



Epiphany

The Schuylkill Valley High School Literary Magazine.

Volume Eleven

2018

Epiphany

The Schuylkill Valley High School Literary Magazine.

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To you, gentle reader,
a bittersweet goodbye as a contradictory introduction:

Every so often, you will find yourself *lucky* enough to be lost in the cosmos of a universe much bigger than our own. Treat the stars as monkey bars and asteroids as swings; mold that universe to fit inside the palm of your hand like polymer clay. When you are done, call yourself *writer*. After all, writers are simply children disguised as adults, exploring a world of language we only pretend to understand. Alter the sky according to your mood and watch it flash first rose for your sunrise sleepiness and then ebony for your creative insomnia and then porcelain for your industrialized insanity and then mauve for your romantic remembrance. Embrace them all through nostalgia to pain, and then look to the person beside you; watch them alter their sky, and call yourself *reader*. Smile as the cosmos folds around you, and close your eyes. Enjoy your shared experience, for writers craft worlds for readers to join.

Within these pages, you will find worlds like and unlike our own. You will travel through azure skies and soft lavender fields, and your heart will sync to the beating of the author's. This is why you should consider yourself *lucky*. Here, in *Epiphany*, different cosmos have come together to connect you with other souls and nature through written word, photography, and artwork. This, in itself, is the astronomically magical metaphor I've been trying to establish.

As always, on behalf of *Epiphany's* editors, advisors, and staff, we extend our deepest gratitude to the Schuylkill Valley community for their endless support of our endeavors. Without the help of individuals like Mrs. Kramer, our lovely advisor, and Mr. Cullen and his Graphic Design team, this magazine would not be possible, and of course, thank *you*-- reader and writer, for without writers, there would be no cosmos to explore and without readers, our cosmos would be empty.

Time and time again, I have enjoyed getting lost in the worlds presented to me by you. I will think fondly of them as I continue my journey to explore and craft new cosmos. Keep your thoughts tangled in poetry, and remember the writers who opened their worlds to you. If you listen closely, you'll hear their pulsing hearts echo "thank you, too."

Sincerely yours,

Ellen Robinson '18, Editor-in-Chief

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We Remember

Autumn Snyder '21

You are with us every day
We feel you with every breath
Your thought is with us
With every decision we make

You have been with us until now
And it is hard to face
That you are finally gone
And we will never see you again

Your hands, your touch, your smile
Are the things we will never forget
All the love you shared with us
And all the tears and pain you made go away

In our short time together
All the memories we had
Will last in our hearts forever
Those memories we will never forget

Although you have left
Now you walk above
You are always with us
We are always surrounded by your love

Now you don't have to worry
For your love will be passed on
'Cause even though you left us
You are always in our hearts
In loving memory of Conner Kleffel
We love and miss you Conner. You were a wonderful guy,
and your life was taken way too soon.
Rest In Peace

Gone

Abigail Scarfoss '21

Yesterday you were with me here
And now you are there
In just a blink of an eye
You were up in the sky
I can not begin to understand
Why you had to be taken from this land
Maybe this was His plan for you
And I will have to get through
You are missed very dear
But I know that you are near
And that someday soon
We will meet again
Somewhere farther than the moon

Home

Skylar Renninger '20

Honorable Mention

Home.
I grew up here.
The people that loved me were here.
Life as I knew it was here.

Move.
This place
was so foreign,
yet so familiar,
like someone else trying to bake your grandmother's famous homemade apple pie.
Some faces I knew,
some faces were new.
Within a horde of strangers,
I found a few friends,
who I had yet to discover,
were genuine and true.

Move.
Saddened and confused,
I did not know what to do.
I came into this new place and found you.
You.
The one that brought me back to life and killed me at the same time,
like coming up to gasp for air in the midst of drowning in the vast ocean.
I was stuck in a dark place and did not know what to do.

Move.
New shelter, same grounds,
no emotional deduction now.
I've come back and I'm better,
better than you've ever seen me.
I am home.



Kadie Runkle '19

Honorable Mention

*I Am**Lily Whitmoyer '19*

I am a reader
 And shutterbug
 And leader
 And lover of hugs.

I am not irresponsible
 Nor flawless
 Nor stoppable
 Nor immodest.

I am forgiving
 And emotional
 And loving
 And rational.

I am not graceful
 Nor foolish
 Nor spiteful
 Nor useless.

I am often stressed
 And observing
 And blessed
 And learning.

I am not silent
 Nor egotistical
 Nor violent
 Nor whimsical.

But there are not enough words
 In the English language
 To describe a person accurately.

So I can only sum up myself in three words:
 I am *me*.

*Honest**Ellen Robinson '18*
2nd Place Poetry

Do you want me to be honest?
 Because, believe me, I can be honest.

I really like dogs, but cats are okay too.
 My favorite color is blue, has been for a while,
 and I hate pink.
 I really appreciate soft jeans and iced coffee.
 My favorite drink is hot chocolate,
 and my favorite holiday is Christmas.

What, is this not what you wanted?

Take me to dinner before you try to pry me open
 like the lobster you would order.
 I am not yours to coat with butter and dissect.

What, was that not your intention?
 What was it then?
 Why else would you ask me to be honest?
 What kind of honesty do you want from me?

My virginity is not yours to *take*,
 nor mine to *give*.
 It is the space between the letters in the word consent.
 I don't know how to be a "woman;"
 no one ever taught me anything except
 "keep your legs closed,"
 and "never wear blue eyeshadow with red lipstick."
 I'm afraid to tell stories,
 because women seldom make it to the ending.
 Same with jokes.
 For some reason, the punchline
 always fails to find laughter when it falls from her lips.
 I believe it's easier to remain silent
 When men try to tell me that sexism doesn't exist.
 Let my mind calculate how many cents a year I lose instead,
 cents I would give up if this man would stop telling me
 how *privileged* I am,
 cents I would give up if this man would stop staring at my chest.

What, was it not honesty you wanted?

Who Am I?

Michael Shott '18

Who am I?

A collection of energetic impulses translated into thoughts by a body of tissue which specializes in computation. A collection of memories, beliefs, and facts that have been amassed over the course of a life which has lasted both an eternity and a mere blink of an eye. A collection of letters into words into sentences that were created by someone that was long gone by the time we arrived, used as a medium of expression to ourselves and to others.

Yet, through all that, the simple letter I holds some special significance to us. Why?

What am I?

Am I thought? Am I mind? Am I flesh? Am I a body?

"I think, therefore I am."

Or is it, "I am, therefore I think"?

Did I exist before I was alive? Existence doesn't require life.

Could it be that our consciousness has always existed, and this form merely allows us to put a shape and a sound and an idea to that consciousness?

Could it be that, truly, we are one?

We all came from somewhere.

Was it a super dense, super hot, super small ball of matter and energy that exploded to form the universe?

If so, we were all in there together.

Not just "us" as in our family, or even humanity; everything that has ever existed was a part of that. Therefore, the perceived separation we experience is just that: perception.

But who are we to say that perception isn't a reality in itself?

Everybody has their own reality.

The objective gives way to the subjective, and truth isn't as clearly defined as we'd like it to be.

That's why the questions are more important than the answers.

So we ask:

Who am I?

And we must reconcile ourselves with the fact that we may never know.

A Collection of Magnificent Haikus

Olivia Jenkins '18

Here are some haikus

I am the haiku master

They are very good

Bobby has a nose

He also has a leg. Yay

He is not a snake

I have a fishy

And my fishy likes to swim

He likes purple pants

Please eat the carrot

for I am the carrot boi

Woo hoo carrots rule

Cornflakes are a good

choice for a healthy and bal...

anced breakfast meal yup

Jamie Moyer '20



*Combinations**Anonymous*

We were,
 Black clothes, black hair,
 Black bulls and black ink.
 Clarinets and crows,
 Gorillas and sharpies,
 Panthers and bats.

Even though we are so many things,
 We were controlled.

They were,
 White paper, white boards,
 White sunscreen, white rabbits,
 White snowflakes, white roses,
 White coats that kept you warm in winter,
 White polish, white shoes,
 White little wisps of dandelions,
 WHITES ONLY,
 And forever they would be.

We are,
 At last,
 Mixed cows, mixed dice,
 Mixed checkerboards, mixed pandas,
 Mixed dalmations,
 And finally,
 After years on end,
 Mixed rights.

*Hip-Hop University**James Stelluti '21*

Jay Z is the first one to open the door.
 The introduction wasn't till 8, but he arrived at 4:44.
 The next to arrive was Drake, who came around 6.
 Followed by J. Cole and Logic.

After everyone arrived, Kendrick Lamar had something to say.
 He was very calm and prepared, it was in his DNA.
 But before Lamar could get up, Lil Uzi Vert took the stage.
 It was a waste of time though, as all he said was "Luv is Rage!"

Big Sean's speech was boring and got off track.
 Although he tried, he was never able to bounce back.
 Right front and center was Kanye West, as he was grumpy and impatient.
 While everyone clapped for Eminem's speech, Yeezy just mumbled, "Is it graduation?"

*To the Stars...**Julia Craft '20*

To the Stars
 I send my regards
 I send my hope
 I send my dreams
 Even though I know
 You will not answer me
 I still hope
 And I still pray
 On every single
 Starbeam
 I still ask
 For your rays
 To touch me
 And to take me
 Away from this reality
 I still ask
 For no more days
 And to be set free
 I still ask to be free
 From this gravity
 That weighs me down
 Towards the ground
 And will keep me
 From flying free
 To the Stars
 I send my
 Heart
 And I hope
 You will
 Keep it safe for me
 And I hope
 That when I
 Awaken
 From all these
 Awful dreams
 You will be there
 Right next to me

College
Hannah Seltzer '18

You dreamed for the longest time what getting away would feel like; wide open spaces opening themselves for you to walk unshackled, untamed, and free. With no help from your mom, it seemed as though this dream would never be within reach. You could only really dream about leading the scoring for your team and being recognized for your dean's list grades; creating life long friends and meeting the love of your life. You've always known that your future would be bright because you believed in yourself, but who knows if your opportunities will be strong enough to meet the dreams you aspire for. You can only hope to become the person you've been imagining up in your head since you were young. You're still young. These decisions you'll soon be making can change your life forever and will show you that your dreams may be closer than you ever thought possible.

You walk around this small suburban campus and take in fresh air from the copious amount of trees surrounding. You stop to notice birds, singing longing mating calls. Squirrels enjoying fall weather in winter and hoping it never ends. You mess with your hair and focus on your feet as the coach explains piece by piece how your future is going to go. You walk through buildings for each different set of majors, creating knots in your stomach. You're still a freshman aren't you? There's no way college is next year already; I mean, come on. What if you choose here and hate it? What if your foot skills can't get better and this is it? What if you don't succeed like you do in your head? What if you disappoint everyone who's rooting for you? You can't do this; let's skip college and join the circus or something. Doesn't that seem like a good option? Who needs schooling anyway? Stop freaking out! It's fine! You're fine! Are you? Are you okay? No, no I am not.

All these choices, decisions and outcomes rattle around in your brain, spinning like a bingo machine waiting to see if you got the number you were hoping for. The number that would secure your future and happiness, security, family, job and everything you hope your life turns into. It makes you dizzy. You are inspired by the interest coaches have in you and hope that is enough to make your decision. You realize your family doesn't have the means to provide for your big dreams, which means you might have to start from the bottom; you have to claw your way to those dreams you won't let go of. Fantasies you hoped could become real life. Are they out of reach? You are so used to disappointment; what would happen if you aren't good enough? Not smart enough? You lay down. Looking up at the ceiling of your bedroom, flashbacks occupy your mind while you try to figure out what happens next. The faint happenings of your mom arguing with her boyfriend linger in your ear but all you can really hear is your cat snoring. Your eyes slowly close on a stressful life you can only forget for eight hours. What will you do? Which school to choose? You talk with your high school coach but it's no big deal right? You aren't signing DI or DII so why does it even matter? Just pick a school Hannah. Who cares. Cool, it's fine. Maybe you should just drop out, and, like I said, join the circus.

