Security Affairs and the State Department, according to Reuters.

The State Department will also present the results of its investigation, based on a review of all US agencies involved in the process, including the US Embassy in Lima, the US Geological Survey, the FBI, and the State Department's Intelligence and Research Bureau, according to Reuters.

During a previous session, the UN warned that uranium might be the second most valuable illicit commodity traded on the illegal market, after cocaine. The UN said: "Illegal sales of mined uranium to generate electricity or to make weapons in South America, Africa, and Asia are increasing. These sales can violate a range of UN Security Council sanctions and could be vulnerable to corruption, strengthening the terrorist threat and security threats to energy supplies, such as oil and gas."

Neural Networks (Part 2)

The rise of illegal uranium trafficking between Peru and Russia is certainly a disturbing development in the world and that the global community needs to address to ensure international peace and security. The notion that we, as a global community, can be complacent in a reprehensible violation that may very well undermine peace in Asia and South America is both dangerous and irresponsible. However, upon further examination, there was no illegal uranium trafficking between Peru and Russia. There was no UN report about illegal uranium trafficking, there was no UN meeting on illegal exports of the highly enriched uranium in 2017, or US investigation into the matter. In fact, the entire story is completely false.

This story was created using a software program developed using neural networks to predict the most likely words and text by referencing a starting prompt to reference against training data from texts, articles, etc. from all across the internet. By giving the program, which is free and readily accessible, a brief one to two sentence starter, it can create a completely new and fabricated story out of nothing using its autoregressive language model that uses deep learning to produce human-like text. Although interesting, this technology can easily be manipulated for nefarious means and cause major problems for our society. This article was created using the GPT-2 model program developed by OpenAI, an artificial intelligence company backed by notable investors such as Elon Musk, Ashton Eaton, and Tomer Kaftan. OpenAI has greatly advanced this technology to the point where they have blocked their new GPT-3 language model program because they felt it was too realistic and posed a significant national security concern if released.

Autoregressive language models have the potential to usher in a new age of misinformation. Misinformation has already had a drastic and fundamental influence on our society, government, and political arena for as long as government itself; however, never before has it been so easy to misinform an entire populace as it is today. Using only a readily available program and a targeted advertising campaign on a large social network, such as Facebook, can enable authoritarian governments, political adversaries, and bad actors to misinform an entire society and hide atrocities while advancing their perilous ideas and regimes. Recently, there have been reports that the current Russian regime under Vladimir Putin has used similar tools to misinform the Russian people to rally support behind the war in Ukraine and undermine the sovereignty of the Ukrainian government by spreading misinformation throughout Ukraine social networks. Even if the stories are aggressively false, as evidenced by the generated story above, so long as there is a sufficient enough volume of misinformation, eventually the delineation between fact and fiction becomes so warm, it is difficult to discern the truth. Such programs will invariably influence US government and politics and presents a new and emerging threat for both politicians and the general populace as we enter an ever more tumultuous political climate and upcoming presidential election.

Joshua Olivera '23
Senior Nonfiction

Your Imagination

I see all that's around me
But nothing surrounds me

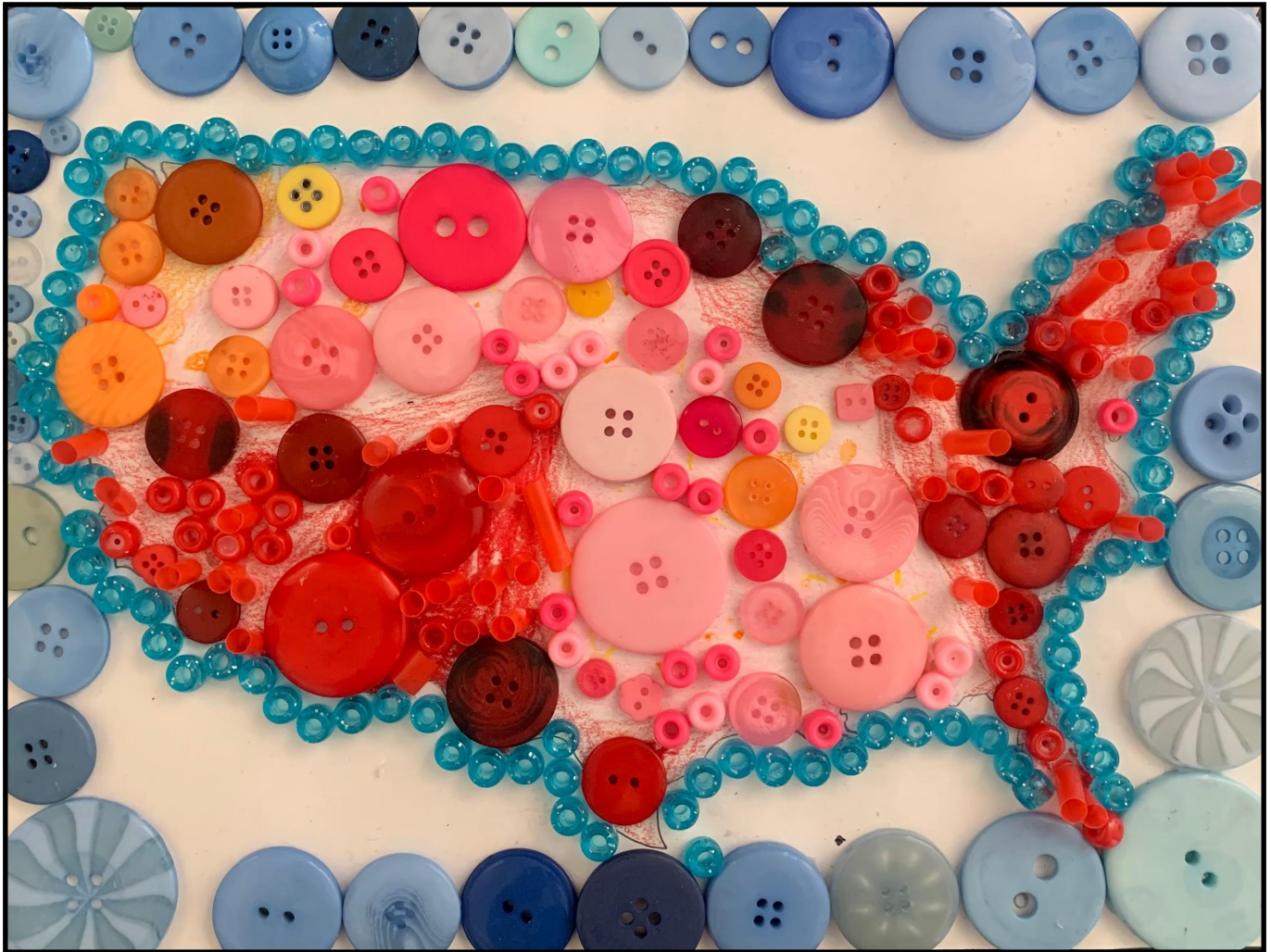
I feel breeze
But there's no wind
I see leaves
But autumn never falls
I feel grief
My light dims
When the sun sets
I feel it at ninety degrees
But summer never ends

I know family
Though they don't know me
I know not
What I cannot see
If I see all
No clarity involved
I give charity
With no one to receive

I have faith
With nothing to believe
My footsteps leave trace
No prints in place
My imagination feeds
The clothes I wear
The food I eat
The house I'm sheltered
Is not a dream

But a symbol of *me*

Cameron Moghaddas '24
Junior Poetry



Climate Change

An assignment by Mr. Croshaw who said "Make a piece of art on a world problem". I immediately thought about the temperature problems in our country. I sketched an outline of the United States and used mixed-mediums to highlight the problem. The red buttons indicate where the temperature has been noticeably higher in the last ten years, while the pink and yellow show where the temperature has been growing in that area.

Owen Krulikowski '26

Wind Bitten

At the cusp of night, the nomad had reached the walls of the old town. The walls towered 70 feet above, tattered and wind bitten. The deep blue pall of the sky made it difficult to make out what was in front of her. The muddy ground made her movements sluggish. She stepped over rusted weapons and wooden crosses as the acidic rain ever so slightly burned her hardened skin. She looked down and watched her steps, attempting to keep as much mud from getting in her boots. She kept looking down as she approached the wall. The squelch of the mud beneath her boots kept her entranced as she slowly approached the town. The stone wall felt impossibly large up close. Rusty blades were stabbed into the cracks and crevices of the wall. She moved with her hand along the rough surface as she searched for an entrance. The deep blue slowly changed into complete darkness. The wall was now her only guide. She heard sounds through the pitter-patter of the acid rain. Faint indiscernible sounds from the mud fields she traveled through. She could see faint figures throughout the mud. She assumed they were the wooden crosses and weapons, so she continued cautiously. She saw a figure near the wall, closer than any of the crosses had been. There was no doubt that this was a human. Or at least it looked human. She scratched her itchy skin as she tried to focus her vision. She could see that this creature had white pupils that pierced through the night's darkness. They were focused on her.

She felt adrenaline rush through her body. She could feel every acidic drop run down her back. Her palms filled with sweat and her legs shook from the intense fear. She quickly felt the wall. She thought that the weapons and scars could serve as points of leverage. She quickly tried to climb. She was completely blind as she swung her arms trying to find the next point to pull herself up with. A glance down revealed that the figure seemed unfazed by her actions. She climbed down to it. There was nothing there it seemed. Her heart began to slow. The shaking got worse. Her legs buckled under the weight of her belongings. She knew that something was wrong about this. She has experienced much worse and had a much less intense reaction. The weight of the bag got heavier and heavier. She fell into the mud. She reached into her bag and grabbed her tinderbox. She set fire to all the tinder with her flint and steel. A very small fire was produced. She heard a screech of pain. Three shadowy figures moved away from her. She felt her body become rejuvenated from her lost energy rushing back into her body. She ran as fast as she could. Her heart beat sporadically and intensely. Acid water streamed across her face and down her neck. The slight burn helped keep her running. She felt a small hole in the wall. She slammed herself into the mud and shoved herself through. She was in a food storage room that had its roof destroyed. She blocked the entrance with a wooden box about her height. She dropped her bag down and laid against the wall. She was safe. But that didn't stop the rainfall from burning her skin, her mud-soaked clothes, or the shaking of her legs. As far as she knew, she was trapped in an unknown place that she was only supposed to visit for a few hours. All she knew was that whatever happened now, she had to make it work.

Fire

Light or Dark
Good or Evil
Rages in hell
Yet illuminates the heavens
As a conflagration glows
The evil around shows
Creating life
And dismissing strife
Makes the bright ball in the sky
Knowing nothing but how to fly
Controls our flow
As the lights control a show
The blaze of glory
Comes with story
The first invention
A monumental prelation
Essential for society
And for some piety
It lights the way
So we will not be led astray
As an omniscient sight
That can result in much plight
The dangerous effects
Regulated by precepts
Evil or Good
Dark or Light

Connor Spinelli '23
Senior Poetry

The Life of a Chicken Wing

Most people on Earth have heard about what chicken wings are, but not everyone follows the entire process the chicken wing goes through. The process starts with the chicken; studies have shown that 74% of chickens all over the world are raised in factories to prepare the meat. Once the chickens of choice are ready to be harvested, they are usually about 6 weeks old. They collect the chicken and turn it into meat using different machines that take off the head of the chicken and take out the organs inside. When making chicken wings the wing of the chicken is used, and the wing is also part of the shoulder. Most food-related companies will have factories for the foods they grow, such as chickens. When the factories turn the chickens into meat, they put the product into trucks and ship it to a surplus of different companies.

The meat can be shipped to a variety of different places, depending on how they sell the chicken. Some of the places where the meat can be exported are grocery stores, where people can buy the meat themselves and make their chicken wings, or companies that might own factories and sell chicken wings to restaurants. Other companies or restaurants could also buy from the factory and get shipments of the chicken meat, too. When the meat arrives at restaurants, they prepare the wings to sell to a variety of customers; many companies have their recipes and can either share recipes with other restaurants or give the recipes out to customers on how to make their chicken wings. This is because chicken wings can be made in a variety of different ways; this also includes frozen chicken wings.

You can get these at almost any grocery store, however, many people buy chicken wing meat itself. Then they make chicken wings using their recipes; this may, however, take longer and can often be better than buying frozen chicken wings. When the chicken wings are made, the process finally ends and are then eaten by someone. Chicken wings were originally invented and made using a recipe in the 1950's by Robert Reinhart. Then through the 1990's, they became more popular and many restaurants started making their recipes and began selling them. Although the process is not the same as it was back then, it has become more efficient. Chickens themselves have also changed since the 1950's.

Over time, constantly breeding in the same conditions, has caused the majority of chickens to be a different breed. The technology that was used to make chicken wings has also changed. In the 1950's, there were no machines that would turn the chickens into the meat that we now have. Factories have also grown that contain chickens and have become a more popular way of containing chickens and raising them to turn them into meat. Overall, the process of chicken production has become efficient and chicken wings have become a food that a wide variety of people can enjoy.

Christopher Covino '25
Sophomore Nonfiction



Fall Foliage

A row of vibrant trees lined on our school's property behind the main buildings.

Stefan Gruskiewicz '25

Monologues (Stream of Consciousness)

I, Kyon, –an engineer who just finished today's stressful work– leave my office. In Ginza, where the rich gather, I move toward the train station Yurakucho, pushed by the massive stream of those who are as poor as me. Do I like my job? Well, at least it brings me money, which allows my triangular life to happen: working, horse racing, and pachinko.

"When you're about to give up, another step forward brings you to the goal line." Don't put this kind of slogan on the bloody train platform, I think as I look at it. Would it be interesting if I take "the step forward" right before the train comes? It would fit my boring life nicely as a stupid ending of it. But maybe it's better not to die, I think as the train approaches. Later, a miracle happens: I sit on an empty seat on the Yamanote Line during its peak hours.

Beyond the noise of the crowd, the train, and the broadcast, I feel myself in another space, in an empty train car with only me and my shadow figure: "Why you chose not to die." "It would leave an incomplete project for my job." "You are truly the serf of the work." "Serf works for their master, I work for stuff of my life." The figure opens his hand, bestows small metal balls and a horse ticket: "You mean these?" "Well... I am not a slave of, I ...," my life is meaningful, it must be. "Praise! By working. I receive praise from others." The public phone on the train rings, I go and pick the phone. "You are a genius" "Good job" "Marvelous, you must be born for the work" "See, as I work hard, others would praise me," I say to the figure, "I could help others. And they would care about me, isn't it great?" "So you are living under other's grace. Maybe," which is initiated by 'Kyon,' the character you act." Maybe, "You are tired of acting, aren't you?" Maybe, "Nobody really understands you; you are actually a lonely person."

"And this is your flat," the figure then transports us to my kitchen, "this is where you stay after escaping from the issues in your life, which are supposed to be much more interesting and fruitful than now." "Of course I escaped!" stressful, I finally give up. "I hate them. I hate the client who changes the requirements of projects all the time; I hate to correct the mistakes made by the stupid newcomers; I hate the crowded train I use every day." The angry me knocks off the coffee cup. "Let's say, what if..." the figure changes its appearance into a girl, "...if I am your girlfriend, please call me Asuka, by the way, you could kiss me..." "I don't need any!" I cry out and try to strangle her, "In MY WORLD, you are unneeded!" Asuka seems surprised, but soon calms down, she gently puts her right hand on my face. "I am sorry." I soon calmed down and put her down, as a tear dropped at the same time. "This is your answer, escaping, as you used to do." Asuka picks the coffee cup, refills it and hands it to me, "even in your fictional world, even if it is what you fantasized for so many times." I am depressed by her needle-like words, it penetrates the fakeness in my heart as easily as it breaks a balloon. "You are right. Asuka. At last, I am the one who I hate most, I am the one who couldn't handle the problems and the one who ran away."

Ride the Lightning

It was a particularly crisp and cloudy day as we reached the icy Vermont slopes. The sky was an eerie shade of dark gray, which meant there was a plethora of snowfall predicted for the next few hours. When we reached the top of the lift, the blizzard had just begun, which made all of our surroundings dark and hazy. The blizzard brought on a distinct thunderclap that we could only describe as sounding like fireworks, which was also accompanied by a bright flash of lightning. When we strapped into our bindings and prepared for our runs, we could only feel an uncanny sense of darkness emitted by the snow. We all felt uneasy about the conditions, but we decided to just ride it out. We started our run at what appeared to be just the right moment, as the thunder and lightning were raging. As our edges sliced into the thick powder-crusting surface, we could feel the shake of the intense thunder, which felt like a gun shot somewhere on the mountain. We could barely see what was in front of us, so we had to rely on our connection to the edge with the snow to gauge our speed. As we started to speed up, the acceleration could only be described as unearthly. The darkness combined with the roaring thunder made us feel like we were streaking through an abyss. All of us felt freer than ever, fully in control of everything, yet disoriented by the immense sounds and darkness of the storm. At each flash of lightning, it felt like we were given the eyes of eagles for a split second. It felt surreal as we went from being blind by the snow to seeing everything in a fraction of a second. I felt like I had some kind of superpower every time lightning would strike, or thunder would roar. I could only describe this run as fully feeling set free. I was truly at the grace of the edges of my board being propelled by the ear-splitting thunder, and gleaming lightning, which made for a truly ghostly ambiance on the slopes.

Aidan Sorge '24
Junior Nonfiction

Skiing for the First Time

I look up into the sky as the individual unique snowflakes land on my tongue and melt away. The vast gray sky up above blows millions of snowflakes past me as I ponder about what will happen today. It was Sunday and I had just arrived at Blue Mountain Resort to ski for the first time. My dad and I were invited by my friend and his dad to go with them. We unpack the car and take our gear to get ready for the day. I remember walking into the lodge and being surprised and awed by the number of people who were there. We quickly ate breakfast and put on our Ski Clothes so we could head out for our lesson.

I open the door and immediately am met by a gust of wind which is pushing against me as I head out to the ski lift. I am met by my dad, who helps me put on my skis and gets me ready to go. Me and my friend were taken up to the lift by the instructors who were assigned to us. We approach the lift as it winds around the corner taking people row by row. I start to look to my right, watching the people go down the hill as many fall, slip, and cry. I zone out from the mesmerizing sight of the people doing it so well, but I hear my name being called. Tamas, Tamas, Tamas! I finally snap back. I realize everyone is ahead of me waiting for the next lift. I start going as fast as I can, fighting against time to make it before the lift separates me from my group. Just as I was about to make it I fell over and lost one of my skis. They quickly shut down the lift so I could get up and get on the lift. Now we learn with the instructors on how to turn and do the basics of skiing. After a couple of runs it was time for our final run where we would go by ourselves with no help.

As we get on the lift I feel the anxiety build up in me as we get closer and closer to the top. I go first, before my friend. I start to get in the zone as I make my turns and I dodge all of the people falling around me. Just then, I make a turn and I fall over, and I see my friend heading straight for me. I try to move out of the way but my ski is stuck in the snow and not moving. I tug, tug, and tug at the ski until I get free and dodge him at the last second. I get up and make it down safely. I am met by the instructor and everyone else and they congratulate me and my friend for doing so well and getting out of the sticky situation. One thing I learned that day was that determination is always better than giving up.

Tamas Nagy '25
Sophomore Nonfiction

The Odd One Out

I was destined to be the new mafia boss and take my father's place as he grew older, but things took a turn for the greater or worse when I found my love for animals and life. I never had a pet as a kid, but any chance I could, I would sneak into the pet shop just to see all the animals. The manager became a close friend, her name was Mackenzie, but the nameplate on her uniform said, Mack. She ran the entire store on her own, and I felt bad for her at times because of how beat up the shop was. In the city of Burnham, no one or thing was safe. Crime ran through the streets and I hate to admit it, but my dad orchestrated a majority of it.

As my 13th birthday came, my father became even more crazed about the idea of me taking his spot. No matter how many times I pleaded to him just to let me live a normal life as a teenager, things were never normal for me. The fear of going against my father's wishes kept me from ever debating with him, and going against his word was never even a thought in my mind. That was until I heard about the new face of the police force; a new cop set to abolish all the crime throughout the city.

Chaos grew at the warehouse, as more and more criminals were being caught and incarcerated. My father spent more time talking to “important people” and just left me in a small room located at the back of the warehouse. He would leave me with my phone and I would sit in there for countless hours until he finally set me free at the end of the day. Sometimes it wasn't until 10:00, but once I found a way out to escape and explore the city, I didn't mind the long hours I worked.

Eventually, I was visiting the pet shop daily for hours at a time. It managed to make me forget all of my worries and the troubling world around me. Whenever I would be there, it felt like nothing bad could ever happen, that was until December 25.

It was Christmas Day, but I was still cooped up in that small room that I sat in every single day. My dad was still working long hours, and I snuck out to the pet shop again, but today seemed a little different. Even though I was now thirteen there was still a whimsical vibe in the air. Snow continued falling from the sky and lined the streets, cars backed up each road as civilians rushed to spend time with their families on the holiday, but I walked by myself to the pet store. I had no one... the closest family I had was Mack and the four dogs I named, but that was enough for me, so I continued walking down the frosted sidewalk. Families passed by giving me worrisome looks, but it was nothing that I hadn't seen before, occasionally someone would ask “Where are your parents?” or “Are you lost?” I began to ignore them, it was easier than making up a lie as to why I was walking by myself on one of the busiest streets in Burnham.

I reached the pet shop, but instead of excitement I felt my heart drop in my chest, I could barely breathe. Tears filled my eyes, but the absolute shock in my body didn't let a single tear fall down my face. I just dropped to my knees, not caring about the broken glass. There was no police tape, no police cars rushing to the scene, nobody stopping to help the motionless boy, just me on the sidewalk, alone.



Peeking Pisa

Pictured is the Leaning Tower of Pisa ‘peeking’ behind the Piazza del Duomo, the Pisa Cathedral. This picture really captures the ‘lean’ of this tower in relation to a straight-standing building. The black-and-white filter is used to accentuate the raw colors of both the Cathedral and Tower to a monochrome background.

Caeleb Chendorain '24

Brotherly Love

Knowing I have a sibling who is there for me when I need him is comforting.
In all that I do he is such an anchor of consolation.
A prize like that makes my concerns seem insignificant.
a lot simpler to endure.
While I'm delighted to take things in stride, laughing with others is uplifting.
I'm so proud of you, brother.
You supported my development and had faith in me.
You refused to let me sit. You refused to let me take a nap.
You urged me to push myself and give it my all.
I appreciate how much you care about me, brother.
Today, I really want to let you know through this poem.
I can now face my worries thanks to you.
Through the tears, you were there.
You have helped me through difficult times.
You have even assisted me in climbing higher than I ever wanted to go in this
life.
Although there is never just enough to say,
The message I convey... Is it because I feel fortunate to have you
? as both my friend and my brother!

Rodney Fanning '23
Senior Poetry

Words of Wisdom for the Workforce

The first rule in the “48 Laws of Power” by Robert Greene is, ‘Never outshine the master’ (Greene 3). Contrary to the phrases ‘always try your hardest’ and ‘always do your best’ taught when we are young, Greene proposes we should almost be afraid of succeeding in the real world. Although this might be a different and harsh thought, Greene believes that ‘outshining’ your superior can, and will, actually hurt you.

This law has two ideas one must realize. First, ‘you can inadvertently outshine a master simply by being yourself,’ and second, ‘never imagine that because the master loves you, you can do anything you want’ (Greene 5). One must be able to suppress their charming and appealing qualities and hide them from the jealous and insecure boss. The dragon would have no problem replacing them with a less gifted knight who cannot slay it. While they may realize replacing them may not be an option, they will treat one coldly to where they want to be replaced.

Second, even if one's higher-up does not seem insecure and is friendly to them, one must not think they have free reign. ‘Never imagine that because the master loves you, you can do anything you want’ (Greene 5). The master can easily change their perception if they feel taken for granted or threatened.

However, with this unusual thinking, how could a person possibly wish to succeed? Admire their boss. Without making it too obvious and gathering hate from other colleagues, one must make their supervisor feel like the center of brilliance. By making them feel needed and in control, one is putting themselves in a position to be treated better in the future.

‘If your ideas are more creative than your master's, ascribe them to him, in as public a manner as possible. Make it clear that your advice is merely an echo of his advice’ (Greene 6). Giving credit to someone else makes them look better to their colleagues and bosses. Giving their credit may seem hurtful to them, but their boss will cherish their input from then on.

But surely they will not stay in the same rung forever. Given the correct situation, one can finally climb the ladder. ‘If your superior is a falling star, there is nothing to fear from outshining him’ (Greene 7). One must not be nice and hide their talents for the rest of their life. If they have been patient and sat on their time, do not be afraid to go past the leader and shine in the eyes of the next dragon. ‘Your master will fall someday, and if you play it right, you will outlive and someday outshine him’ (Greene 7).