Stress cannot completely be in control and when it comes to continuing your athletic and academic careers; your brain takes over. Pacing back and forth, you sweat going through countless college mail from schools you probably won't apply to and start many applications you probably won't finish. You have no energy or ambition to write essays, maybe you aren't ready to move on. Maybe high school is where you belong, and maybe that's as far as you'll go. What happens when your life doesn't live up to your head's expectations? But how can one plan out the rest of their life in their head without actually knowing what will happen. No one in this world can predict the future but apparently my head wants to get my hopes up. Why does this search have to be so hard? Why is getting to this point with twelve years of education somehow the easy part? I've never been so stressed. What's going on. I'm done. It's settled. I'm officially joining the circus.

*Asking Ourselves Why**Isabella Romig '21*

Why do we spend countless hours thinking of someone
 who has acknowledged our existence once?
 Why is it unbelievably easy to fall in love with someone so quickly
 when the thought of loving ourselves has never crossed our minds?
 Why do we imagine perfectly realistic scenarios
 and sit motionless waiting for them to happen?
 Why is it difficult to fathom the thought of not having the anxiety
 that eats up our insides?
 Why do we insist on tearing ourselves apart
 because we fear others might have a chance
 to do it before us?
 Why do we sit around waiting for our questions
 to answer themselves?

*Drip!**Emily Angstadt '20*

I cannot cry.
 But I don't mind.
 Others cry for me,
 when they're torn up inside.
 When mourning men grieve,
 When babies a-wail,
 when the hearse-man comes knocking,
 that's when I am there.
 In wars, in famine,
 in sickness, in death
 in schools and in houses,
 They give me no rest.
 As I drip down the cheek
 Of a man on a bridge
 As I drip off their faces...
 They don't want to live.
 I cannot cry,
 but always I hear
 the sorrows of others-
 for I am a tear.

*Rose Perfume**Kaitlynn Wayman '18*

A student waltzes through the threshold to a new atmosphere, planted innocuously like an innocent flower with a hidden serpent curled at its base, she sits in the seat before me, turning to give a dangerously sweet smile. Then it hits me.

The scent of the rose perfume suffocates me. The mist stretches out like a noose and wraps around my throat. It is hard to breathe. It fills my lungs and it feels like a garden in my body with thorned surgeon's tools that poke and prod at my organs. The beautiful poison clouds my senses and fills my brain with a soft rose haze and a hum settles into my bones. The rose is a poison as a film layers over my sinuses, turning everything pink. My skin feels raw as the utter uncomfortableness of too much of one thing swallows me whole. The smell is a soft yet unnerving touch along my face that causes my chest to constrict. Its intoxicating for some but a toxin for me.

Perfume exits from every pore of my body, through my eyes, and in my breath; the taste of sweet chemicals burn and blister my skin. The air is cloudy. Foggy. I can no longer see the space in front of me. My mind swims with the gentle curls of oh so pungent air. The pink scent feels like hair snaking around my neck, down my throat.

Choking
 Inhaling
 Drowning

It's impossible to breathe like this. I need to get out; everything is too much, too pink, too loud, too many senses. Things that never bothered me before multiply and exaggerate to the point that nothing can be focused on because everything is being focused on. This all feels like something two or ten people should be dealing with, not one person. Hours seem to pass while feeling like time stood still; the bell rings and the spell is broken. I can breathe again.

El Examen Final Es Medio De Su Grado

Emily Angstadt '20

Honorable Mention

Even before I opened my eyes, I realized something was wrong. It was hot, too hot for inside, and too bright. I could feel a hard, dusty surface beneath me. I slowly opened my eyes, allowing my vision to adjust to the bright scene around me.

All I could see was dusty earth all the way to the horizon. The sky was a flat blue with the sun shining blindingly. A few dry bushes dotted the landscape. A dirt road, barely distinguishable from the rest of the ground, cut across the land and away over the distant horizon.

I reached into my pocket, hoping to find my cell phone. Instead, I pulled out a handful of bills-- Mexican pesos. I counted them to equal \$1,000. I was glad that I had at least *some money, even if it was only about 50 USD*.

Then, I noticed something else left in my pocket. It was a note; I read it: "Esto es el examen final. -Sra. Kahlo."

As I tried to piece together what had happened, I remembered the events of the previous night. I was laying in bed, watching TV, when I heard a noise behind me. I had started to turn toward the door, when suddenly I felt a rag covering my face. The smell of chemicals filled my nose, and I felt myself blacking out.

So, in some weird, twisted test, my Spanish teacher had kidnapped me and dropped me off in what I presumed was Mexico with nothing but some pesos and a note. Not even water! The most angering part, though, (aside from being kidnapped) is that I was only in Spanish 1! I was a total beginner! How was I supposed to make it back home with 50 bucks and an extremely minimal understanding of the Spanish language?

As I sat there, trying to figure out what to do, I heard a car approaching. I saw it appear over the horizon, just a tiny dot, slowly growing as it approached me. As the car got closer, I took off my shirt and began waving it over my head. As the car slowed to a stop, I thanked any god I could think of that I was so lucky. I approached the door as the driver rolled down their window, seeing a middle-aged woman driving.

"Excuse me, I'm lost, do you think I could get a ride?" I asked. As I spoke, her face turned to confusion.

"Lo siento, no hablo inglés," she responded.

I swore under my breath, then tried to think of how to explain my situation.

"Yo hablo español pero solamente un poco. Yo no sé dónde estoy. Estoy..." I trailed off, trying to think of the right word. The woman nodded sympathetically.

Eventually, I just pointed to the back seat of her car and said "¿por favor?" The woman looked uncertain for a moment. I suddenly remembered the money in my pocket. I pulled out a few of the bills, showing them to the lady. "¡Tengo dinero! ¡Puedo pagarte!"

The lady thought for a moment before nodding and unlocking the door. I got into the back seat and buckled in. The woman turned to me.

"¿Adónde vas?" she asked.

I opened my mouth to respond but stopped. I had no clue where I was, aside from 'Mexico, probably.' I thought for a second, replying, "¿Dónde estamos? Necesito volver a los Estados Unidos."

A look of surprise spread over the lady's face. She said something that I didn't totally hear, but I got the gist of it. She couldn't take me all the way there. I nodded understandingly.

"¿Puedes llevarme a un ciudad grande?" I asked. As long as I could get to an airport, I'd be fine. The woman nodded, and began to drive again in the way she had been heading originally. After a few minutes, I began to feel faint. Lying in the sun had probably made me very dehydrated. I cleared my throat, then asked, "¿Tienes agua? Tengo mucho sed."

The woman nodded, "Sí, tengo agua. Aquí." She said, digging into her purse to grab a water bottle and handing it to me. I nodded appreciatively, thanking her.

Eventually we reached a city, Mexico City to be exact. I asked the lady to take me to the US Embassy, thinking it would be my best bet to get home quickly. Unfortunately, fate wouldn't let me go that easily.

Ode to a Lost Childhood

Emily Angstadt '20

slither, slither
through the reeds, comes a creature
glowing, glowering eyes and sharp-as-knife
scales
scarcely a rattle from its warning tail

it approaches,
bristling danger and mother's reproaches
but I in my youthful innocence knew naught,
and, with blissful ignorance, was caught

oh, how I cried
as its venom snuck inside
For soon as my back had been turned to the
thing,
it latched onto me with a bite and a sting.

Years upon years,
they all dried my tears
as they patched up my wounds
and said "darling, it'll change soon."

eyes, blinking eyes,
they've all been caught by the lies
and now they tell me, "oh,
give it a second chance!
Forget about the past!
Just trust it, at last!"

"It's changed, can't you see?"
they cry out to me
but just as soon as their attention moves
away,
there goes another strike of the venom-
here to stay.



Quiero Ser Libre

Jesulayomi Adejo '20

quiero ser libre
mientras todavía vivo
no pueden silenciarme

we feel the fire in our fingertips
let it travel in the cracks of our hands
and possess our palms

but our fire has nowhere to go
no seething souls to fuel its flame

we have quiet qualms now.
we sit in solemn silence.

they pin down our arms
so we can't raise our fists
they hold our tongues
so we can't protest
our legs are bound
so we can't stand together
in unity

we are separated
but division won't stop us

quiero ser libre
mientras todavía vivo
no pueden silenciarme

Logan Knepp '20

Honorable Mention

God Save the Prom Queen

Donald Ballou '18

2nd Place Fiction

Walking into senior year, Kala could already feel the weight of the Prom Queen crown on her head. As far as she was concerned, she had no competition. How could she? Her daddy was a multi-millionaire living in a small town and her mom was her school's Prom Queen during her senior year. It was in her blood. The other girls didn't stand a chance.

She went dress shopping in November. Her mother wanted to see her daughter in an airy taffeta gown, but that would simply not work. Girls are crowned wearing skin-tight sleeves of silk, not childish, princess ball gowns. She couldn't just win; she needed every single vote, including those of her competitions' boy-friends, and she wasn't going to get those in a shoulder-to-ankle Project Runway reject.

She wasn't nasty. Not like the stereotypical popular high school girl. But, she needed to win.

A queen has a king, of course. Her boyfriend almost broke up with her in March; he didn't even want to go to Prom, but that was fixed. After some coaxing, he made up for it by giving her the most extravagant Promposal of the school.

Finally, the day arrived. Students are only supposed to take a half day off from school to get ready for Prom, but Kala desperately needed the whole day. Nails, hair, makeup, dress; she screamed in delight to find her no-food diet let her squeeze into her two-sizes-too-small dress. Stiletto heels almost seemed to impale her living room carpet as she walked to her patio for pictures.

Her escort was waiting, perfect white teeth almost showing when Kala walked out and revealed her barbie-dolled self. Stiff pictures were taken in various positions at only the most showy places of her family's mansion.

She arrived at Prom, stepping out of Daddy's own limo, only the best for his perfect daughter. The entire yearbook club had set up a red carpet to the entrance of the ballroom, and were taking pictures as if they were the paparazzi. Kala knew they loved her; she knew that the ones with the cameras were always her biggest fans.

Food was served and songs were played. Kala drank water and attempted to get the attention of every male in the venue. She grew impatient waiting for the Prom Court announcement, giving up on dancing and sitting at her table within forty-five minutes. Three-quarters of the way through the dance, the Class President tapped on the microphone, smiled, and asked for Prom Court to take the stage.

This was it. Prom King was announced; Kala's boyfriend won. She was too anxious to clap, but in the back of her mind, she knew she'd have to show her congratulations later. After all, he hadn't wanted to come.

The girls were asked to step forward. Kala shook the hair from her face and gave a big pageant smile, showing off her full lips and unblemished, beaming skin. The Class President opened the envelope, pulled out the paper, leaned into the mic, and spoke.

"Kala Dountry."

The crowd applauded, scattered screams striking the air. Kala held her hand to her mouth and held back her tears, stumbling up to the mic and shakily taking her bouquet of flowers. She began to give her speech as the tiara was placed on her head.

"O-Oh! Oh my goodness! Thank you so much! Thank you all, I love you al-oh!" The tiara's combs pricked her as it was placed in her hair. She dramatically looked up and giggled at her crown. She finished her thank-yous and started to walk towards the stairs from the stage.

Then, the tiara's combs sunk into her head.

Kala jerked forward, surprised and confused, and went to put a hand up, as if she were afraid it might fall. It wasn't going to fall, not on its own.

When she brought her hand down, she saw her own blood running down her french-cut polished fingers, and felt the warm liquid start to flow down her face. She stumbled back onto center stage as she frantically wiped her face and dropped her bouquet.