Works Cited

Greene, Robert and Joost Elffers. *The 48 Laws of Power*. New York: Penguin, 2000. Print.

The Robert Frost Writing Contest Winners

My Robot Son

It has been three days since we bought that... thing. I don't even know how to describe it—that *thing* is supposed to be our son, but truly, it is not; he is dead. Last month, our toddler had been diagnosed with a disease which has no cure, and he died a few days after the symptoms were clear. Obviously, my wife and I couldn't accept this, but no matter how much we hoped this wasn't true, we couldn't escape from our reality. That is, if we didn't realize how far we have come in technology. Robots have been quite popular in the cities surrounding us, so we have just been waiting for an offer to pop up. After many sleepless nights of grief, guilt, and patience, my wife squealed when she saw the billboard: "*NEW PROTOTYPE, READY FOR PUBLIC TESTING!*" Out of desperation, we immediately decided to call the company and inform them of our situation, and after a lot of paperwork and signing contracts, it arrived.

When our toddler showed up, my wife and I were finally at ease. It was only until the first night where I realized something was wrong with all of this. My wife, however, was the complete opposite. She would spoil him like nothing ever happened, and he would pretend to sound genuine with his advanced artificial intelligence, attempting to conjugate "natural" responses. But I knew behind those dull, metallic eyes was a mind that never loved us, only programmed to make us *feel* that he did. The second night, while I was looking for our son, I sickened at the sight of it opening up its torso and dumping all of the food my wife cooked for him in the dumpster right outside our apartment building. I immediately told her, but she didn't care. She said that he *is* our real son no matter what, and we should take care of him as best we can. Now, it is the third night, and I refuse to let a machine control how we live. It doesn't love, it doesn't feel, it doesn't eat, it doesn't sleep, it only pretends to be. That was my final straw. Once he went to the dumpster to dispose of any "waste," I picked it up by the armpits and drove to the nearest incinerator I could find. One of the contracts we signed was that there were no refunds, so it would be useless to just give it back to them, and I didn't want any more temptations. This thing was a demon, designed only to make humanity suffer even more. The robot kept making alarm noises, occasionally saying, "*Error, error, malfunctioning,*" in a monotone voice, which only made me want to destroy it even more. When I got to the garbage disposal, I tried to disassemble it as much as I could; therefore, it wouldn't find a way to escape. I dumped all the remaining parts, and then drove back home.

As soon as I stepped into the door of our apartment, I heard the frantic screams of my wife, calling our son's name. Of course I had to tell her eventually—I couldn't hide the fact that I basically "killed" our son for a second time, but it was for the best. For the next few days, she was in the same emotional state she felt when our real son died. My wife has clearly shown a different attitude towards me, and I understand that. She says that she realizes what we did was wrong, but I know she is still thinking about that robot. I know she is infuriated that we won't see our son anymore, and I keep telling her that this is a part of life. We have to move on, and we can't do that if we keep thinking about the past.

The Boat

On most days, I always go out fishing on Riverview Lake. Accompanying me on very few occasions is my greatest friend, Caleb Castellano. Unaware of the weather, he continued as usual and prepared the car for our trip. As often as I warned him, he ignored my precautions while struggling to put the boat in his car. The trip to the lake seemed extra lengthy, partially on the fact that Caleb continually checked his watch and commented on how fast the time was moving. When the distant lake came into view, Caleb parked the car in the gravel parking spot, almost 200 yards from the lake. Of all the places, I thought, he picked the worst one. How unfortunate.

Right before I exited the car, Caleb's new watch buzzed and beeped, signaling the new hour. As a storm was approaching rather quickly, we wasted no time in preparing the boat in the lake. Being a man of his word, Caleb answered his boss who was calling, apologized, and left to speak to him. I was left alone with just me and the boat. As I took the boat out into the cold, harsh water, I couldn't help but notice the storm clouds moving in. By the time I was in the middle of the lake, I couldn't turn back. As the wind picked up, the growing waves pushed the boat more and more, until the boat fell to its right side. The noticeably colder water prevented me from swimming to shore. How unfortunate, I thought to myself. Over and over, the sound of Caleb's watch in the new hour kept playing in my mind.

I woke up to the sound of Caleb's new watch buzzing and beeping, signaling the new hour. As a storm was approaching rather quickly, we wasted no time in preparing the boat on the lake. Being a man of his family, Caleb answered his wife who was calling, apologized, and left to speak to her. I was left alone with just me and the boat. As I took the boat out into the cold, harsh water, I couldn't help but notice the enlarging waves moving in. By the time I was in the middle of the lake, I couldn't turn back. The growing waves pushed the boat more and more, until the boat filled with an alarming amount of water. Ironically, the boat sank slower and slower, until there was no more boat. The noticeably colder water prevented me from swimming to shore. How unfortunate, I thought to myself. Over and over, the sound of Caleb's watch in the new hour kept playing in my mind.

I woke up to the sound of Caleb's voice, announcing our arrival to the lake. Startled and shaken up by the most unpleasurable dream, I shook it off and opened the car door to set up the boat. Just as I was exiting the car, I inevitably heard the sound of Caleb's new watch buzzing and beeping, signaling the new hour.

Wyatt Kovacs '26
Second Place, Freshman Fiction

The Three Knives Killer

Detective Andrew Gates walked into the gruesome crime scene with a grim, solemn look on his face. He had been attempting to track down the infamous Three Knives Killer for two years now, who had just struck again. The hotel room was plastered with blood and a limp body lay on the floor, and of course, the signature three knives punctured in the wall. Along with Gates, other typical people were at the scene, bioremediation specialists, police officers, and forensic cleaners, but one man caught the detective's eye. He was quite short, possibly 5'5 - 5'6 with short black hair and a brown trenchcoat. Intrigued by the new bystander, Andrew strolled to the man and introduced himself and they began to confer.

"Hello sir," Gates said, "this is a private investigation I am going to have to ask you to vacate the premises."

The man responded "I'm aware, I am Reid Gallegos, detective for the NYPD. Nice to meet you. I was the first one on the scene, they found the body within a minute or two of the killing and locked down the building."

Gates responded, "Yeah, I'm aware they were checking identification before they let anyone in and were keeping track of who was in the building. I didn't know that they had put another detective on the case, I have been trying to catch this guy for a couple of years now alone."

"Uh-huh, Roger here had been having an affair with a woman for a while and finally got what he deserved. Anyhow, I have got to get going, I collected all of the data I need. Nice to meet you..."

"Gates," Andrew said " Detective Andrew Gates."

The two men shook hands and Gallegos left the room. Detective Gates was a little perplexed by Reid, but he was determined to catch the killer and continued his investigation. Andrew began to ask a few of the bioremediation a few questions about the killing. They said that as they arrived Detective Gallegos was walking out of the bathroom saying that he was checking it for evidence and had found only a pair of clothes in it. However, they had not learned any information about who the man was, why he was killed, and no one had been seen fleeing from the scene. Gates immediately rose his head and began to reflect on all of the information. Hastily, Andrew began to run out the room and for the hotel stairs, down them and to the door.

He eagerly began questioning the police officers at the door, "Do you have a detective by the name of Reid Gallegos on your sign in and sign out sheet?"

One of the policemen replied, "No sir, the only detective we have on this list is Andrew Gates, but he just left a few moments ago."

"What did he look like?" asked Detective Gates.

The policeman replied "He was on the shorter side, I would guess around 5'5 and uhm, oh yeah, he had a brown trenchcoat."

Gates then became enraged and fell to the ground weeping, the three knives killer had escaped from him once again.

Car Batteries: As Good as We Think?

There has been a massive spike in the number of electric cars being produced. Electric cars are more liked by members of the community because they lack the use of fossil fuels. Gas cars burn gasoline, which does indeed contribute to global warming. However, there are a lot of misconceptions about electric cars. Electric cars don't have zero downsides. Many people think that electric cars are the solution to everything, and while it is a good solution, there is a major issue: lithium batteries. Lithium isn't poisonous to the human body and is used to calm people and is a good antidepressant. However, lithium isn't all good for the environment. Mining lithium can still harm the environment. If there is a huge trend for lithium batteries, this can have major setbacks to the environment. Lithium itself may be better than oil, but the batteries are not. What's called lithium-ion batteries carry toxic metals that when exposed to water can contaminate it, just like oil can. There is also the issue that lithium isn't infinite. Lithium is a metal found in the earth, which will run out eventually. Even though lithium is renewable, we will need to mine less and less, and at some point in time, we will not have any left. Additionally, Lithium-ion batteries are a major cause of fires in landfills and recycling centers. Lithium is very recyclable, but you have to be extremely careful to not cause an explosion or a fire. Lithium is a more safe alternative to oil, but it isn't a permanent solution. Unlike lithium, oil does have spills that can harm sea life drastically. There are good sides to lithium, like how it can be reused for energy storage once it can no longer be used for a car. The issue is that cars won't be able to run off of lithium batteries forever. Just like oil, we will run out of lithium. In conclusion, lithium is a good alternative to oil, but it still contains its downsides.

Titus Solomon '26
First Place, Freshman Nonfiction

The Space Race

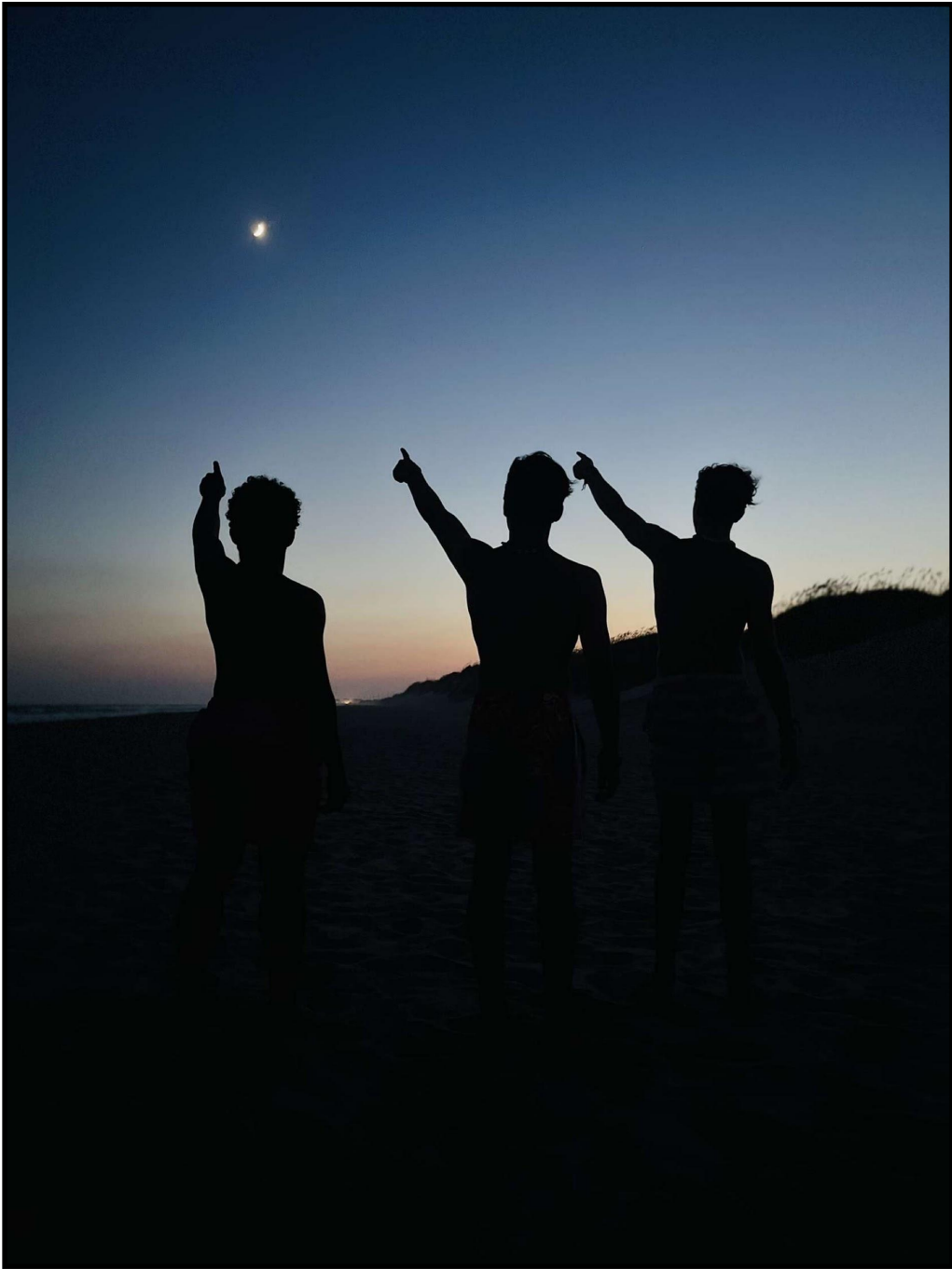
During the 60's, the seemingly never ending fight for the edge between the Soviets and the Americans shifted from the earth to space. Each country set up their own space programs, with the idea of advancing their rocket technology, and to gain bragging rights over the other nation. After the 60's the United States had held a firm foothold in space.

The first spaceflight was on October 4, 1957, when the USSR Launched Sputnik, but the origins of Spaceflight begin much earlier. During World War II, rockets were used by the Nazis to bomb cities. After the war, they were in high demand by the Russians and Americans. The Americans had Werner von Braun, a German, and the Soviets had Sergei Korolev.

These German scientists, including ones the United States already had, were used to make missiles for the US army with the formation of the Army Rocket Team. They had transformed the US into a nation that could strike at any minute with the new missiles, along with the Russians. In 1957 the Russians launched Sputnik, the first satellite to orbit the earth. The US could not fall behind, so they started NASA, to directly compete with the Soviets. The United States put its first satellite into orbit on January 31, 1958 (Jpl.nasa.gov). The Russians responded by putting Yuri Gagarin into orbit on the Vostok 1, on April 12, 1961 (Esa.int), with the Americans Putting Alan Shepard into space on May 5, 1961 (Nasa.gov). After the US was defeated, John Kennedy gave his infamous speech, "Setting the US's Sights on the Moon".

The US then began another program after Project Mercury. The US started the Gemini Program, which was made to prove that a spacecraft can dock with another spacecraft while in orbit. The Gemini Capsule was a small, two man spacecraft. It's first flight with crew was on March 23, 1965 (Nasa.gov), with Gemini 3, and ended with Gemini XII, on November 11, 1966 (Brittanica.com). During this time, Russian Cosmonaut Alexei Leonov was the first person to perform a spacewalk, and Sergei Korolev would die on January 14, 1966 (Brittanica.com).

The next program was Project Apollo, which would land on the moon's surface. They chose the massive Saturn V rocket, the Apollo spacecraft, which consisted of a Command module to pilot the craft, the Service Module to carry oxygen and water and the Lunar Module that would land on the moon) Apollo 11 would launch on July 16, 1969, would land on July 20, 1969, and would come back on July 24th, 1969 (Nasa.gov) . There would be 10 missions in total, with 7 landing on the moon, ending with Apollo 17, in 1972.



Sunset

A Sunset in the Outer Banks.

Tyler LeBrocq '25

The Creation, Evolution, and Impact of Basketball

Basketball has dramatically changed over the decades. The creation, evolution, and impact of basketball are so significant in today's world. The iconic sport basketball was born in Massachusetts and was created by an ordinary physical education teacher, James Naismith in 1891. The idea all came about when Mr. Naismith wanted his students to stay active due to them not being able to go outside because of the harsh winter weather. Due to this circumstance, he was informed to make a new sport for his students to play. While he was in the process of formulating a game he suddenly had flashbacks of when he was a kid and he played this game that incorporated the use of rocks and the goal being to hit the target. This automatically turned on a light bulb in his head and inspired him to compose the game he referred to as "basket ball". The first official game was held in Springfield, Massachusetts on December 21, 1891. The game had only just been developed and only contained a few rules. Nine players played on the court, the ball originally used was a soccer ball, and there were two peach baskets nailed onto the wall used as the nets. The first-ever game of basketball was a monumental event and the sport instantly skyrocketed in popularity! Gradually over time, new rules were introduced such as a new ball type, the ability to dribble in order to move around the court, the addition of backboards, and more. Basketball later evolved from a game to a sport with the introduction of professional leagues. During the 1920's era, few professional teams had been established. In 1936, basketball became an official Olympic sport which made the game even more popular on a global status. On June 6, 1946, in New York, the National Basketball Association (NBA) was officially made. Over the years, multiple franchises arose, and as decades went on televised games allowed the league to reach an even larger audience. Over time, league superstars arose, such as Micheal Jordan, Bill Russell, Lebron James, and Stephen Curry, and basketball players became icons and role models to the youth. The sport now had a significant impact both on and off the court and propelled the game of basketball to popularity never seen before. Over time, new techniques and mind-blowing athletic maneuvers were created by players, elevating the skill of the game and making games even more entertaining to watch. Outside of the court, the influence of basketball on street fashion, music, and culture, in general, is evident. NBA players even started signing shoe deals outside of the NBA with major sneaker brands which reconstructed the culture of the shoe industry. From its inception, basketball has changed the nature of sports and culture as we know it. Over time, basketball has evolved and will continue to do so. The sport has transformed so many generations of youth, and its positive impact on not just basketball players but global society as a whole cannot be overlooked.

A King's Woe

I sit upon my throne
Covered in rings and blings
I cannot stand not being home
I long for only one thing

Bloodied hands
I try to wash them clean
Dyed red from my plans
To conquer the scene

The throne that isn't mine
The land not my own
I tried to recline
I sit with my prize, alone

It was me who caused the bloodshed
T'was me who looked into men's eyes
Their eyes now reside on the bodies of the dead
I stole, killed, lied, and terrorized

It was not my idea
A forced genocide from powers much stronger
My wrath felt from Canada to Korea
A title I bear, that being warmonger

Killer, a name I cannot shed
I do not deny
Left and right, graves of the dead
All I do is lie

I long to be home
Before my crimes
They don't let me roam
I can't go home, this is not my time

Isolation

He sat alone in the dark
As the wind in the night
Blew harder and harder
And the papers on the table took flight

The old man picked up the cup
And suddenly heard a knock
He turned his head back
But his vision was blocked

He peered up at the dark shadow
And turned pale as the sand
Standing in front of him
Was an unknown man

He had a mask shaped of a crow
It covered his face smeared with blood
It struck fear into the man
But he couldn't get up and run

He got up and struggled
And tried to move
But the man's hands wrapped his neck
And they gripped hard and smooth

He was struck in the back of head
Like a lightbulb that explodes
His conscious was gone
He was knocked out cold

Until the man awoke
Jumping up from his bed
He panicked looking around
But it was all in his head.
And everything thing that he thought
Had came to an end

Lost

Sometimes I feel like I don't know where I am.
Sometimes I feel like I'm trapped in my own land.
Sometimes I feel like I don't know what to do.
Sometimes I don't know what to think is true.
Sometimes I feel like no one even cares.
Sometimes I feel like no one even dares.
Why do I have to be all alone?
Why do people think it's right to disown?
Sometimes I feel it's right to separate.
But I know it's the reason for all my hate.
I will start to keep my head up high,
With confidence and to never cry.
I have to face my fear and outrun,
What's trying to keep me from being one.
I will learn to be with others just like me.
In the future maybe we will all agree.
Until then, I hope I will be safe and sound.
For I know myself is the only thing to be found.

Justin Trivino '26
Third Place, Freshman Poetry



A School Hallmark

A patinated cross that rests above our Campus Ministry Commons and Chapel Building. It is able to be seen across the school's property and serves as a subtle reminder of our Faith.

Giovanni Oliveti '24

The Story of Cherokee Lake

A long time ago, there lived three young men by the names of Benjamin, Silas, and Rowan. These three young men grew up on the outskirts of a small little town in Tennessee called Morristown. They lived on the southern side of town where they allied with the great Cherokee. Obviously named after the Cherokee Indians who inhabited the land before the English colonists, it was their main supply of fresh water. The group was very prosperous living off this freshwater source, however after the Indians were driven out and colonists started drinking from the lake, it has been a huge sign of misfortune. 100s of people have fallen victim from drinking out of the lake since. People finally decided to test the water, thinking there must be poison or something in the water. The water samples were completely clean, with no traces of anything harmful to humans. So that raised the question, what is wrong with the lake?

Benjamin, Silas, and Rowan all grew up living normal everyday lives. Growing up the boys were always warned to never go swimming or drink from the lake. Kids all around the town were warned about it from the very beginning. There was much hysteria that went on about the mysteriousness of the lake. Rowan was always the most adventurous in the group, so one day after Sunday mass Rowan said to his friends, "Let's go down to the lake and try to figure out what our parents are so scared about." Benjamin and Silas were both good students in school, and much more knowledgeable than Rowan. The two boys immediately shot that idea down, wanting to obey what their parents had told them, but Rowan was very persistent to get his way. "We will only go for 10 minutes, and if we don't find anything, then we'll just leave", stated Rowan. After much consideration the two boys reluctantly agreed and headed down to the Lake.

The boys finally arrived at the lake by sundown. Normally during the day, the lake is busy with people doing cetrina activities around the lake, due to the fact it is a beautiful sight during the day. No one other person was at the lake at this hour. The boys followed the rocky trail down to the lake and gleamed over the big blue body of water. To this point in time most of the lake had been discovered, except for a small part of woodland adjacent to where they were standing. No surprise to Elias and Benjamin when Rowan stated, "There is the point we will explore, I want to see what mysteries lie beyond the tall oak trees." There was only one problem with that, they would have to swim across the lake, due to the fact that there was no route to get there on land. Benjamin and Elias were trembling with fear, but that ended very quickly when Rowan shoved them both in the water, and he jumped in right after.

As the boys were around the midway point, the Morristown local sheriff, Sheriff Hughes arrived with the three boys' parents and they were all very nervous for their children. The sheriff desperately yelled, "Get out of the lake right now, bad things could happen to you guys." The boys, recognizing what they did was very wrong, started swimming back, but as they were swimming Elia's head dipped below the water. It did not pop back up, so Benjamin with no time to waste went down to get him, quickly followed by Rowan. The second all three of them dipped below the surface, their whole bodies disappeared. The only thing left to see were little ripples in the water, but nothing left of the boys from a keen eye. The sheriff himself reluctantly went into the lake to try to rescue the boys or see if he could spot the bodies, but as he ducked his head down, his body disappeared alongside the boys, and no traces of any of them were ever found in Cherokee lake.

Murky Afternoon

On a murky afternoon, John was walking down the street just like he always did after his daily shift at the local market. John was not an easily excitable man, as he had little to look forward to. His routine was the same almost every day of his life, except the days he was off from work. However, these days off brought even more boredom, as he was filled with restlessness, and could never fully relax. As he continued to walk, John saw something shine in the corner of his eyes. At first, he thought nothing of it. He continued to trot down the street as if nothing had happened. But, as he continued to think about it more, his mind forced his body to turn around out of pure curiosity.

Once he finally approached it, he noticed it was a sheet of paper lined in aluminum foil. Within it contained a map that had a bright and vibrant “X” at the center of it. John’s eyes widened, as for the first time his brain was actually captivated by something. He immediately knew that he would do everything in his power to reach the final destination, and from there he started to embark on his impending journey. The course on the map first led him to a forest. Without hesitation, John immediately began to walk into the depth of the trees without the worry about sunset. Further, further, and even further he walked, but still, he came up with nothing.

Without even noticing, John realized that the darkness had encompassed both him and his surroundings. John began to panic, as he no longer had any sense of direction. The map that he had blatantly ignored as he walked into the forest, was now useless as he had no light source. In complete dejection, John sat down on a small boulder that he encountered close to him. That was when something began to shimmer once again, but even further in distance. John had to follow this light, out of curiosity or not, because it was getting much darker and his safety was beginning to become increasingly vulnerable. The journey was nowhere near safe. Ditches, ivy, and small rocks all filled the path. John had to be very careful in order to get out of this extremely perilous situation. John began to hope for the first time again, which is when the light shut off.

The light then appeared on the opposite side of where he was going. John yelled out in agony, as he knew that his aggravation was being used for the amusement of someone else. Nothing could stop the new sensation of anger that John was experiencing, and he began to strut back to what he thought was the exit of the forest. However, since he had lost his sense of direction, he began to walk even further into the woods. When he finally noticed what he had done, he began to lie down on a leaf bed and soon fell fast asleep.