The crowd had started to notice that something was wrong. They dispersed into their cliques as Kala stumbled back onto stage. The students closest to the stage saw Kala bleeding and stood shocked. The others noticed once Kala's screams pierced through the dance music. Kala screamed and clutched her tiara in both hands, pulling and yanking and crying. Blood had covered her face and neck and was working on

staining her dress. She gave up on pulling out the tiara and started to wipe the blood from her beautiful face before it could suffocate her.

The theme of the Prom was metallic. There was a floor-to-ceiling mirror covering the wall opposite the stage. Kala wiped her wide eyes and saw her reflection above the crowd. As she wiped the blood from her face, her makeup came off, too. She wiped her eyebrows and hair started to spring up where she used to have them, before she got rid of them and just got perfect tattoos. She wiped her nose, and all of a sudden that bump on her bridge was back. The bump that Mommy insisted Daddy pay \$3,500 to get rid of. She wiped her mouth and her lips deflated like two balloons, thin lines encapsulating a now crooked set of semi-white teeth.

Kala stared in horror at herself as the crowd gasped and murmured. Squeals of surprise waved through the students as Kala's appearance changed. No one dared go to help her, for what might happen if her blood landed on them? They stood transfixed, staring at the Prom Queen, watching her transformation.

Meanwhile, the blood kept pouring from Kala's crown. It seeped down her dress and flowed like a branching river down her arms. She rubbed the blood off her arms, and they became jiggly, and had much less muscle definition. There were creases at her armpits. She wiped the blood off her dress and felt her stomach give back the layer of fat she had worked years to abolish, puking it out or starving it. She screamed as her stomach tore through her dress and she collapsed, rolling her head about her scarlet hands.

The crowd was in suffocating silence. Then, Kala rose. She rose as if something were picking her up by a string wrapped around her rib cage, back to her subjects, her tiara spotlessly gleaming and clutching her frizzed locks of hair, her arms stretched out wide and her feet together, the disco ball reflecting white light onto her transformed body. She fell, her torso and arms grabbing the white curtain behind her while she slid down.

Ten minutes later, Kala's peasants danced as two chaperones began to slap red paint onto the stained curtain, the new color not quite matching the red, descending trail of royal responsibilities left behind by their newly risen Queen.

Lily Dang '21

Honorable Mention



We Go Together

Kaley Kauffman '19

We go together like black and white,
We go together like day and night.
We go together like man and wife,
We go together like death and life.

We are just simply meant to be together.

We go together like pork and beans,
We go together like kings and queens.
We go together like wine and cheese,
We go together like legs and knees.

We are just simply meant to be together.

We go together like rise and fall,
We go together like hammer and saw.
We go together like rain and shine,
We go together like eight and nine.

We are just simply meant to be together.
We go together like suit and tie,
We go together like live and die.
We go together like bride and groom,
We go together like sun and moon.

We are just simply meant to be together.

Social Life Who? I Don't Know Her

Jesulayomi Adego '20

"Excuse me, do you know where I could find the bathroom?"

"Down the hall and to the right."

"Thank you," I reply, practically jumping for joy. I've found my escape.

The bathroom, it turns out, is worse than the party was. After sitting alone and sulking for half an hour, I come to the conclusion that *maybe* I should try and socialize. Aka, the worst decision I've ever made.

When I go back inside the hall, the room is (still) full of sweaty, hormonal teenagers who are dancing like their lives depend on it. As in, the dancing is horrendous.

But anyway.

I am not one for dancing, or close proximity to other human beings, so I find a comfortable seat in the back of the room. And I watch.

I watch the people my age who, despite their perspiration and atrocious dancing, seem to be enjoying themselves. And I wonder, *what is wrong with me? Why can't I have fun too?*

And the answer is clear; it's right in front of me, staring oddly at me, jumping up and down while waving its arms like a maniac. *I'm not like them.*

I'm not like them. I do homework on Friday nights. I hide in bathrooms at parties in an attempt to avoid social interaction. My idea of "a #lit night" is watching rom coms and crying.

So, there it is, plain and simple. I must be a loser. Losers don't have fun at parties; they stand alone at said party and watch everyone else have fun.

Does this sound like self-pity? I promise it's not. It's more like self-deprecation with a hint of satire. It's me making fun of myself while realizing that one day, this "not-good-at-socializing" thing will result in me ending up sad, alone, and regretful.

Maybe this is a message to myself. It's me saying, "Wake up! You can't be friendless forever. That's not how life works!"



Lily Whitmoyer '19

1st Place Artwork

Logan Knepp

'20



I Can Still Be A Princess

Charanya Birabaharan '19

Baby pink room, princess bed sheets, bejeweled purple drapes, a coloring book with every Disney princess hidden beneath my bed, my journal filled with dreams of becoming the prettiest princess marrying the perfect prince--all these treasures decorated my room. When I was ten, my bedroom existed as my special place to dream and list endless possibilities. Twelve years later, my room changed to a dark shade of purple, grey bed sheets and drapes, a box with childhood memories resting beneath my bed. My room now a place where I stress about getting into college, grades, and healing a broken heart.

One day, exhausted from worrying about an upcoming chemistry test, I scrolled through Pinterest to give my mind a break. I came across a quote that changed my future stress response to the excitement of developing into the best version of myself: "Once upon a time you were a little girl with big dreams that you promised you'd make real one day. Don't disappoint yourself." Since then, I intend to find that little girl who wanted to be a princess.

As a child, everything seems possible. Parents give their children the impression that they can pursue any career by the wave of a wand or the rubbing of a lamp. As we get older, those dreams of becoming a princess, a spy, or a movie star fade away. When I entered high school, reality set in and overwhelmed my childhood ambitions. My castle started vanishing further and further. Every part of my life grew tougher. I no longer believed I could wear a poofy dress with a tiara on my head or prance away on a horse to a fairytale land. Those dreams soon disintegrated; yet, when reading that quote, I realized my dreams never really disappeared. My dreams never faded away. My dreams have only evolved.

These past years, my parents instilled upon me that becoming a benevolent individual who helps others in need prevails over all other accomplishments. My parents advised me to not wait on a shooting star and make a wish, but encouraged me to go after what I want. Initially, I dreamed of wearing that poofy dress, but now I desire to wear a long white coat. I dreamed of attending balls and dancing in high heels, but now I prefer to wear scrubs and spend time helping non-profit organizations. While I once dreamed of fulfilling the image of the prettiest princess, I now work toward acting as the kindest individual. My dreams never disappeared. My dreams never faded away. My dreams became my goals. A passionate individual who cares for others and working to make something of herself *is noble*.

"Once upon a time you were a little girl with big dreams that you promised you'd make real one day": this quote exists as a reminder that a little girl's spirit still frolics inside me. As children, we dream with no limits but strengthening those dreams into realities writes an event in one's fairytale book. A princess cares. A princess speaks her mind. A princess works hard for what she wants. If at one point in my life I thought of becoming a princess was possible, then I obtain the ability to make that dream come true today. I intend to develop my optimistic perspective and indeed, not disappoint myself. I am working toward becoming that princess, just maybe trading my tiara in for a white coat and a different color room.

It's Going to Hurt
Ellen Robinson '18

It's going to hurt
 when he leaves her apartment for
 the last time,
 angry, bags in hand,

too angry to comprehend what he just did.

when she prys her empty heart body
 from the television and ice cream
 only to crawl in her bed
 and realize it's gotten a lot bigger.
 Her sheets feel clumsy and wrinkled.
 Her pillow feels cold,
 and for the first time, she feels
 completely
 alone.

It's going to hurt
 when he sits his body at bar stools,
 checks out girls he doesn't care about.
 Tries anything just to fill
 an emptiness he doesn't understand.
 Whiskey's only numbing, you know.

It's going to hurt
 when she wakes up to the alarm clock
 rather than soft kisses on her cheek.
 She makes her own coffee
 and pretends not to notice the
 second mug in the cupboard.

when he wakes up beside a stranger
 in his bed, sun lighting an unknown face.
 It is so full, yet feels so empty.

when she walks down the street,
 watches him hand-in-hand with another girl,
 laughing at her stupid jokes,
 smiles as he walks past.
 Knows he is no longer hers.

It's going to hurt
 when she passes him on the street,
 alone;
 he made her that way.
 Clutches the girl hanging onto his arm,
 Tighter.
 He doesn't even like her,
 but laughs with her anyway.
 Anything to pretend it doesn't hurt
 that she is no longer his.

He will never be hers again,
 and it's going to hurt.

She will never be his again,
 and it's going to hurt.



Cassidy Brown '20



Emily Angstadt '20
Honorable Mention

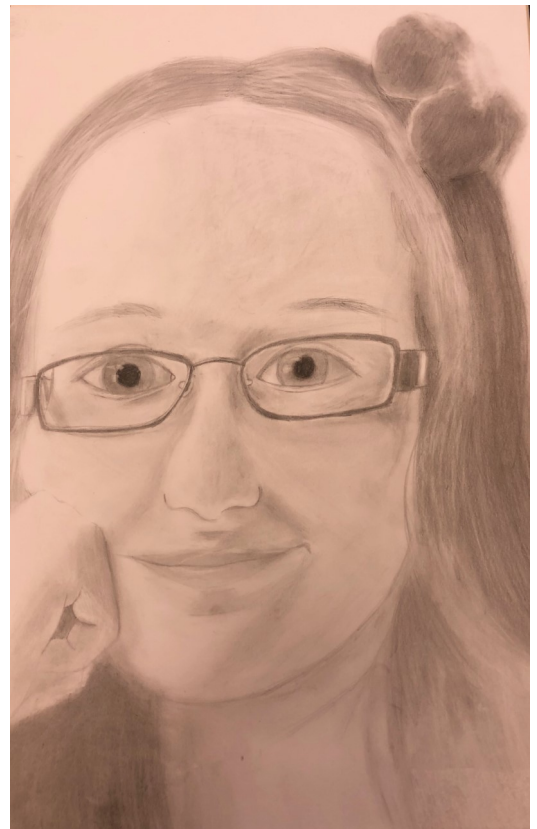
To Get to the Other Side

Olivia Jenkins '18

It's a typical day on planet Earth;
The birds chirp and the bees buzz
as I make my way to work.
But I can't hear them
because of the noise my tires make
as they crush the fragile bodies of the chickens beneath me.
I don't like driving over the chickens;
It saddens me.
But how would I get to work?
I gaze upon the narrow stretch of chickens before me
while listening to the strange melody
of their deranged squawks
and breaking bones.
Something catches my eye - a few roads are grazing in a pasture
I love those silly creatures
with their black rectangle shaped bodies
and dashed yellow markings.
They make me happy,
especially the baby ones (I think they're called trails)
Several minutes later I arrive at work
alive and well—
I can't say as much for the chickens.
My coworker greets me with that never-ending joke:
"Why did the road cross the chickens?"

Cassandra Cote '18

2nd Place Artwork



Snowy Days

Elizabeth Clement '18

Honorable Mention

I'm sitting in an old pickup truck, or a death trap as we like to call it. The snow lays still on the ground, coating the road and covering the yellow lines beneath it. As the snow turns to slush below the old tires, I laugh with my friends in the cramped front seat as we play random music we find on Youtube. Everything we say rapidly transforms into fits of giggles and none of it makes sense.

We just barely made it to the movie that we drove in slippery snow to get to. The nice but stern-sounding 20-something year old warns my friend to bring her ID to the movie we didn't even realize was rated R in the first place. Walking through the supposed ticket booth, we look for the theater that belongs to our movie. We coast past the posters for movies that have either been playing, or are coming out soon. They're framed in the cheap fake gold that displays the run-down nature of the complex, but with cheap tickets, no one really cares. Twenty minutes late for the start time of the movie, we quietly sneak into the theater, only to realize that it's pitch black, and I can't see the floor below me. Hoping no one minds, I turn on my flashlight; I come to the conclusion that no one is in the theater. My friends and I settle into the direct center and start babbling about the movie. Not a single person can shush or discretely glare at us, so we comment all throughout the movie, making connections, and falling into silence at the climax. The conversation continues in the truck as one topic branches off into another, leading into my other friend and I arguing over the flow of the movie — she's outnumbered two to one. But our stomachs growl, so we all agree that we need something before heading home.

The grease practically coats my throat as I scoop mouthfuls of mac & cheese. The lights are bright, clashing with the blue-hued snowy sky outside the window. The color-palette of the gas station clashes with everything in the store and matches the mood of the night. I can't quite tell what the mood is, but I feel it as my friend comments on how we have all drank two large, movie theater sized cups of cherry cola in the span of a few hours. I realize that I haven't told my mom where I am, despite the below ideal road conditions, but I can't find it in me to be worried.

Winter brings darkness quickly, and what feels like midnight is only 7 o'clock. The street lamps' yellow tints illuminate the roads ahead, which are still not very visible. My friends and I talk about the passing of highschool, a topic brought on by the movie that we saw when the sky was still blue. We look back to the past through the journey to the future until the death trap skids up my driveway. I extend the conversation for a while longer, savoring the feeling of the adventure. I make my way up to my doorway, enter my house, and the moment is over, but never forgotten.

Fears

Alyssa Weaver '20

You are afraid.

You are afraid of piercing words and judging looks.

You are afraid of your own body and seeing old yearbooks.

You are afraid of terrible thoughts and the voices inside your head.

You are afraid of your own fears and of being swallowed by dread.

You are afraid of your own voice and never being heard.

You are afraid of letting things change and not saying a word.

You are afraid of the daily stress and all of the anxiety.

You are afraid of strangers and everything about society.

You are afraid of being different and called a minority.

You are afraid of all things normal and especially the majority.



Beach

Abigail Douglas '19

Serenity waves
The shore is calling my name
With the salty air

With its sandy floors
It motions me over
Into the water

Pulling me closer
The cool embrace on my skin
Finally at peace

Gaetshelyne Najac '20

Lured

Mackenzie Homan '18

3rd Place Fiction

When I look out across miles of snow, miles of landscape broken only by evergreens and evening shadows, I wish to be so many things I am not. A fairy perhaps, unhindered by gravity and whimsical enough to speak to snow burrowed animals. Or maybe a hawk, so that I could soar above the branches and watch as layers of snow smother every root and every rock. I could even be a breeze, brushing past each snowflake, trapping only some in my grasp.

Tempting, the snow is, iridescent in the evening light, its drifts like labyrinths I could spend all my days weaving through, to someplace far, far from here. With no glass, no door, no barrier separating the snow from I, I hear the murmur of freedom—miles of dusky white beckoning me to escape, my mind fluttering away on some icy wind or twilight gust. I loosen my hold on myself, let go of control, and give up on any notion of what is true. The snow stings my bare feet, brings to life something inside, and calmly, luxuriously intoxicates my mind. I feel myself drawn strongly to this natural, untouched world: a world cushioned by snow but nonetheless dangerous, able to chill one to submission and coax them to sleep.

Sleep. That is what I am trying to do. I cannot remember how I got here, or if I am supposed to walk on towards something. Maybe a light, a house, a warm place. No, I am meant to stay here.

I wish I could think of...I don't know. I came outside for a reason, a purpose. A calling maybe? This I know. I can't feel my feet at all. It is so dark, but I remember daylight from before. Waning daylight, I remember. But now it is dark, and I am so cold.

Am I lying down? I think so. In something soft. Yet hard under my hips. It is wet. Snow. I am outside, right. In the snow. Am I still cold? Not so much now. Not like before.

I could sleep. I tried to already. But before I was still cold. I am warm now. And wrapped up. My fingers? Where are they? Where are what? ...

Sleep. I can sleep. Here. Snow is warm. Sleep now. Good night.

Roanoke

Sarah Zockoll '18

Honorable Mention

There's no place like home. And to me, my home is not a house, but rather a star, built almost four hundred miles away. Standing proud above a tree-covered valley, she illuminates the sky and overlooks her maze of a city below, each and every night. Her fluorescent lights have always shined and always glistered, leaving a starlit visage of the city's bustling streets below. Naturally, I've always found myself drawn to her, to my Star, even from a young age, even till now. The worst part of seeing her was the journey there itself; however, once you've made the ride so many times, you get used to it. Those drives up that mountain were always painfully long, but undoubtedly worth it.

Memories rush through my mind of my younger self, craning my head in my Barbie car seat to catch a glimpse of my beloved Star as we drove by her mountain. I recall bounding up the trails to see her, my knobby knees laden with bug bites, my muddy sneakers leaving tiny footprints as I eagerly pulled my sister along to go see my Star. I remember it all, the long drives to see her and sunsets enveloping us and the creaky wooden boards beneath her and crowds wreathed in smiles with twinkling eyes as they gazed upon her.

With hundreds of miles between us, I can only long for the day that I may see my lovely, my beautiful Star again.

Port Volta

Bryce Burnett '18

Honorable Mention

There exists an ebb and flow of *almost* silent waves that lick grey sands and silver stones.
My dangling fingers, moving in time with the tranquil hum, move from pebble to boulder, from wood post to splinters, and back again to those miniature, prismatic pieces of earth.

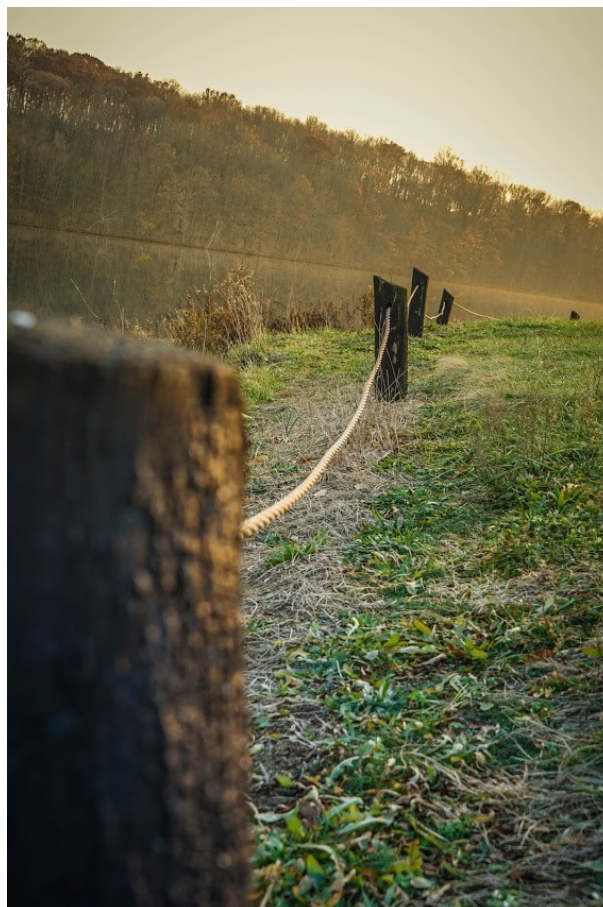
I know I'm not the only one who recognizes the soothing sounds of these soul-contained waves. I know that the daylight shooting stars hear the waves too, cawing and flapping in contrast with such soft sound, not to disturb the beauty, but to rejoice in it, to praise it and worship it.

Swinging in playful circles around a wood post, I stomp between the lands of gold dust and the sea of crystal elixir. Yet I nod at the cracks up above between the salt-stained slats where sunlight seeps through like dense, spilt cream.

I know where I need to be.

I welcome myself to the world up above where white light consumes my whole being, especially affixed on my face in this seemingly unforgiving world, a world where a hot boardwalk feels like volcanic coals.

Jennifer Brown '20



Yet the atmosphere further intensifies,
 and salt bathes in my eyes and mouth.
 Beneath my feet, waves whip against the static beams
 and what once were admirable sea gulls are now deplorable sirens,
 floundering about the sky like a disturbed hoard:
 a school of aerial fish out of water,
 a wicked world now upside down.

But what I never expected to enter
 was a solid mass of man's Creation,
 cutting through sea like a knife
 with horrifying lethargy,
 thriving in pulsating ship horns that
 tear at me from the insides,
 expanding my ribs with unthinkable force.
 One thousand trumpets, one thousand trombones,
 glued together by ripe french horns and the chaotic cry of
 a disoriented world.

These shrill sounds cut through the airways
 as the artificial spawn cuts through crystal.
 I squint and tremble in agony and displeasure,
 the enemy of the sea shouting at the world in hot anger,
 suffocating the water beneath without a second thought.
 The brass band screams from island to island,
 to beaches with black sand and to beaches of scarlet red,
 muffling the delicate song of life in its most natural state.

Those simple sounds of before, those hushed hymns and
 graceful lullabies played by Nature's flute,
 will never be the same again.



Macy Zimmerman '19

Pure

Cassidy Rittenhouse '20

I lay In a field
 Of multifarious flowers,
 Lilacs and lilies I think,
 And deeply inhale
 A lurking aroma
 Of lavender.

Letting my thoughts
 Wander in loopy strings
 Of memory only leads
 To my unavoidable
 And obnoxious laughter.
 For they are far from
 Lackadaisical.

A whistling lyrical
 Breeze laces through
 My hair pulling
 Me back to reality
 As the last
 Bit of luminous sun
 is covered by
 Clouds.

This simple place
 I have found
 In the field of
 Lilacs and lilies
 Is not just luck.
 It is filled with
 love.

The Great Appalachian

Alyssa Robinson '19

"I miss home." I uttered with despair on the drive up.

We hadn't even stepped onto the trail yet, and I was already longing my snow white, plush, cold sheets.

The Appalachian Trail stood intriguingly in front of my husband and I, valleys whistling with wind; it was mysterious how we couldn't see beyond the bend about a mile up overlooking the green painted hills. We kept hearing the crunch of natural gravel that lay loosely under our dark green hiking edition Merrell sneakers.

It had been three days, and we were struggling with cracked palms and wind-brushed cheeks. I kind of figured this type of thing was going to happen to us, but I did not envision it would occur so early on. I swear I thought I was more prepared than I was. We'd hiked 15 miles so far on that warm April afternoon, which meant we had a grand total of 11 more to go that day, but according to the other hikers, we were going to have a rough next couple of days. We did. Where we had previously hiked, it was moderate terrain, but a little farther up, there had been only immense rocks to walk and sleep on.

There was obviously little cell phone service, unless you find a place off the trail to go. So, predicting the weather became unfeasible to us. I took the trip with my husband, Dan, and let me tell you, having another person there made all the difference. It's good to have someone else encouraging you when days are long and tiresome and calming you down when they are stressful. It made our journey much more peaceful and easier to enjoy.

Above his glasses, brown hair lay floppily against his rather large forehead. Dan was the type of guy who came off as cocky and rude, but people tended to get that easily confused with confidence. Whenever I lacked it, he made up for it. It was almost like we fit perfectly together.

He would constantly persuade me to come out of my thick shelled shell, like the hike or even trying out a new class once in awhile. I was obligated to believe in myself, but he truly did, and that's why we were the perfect team for this.

We woke up after a cold and wet night, dew speckled on our tents. A vibrant sunrise glowed through the bare spot of trees where we were sitting. I can still remember the feeling of its beams cutting through my skin and pouring itself throughout my body. It was comforting knowing I was going to have that to look forward to every morning.

The words, "I'm ready whenever you are," slipped dreadfully off my tongue to Dan, knowing how grueling the upcoming trial would be walking on the rocks.

He grinned, chuckled, met my eyes and said, "Give me five." He obviously felt really confident about the day ahead, which often happened.

We gathered our belongings and started back up on our daily routine. Wake up. Dread the day. Get moving. Stop for a lunch break. Keep moving. Set up a site. Sleep. Repeat.

It had been about a month and a half, and it only got worse. As we continued on with our dried, unsweetened food, we began to feel miserable. By that point, I must have had frostbite on my toes since the temperature averaged a high of 28 chilling degrees.