He woke up once again and replayed his actions from the previous day. Filled with regret, John finally found his way out of the forest. He realized that he ruined the first excitement that his life had encountered in awhile, and knew he could’ve handled the situation much better, instead of out of impulsivity. John continued his life from there, and continued to go through his routine regularly. His life never became exciting again and he continued to work at his boring job until he had saved enough to retire. John continued to stay inside and attempt to captivate his mind for a couple years until he perished.

Past Dwelling

A man lay on the couch, clutching another bottle. He seemed to have drunk it all and placed it on the ground, where many other bottles stood there. His face looked as if no motivation or energy was present within him, as a deep sleep took over him. The alcohol took over his body and numbed his emotions. He looked at the walls that were filled with pictures taken throughout his life. He looked at himself walking down an aisle: arm and arm, with a woman that he once thought he could not live without. Another picture that he held dearly had what looked to be two children in both his arms; he had a broad smile, beaming with jubilation. Simultaneously, his heart ached when he was not able to comprehend or understand the current state he was in. His mind filled with anguish as he dwelled on the past where he remembered how everything came to an end. He wondered how this all came to a conclusion and how things were ending too soon for him. He felt that it was all too much to take in, his body could not keep up with what he had to endure. He had no other meaning in the world he lived in, he could not have restored what he had already lost.

He went outside his apartment building and took the stairs up to the highest floor. There, he felt the wind blow his face and hair that had been uncut for several months. The cold air pierced his skin as he proceeded to grip the icy metal of the railing. He peeked over the edge of the building and thought it would be the end of it. No more somberness, no more worry, and ultimately... nothing. He pondered even more about his memories, where he thinks about those people. They could have lived their lives without him, he was not an important person in their lives anyway. They would soon forget about him in the future, right?

He then heard a door creak open and saw a girl approach him. The moon lit up her face and it was a stranger to him. The man gripped the railing harder, but the girl said “I just wanted to talk for a bit.” She walked over to him, and they both stared into the bright moon present in the night sky.

“I was once here not too long ago in the same place you were. Everyone has something to say that they keep pent up,” she finally said to him. He remained silent but remembered his former days of glory, days when misery were absent.

“You’ll miss so many things. You’ll miss being with family or friends. You’ll miss getting a chance a finding a soulmate. You’ll miss watching the sky at every sunset or sunrise. There is always someone who will be able to talk to you whether you feel like it or not. There are too many people that will miss you once you leave. There are more people that care than you think.” She walked on the concrete floor of the rooftop, and made her way back to the door. He looked back up at the moon. She the disappeared and he thought about what she said: “You remember when times weren’t so bleak. Things are bleak now, but that won’t be permanent.” There was so much more to life that a person can not fulfill. He turned his back to the moon and walked back down.

Tim Kou '25
Third Place, Sophomore Fiction

JusticeworX

This past summer I attended a Justiceworx service trip to Trenton. I never could have imagined how influential this trip would be on my life. The Justiceworx service trip to Trenton changed me in ways and helped me to appreciate more about life, especially food, friends, and education.

Due to the low income of many families in Trenton, many families had to rely on the soup kitchen we worked at for food. Because of this, we tirelessly work to help those who could not afford a good meal to get one. We saw many different people come through the doors of the soup kitchen but they all left with a full smile and a full stomach. We saw many parents come through whom we would have long talks with about their situation. These incredible people helped inspire us to continue to serve the community to the best of our ability. Without the soup kitchen, parents would not be able to feed their children. Even though these people did not have a lot they showed us all true kindness and gratitude for the work we did.

From working with kids at the CYO summer camp our group began to understand the responsibility of guiding young children the right way. Throughout our time at the summer camp, our group made many friends who we helped through the week do their many crafts and activities. Many kids clung to us and their energy was infectious. We would play games of basketball, kickball, and even Just Dance on the Nintendo switch. Of course, there were times when they would make a mistake or get into a fight with other children and we had to step in and help resolve the situation. Having the maturity to help calm the kids down and help them rectify the situation was a big teaching point for us. Our guidance made these kids better people and teaches them about calmness and respect.

The Sprout U School of Arts taught us the true value of education and what never giving up can help you accomplish. On our first day in the school, we were greeted by many smiling faces. We were introduced to the owner of the school and she told us about her inspiring journey from bankruptcy and homelessness, to providing for 200 kids daily in her school. She was a selfless and fearless woman who wanted nothing more than to help her students. Therefore, she gave our group instructions to begin work on creating a new computer lab. We purged an old closet filled with computers last turned on in 2012 checking if they work and fixing them if they were malfunctioning. We tested out each computer and if we discovered a piece was broken or malfunctioning we would find a working one and replace it. Our work at the school was greatly appreciated by all the staff and they were thrilled with the result of their new computer lab. My experience at the Sprout school taught me many valuable lessons which I will never forget.

My time in Justiceworx helped me learn many life lessons that I will carry with me forever. Many of the people I met inspired me to always persevere through tough times. The lessons I learned about the importance of food, friends, and education truly helped shape who I am today.

A History of Football

Football is a popular sport that everyone is familiar with. However, not everyone is aware of the cherished sport's beginnings. Did you know that in the original games, players used their feet, hence the name, football?

In New Brunswick, Rutgers and Princeton competed in the first-ever game on November 6, 1869. The rules, consisting of a mixture of Rugby and Soccer, were very different from what they are today. Originally, there were twenty-five men per side. Carrying the ball was prohibited. Players were restricted to kicking the ball and striking it with their hands.

The rules would change dramatically over time.

Shortly after their game, Princeton and Rutgers sought to formalize the game with rules. They agreed on field dimensions and reduced the number of players from twenty-five to twenty. Walter Camp, also known as the Father of Football, introduced several regulation revisions. It consisted of reducing the number of players once more, from twenty to eleven. Additionally, he instituted a "snap", which led to less confusion and chaos between the two aggressive teams. Princeton took advantage of the rules and realized they could keep the ball for the entire game without gaining or losing yards. They did this to run the clock, which led to multiple undefeated records.

A necessary rule change was in order to prevent the "delaying" method. In 1882, the rule of downs was proposed. Each team would be given three opportunities to advance a total of five yards. Later, they increased it from five yards to ten. Additionally, the field dimensions were reduced. The board also decided to alter the scoring system. Touchdowns earned four points, safeties and goals made after a touchdown gained two points. Field goals were worth five points. Despite all the changes, the violence of the game remained. The President at the time, Theodore Roosevelt, nearly banned the sport. As the death numbers rose, the consensus agreed that something had to be done. All of the colleges joined together to discuss rules that would ensure the safety of the gentlemen.

Ultimately, these meetings ended with the formation of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). In addition to the safety regulations, forward passing was authorized. Games were shortened to sixty minutes and the field dimensions were once again shortened. Again, the scoring system was modified, touchdowns now counting as six points and field goals reduced to three. The initial three downs were ultimately changed to four.

The National Football League and American Football League were founded in the 1920s. These leagues established a fierce rivalry, having one team from each league to face the other in the ultimate game, called the Super Bowl. Eventually, the two leagues would combine, creating one of America's favorite sports to watch every Sunday.

James Hoebich II '25

Second Place, Sophomore Nonfiction

First Week in America

When I walked off the plane and entered the Newark Airport on a hot summer day in August 2017, I was filled with excitement and hope, as I was ready to start my new life here in America. In fact, my emotions went off the roof and caused me to vomit while leaving the airplane. Well, perhaps it wasn't only excitement and hope that caused this to happen but also nervousness, a lot of nervousness.

Five years later, I can still clearly remember the night before I walked through the doors of my new school, I was awake for a long time in my bed, contemplating how I was going to communicate with my new teachers and students with the limited amount of English I knew at the time, but I could not seem to find the answer. The next thing I knew, it was September 5th 2017, 6:30 AM- one of the most important days of my life.

That morning I was in the school parking lot 20 minutes before school had begun, and my family was there to encourage me. They said a lot, but I only remembered one piece of advice from my father and that was to not think of the fear in front of me, but be hopeful and grateful that I will be meeting new people- people whom are not the same from my home, and people who will change my life.

I walked out of the parking lot and entered the crowded room built out of glass, and all my classmates stood there excitedly waiting for school to begin, I went to a corner and looked out to the parking lot, my families were still there. Suddenly there was a voice behind me.

"Yo, what's up!" It was Gian Gomez, and I nervously turned around and gave him a head nod.

"Okay children, you all should go to your classrooms now!" said the principal.

As I walked up the stairs to the top floor, my heart did the same, it was beating so fast that I could hear it. When I walked into my classroom however I saw the most welcoming teacher that would change my life forever. As I sat down, the student sitting next to me, Michael Marcassoli, started introducing himself but I didn't really listen to him, nor that I was able to understand much. I was so taken back that I had tears in my eyes after seeing how welcoming everyone was, and the nervousness vanished, turning into hope.

Musings of Thalassophile

At dawn I sit in my own private paradise
The sky is painted with shades of gris, orange and yellow.
The sun is not quite ready to awaken,
she is only moving to a more comfortable position,
Her eyes half open radiating slivers of glistening light.

A gentle breeze brushes my cheeks,
The sand-like liquid mercury enveloping my fingers and toes.
Vestiges of yesterday's bliss scattered vastly.
Burnt driftwood from a bonfire, orphaned flip flops and sand pails.
The only sounds are the ebb and fall of waves gently crashing to shore
The faint aroma of burnt wood and sea salt tickling your senses.

The waves reach out to me continuously, cyclically,
stopping just short of touching me,
Leaving lacy patterns on the freshly ironed sand in their wake.
Each wave leaves behind glimpses of the alternate universe housed by the ocean,
Outgrown shells left behind for something bigger,
small pebbles not yet pounded into sand.

A seemingly quiet place to dwell is a carnival for the body, mind and soul,
Drawing thoughts and memories from deep in my mind's hard drive.
A sound, a scent, a taste, a feeling-all explode into something bigger and better,
Leaving my soul rested, adrenalized and hungry for more.
Soon a new day will begin,

Hustling and bustling with glee, anticipation, and fatigue
The sun will smile brightly and warm up the souls of all who receive her,
The ocean will continue to churn
and remind us that we are not the only beings here.

Scents of coconut, sunscreen, sea salt, bug spray will intensify throughout the day,
Sounds of exuberance coupled with occasional frustration will pierce the quiet
that is now Memories will be created, replicated and stored in the temporal lobes
of the human brain, Ready to be summoned to the surface during a pensive
morning walk to the beach.



The Sky out on Water

A great catch of the Sun bleeding through the clouds, captured during fishing trip on the water in Perth Amboy, New Jersey.

Michael Marcassoli '25

The Breathless Lake

The breathless lake holds on for the summer,
Feeling exacerbated by every newcomer.
The sun is relentless, portrayed as the adversary.
Thoughts of survival have now become scary.
Drained of its resources, in the name of sport.
Thinking to itself, "will I fall short?"

That's when autumn eventually rolls by,
Subtly and cautiously, never catching an eye.
The lake is now placid, and filled with tranquility.
As its inhabitants exhibit plasticity.
Calm and collected like those without worry,
Its thoughts of the past begin to be slurried.

Winter arrives, now the lake is at rest.
Desolate as ever, what a sight nonetheless.
Not a man or woman dares to step within,
Since the lake is both invincible and vengeful when the ice is thin.
Cherishing the moments in which its unbothered,
For it knows these times will not last much longer.

Spring is here, without any wait.
Implications of a brutal summer, seeming innate.
The lake rejects its last moments of happiness with disdain,
While past memories of good start to wane.
Desperation now begins to step in,
As the malicious premonitions continue to win.

Like a night terror, summer is back.
Refreshing the grim memories, without any slack.
The lake is not ready, reaching its end.
Yielding now, and continuing its descend.
"This is the end of me," exclaiming with agony.
And it was, demonstrating the summer's lethality.

Troy Boucher '25
Second Place, Sophomore Poetry

Ode to Nature

Yesterday it was sunshine,
Tomorrow it will be rain.
For all the days in the year,
Nature works like a melody.

Water cleanses all,
And leaves blanket the Earth.
Your sunshine is our smile,
And our pain is your storm.

The ocean's depths are endless,
Like the ferociousness of a flame.
Although they are opposites,
They have the same power.

Your beauty lies in your inconsistency,
From your level plains to peaking mountains.
Your waves refresh the shores,
Just as the rain refreshes the lands.

Humans see only a narrow scope,
Of what you have to offer.