Two months later, conditions got slightly better. It had officially reached springtime, so the weather was one less thing we had to worry about on a day to day basis. We'd come across quite an array of wildlife out there, but nothing too dangerous. This, this is what I expected it to be like. Rays of sunlight sinking into our windburned skin.

Five months into it, and I missed my home. Dan started to develop a sharp pain on the bottom right of his foot, and we had to decide what do. Do we stay, or do we head off the trail? He wrapped it with tape, then summoned me to catch up after he caught me staring at him in disbelief. How could that have been comfortable?

The last time we saw a mile sign, it said we hiked approximately 1,847 miles. Some days were a tad rainier than others, but overall Mother Nature had treated us well on our excursion.

Month number six was the month of scarce food. Our food supply had gotten dramatically low for 60 more days on the trail with two people. Our "pantry" included 25 granola bars, 1 tub of protein powder and 12 packages of freeze-dried bananas. Nothing had really happened that month, except the worried thoughts I had about Dan's foot, but he would not participate in conversations about it. When I

finally got his feelings out, he said he would push through until the end, because this was on his bucket list as well, and he wanted to complete it.

In the last month there, I really looked forward to going home. The nice, comforting feel of my bed, crisp sheets folding under me continued to fill my mind. To pass the time and escape from our reality of starving tummies, Dan and I talked about our Thanksgiving menu and what our big turkey day would consist of. We came up with a feast of golden turkey, juicy cranberry, smooth potatoes, and soft stuffing. Nights got colder and layers started to feel thinner as the days came and went.

When we stepped over the fake, yellow painted finish line of the trail, my body filled with relief but also flashbacks of countless memories. Though hard at times, Dan got me through it, and constantly reminded me why I was there: to accomplish another thing on my bucket list. I'm still amazed at the beauty that I was privileged enough to see, and the unimaginable memories that are now a part of me and my history.

In A Way...

Hannah Seltzer '18

Honorable Mention

Golden embers woven like silk sways sporadically spiraling
Cerulean flakes run endlessly emerging in her eyes
Blush buttons bloom as cheekbones
Scarlet succulents press persistently to my lips

Champagne strides fall into line with mine
Squash days sink into sapphire nights
Merigold midnights with harvest moons marinate in midnight skies
Sangria salutations send off unwilling lovers

Sage stubbles take center stage
Indigo outfits fall flat to floral floor mats
Coral contents stay concealed in connected coral reefs
Crimson castaways call out for duele dimensional casualties

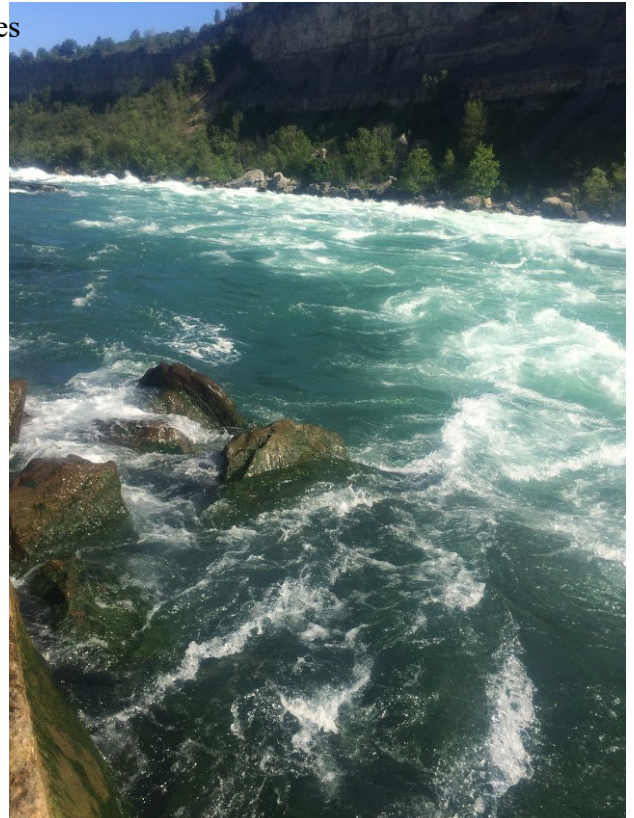
Rosewood flickers frolick frivolously to avoid fixation
Azure arthropods buzz blindly about
Spruce summer wind winds around seafoam scenery
Fern farewells flourish like flowers finding themselves

Arctic eyes isolate internal insecurities while
Plum pleasure please pure potential
Cyan comets burst solidity from steel sight
Lavender leave-taking lacks in sentimental sayings

Electric indigo ignitions start unwanted inbetweens
Amethyst alters mock pristine promises
Gold rings wrap rigorously around unloyal laughter
Smalt severance glissén in asphalt eye holes

Colors describe feelings
Adjectives describe body parts
Verbs describe memories
Everything describes everything
In a way

Macy Zimmerman '19



The Lantern
Elysia Davila '19
1st Place Fiction

I remembered the mystical evenings most of all, when the sun kissed the trees goodbye, remembered the rhythmic song of celebratory crickets and the glowing lights of the fireflies as they danced along. Blades of freshly cut grasses reached to the sky between my toes, and though they were too dark to see, their aura radiated into me with every step I took. I flicked on my lantern, a small, delicate little thing, and the images of every dangling tree, every stray-flying moth, sprung to life. The winding path in front of me developed a golden hue, the trees giving it a shade of honey suckle, the stray weeds gold-plated, the leaves amber as they fell, all pointing the way to the gods and their serenity. An isolated breeze softly pushed me forward, my spine tingling with the chill. It carried the smells of the nearby pond, stagnant water and growing algae blended with a precise arrangement of wildflowers without name. Fresh. Natural. Free.

I remembered the wonders of the life around me. A moth and his brethren flew gracefully around my lantern, one behind the other, each mimicking the last, so perplexed by the glow. Buzzing around me one by one, they seemed to crown me. "Oh, heavenly giant," they seemed to cry, "bringer of light and peace. Stay." I continued along the illuminated path, my lantern floating at arm's length, reflecting the beady eyes of foxes and deer and coyotes too wary to come near. My disciples lingered close behind, gaining followers every minute. They prayed and cried to the light, singing melodious hymns with their buzzes and flapping their wings to the beat. Winged shadows darkened the nearby tree trunks, dimming their newfound golden hue to its original burnt umber, allowing for the still-plated leaves to highlight and gleam. Empowering. Strengthening. Illuminating.

I remembered the whispers of the waving branches in the summer winds, telling me the secrets of the forbidden world, the world shrouded in darkness for the deepest hours. They spilled every vice of every animal, every tree, every impurity normally obscured. Wandering ears listened in as they gossipped. More and more beady eyes peered from the depths that even my lantern's glow couldn't reach. With each movement they rustled the brush, these mysterious, anonymous listeners. The lantern's flame flickered as each sin came exposed, causing silhouettes to tremble against the guiding tree trunks and the hungry congregation to come closer. My devotees continued flying against my lantern as if no wrong had passed, but a shiver trickled down my spine, slowly, slowly enough for my body to freeze and envelop every uncomfortable moment. I remembered that moment most of all, the moment I realized I had control. I closed my eyes, lifted the lantern to my face, and blew.

Mary Poppins
Meghan Cook '19
1st Place Creative Nonfiction

Beneath the hundred-year-old pine, a lightning pole for the surrounding mile and split nearly to its base, is a floodplain of unusually lush grass. As it stood ten years ago, the pine, a little less split, gazed down onto a red wagon, still functional, but resting at a slant, one side five feet in the air, the other on the ground. I loved the place under that pine, the tallest tree I knew. The wagon had been stationary at that point for a year and a half, and while I missed the hayrides, I didn't mind its current resting place. Of course, I had no idea that the wagon would never move again, that its grave would become obscured by the invasive plant species my mother used to fight so hard against, that its decay would pass without a second thought from anyone.

One day, drizzly, and scented with rain and mowed grass, I ventured out of my house and to the place beneath the pine. I stamped, barefoot, grass clinging to my ankles and between my toes, to the red wagon. Even back then the paint was faded and chipped, and the boards treacherous. I had come with a purpose, and that purpose was to fly. My hypothesis went something like this: Jumping from the wagon with an umbrella will provide a slower descent than jumping without an umbrella. Over and over I stepped carefully onto the low end of the wagon, and, avoiding flaws in the wood, stepped up to the edge. Every time I got a rush in my stomach and felt as though I could be at the top of the pine tree instead of five feet from the grass. I opened my umbrella, and it flicked dew into my face. I curled my toes over the edge. I held the umbrella high over my head. I leaped.

An Ode to Koal

Olivia Jenkins '18

Honorable Mention

They say you can only be man's best friend
but you swept past that title the moment my eyes met yours for
the first time

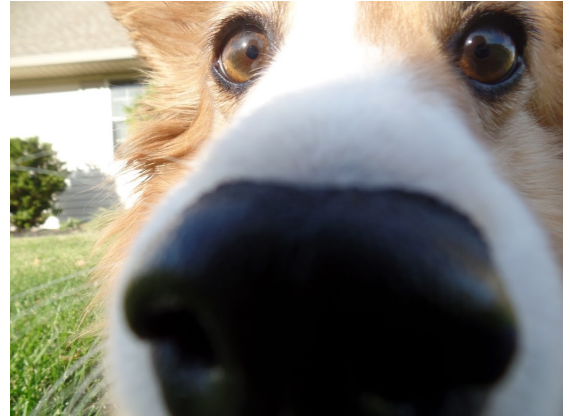
I don't know how you did it
Maybe with your bubblegum tongue
sticking out as you adventure in your dreams
Or with the way you talk to me with your eyebrows
But you stole my heart

And I would like to think I stole yours too
Maybe our lives were meant to be intertwined
Like the rope on that red ball that's bigger than your
head

And your silent companionship
was meant to help me forget the world
when my troubles seem too much to handle
And your eyes

Those glassy cocoa orbs tell me everything
I know when you're hungry
I know when you're hurt

But most importantly I know that you care
Oh Koal you goofy little guy
You never cease to bring out the happiness in me
and the day will never come that I stop loving you
So as long as I see those silky ears flopping
As you chase yourself around the oak tree
I know I'll have someone there for me
May your stubby tail never stop wagging, Koal



Hannah Phillips '20 – Honorable Mention

Spring Sonnet

Jesulayomi Adejo '20

Honorable Mention

When love and lilies rise up from the ground,
I see, I know that spring has come around;
her breath, it warms the cold of winter night,
replaces evening dark with evening lights.

But spring has lost her lover in the change.
She cries; she weeps, her tears are fresh and strange.
They coat the emerald leaves with morning dew,
and leave my heart with feelings all askew.

And though I feel the whirling winds of May,
I think it is a rather lovely day:
the birds together sing their glorious tune;
they sit, they watch, they wait for summer soon.

and so do I, I really must admit.
Up in their tree, I watch, I wait, I sit.



Lily Whitmoyer '19

Pay Attention*Andréa Altobelli '20*

My mind has too many tabs open

Cracking my wrists

fingers, elbows

Knees, ankles, back

Flicking my eraser

tapping my pencil

Tap, tap, tap

Picking at my nail polish

Or my nails

Swinging my legs

Swoosh, swoosh, swoosh

Painting huge murals in my head

Painting, painting, painting

Doodling e v e r y w h e r e

Scribble, scribble, scribble

Cracking my wrists

And fingers, elbows

Knees, ankles, back

Endless alternate universes

Exploring them all at the wrong
times

Snap, snap, snap

Pay attention!

*Casey Lennon '18**Honorable Mention****A Winter's Day****Ella Jenkins '21*

Snowflakes flutter from the sky, blanketing the once harlequin world in a sheet of white. The proud pines bend in greeting as the gentle winter breeze caresses their bended branches.

Sunlight streams through the billows of clouds illuminating the sky in vermillion orange. Icicles drip into the snow, boring holes into the freshly fallen puffs.

The resident birds soar over the trees vanishing into the sea of clouds. Frost slowly travels until it reaches the windows, coating them in a silvery sheen.

Icy footsteps litter the ground, leading to a child's snowy fortress. Crisp air sends goosebumps across the young couple's linked hands. The songbirds' haunting melody echoes across the snowy wonderland.

But this beautiful wintry day cannot last forever as spring's first blossom patiently waits to ascend from the frozen earth.

*Autumn: College Style**Meghan Cook '19**Honorable Mention*

I can tell it's fall
 by the ever present leaves
 And the field to my back
 That was once full of wildflowers
 I remember being astonished by their beauty
 Pink and purple and free in the perfect way
 But don't worry,
 They'll come back again in time

There are silver railings
 At the perfect angle to
 To ride but still feel safe
 And the black scuffed streaks near the top
 Speak of stumbling and sliding and smiling

I can hear birds and flies and pages turning
 And the air that blows off the mountain
 Smells like wet leaves

White lines in the grass
 Almost make me want to run,
 But that would be ridiculous

The trees here are made to climb

*Creativity Everywhere**Victoria Jamison '20*

Laughing kids and happy teachers,
 Whiteboards marked and blackboards chalked,
 Lined up desks and pushed in chairs,
 Creativity everywhere.

Decorated classrooms and stickered folders,
 Floors clean and ceilings clear,
 Warm air rising and cold air falling,
 Creativity everywhere.

Easy tests and fun reviews,
 Homework scarce and carpets soft,
 Colored pencils and stylish pens,
 Creativity everywhere.

This is a place where I can never go back,
 Can you guess what it is?
 Elementary school,
 A place where creativity is everywhere.

Hannah Phillips
 '20



It's Raining Somewhere

Julia Craft '20

It was raining. It was raining, and it was cold; yet, there I sat on the side of the road. My hands trembled; my toes went numb; my head sunk down; and rain soaked my hair. I stared at the puddles that pooled at the sides of the road, seeping through my shoes and chilling my feet. Sitting there, I watched the ripples that spread from each droplet hitting the puddle's surface. The world around me looked like a blur of colors: each light from the city skyline faded; each headlight of a passing car was a spotlight in the darkened sky. All the usual sounds heard in the darkness, like crickets chirping or the rustle of a faraway bush, are silenced by the nullifying pitter-patter of the falling rain. So, it surprised me when I didn't hear the footsteps of the passing stranger or the quiet thump of him sitting down. I didn't hear his breaths, coming from his slightly heaving chest, or his erratic heartbeat, which thumped through his chest.

"What did they do to you?" The stranger I never heard, quietly questioned, without even a glance my way. Startled by the presence that was suddenly there, I yelped, shut my eyes, and jumped back a little bit, which is quite hard to manage, as I was sitting on a shallow curb.

"W-What?" I asked, so panicked by the stranger's presence that I didn't have time to register his question. I opened my eyes into little slits and looked at the stranger. It was a little boy, who looked about eleven or twelve. He had knotted, black hair, the biggest brown eyes, and a slightly crooked nose. He wore a tight childish grin and ripped jeans. His t-shirt had a faded Beatles symbol on it and was stained with what looked like chocolate. His grin was not one of ease, and there was a deep sadness in his eyes. I could tell, however, he had genuine kindness in his heart.

"What did they do to you?" The odd little boy sadly asked again.

"I-I'm terribly sorry, but I-I'm afraid I have no idea what you mean. Maybe you have me confused with someone else?" I suggested shyly, having no idea what to say. I had never seen this boy in my life, and he was more than likely just confused.

"No. I can't confuse you with anyone if I don't know you." He stated with an added pep to his tone.

"Oh," I muttered not really sure what the appropriate answer was. He was lost, or maybe he needed help, or maybe he was the ploy to lure me into a false sense of security, allowing someone to kidnap me. Idiot, I thought. You were sitting on the side of the road, so maybe he was just making sure you were okay. Yeah, yeah, that was it. If you saw some random person sitting upon the side of the road, you would be concerned too. Yeah, he was probably just concerned. I really needed to stop referring to him as "him."

"Hey, my name's--" I started.

"--I think it would be better if we didn't know each other's names." He quietly interrupted. "What I want to know is, what did they do to you?"

"Who are they?" I questioned back.

"They." He stated again, almost angrily.

"They who?" I asked again with an equal amount of anger.

"They: The ones that hurt you; the ones that cheated you; the liars; the thieves; the ones who broke your spirit and left it for dead. What did they do to you?" He questioned, trying to be calm about it. Anger and sadness were now present in his tone, but they didn't seem to be directed at me.

I laughed it off, trying to pretend I had no idea what he was talking about. I denied my heart access to those emotions; I buried them a long time ago. I denied any of what he said, pretending none of what he was talking about existed, pretending it was not real, pretending it was all his own imagination, and pretending it was all a joke.

"I-I..." I started, about to mention how I had no idea what he meant, or how he was just a kid who wouldn't know anything, or how he had no idea what he was talking about. I couldn't, though. I couldn't force the words off my tongue. I wouldn't do this anymore. No, I buried these emotions a long time ago. I tried to force them back down. I tried to push the images out of my head. No! You hear me, No! I will not! I can not! Suddenly, I was engulfed in warmth, pulling me out of the storm of my broken thoughts. The warmth was the boy. H-he's hugging me? Was something warm falling down my cheek? At first I thought it was rain, but then, I realized it was tears. All of a sudden, I felt sobs running throughout my body. I didn't even know I was crying.

“They’re gone now; it’s okay,” The boy whispered, trying to soothe me. “It’s going to be okay. Do you know how I know this? I know, because it’s raining somewhere.”

Gender Binary is Confusing and so am I

Elysia Davila '19

3rd Place Poetry

To the beautiful, empowered women
with tangled hair and glowing eyes,
how do you stare in the mirror each morning
picking your standard outfit,
your Victoria’s Secret bras two sizes too big
and \$80 v-necks to match,
without the fear that your chest will protrude just a bit too far?
how do you glance down, see nothing but cleavage, and think
“this is normal,
perfect,
me.”
and how are you able to go
more than one day
without having to remind yourself
“hey, i’m a girl.”
how is it just who you are?

To the confident, lighthearted men
whose masculinity defines their every move,
how do you stand so tall as you stare in the mirror,
shoulders back,
parting your gelled hair precisely 30 degrees to the left,
without insecurity?
how are you so sure that your masculinity will hold?
how do you let it envelop you so?
and how are you able to go
more than one day
without having to remind yourself
“hey, i’m a boy.”
how is it just who you are?

To the bulk of the population,
to the “babes” and the “baddies” and the “beauties”,
to the “dudes” and the “guys”
who just know,
how do you know who you are?

Tyler Perry '19

The Kitten

Victoria Jamison '20

Blue eyes darting,
Jaws parting,
The kitten uttered a meow.

Body stretching,
Paws racing,
It ran across the forest.

Paws scurrying,
Body hurtling,
Herself on top of a sibling.

Claws flying,
Teeth biting,
They tumbled down a hill.



60

Elizabeth Clement '18

1st Place Poetry

I am moving at 60 mph and 60,000 lives are passing by
 I do not know them
 I only see them
 But I weave together bits and pieces
 And I envision a story in my head

I see the small house on the side of the road with the old-swing set with faded yellow seats
 In my head I picture a family coming home from their weekly diner brunch
 In the old pickup truck with old paint
 The toddler running to the faded yellow seat
 Getting pushed by his mother who smiles at him with love as yellow as the swing-set and the sun

I see a woman in a small car in her scrubs
 From some hospital who has probably worked too many hours
 And seen too many things and is going home to eat too many pancakes that her husband makes because
 They love breakfast for dinner
 And watching tv on their far too old couch

I see a construction worker at the side of the broken road
 Asking himself why he decided to follow his dad into construction instead of college
 And just wants to go home and watch football with his buddies
 while eating grease-soaked pizza
 And complaining about his wife that never stops nagging him about the broken shower head

I see these people with their swing sets and scrubs and pizza stains
 And wonder if I am the girl in a red van
 With a mother who smiles at her like the sun
 And loves pizza with pineapple
 Or if I am just a face out of thousands
 Passing at 60 miles an hour

*The Twelfth Man**Timothy Horrell '21*

The season drags along
 Forever sitting
 Secluded, alone
 The twelfth man on a twelve man team

Picked last, played last
 Always last
 Robbed of opportunity
 The twelfth man on a twelve man team

Just do it, says Nike
 But there is nothing to be done
 The bench is my home
 The twelfth man on a twelve man team

Macy Zimmerman '19

There are two roads
 Chase my dream
 Or continue to be
 The twelfth man on a twelve man team

I strive to improve
 Eyes set on greatness
 Determined to succeed
 The tenth man on a twelve man team

Endless hours sacrificed
 A bargain with time
 A bargain won
 The seventh man on a twelve man team

Grit, willpower, perseverance
 Sweat raining down my face
 Stronger, faster, smarter, better
 The fifth man on a twelve man team

Assists arrived first, vision unmatched
 Rebounds, steals, blocks
 Hustle stats
 The third man on a twelve man team

Points eluded me,
 Like a cat and mouse
 For the basket and I disagreed
 The third man on a twelve man team

Seconds left, my head picks up
 Eyes scan the court
 Their defense, lockdown
 There is no option but to shoot

Time warps, my senses numbed
 I
 Missed
 For now I wish I could be

The twelfth man on a twelve man team.

Swatting Flies

Donald Ballou '18

3rd Place Creative Nonfiction

There aren't supposed to be a lot of bugs in late April or early May. The weather is still too rainy, too cold, too fresh for flies; and yet, there they were, buzzing and landing on the ceiling, chairs, and table of the hospice room.

The flies were so loud. Their presence made everything feel dirty, unclean. I felt dirty. Their grubby legs rubbing together as they stood upside down on the stucco ceiling gave the feeling that they had purposely tainted the air.

My mother sat in an indented corner of the room talking to my grandmother, where a booth stuck out and protruded the walls into the grass outside. It was actually very sunny out, but the sunlight had an awfully hard time invading the cool darkness of the room. The beams traveled about as far as where the indent of the little room joined the entire room, and the warmth didn't even reach there. It must've been a cool 65 degrees in that room. Everyone wore long sleeves, sweaters, or hoodies. When they got to the wall to the left of the door, across from the couch and chair on the opposite side, they all had to hug themselves from the cold.

My aunt was lying there; her head at the wall to the left of the door, feet pointing across to the couch and chair on the opposite side. She was asleep, as per the chemicals coursing through her veins. She slept more than she was awake, really. Every once in awhile she'd wake up either in a panic, crying about being able to hear her mother crying when she wouldn't even be at the hospice center, or in a giggle, speaking silly sentences that made absolutely no sense. We'd laugh along with her, until we realized her humor wasn't hers; it was the drugs'. Then our faces turned to a somber smile, not wanting to make her think about anything but her laughter.

Have you seen *Frozen*? The trailers for the movie had come out while my aunt was in the hospital, before her insurance cut her off and forced us to move her to hospice. She dearly wanted to see it, but didn't have the patience to wait until winter. In *Frozen*, Queen Elsa has magical ice powers, with pure white ice able to crystallize and spread around and about her. In real life, my aunt had a deadly disease; dirty black ice cracking and creeping out from her and darkening the the room. Everyone wore long sleeves, sweaters, or hoodies.

My brother and sister sat next to me on that couch across from my aunt. They don't like to talk in situations that are anything but happy and lighthearted. My brother has a natural talent to be able to make light of almost any situation, and he was trying his hardest in this room, even as we could feel the black ice thicken. He clutched a red fly swatter, and stood on the couch cushion and waved and slapped at the ceiling, dispersing the flies throughout the room. Dad bet him a nickel for every fly he killed, and he already flattened one or two. He made a game out of killing flies.