Your hidden wonders,
And untamed beasts,
Exceed humanities expectations.

For without you,
The world remains undesirable.
For what else may we ask for,
You give us hope with your spring.

Aaron Guempel '25
Third Place, Sophomore Poetry

Everything Went Black

December 21, 2012, was the day that the world ended. The day had begun abnormally; it was the first day of winter and the weather was in the eighties. The wind blew still and the Sun shined its very brightest. It seemed that all animals had gone into hibernation, and even housepets appeared very calm amidst the anomalies. Besides the bizarreness of the day, everyone had acted normally like anyone would on a Friday. There were only things and events to look forward to with the upcoming weekend of adventure and fun. By the time the clock had struck 10:00 AM, there was a sudden change in temperature. Within seconds, there was a drop of forty-five degrees and everyone was unprepared. The forces of Mother Nature could've simply been playing around or even testing the humans on Earth. Besides the bizarreness of the day, everyone adapted or had just dealt with being cold in this sudden change of weather. From there on the day proceeded, as usual, it was noon and many decided to eat lunch or take a break from work or school. The first day of winter was the shortest day indeed, but the sun had come down so early this time around. It was only 1:30 PM and the Sun had already started setting despite it being the afternoon. Maybe the humans were being played around with, or possibly they've been tested. Besides the bizarreness of the then night, everyone turned on lights indoors or went back inside. After that, everything returned to business as usual, no one saw the need to disrupt their work or school. Now it was 5:30 PM, the time that the average person would arrive home from work and then spend time with their loved ones or have alone time. Maybe it was the rush of cars, but it couldn't have been since this happened every Monday through Friday. The Earth was shaken, it wasn't an earthquake worldwide, the Earth was shaken by something or someone. It startled many, but minimal casualties were sustained in the world. Besides the bizarreness of the day, everyone continued living, even though many wanted the day to end with all the anomalies that took place. It was now 6:00 PM, and the once luminescence of the moon had turned from a pure white to a bloody and almost hateful intensity of red. The shaking had happened again, but this time a great mass of blackness had manipulated the planet. A cosmic titan had formed in front of the billions of Earth's inhabitants, it emitted such an aura that invoked despair into all. Slowly but surely, the blackness had seemed to infuse itself into the water. The blue seas of the Earth had been tainted with an ever-growing blackness. Eventually, the water had been consumed, and the spreading pestilence continued spreading onto the land. The blackness not only consumed the land and sea, the matter oozing with hate persisted and consumed creatures too. The bizarreness of the night was no longer a hindrance to the day, it was instead a malicious force rapidly devouring the Earth. The black matter had carried on to consume the entire Earth. From space stations, the former planet had become a living orb of blackness and evil. To everyone on Earth, their world had ended and the planet was consumed. It was the day that the world ended and that everything went black.

Raymond McCraney '24
First Place, Junior Fiction



The Lone Man

In a post apocalyptic world, one man remains, standing alone. The yellow-orange sky is not a filter, but rather the effects of a smoky haze traveling south from Canadian forest fires.

Michael Armao '25

An Aspired Seahorse

Floating, wandering, swimming, living, in the vast fishbowl of procured life. The same routine, the same thoughts, the same goal. All I wanted was to feel something, other than the seaweed on my tongue. It never crossed my mind that I could complete much more in my life than eat and sleep. That is until I came across the largest creature I've ever gazed upon. Looking back at it, the creature was just a dark shadow to me, unrecognizable, angelic, and robust. As the creature swam past me, I felt the sanctity of it pass onto me. I could only dream to be the size of that deity.

But dreams will be dreams, such as fish will stay fish. So I will wander and feel the same as I always did. But what could I do to break that. I couldn't think of anything, but there was always the possibility. There was a passion inside me, telling me to fight, telling me there's a chance to break this horrid routine. The satisfaction deafening the sadness. The desire towering the defeat. The necessity battling the neglect. These all help me to see if there's a chance. There's a possibility that I can differ. That I can arise just as big as that creature. The question of whether I needed to was clear. I want definition for my life and justice for my dull, patterned existence. Only to get it, I need effort and I need struggle. This alone can overrule my past and color my future

And as I gather my thoughts and proceed to my beginnings, I realize, fish don't have to stay fish.

Thomas DeAmorin '24
Second Place, Junior Fiction

Manhunt

The five of us rushed into the car. We had a bit of a head start, but that wouldn't mean anything if we didn't find a spot out of their sight. Into the car we all went, very thankful that Jack picked up his keys before leaving. Jack and Avery hid in each front seat while Georgi, Nick, and I crammed in the back. The quiet chatter and heavy breathing between sentences created a thick fog that spread and covered the windows like a cozy blanket. What seemed to be a blessing ultimately appeared to be a curse because how in the world could we see the hunters? We all tried to jockey for the best alignment and position to hide in the car before the fence swung wide open. They walked out to the driveway and the motion-sensor lights switched on: darkness would've been better. They seemed to fixture themselves towards the front of the house, the most apparent place any of us could've been. After much boredom, drawings on the car windows became common, but we had to keep it to a minimum, our immunity was at stake after all.

A couple of minutes passed... what would we do? We all conversed quietly before a bright idea crossed our minds: start a live stream. Nick offered to start one up, but it eventually came down to everyone joining, despite all of us in the car like sardines. After we spotted them, we closed the live stream, leaving the people who joined with so many questions. Being in the most comfortable position within the car, I perked up, being shielded by the dense condensation on the windows. As soon as I peeked up, the whole hand rested on the window and stood there. We all thought at the moment we lost, but divine intervention came through, and both the person and their hand walked off behind the car. A huge sigh of relief came down upon us all but we had to make sure they were completely gone. It was then that calls from the hunters lit up my phone, which I picked up and told everyone to stay quiet. A brief interrogation followed and after some manipulation, the hunters seemed to relax as my false information seemed to make them satisfied. More time passed before the second call lit up my phone, but this time, they wanted proof. Being the resourceful bunch that we were, we manipulated flashlights, camera angles, and surround sound to manipulate the hunters and send them on a new track entirely.

With each passing minute, we grew more restless as the hunters became more frustrated. Georgi, Nick, and I made a beeline for the abandoned house across the street from the car to deviate their attention. Light on our feet, we made it inside the house with the pleasant surprise that there were no followers. After a few more minutes, my phone lit up for the third time to the demands of our location. After a brief deliberation, a deal was reached where the hunters would surrender their goal, in turn for our locations and inevitable safety from them.

Caeleb Chendorain '24
Third Place, Junior Fiction

Family History, a Part of US History

During a conversation at a recent family dinner, I learned that my great-great grandmother and her sister were killed in one of the most horrific fires in United States history. On March 25, 1911, the Triangle Shirtwaist Company Factory in New York City caught fire, killing 146 workers. Due to their tragic death, my great-great grandfather turned to alcohol and was incapable of taking care of his children. Because of this, my great-grandmother was adopted by her aunt, however her four brothers were placed in an orphanage. Fortunately, because of their strong sense of family, my great-grandmother and her brothers always stayed in touch. Hearing this story made me want to learn more about the Triangle Shirtwaist Company Fire.

The Triangle Shirtwaist Company fire could have been prevented, but the poor working conditions as well as safety hazards proved otherwise. Starting like any other work day, the workers went straight to their jobs and the owners locked all doors, including the fire escapes and the stairwells. This would ensure that the women did not leave the premises during working hours. However, this small action would become the downfall of 146 lives. During the afternoon, a fire had started in a bin of rags and a failed attempt was made to put it out due to crude safety equipment. As the fire continued to spread throughout the eighth floor of the building, chaos began to arise among the workers. First, workers used the elevator to escape. It was successful, until it broke down. Then, workers went to evacuate through the stairwell, but met their doom when they realized they were locked inside. All workers on the eighth floor or higher were trapped, with no other option than to jump out of the windows or stay inside. In the end, 49 workers had been burned or suffocated by the fire, 36 had died in the elevator shaft, and 58 died from jumping out of windows. Three others were hospitalized then later died.

After the fire had finally been extinguished, the scene was dreadful. Families had to claim bodies. A building and hundreds of lives were left in ruin. Following the tragic events of March 25, 1911, widespread attention to the dangers of poor working conditions were rising and monumental efforts were made to protect laborers. Many laws to protect workers' rights were put in place. One of the most important included the Sullivan-Hoey Fire Prevention Law which mandated the use of a sprinkler system in factories. The New York City Fire Prevention Bureau was formed and strengthened the influence of the fire commissioners. In addition, multiple labor unions were formed to protect the rights of the workers.

The tragic event of the Triangle Shirtwaist Company Fire affected many lives including that of my own family. Important laws were implemented subsequent to this that have saved countless lives and continue to protect factory workers from deplorable and dangerous working conditions.

The Rose-Patterned Couch

Growing up, going to my grandparents' house was not a Sunday occasion, but a daily occurrence. Both of my parents worked demanding hours and my grandparents were my only option after school. Sometimes, I would dread going to their house. They did not have Wi-Fi, my favorite TV channels, or electronics to pass the time. Instead, their house was filled with great laughs, stories about the past, and, above all, unconditional love.

Perhaps the greatest thing about going to their house after school was the presence of my great-grandmother. Instead of watching TV, I would sit on my grandparents' rose-patterned couch and listen to her endless stories. She was born on a small island off the coast of Portugal where money was thin and love was thick. On Sundays, she would have to switch shoes with one of her eight other siblings to go to Church as they did not have enough money to buy shoes for everyone.

Being the eldest of nine, she was thrown into the mother role in her teenage years when her mother suddenly died during childbirth. She was tasked with raising her eight younger siblings - even delaying her upcoming wedding. Once all of her siblings, as well as her children, were grown up, she decided to make the difficult journey to America to give her posterity the best opportunities to achieve their dreams.

Life in America was often harsh and unforgiving. She did not know the language and money was extremely tight. She did what she could to provide for her expanding family. Many times, the only thing she could give was her endless love and support. As the years went by and life was becoming slower-paced, she looked on as her siblings left this earth one by one. To her, losing one of his siblings was like losing a child. In 2020, my great-grandmother passed on at the age of 101, outliving all of her siblings except for the youngest two.

The stories that she told me on the rose-patterned couch will stay with me forever.

Through her, I received firsthand accounts of the strength and perseverance that it took to make the journey for a better future. During her life, she overcame every obstacle that she faced. The time that I was able to spend with her is the greatest blessing of my life.

Gavin Szilvasi '24
Second Place, Junior Nonfiction

Speed

Rule #1: Speed. Planes stay in the air because of speed. Even if the engines die, they can still fly in the air and keep going. Why? Because of speed. The same concept goes for your tasks, problems, and ideas - essentially anything that requires you to take action. Get things done quickly. The quicker it's done, the faster you get to move on. Time is of the essence and every moment you do not get something done is another moment you cannot move on to their next duty. Lack of speed will cause stalling. The task must be fulfilled as quickly as possible. Of course, this means to do it quickly, not hastily. Many people make the mistake of not working with speed, which leads them to lose their momentum and "fall out of the sky". For example, people who procrastinate have lost their momentum at their work, making it very difficult for them to get back on track and finish their duties. People who feel depressed have fallen out of the flow of constantly working to improve their lives. People who delay opportunities for later until they feel ready often lose their chances. Rule #1 applies to everything you do and working with speed is almost never going to not help you. Getting this right before anything else is crucial to your success.

Andrew Kojima '24
Third Place, Junior Nonfiction

The Other Side of the Mountain

I sat on the ground with my hands buried in the long green grass
The smell was sweet and welcoming within the valley
The birds flew around me singing,
Harmonizing with the sounds of the running water.
But then I peered up to the sky,
Only to see the giant mountain before me
I began to ponder what lies on top of that mountain
I soon became restless and eager,
For my journey was about to begin.

I left the valley without glancing back
I knew my adventure was well worth it
As I climbed higher and higher more storms seemed to rush in
However, I knew I had to persist, so I kept on climbing.
Every year faded with every step I took
It seemed I was losing time but I thought nothing of it
For I knew the top held something that I wanted, even needed!
I continued to climb and to climb and to climb...

Finally, I reached the mountain's high peak,
With the sun glistening on my perspired face
I sat down and exhaled with pride
Not one cloud was in the sky above me.
As I buried my hands into the gray gravel, I began to look around
And saw nothing but the empty horizon all around me
I heard nothing but the gusting winds swirling above my head.