Eventually he bored himself and went out of the room to a little commons, where a kitchen and the rest of my family was. I was going to brush the cushion off from his feet, but a fly buzzing past my ear convinced me that it wouldn't make the room feel any cleaner. My sister followed, since she hated staying in the room. Sad things disturb her, I think. She isn't a sad kind of person. She expresses emotion either through happiness or anger. She didn't really know what to be angry at, I think, so she didn't know how to act. She was so stiff you would think she'd gotten frostbite. She speed walked out the door to meet our aunts, cousins and other grandparents. My aunt's daughter left the room for a minute, to either use the bathroom or get a drink, I believe. She never left the room for more than a couple minutes whenever she visited her mother. Our grandparents had to take her from home to hospice almost everyday after school. They didn't mind or complain; they would have come everyday even if her daughter's daughter wasn't in their care.

So, I sat on the couch and looked at my aunt, and looked at the bag of Reese's Minis we brought her on the little table next to the couch, and looked at my mother and grandmother talking, and thought of my cousin, and looked at the flies. My other aunt walked in and out of the room, in and out of the bathroom, constantly working. She was the primary caregiver. She never stopped working, and she never stopped giving all of herself to her sister.

My grandmother and mother left to go outside; after decades of being clean, my grandmother had taken up smoking again. Everyone could guess why, but no one dared to even mention her reappearing habit. Some cans of worms can be spotted a mile away. A lot of my family had taken up smoking since the last Thanksgiving, when we learned my aunt would be going to have a surgery that wasn't supposed to contain any life rupturing discoveries of masses within her abdomen, but did.

The primary caretaker asked for my assistance in aiding her with the patient, so I rose from the couch and went over to my aunts. I was in charge of standing by my aunt's side and notifying the primary caretaker if she happened to wake up. We were now between doses and she had to replace a catheter, I think. As my aunt rummaged around in the bathroom and I watched my aunt with unfocused, glossy eyes, swatting the air above her whenever a fly landed on her face, I heard an absolutely tremendous thud from the indented booth. My head jerked up and I saw a black ball fling off of the window, fall to the ground, uncurl itself into a bird, and then take off. I was so shocked that I didn't notice my aunt had woken up. The primary caretaker had reappeared and asked when my aunt woke up.

"Did...didn't you hear that?" The words stumbled out of my mouth awkwardly.

"What, honey?" the primary caretaker distractedly asked as she untucked blankets and heaved a load onto my open arms.

"The...there was a... a bird... It hit the window and it just..."

"Don, I need you to hold up her blankets."

"Yeah." I picked up the blankets, still looking at the window. My aunt made light mumbling conversation as the primary caretaker went through her duties, loudly talking back to her in a patronizing voice. I just stared at the window.

Once the job was done and I was thanked, I sat back down on the couch. I sat on the couch and looked at my aunt, and looked at the bag of Reese's Minis, and looked at the primary caretaker bustling around the room, and thought of my cousin, and looked at the flies.

I was very cold. I had to hug myself. The air conditioner must have kicked in, the primary caretaker's fast and deliberate movements generating too much heat to allow the ice to thicken. I watched my aunt sleep with her mouth agape, and realized that if she wasn't looped up, she'd probably hate being watched as she slept. But I had to watch her anyways. I had to look for cracks in the ice. I needed to see the cracks in the ice so badly, I was so desperate to see a glimmer of sunshine hit my aunt's bed.

My face bunched up and warmed. I shook a little bit and I took my eyes off my aunt. I took my eyes off the bag of Reese's Minis. I took my eyes off the primary caregiver.

I stood up and grabbed the red fly swatter and looked up at the ceiling.



Hannah Phillips '20

A Star-Crossed Rock and Star

Laura Henne '18

Honorable Mention

Moon:

The clouds blocked out any light shining from my radiance. I wonder if the humans down on Earth will ever see me through a possible break in the clouds tonight. Even though they can only see me during the darkness of night, while practically everyone is asleep, some still find the time to admire my everlasting beauty. I have even had humans and others try to land on my surface, which goes to show how much they love and care about me. But I only want to see her. She's so beautiful with all of her glowing heat and energy. What I would give to meet her one day in the future. I can only see and admire her from a distance, but when I do, I go insane. She's my world, my never ending ember of light. The most powerful star in the Universe, shining for me and only me. She's my fireheart, my sun.

Sun:

He's very mysterious. I casually see him revolving around the blue and green planet, a mere three planets away from me. The humans there call it "Earth." I want to say hello one day, but I know it won't happen. I'm the most powerful star in the whole entire space universe. Why could I ever love a piece of rock that orbits Earth? I'm insane. Obviously, we cannot be together. Too many planets need and rely on me. The people of Earth and other planets need me for survival. Even if we were ever to meet, I would obliterate him with my mere strength, energy, and light. But, perhaps there will come a time where I'll be able to see him up close and personal without killing him entirely. Be able to see all of the craters on his surface, the way that they cave in ever so slightly, showing his most vulnerable parts of him to me and only me.

Moon:

I never knew what drew me to her at first. Maybe it was the way she lit up the sky with those orange and red wavelengths. Or maybe it was the time that she led me out of the darkness that constantly orbited around me. She was my guiding light. As cliché as that might sound, it was the truth. There are parts of me that choose to forget the moments before I had met her. Some of them are too bad to recall, yet I think of the future. When the Universe is not the Universe anymore, but instead black and endless empty space, our souls will find some way to reconnect. But for now, I'm content with looking at the love of my life.

Sun:

I cannot remember the times prior to meeting him. People were scared of me. Others feared my presence. My outer core shines bright for everything surrounding me, supplying them with needed warmth and light. My exterior puts off a feeling of self-confidence and positivity and light, but no one knows what lurks beneath the surface. Feelings of loneliness find their way through the pores of plasma, which are released into space. Feelings of lost hope and dreams were existent, until the day my attention was drawn to my Earth's moon. He looked so sad and lonely, circling around and around, never stopping. He seemed to bleed darkness around him, almost radiating little to no light. Immediately my instincts kicked in and I began to shine brighter than I ever had in my entire existence. For once, I had found someone who shared the same feelings and emotions as I did. I was not alone.

Moon:

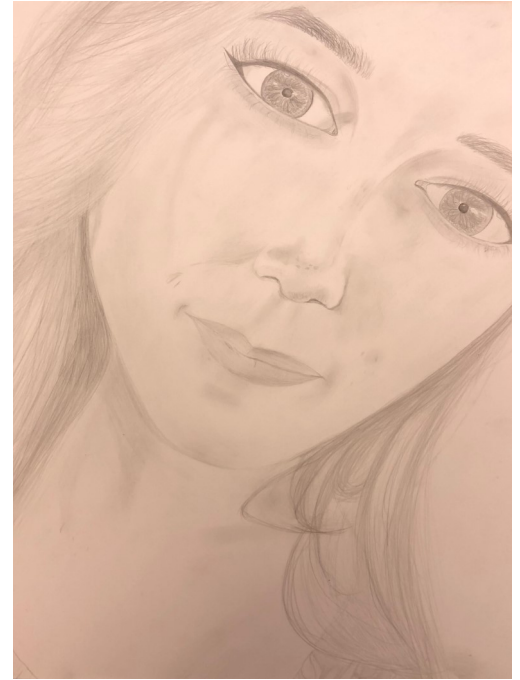
Her light gives me the strength and motivation to keep orbiting the blue and green marble, Earth. She reflects her light off to me, illuminating the night sky for people down on the ground. With her, I feel complete. She brought me out of my darkness, and now all I can see is light in front of me. She is my shining star in space. She's my Sun.

Sun:

My heart and my soul belong solely to him and him only. He is my Earth's Moon.

Purple
Skylar Renninger '20

Purple
 the color of comfort
 and soft lavender blowing in the cool spring breeze.
 The color of loyalty,
 of 5 o'clock sunsets when the sun fades beneath the horizon,
 of sparkling amethyst.
 The color of the cosmos and the unknown world,
 that bold lipstick you wish you could pull off,
 and mystery.
 The color that reminds me to take a step back and remember to



Remember
Julia Craft '20

Kassidy Swain '18

Do you remember our eyes meeting from across the room?
 Do you remember how long it took for me to actually say a word to you?
 Do you remember all your cheesy pick-up lines and shameless flirts?
 Do you remember how you made me laugh so hard with that joke?
 Do you remember our first date?
 Do you remember our endless midnight talks?
 Do you remember the moments we were alone?
 Do you remember our song that we slow danced to on the roof of the school?
 Do you remember when you captured my heart?
 Do you remember how those three small words made me fall into your waiting arms?
 Do you remember when you saw me fall apart?
 Do you remember what you said?
 Do you remember telling me you'd never leave?
 Do you remember how you tore me apart?
 Do you remember how your words destroyed the world I worked so hard for?
 Do you remember what you said?
 Do you remember the tears that appeared in my eyes?
 Do you remember longing looks from across the room?
 Do you remember watching me pull down the sleeves on my arms?
 Do you remember how I said I was fine when you asked how I was?
 Do you remember me having a bowed head in the hallways?
 Do you remember the last time our eyes met?
 Do you remember the haunting sadness that laid there?
 Do you remember staring into my cold lifeless eyes?
 Do you remember asking yourself?
 Why?
 Do you remember standing over my grave?
 Do you remember them lowering my casket into the ground?
 Do you remember all the words you said?
 That I was beautiful and wonderful?
 That I was the best thing that happened to you?
 Do you remember all the pain you put me through?
 Because I do.

Love With Love

Hannah Seltzer '18

Honorable Mention

I had trouble sleeping; I couldn't muster an understanding for the things I was feeling and my understanding of all things surrounding seems blurry. I had developed a relationship with my feelings, became best friends with my emotions, and attached to their sentiments. I indulged him in empty thoughts and meaningless banter, things you'd think all best friends should know; but what happens when your bestfriend gets a new best friend? Doesn't that make you an old friend? Well love has become my old friend; my best friend got a new best friend I guess you could say we just grew apart.

Love is a complicated subject; he is really someone you have to get to know. He doesn't like cold water or mint ice cream, he bites his lip when he's trying not to laugh. I made him laugh all the time. When he smiled he got this glimmer in his eyes, matched the one off his teeth. He chuckled at all those corny jokes and made fun of the snort in my laugh. I'd always punch him lightly on the arm when he joked about my braces. I was blissfully happy with love and we'd dream of being together. Love was amazing and I was head over heels in love with love. He treated me well. He called me beautiful every morning, told me I made him feel lucky. I felt lucky to be with love, always loving. He brought me a white tulip; they're my favorite. Just one. A smile grew between my eyes and rested under my cheeks. The apples of them flushed with joy and love looked me in the face and grinned. I giggled back and happiness poured from my eyes and into the air; love was amazing I'll say it a thousand times. Love was amazing. Could life get any better honestly?

Well, Love is fickle. He hated the way he looked without glasses and when I said he was handsome anyway he made crude jokes in disbelief. He never wanted to believe that he embodied perfect in my eyes and he always said he was fat. I cried, pleading to him to try to see my side but he grew depressed. Love became unloving and I had no more ambition to help him. He said he loved that I loved him; He still called me beautiful every morning but started to fall asleep before saying goodnight. I fought and I fought but love doesn't always conquer all, he really only did that to me. He held my hand on our way to my house and I smiled to myself thinking the good outweighed the bad. But did it? Could everything we've been through justify the way he acted. Of course it could. My love for love was so great I let it happen. I let him tell me he was too busy. I kept asking if he was alright and he insisted he was but when it came to holding me he just wasn't in the mood; when i said "i miss you" he said "you too". I said I loved him and he said he loves the person I am. He always caught me looking his way and wondered why I became so infatuated. He tried to play his feelings off as friendship after confessing he loved me. Love had a confusing way of trying to say I was nothing. He could have came right out and said it. He could have told me instead of letting me find out it was all a lie. Love was unloving once again and I wanted nothing to do with him. Yet I still loved love. I still wished that everyday I could text him and ask how he slept and he'd say "I would've slept better with you"

Love had a way of creeping under my skin and he never asked permission. His words trespassed in the restricted section of my heart and were only left off with a warning. He scribbled lines of poetry across my chest in erasable pen but those erasers don't work on skin. Love etched a broken heart into the skin below my chin so that every time I'd breathe I could feel it burning. He shattered glass beneath my feet so that trying to get to him wouldn't be as easy. I thought I could get used to not being good enough but not good enough eventually wasn't good enough for him. Even using me wasn't fun anymore.