But then I gazed down upon the valley behind me
It was full of beautiful trees and rolling hills with green lining
I could remember clearly the feeling of the green blades between my fingers
It was then that I realized that the top of the mountain was not a place of growth
I soon became restless and eager once more
So I decided to rise and take my first step down the other side of the mountain.

Goodbye, Mother

I knew the time would come, but never would I have thought it would be today
The day I had to put you away.
How I still hear your voice in my head,
And see you knitting, and laying on my bed;
Now my heart is dead and I don't know what to do
I miss all the memories I had of you.
Although you watch over me now
It feels like a part of me has been destroyed.
You will never be replaced and there will be no one to fill the void;
I now know what it means to be depressed—
How can I ever put my mourning to rest
You have guided and given me everything you could,
Now I will try my best to get back to feeling good.
Forever will I remember your smile that was as bright as the stars,
And, all of those candy bars.
Forever will I remember your heart of pure gold
And, all those times you took care of me when I had a cold
Although you were my mother, you were my best friend
I will miss you until my day's end.

Arjun Nath '24
Second Place, Junior Poetry

The Crusade

The crusade brings out the best and worst in me. The night rages on eternally
I stride, I fight, I bleed.
And yet the war still needs me

Another night is filled with the piercing cold of the rain But the way I'm going, I
will never escape the pain Justice and vengeance seem to go hand in hand
But when you strip things away, nothing stands

I have affected the world I know The world I sought to protect seems to grow I
can't do this alone anymore, I ponder
As I search for a partner over yonder

What does it mean to bring someone into this fight Molding them, sculpting
them to be me isn't right I'll need to teach them how to be better
My mom scolded me to be more intelligent, I'll let her

I never counted on being alone
But this hate and spite I can't condone I'm not a soldier I can promise you
I'm not some captain who sailed the ocean blue

But listen closely cause I know for certain I can no longer hold this burden
His name is Richard I'll let him in His optimism will never wear thin

A friend, a brother, a son we'll see But need to treat him properly When he's
ready he'll take an oath
To serve and protect and help those he can't loathe

The crusade brings out the best and worst in me But now I can control it
indubitably
I stride, I fight, I bleed, I cry But now you know why

Giancarlo Hailes Perilla '24
Third Place, Junior Poetry

Breakout

Sirens blared. Voices of confused felons echoed through the hallway. I had managed to unfasten every screw on the grate that led to the air duct above my cell. “The movement came from Cell 315” a voice yelled from around the corner. Unbeknownst to me the grates above our cells were wired. Without further hesitation, I pulled myself up into the air duct, chose a direction, and scurried along at as fast a clip as I could manage. Had I been aware of the alarms I would have pre-planned a route, but my haste to once again become a free man had led me to make a careless attempt to escape. The presumed guards had reached my former cell and I heard the vent groan and creak with the added weight of a human being in a space that normally only held air. Knowing my time was limited I propelled myself forward through the vent even faster than before until I came upon a dead end. I attempted to maneuver myself around to go back the way I came but the effort proved futile. The metallic clanking behind me grew louder and I was left with no other choice. I kicked through the grate below me and fell onto a large desk. As I took in my surroundings I realized I had fallen into the warden’s office. The thing that gave it away? He lay sleeping on a pull-out couch directly to my right. Or at least he had been sleeping until I came crashing loudly through the ceiling, disturbing his rest. As he registered my presence, anger crept into his eyes and at that moment he decided to lunge at me. Thankfully for me in his drowsy state, he failed to register that I was atop a desk and proceeded to run straight into it. I took advantage of his blunder and kicked out the screen from his open window. As I was considering making the jump the guard who I had heard in the air duct jumped down into the office and charged at me. Left with no other choice I grabbed the windowsill and flung myself into the crisp night air.

The sharp branches pierced my skin as I landed hard on the grove of bushes two stories below the warden’s office. Though being massively cushioned by the shrubbery, the fall had still taken a toll on me. The entire left side of my body felt as if it was on fire and I was fairly sure I had sprained at least one of my ankles. Both the guard and warden looked down from the window helplessly, desperately wanting to catch me but unwilling to endure the same pain I had. When I glanced back up after untangling myself they were gone. Though I didn’t hear any approaching voices, the alarm was still sounding throughout the penitentiary and I knew the warden and guards would be here any second. I hurried along the perimeter until I came upon the lone tree on that side of the compound. Using the wall itself as a foothold I jumped up and branch by branch made my way to the top. I was now faced with a ten-foot gap from the tallest part of the tree to the top of the wall. I made it with ease. Jumping down on the other side I thought I was home free. I was wrong. The warden and an entourage of guards emerged from a gate about a hundred yards from where I stood. I immediately turned and ran in the opposite direction. I had run a few blocks when I noticed the entrance to the subway. I contemplated it but decided against it as it was too obvious and it could have been hours until the next train at that hour of the night. Instead, I crossed the street and lay flat on the grass in the shadow of a building. A few moments later the guards came past, checked the subway, found nothing, and continued down the road. I got up, brushed the dirt off my clothes, and disappeared into the night. I had done the impossible.

Matthew O’Hare ‘23
First Place, Senior Fiction

Ingrained in My Bones

Droves of unsuspecting people are going about their days walking around carefree as could be. Little do they know that I lie in wait just out of sight. I always knew I was born to hunt, to strike fear in the hearts of my prey before I tear them to shreds. I watch carefully as an unsuspecting traveler enters my territory. She observes the environment and occasionally inspects the objects that surround her. She is a lone fish, and I am a menacing predator. She comes closer, and I know this is my chance. I jump towards her with all my strength and bare my sharp teeth. As I barrel towards her, I see the fear in her eyes, and I know she doesn't stand a chance. Then suddenly, she catches me in her arms. She turns me in her arms so she can look at me face-to-face and gives me an expression of that disgusting emotion: affection as if I'm a puppy or a small child. She smiles, gives me a small pat on the head, and puts me back on the shelf that I came from. Then she walks away to examine some more items at the store. I am devastated. Who am I kidding? I am not a beast. No one is afraid of me. I am merely a soft, plush, cute replica of the terrifying shark I wanted to be—the shark I was meant to be. My teeth are not sharp and my skin is not gritty. I am covered in soft fur that makes me perfect to pet and pat. My pathetic squishy body, at a length of less than 4 feet, does not come close to comparing with the grandeur of real sharks. I don't even live in the water like a real shark! I'm stuck in this Ikea on a shelf in the kitchenware section! Besides being roughly the same shape, I am the complete opposite of what a shark should be. I don't understand why I was made the way I was. I'm shark-shaped and shark-minded, but my desperate, burning desire to become a true shark can never become more than that: a desire. How could God be so cruel as to make me this way? While wallowing in my misery, a boy picks me up from the shelf. Of course, just when I thought I couldn't be more humiliated, I am being carried around by a human. He stares at me for a while, seeming to contemplate what to do with me. He must decide that I haven't suffered enough as he continues walking through the store with me under his arm. Can't a "shark" have a crisis without being interrupted by stupid humans? While we walk through the store, the boy stops to look at various items, and, despite my foul mood, I become curious about the boy's motives. He is stupid. Why is he touching every carpet in sight when he doesn't take any? We stop at the shelf of plants, and he lifts me up so I can look at each one and quietly asks me which one I like the best. He knows that I cannot respond to him yet he asks anyway. Is he mocking me? He picks up a small, spiky green one, inspecting it like he did to me. He puts it in front of my face as if to show it to me, smiles, then puts it in his cart. That's the one I liked the most. Could he tell or was it just a coincidence? When we enter the frozen foods section, he takes three bags of meatballs with him, then proceeds to the checkout area. He finally puts me down on the conveyor belt. I find myself missing his embrace. That is not very menacing or shark-like of me. The employee scans my tail, the plant, and the meatballs, and then the boy puts me under his arm once again and carries the bag of other things in his free hand. We walk outside, and I get to see the outside world for the first time. The sun shines down on my soft head, illuminating the world and the boy. He looks tired but is smiling. Maybe he was walking in the store for too long. He walks to his car and puts the bag of items in the trunk. He sits in front of the steering wheel with me in his lap and closes the car door. He turns me to face him, just as the young woman did earlier. He has affection in his eyes, but somehow, I don't mind. He pulls me close and squeezes me in his embrace, relaxing as his grip gets tighter. Maybe God did give me a purpose.

Justin Lee '23

Second Place, Senior Fiction 100

Welcome to My Apocalypse

When the acid started falling, we had no place to go. Our wooden homes began dissolving, the life around us shriveled up and turned to dust, and most of all, our leadership was entirely incompetent. All kept saying that this was going to pass, that we should keep buying emergency supplies and consuming “environmentally friendly” products. But it was all a sham, as they were all paid off by the same corporation making the products.

The countries around us didn’t care. “Not my problem!” “Why should we help, we have our own issues.” “I bought green products, I’m doing my part.” “Let’s all pray for those affected.” We were forced to flee our lands, the ancestral plains that generations before us inhabited. All of that history and culture is gone because of some company’s quarterly.

We were treated like dirt, and only a few places accepted us. But even so, those places did not have the same power and wealth as those that rejected our presence. They were arrogant, they thought it was a small tragedy in some far-off land. So they went back to mowing their lawns, to driving their big, expensive cars, and buying the most expensive things, all while claiming they cared about the environment.

But then the rain started to grow.

Within months, the rain had moved to cover the continent. The damage was severe, destroying valuable ecosystems needed for the planet. But the only concern people had were the resorts shutting down, that supply chains were interrupted, and that they couldn’t get what they wanted immediately. The fact that this was apocalyptic and could destroy society was overshadowed by people not getting their favorite dish at their favorite restaurant.

Then, the oceans themselves were imbued with the fires of Hades. They started decreasing pH levels, becoming more acidic. The beaches were closed, and the people were outraged. How were they to distract themselves from their problems now? The acidic water going into the atmosphere and the air around us was not a concern, but the disruption of precious vacation time was paramount.

The corporations, however, were making record profits. As the ones who caused this with CO2 released from the making of their “green” products, they should know. They would immediately fill the holes in the people’s lives with simulations of the places destroyed by the rain. They sold lab-grown food to replace the animals lost in the ecological destruction. It made the populace complacent, letting it seem everything was under control. After all, panic only makes people consume less, so just bottle some happiness in a jar and sell it for 5 dollars.

When the rain and the oceans finally met up with the rich and wealthy countries, nobody panicked. Nobody knew the severity, as they were sold bunkers and survival supplies by the corporations, making it seem the apocalypse was survivable. But in truth, the bunkers were so cheaply made, they dissolved in acid, and even if you survived, the oceans made the air itself unbreathable. The wealthy were fine though, as they made industrial strength bunkers just for themselves, protecting them from their consequences.

Everything was preventable, but in truth, nothing could have prevented it. For it would mean that the corporations would have made only 15 billion instead of 16 billion. The people could have revolted, they could have done something, but even then, we didn’t make the decisions anymore. We sold our rights for comfort, and we suffered punishments made for them.

The Brisket Tradition

Every year on the last day of Hanukkah, my family and I would walk precisely 200 steps, down the street to my Nonnie's house. Nonnie was my mother's aunt, but they were very close, more like mother and daughter than aunt and niece. Nonnie and my Grandmother had grown up in the same neighborhood in Pittsburgh, went to the same high school, and ended up marrying brothers. Nonnie did not have any grandchildren and, since both sets of my grandparents live far away, Nonnie assumed all local grandmother duties - babysitting, attending school concerts and plays, and sneaking me candy and snacks between meals.

When we walked into Nonnie's house, we were overwhelmed with a sense of welcome. The roaring fireplace warmed the drafty living room. Lit candles filled the room with familiar holiday scents. I'd squeeze through the small doorway into the narrow bustling kitchen. The counters were covered with heaping platters filled with latkes, butternut squash, and mashed potatoes. A small table at the far end of the kitchen was covered with pies, macarons, and brownies. In the place of honor, on top of the stove sat the bright orange Le Creuset pot, filled with the mouth-watering brisket. My Nonnie makes the most delicious brisket anyone has ever tasted. Legend has it that the recipe dates back to my Nonnie's great-great-grandmother. The recipe was never written down or told to anyone outside of the family. Nonnie was an only child of an only child, so she was the only one who inherited the original recipe. Although she never said so, I think the reason she never shared the recipe was her desire to keep her family together and hold on to this one tradition. It was the only time during the year that her family put aside time to come together.