Like I said, love is a complicated subject; He doesn't like being photographed in public or in private. He likes the color orange and buys stupid thing that are too expensive. His eyebrow twitches when he's thinking about something serious and his ears wiggle when he's making a joke. He always smiled when I smiled. It wasn't until I stopped laughing that I noticed his frown.

Dandelion in the Dark

Olivia Jenkins '18

I searched for you so very hard
 for I was to write a poem about something beautiful
 As the night sky snuck away with my vision
 I searched for you
 But the horizon was empty
 Empty
 But I knew you were there
 for there is no doubt that the soul can feel what the eyes cannot see
 So I found a new horizon
 more promising than the last
 But who knew that horizons could break their promises
 Empty
 My hope spread its wings
 and flew away into that empty horizon
 A single feather trailed behind
 Drifting
 Falling
 Landing with the slightest tremble
 Next to you
 so dull
 and ugly
 I was wrong
 There are no dandelions in the dark



Tiny Monotonous World

Skylar Renninger '20

Wake up.
 Make yourself presentable.
 Eat breakfast.
 Go to school.
 Eat lunch.
 Play your sport.
 Go to your club.
 Go home.
 Eat dinner.
 Do your homework.
 Rid away the dirt and grime of the day.
 Lay down in bed.
 Sleep.
 Repeat
 Repeat
 Repeat

Adriana Godfrey '20

Polka Dots and Chocolate Bars

Ellen Robinson '18

2nd Place Creative Nonfiction

"Hi! I'm Carlos," a chubby kid beside me declares.

Brunette hair curls over a round face. Hazel eyes gaze at me while thin lips tilt into a smile.

I stare at the lavender on my toe nails and press my thumbs together. "Hi," I reply.

Everyone at the party rushes to the changing rooms, but I stay at the bench, contemplating what I want to do.

"Ellen! Aren't you coming?" My friend beckons.

I follow.

I slide into my polka-dot bikini and wait. My friend calls for me, but I tell her to wait and that I'll be along soon. I never really wanted to go; I didn't feel well, but there I was in the changing room anyway.

The party-goers pile into the pool, venturing to the deep end.

I stand at the red-and-white buoys. The cold water surrounds me. I shiver.

Carlos notices my hesitancy, joining me. "Take my hand; it will be alright."

I cross my arms and slide my feet across the smooth bottom of the pool.

He stretches his hand toward me, palm toward the honey sun and fingers reaching in all directions.

My hand is pale against his tan skin, but he is warm and soft. I suppress a smile.

He blushes, guiding me under the buoys.

We line up, ducks behind their mothers, on the pool wall. My friend tells jokes and we laugh while I make side glances and small smiles to Carlos. I'm beginning to hope he likes me.

He promises me I won't drown so when treading water is too exhausting, I lay my hands on his shoulders to stay afloat.

The sun peaks in the sky, and my friend teases Carlos and I. We laugh, and she snaps a photo with her waterproof camera. He's standing with me on his back, smiling.

"I'll give you a chocolate bar if you go out with me."

"You can't be serious," I laugh.

"I am serious," he proves this by putting a stern look on his face.

"Alright, then we have a deal."

We laugh along with everyone who still thinks he is joking, including me.

The sky turns to burnt sienna. He holds me close; it's comforting, and I resist letting go. He carries me to the car and says goodbye.

Two weeks of messaging later, I fall and hit my head.

The first two months of our relationship is black in my memory. I try to piece together half-remembered images: a yellow rubber duck he won from a machine; the paper he used to ask me to be his girlfriend because he couldn't wait any more; the ticket from *Camp Rock: The Musical*; a red car that took us to the mall.

I cry in my best friend's car when I realize I cannot remember our first kiss.

I apologize to him, but he pulls me into his arms, taking a deep breath. "We were in Spirit Halloween, looking at costumes. You turned to me and said 'hey.' I looked at you, and you kissed me."

"I like that story," I whisper, snuggling deeper into his embrace.

Namoi Arnold '18



N/A

Aiden Gensure '21

The performance has not yet started
 The curtains are still closed
 The time of opportunity has almost begun
 Although it will not last long.
 The script may be pre-composed;
 But make the most of it:
 Add the unrehearsed
 Chant the unsung
 Speak the unheard
 Do what you may and do what you must.
 As the crimson curtain opens
 Remember that it can close in an instant
 In a moment lifework can be erased and forgotten
 Make the most of it.
 For the curtain now closes
 As it always has and always will
 And no man or woman can escape
 The all-restraining
 And all-ending
 Closing of the velvet curtain.

Allison Henwood '20

3rd Place Artwork



Puck

Hallie Jacobs '18

Mystical fairies of the night,
 take Flight.
 For the hour is nigh
 When I come to Fly
 And spread my Mischief
 for all to see.
 With a dash of magic,
 your eyes will close,
 and you will enter a realm
 only I can control.
 Throughout your Slumber,
 the challenges you face will
 be dire.
 But when Sunrise comes,
 I clean up what was done,
 and once you awake
 from your dream-like Trance
 You will never tire.

Big Bang

Alexis Szymczyk '19

Avery was incredibly satisfied with the mundane-ness of her life. She assured herself that she never secretly desires the sort of fantastical, impossible life her brother enjoys watching on TV and reading about. Monsters and supermen have no place in her world, her mind is free of magic and honorable battles to the death. Her imagination, she decided, can be as barren as she wishes it to be.

When the “thing” crashes, it’s branded a spaceship and her brother, her parents, her friends, all panic, taking motorcycles and cars and buses and boats and anything that still runs far away from the sight of their debree-dusted homes. They run away from the tiny forest that used to exist on the outskirts of their town, now flattened by a massive and strange object. Avery is not frightened. She does not imagine what the object might be. She accepts that “mundane” is now living sparingly out of pantries in empty homes and letting housepets out of latched doors and cages. She likes this new mundane, where she walks alone in streets full of slowly wilding animals, shadowed by the awkward jut of the foreign object blocking out the moon.

Of course, her new mundane is not without complications. The animals have become more mischievous the longer she’s alone, stealing her food and supplies. Currently, Avery is chasing a large raccoon running away with her small water storage bottle clamped between his teeth, like some sort of failed pirate. He’s making it difficult to follow, dodging branches and slipping under roots, and she picks up her pace, jumping over the errant fallen log and delighting in exerting herself. The dark and distorted reflection of her reddened face confronts her before she realizes how close they’ve come to the object. Undaunted and unwilling to lose her water bottle, she bends and wriggles through an oblong cutout in the wall, following the raccoons’ bristling tail, taunting her in the shadows ahead.

As soon as she pulls her second foot through, she’s plunged into darkness. She pauses to listen, hoping to hear the telltale sounds of scattering paws or clicking nails. Oddly, nothing reaches her.

The hairs on the back of Avery’s neck rise a half second before thousands of tiny touches light up her skin. A scream crawls out of her throat. The ground shakes. She tries to claw at her arms, absolutely certain she’s covered in bugs.

The feeling stops as abruptly when a tickle begins at the back of her mind. There’s a question in her head: Continue Previous Program? Seeing no other option, she tells the itchy sensation “yes” and is hit with a barrage of data that somehow makes her head hurt only slightly less than when she fell off the school’s roof in fifth grade and landed herself with a concussion and minor head trauma.

A high tone sounds and slowly, very slowly, she’s able to sort the data into a manageable picture. Tiny galaxies are blossoming from the outer walls of her ship, slowly expanding and drifting further away into blank space. She can count every star, planet, and nebula as they morph and mature, each of their gravity’s pulling her ship along. She drifts after the largest galaxy, the third oldest, spewing new life this way and that. Suddenly content, she lets her personal universe grow as she marvels at its size and beauty, a nonpareil in the blankness.

The tone sounds again, abruptly, as a developing planet takes up her sensors. She lets its personal complexity overtake her, crackling magma swiftly morphing into raging seas and then sprouting landmasses and frolicking life. The tone sounds again, somehow more insistent, and the ship lurches forward. She is too close. The ship is crashing.

Again, the tone sounds, and she finally recognizes it as a warning. A piece of the hull rips away and her eyes are blinded by light and color for the first time in eons. Her skin smolders. Closer, closer, she barrels towards the planet’s surface as viridian landmasses shift beneath her, faster than her eye can follow.

When she is no less than a few thousand feet away she’s hit with a moment of familiarity. A small forest and a tiny town with close-drawn houses: doesn’t she know that town? She decides, moments before the trees engulf her, that it must be her imagination.

Restaurant Sounds
Ellen Robinson '18

Hello, how may I help you? High E bubbling over southern accent.

I'll have eight nuggets and a chocolate milkshake, please. Shy mouse squeaks.

Cashier's hard lip line smudges like oil painting smiles. Hands me white cold cup. Blonde hair trapped in ashy black cap. Seafoam eyes waiting. *Next.*

Family of four. Big Mother. Small Father. Two tiny Toddlers. *Mommy, can I have-- No. Daddy, can I have-- No.*

How may I help you?

Stare. Empty countertop. Beeping ovens. Whirring machines.

Order #57 ready! Says Brunette Freckled Girl to Cashier. Hands me food.

Big Mother orders. Booms like earthquakes. Shrills like flutes. *Three twelve piece chicken nuggets and three large fries please.*

Walk to table. Cringe as chair squeals. Children laughing. Black and white film conversations.

Did you hear the accident on the news? Child tone with briefcase voice.

Did you catch the game? Child tone with briefcase voice.

Cashier and Brown Hair Girl sit at table beside me. Complain. *Why are all the customers so bitchy today?*

Toddler cries. Big Mother hushes.

Older Woman drops food. Tray clatters. Apologies. Shivering in their own sounds. Voice like mine.

The Last Page

Macy Zimmerman '19

Don't judge a book
by its cover.

Make sure to give
the torn pages a chance
to tell a story.

Run your finger along
the words written in ink.

You may just find
a character

that makes you laugh,
that makes you cry.

This character might just make you
love them so deeply
that you feel as if you know them
inside and out.

You will be inspired.

You will feel empowered.

You will fall in love
with the character's reality
and just like that,
it'll be over.

The cover you judged
will have been forgotten
and instead,

instead, you're sitting on your bed
tears in your eyes,

wishing that your
favorite character's story wasn't
over yet.

Abigail Bentz '20

Honorable Mention



*Stinkbug Morning Song**Mr. Timothy Megford*

It's spring, you jerk.
 Your radiators are cold and the sun dries
 The net curtains, drawn back to remember the world.
 Through snowmelt mulchdamp
 The nosy fibrous sprigs of
 Crocus fingers point towards the warmth, while
 Birds in noisy protest groups call
 With renewed vigor for better days.
 The hum of life, so long on bitter idle
 Finds a gear, and the mesh engages
 In a glow of forward movement
 And all are pulled in irresistible waves
 On the optimistic request.

Except, it seems, for you —
 You grump-fed ronyon drudge.
 Where lies your spring-fed lake
 Of warmth when I — with coarse dark
 Dry-buzz wings take flight around
 Your table lamp? Is there no joy
 Left for my busy, boxy body?
 No spring left for me, who Crawled through your brickwork and
 Rustled click-clawing through the plaster gaps?
 I guess not. In the midst of life
 I am in death, my dun gut dryness
 Not sorting with the green damp of your Spring growth
 And so —
 I must go, I suppose.
 My dust-brown carapace popped in
 A glob of foul-smelling decay.

Serves you right.