When I was in middle school, my mom started back to work. I was old enough to be home alone, but I would frequently stop at Nonnie's after school. Nonnie would feed me a snack and help me with my homework. During my freshman year of high school Nonnie and my uncle began spending their winters in the Poconos. While they were gone, I'd house-sit for them. The once comfortable smell of the house was beginning to fade. When they would come back, it was always for a short period of time. Occasionally I'd pass her and my uncle walking their dog when I was heading to school, but I never had time to stop. At the next Hanukkah dinner, she placed the brisket on the table but soon got up to serve the brisket again, not remembering that it was already on the table. She had trouble following the conversation and mixed up some names. We were concerned, but Nonnie was young, and she claimed she was just tired and shouldn't have had a glass of wine before dinner.

That winter, Nonnie slowly started to disappear from my life. The following year they skipped Thanksgiving at my family's house for the first time since I was born. Eventually, we found out she had been diagnosed with early-onset Alzheimer's. The disease progressed quickly, and her memories faded away. In just a few months, Nonnie was placed in a long-term care facility. Her memories of us are lost, along with the secret of the fantastic food that brought us together as a family. My family has many recipes that we have passed down through the years. My mom's brownies, my grandmother's blueberry buckle, and my great-grandmother's mac, and cheese. Each one adjusted to the particular tastes of its new chef. You take what your family has given to you and add your own ingredients based on your preferences, enhancing the legacy along with your piece attached. This Hanukkah, my sister and I will begin the process of discovering and recreating her recipe so we can share this dish and my memories of Nonnie with our own friends and family.

The National Shrine

Of all the sights and wonders I visited during my travels in Washington D.C., no place filled me with more awe than the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. Normally called the National Shrine for short, it is home to some of the greatest architectural and artistic masterpieces in all of Washington. The first thing one sees when approaching it is the three hundred twenty-nine foot bell tower, making the basilica the tallest habitable building in Washington. Upon closer approach, the thick masonry walls and the heroic-size statues of saints surrounding the portal of the grand facade become apparent.

When entering the basilica, visitors are overwhelmed by the massive Byzantine-style domes and the Romanesque trademark walls and vaulted ceilings. The basilica has five domes with mosaics representing major events in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The first dome in the nave is the Incarnation Dome, which depicts the Annunciation, Nativity, Wedding Feast at Cana, and the Transfiguration while the Redemption Dome includes scenes of the Temptation in the Desert, the Crucifixion, the Descent into Hell, and the Resurrection from the Dead. The Trinity Dome is the main dome and is only 7 feet shorter in diameter than the dome of the Capitol Building. The mosaic of the dome includes depictions of the Holy Trinity, the Virgin Mary, eighteen different saints, two archangels, and the four gospel writers, all encircled with the Nicene Creed. The last two domes are the Descent of the Holy Spirit Dome and the Triumph of the Lamb Dome which depicts the Pentecost and events from the Book of Revelation. Dominating the North Apse is perhaps the largest mosaic of Jesus in the world, the Christ in Majesty mosaic. The solemn and awe-inspiring presence of the National Shrine leaves an indelible mark on all the faithful who walk its marble floors.

Christian Foster '23
Second Place, Senior Nonfiction



Snowy Night

A snowy night at a Church.

Elikem Amenuvor '25

Hard Work and Dedication

The mix of the wind over the cold water outside and the water that soaked my shirt made everything excruciatingly bitter. The blisters on my hands had formed hours ago and were now popping, leaving my hands sticky with blood. This gruesome development wasn't so bad as it kept my hands stuck to the oars. Four of us were in the boat, fighting to stay afloat. All of us were shaking a little from the November rain. We could barely balance and were getting drenched; the other freshmen boats were doing no better. I thought the lake water on my sweatshirt smelled bad, but the taste of it in my mouth was far worse. The locking of the oars and the rush of the water created an appealing rhythm, but the silence in the boat was painful. The boats of upperclassmen glided by us effortlessly, dry. However, beyond the discomfort and pain was a peculiar joy. This feeling was enough to keep me coming back. Returning day after day bred tenacity in me, which kept me rowing throughout the years.

A year later, a teammate and I were moved to a smaller doubles boat. In the weeks leading up to the National race, we made the most of our time. We'd start our practices with the sun high in the sky and row until it set and we couldn't see a thing. Our throats were dry and raspy but we kept balanced and stayed moving. During our first race, we did our best to look confident but to no avail. We rowed hard but our average speed was miles behind our competition and we were left humiliated. For months after this race, I never wanted to sit in that boat again; I was ready to cut my losses and try out for some other team, anything to escape this humiliation. Running from it would have only made it worse, so my only chance of redemption was to go back and win it. The loss of this one race was enough to make me fight for more speed and strength every day for the following year.

That's exactly what I did. Every day I sat in that boat until it was too dark to see my calloused hands in front of me. My back ached and my arms burned constantly. There were days I woke up too sore to move, but got up and did it all again. All of the pain was endured for the sole purpose of redemption and that made it bearable. I watched as the other boats disappeared against the horizon as we sped by them every day. I knew I was improving but couldn't be complacent. This pursuit of strength and speed turned into my pursuit of happiness; I learned to love the process and would not stop until I won that race.

I also became much closer with my partner as we built an irrevocable trust. Trust is the foundation of a doubles boat and not letting my partner down motivated me constantly. We had to trust each other's intricate movements. We had to trust each other's instincts. We had to trust that the other wouldn't slow down or give up. When the day of the National race arrived, we rowed at the speed of a motorboat and moved with an unmatched air of confidence. We pushed harder than we ever have during that race, and we finished first. Finally clutching that trophy with my partner was something that was unimaginable just one year ago.

Matthias Topping '23

Senior Poetry 105



Orange Atmosphere

James Rodrigues MacFarlane '26

This is a Poem

Words entered my mind,
@jUmBled MEsS Of letter\$,
Time to start writing.

Roses are red, violets are blue,
This poem's getting old, better write a haiku!
Poems need rhymes, shouldn't they,
Or is that just something people say?
A, B, A, B, but wait- don't forget about C,
Aw shucks, does it really matter?

Reading and writing and limerick,
Taught to the tune of the hickory stick,
If it sounds poetic then write it down,
But you should always watch out to avoid extremely long lines which interrupt the
flow.

Trees- how beautiful are your fall colors,
Like the sunset painting the weary day.
And you, winter, so cold and barren!
Shall I compare thee to a midlife nightmare?

My darling, I love you so dearly,
Your words are like the voices of the sirens,
And your alluring powers captivate me,
When I see you, methinks it is ecstasy!

Oh, how I sing of a mighty man, born of nobility,
Fated to be exiled to a distant country,
The place was Northwaldia, where the dark forest,
Meets the streams, the sea nymphs pass their days.

Yo, yo, yo, and listen up,
I'll show you I ain't no gup...
Pee.. so you see, I was born where the,
West Philly and Doghead gangs met, huh?

Words entered my mind,
@jUmBled MEsS Of letter\$,
Time to start writing.

Never Ending

I took a step
farther than before
I took another
I knew once more
The steps I took
have led nowhere
Vast expanse
Endless stairs.

Each lift of foot
Each pass of time
Never Ending
Endless climb

That step I took
I checked to see
Truly no farther
than the prior would be
To take another
could prove me right
But these stairs
were an Endless plight

Each unsure step
Made sure that I'm
Never Ending
This Endless climb

One step
too far
One step
seemed to short
One step
I stopped
One step
I had got

Out of the loop
Run out of time
I could end
My Endless climb

But I took a step

The Carcass

O' sweet child!
How you've outlived splendor!
That Internet has become thy ender,
that same Internet which granted thee thy glory.
A fun murder mystery among friends was thy story.
Played and discharged honorably, you were transitory.
But then from the vast Internet enter
those subtle Memes! Just as a venter
pops and stabs, Memes came to drag
you from repose; from calm an attack.
"WHEN THE IMPOSTER IS SUS!" they roared on knees.
Equated to a trash can, geometry, a nugget, the Teletubbies;
you lost your identity, a Murder Mystery erased for funnies.
Vile Memes! which sentenced thee to life and lost the keys.
Condemned to a one-liner, from you your vitality was seized.
O' fallen child, how can I look upon you and not see
the Fallen Angel versus what you were meant to be?
Like a knight maimed, Yet, I am still among.
now discarded to dust. Forsaken you I've not.
They all forgot you. Your youth I've sung.
No glory among us. Your glory I've sought.

Matthew Imhoff '23
Third Place, Senior Poetry

Vignette Staff

Editor-in-Chief:

Giovanni Oliveti '24

Staff Members:

Justin Lee '23

Armon Singh '23

Jake Stephen '24

Thomas DeAmorin '24

Troy Boucher '25

Ronan Pell '25

Jacob Alexander '25

Mihir Joseph '25

Elikem Amenuever '25

Alejandro Tellez '25

Santino Oliveti '26

Moderators:

Mr. Paul Caruso

Dr. Robert Longhi '81

Policy

All students enrolled at Saint Joseph, and all faculty members who work at the school, are encouraged to submit poetry, fiction, nonfiction, artwork, and photography to the literary and arts magazine. Submissions are judged equally on all grade levels. Writing submissions are collected in conjunction with the school's Robert Frost Writing Contest. Robert Frost Contest winners, in all grade levels, are published in the magazine. Other writing that is published in the Vignette, as well as all the artwork and photography, have been reviewed and approved by the literary staff.

Each student may submit a maximum of five works. Previously published pieces are not eligible. All writing entries must be typed. Each submission (writing, photography, and artwork) must include the following information: student ID number, grade level, title, and category (poetry, fiction, nonfiction, photography, artwork).

Submissions are judged by the Vignette literary and layout staff, which is comprised of students who try out for their positions. The English Department also provides guidance and feedback with regards to critiquing written submissions, as well as judging the winners of the Robert Frost Writing Contest. With the exception of artwork and photography, submissions are not returned. The editors and advisors reserve the right to edit manuscripts for grammar, spelling, punctuation, and clarity.

Colophon

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

The body copy was set in Libre Baskerville 13 point for a majority of the pieces, with the font being altered on some to fit the piece on one page. Headlines were set in Libre Baskerville 20 point. The Vignette was created and piloted in Google Slides for this edition.

The front and back cover artworks were created by Jim Yu '23. Folios were designed by the Vignette staff. This magazine is 114 pages using a 8.5 x 11 inch format.

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

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## Vignette Awards

2022: ASPA – "First Place with Special Merit"  
2021: ASPA – "First Place with Special Merit" &  
"Outstanding Photograph"  
2020: ASPA – "First Place with Special Merit" &  
"Most Outstanding High School Literary-Art Magazine"  
2019: ASPA – "First Place with Special Merit"  
2018: ASPA – "First Place with Special Merit"  
2017: ASPA – "First Place with Special Merit"  
2016: ASPA – "First Place with Special Merit"  
2015: ASPA – First Place with Special Merit"  
2014: ASPA – "First Place with Special Merit" &  
"Most Outstanding Private School"  
2013: ASPA – "First Place with Special Merit" &  
"Most Outstanding Private School"  
2012: ASPA – "First Place with Special Merit"  
2011: ASPA – "First Place with Special Merit"  
2010: ASPA – "First Place with Special Merit"  
2009: ASPA – "First Place with Special Merit"  
2008: ASPA – "First Place with Special Merit"  
2007: ASPA – "First Place with Special Merit"  
2006: ASPA – "First Place with Special Merit"

## Dedication

This year's dedication is in honor of Mrs. Linda Muratore who is retiring after being an educator for nearly 35 years. Mrs. Muratore began teaching in 1988 at Bishop Kearney High School in Brooklyn, New York and after six years of teaching Mathematics there, she began teaching at Saint Joseph High School in 1994. In 2000, Mrs. Muratore became the Mathematics Department Chair and Moderator of the Math League until her retirement.

In her twenty-nine years at Saint Joe's, Mrs. Muratore taught various Math courses including Precalculus, Discrete Math, and AP Calculus AB, and impacted thousands of students. Mr. Brian Jenkins '98, Mr. Nicholas Romanak '98, Mr. Christopher Harring '05, Mr. Roel Mercado '07, Mr. David Arva '08, Mr. Luis DeJesus '16, and Mr. Dylan Hollender '17 are the seven current alumni Partners-in-Mission that Mrs. Muratore had taught.

The Saint Joseph High School Community thanks Mrs. Muratore for her many years of commitment to education and wishes her all the best in her retirement.

*Giovanni Oliveti '24*



Janet

