



**VOLUME 64**

**CANUCKLING  
2019**

**THE  
CREATIVE  
MANIFESTO**





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# **THE CREATIVE MANIFESTO**

**VOLUME 64**

**THE LITERARY-ART MAGAZINE**

**OF**

**NORTH PLAINFIELD HIGH SCHOOL**

**34 WILSON AVENUE**

**NORTH PLAINFIELD, NEW JERSEY 07060**

# **CANUCKLING**

# **2019**

**AMERICAN SCHOLASTIC PRESS ASSOCIATION**

**FIRST PLACE 2018**

**COLUMBIA SCHOLASTIC PRESS ASSOCIATION**

**GOLD MEDALIST AWARD 2018**



North Plainfield High School was founded in 1896. Its first graduating class boasted three students. Many residents of North Plainfield and the neighboring town of Plainfield had favored the merger of the two communities, an annexation idea paralleling United States-Canada theories in vogue at the time. With North Plainfield located just north of the brook, it was popular to refer to the community as "Little Canada." Thus, high school students became known as the Canucks, and the school adopted a bearded lumberjack as its mascot.

The *Canuckling* magazine, though not quite as ancient as the school, was first published in 1955 in hardcover with Ms. Marie O'Brien as the General Adviser and Ms. Frieda T. Bockius as the Art Director. We are proud to be a part of this tradition, now celebrating our sixty-fourth anniversary year, as we graduate a class of approximately 200 bright, talented students.

*(Photo by Kristyn Rosen.)*



# **2019 CANUCKLING STAFF**

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Mr. John DeLaurentis  
English and Creative Writing Teacher

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Mobalaji Falowo, Literary Editor  
Veronica Vega-Diaz, Literary Editor  
Jasmin Guillen, Photographic/Art Editor  
Daisy Cifuentes, Photographic/Art Editor

Staff:  
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Leslie Andaluz  
Tiffany Chacon  
Cynthia Contreras  
Brian Eugenio  
Julissa Jacome  
Karla Ramos  
Katherine Sandoval  
Amaya Nicole Shallo  
Adam Stevens

Special Thanks to the English department



## **Policy**

*Canuckling* invites all students of North Plainfield High School students to submit original works of literature and art. Students may submit work to the English teachers, or directly to the advisers throughout the school year. All submissions are catalogued and subsequently judged for content and form on an anonymous basis by the editorial staff. The staff meets on Thursdays to read and select submissions. Every effort has been made to ensure originality. Each student may submit as many pieces as he or she wishes. We ask that students place their name and grade on the back. Submissions may not be returned. It is the hope of the staff that the magazine is representative of the creative talent of North Plainfield High School.

## **Colophon**

*Canuckling 2019*, the literary and art magazine of North Plainfield High School, was printed with a press run of 200 copies on 28# laser stock and bound by GMPC Printing of Clifton, NJ. The software used for the layout of the *Canuckling* is Microsoft Publisher. The font types used in this issue are AR Darling, Berlin Sans FB, and Ebrima.

## **Cover**

Jasmin Guillen, a sophomore, drew the illustration on the cover with pencil. The piece is titled, "Barcode."



# BLAST FROM THE PAST

From Canuckling 2009: *Journeys through Expressions*

## Jealousy

Emily Anne Giambalvo

I'm jealous of the sun,  
Who's always encouraged to shine.  
I'm jealous of the rain,  
That strokes each tender vine  
I'm jealous of the flowers,  
That always know when to bloom.  
I'm jealous of the butterflies,  
Who fly so free at noon.

I'm jealous of the wind  
That always blows so free  
I'm jealous of the evergreen,  
The ever-flourishing tree.  
I'm jealous of the stars,  
Who always shine so bright.  
I'm jealous of the moon,  
That gets to stay out all night.

I'm jealous of the rainbows,  
Who are sought after by all.  
I'm jealous of the full-grown bird,  
That never have to fall.  
I'm jealous of the storm clouds,  
Always allowed to grieve.  
I'm jealous of the mountains,  
Who never have to leave.

I'm jealous of the rivers,  
How they always skip and run.  
I'm jealous of the animals,  
Who always manage to have fun.  
I'm jealous of the waterfalls,  
Who run so strong with power.  
I'm jealous of the baby deer,  
As innocent as a flower.

I'm jealous of all these things  
Because it's clear to see,  
How easy it is to be them  
And how hard it is to be me.



# NPHS ALUMNUS SPOTLIGHT

Abraham Guillen, NPHS-Class of 2018

*What are the reasons why you like to express your thoughts through creative writing?*

I like expressing my thoughts through creative writing because out of everything I do, writing helps me figure myself out the most. It's a way to let things out and even grow as a person sometimes. My writing has been changing over the years with me, and I hope it's always for the better.

*What is the most important lesson you have learned about the writing process?*

Revision. Revising your work is very important in the writing process. Brainstorming and attempting new concepts are important as well, but revising is what can make something interesting into something profound. It is always important to pour the best of yourself into all things, and writing is no different. Revising helps make sure that I'm doing just that.

*In what ways do you think poetry plays an important role in today's society?*

Everything is busy and hectic with the easy access of information and unfathomable connection speeds. I'm sure that not many people appreciate poetry, but I'm sure many people today still find it as something worthy of their time. I'd like to think people still value poetry, especially as a means to step back from all the craziness of today and reflect.

*What do you think of the publication process when it comes to seeing your work in print?*

I'm not comfortable with publishing my work, but I do realize how important publishing pieces are in becoming a writer. Money is a thing and it's an important thing, however that's not why publishing is so great. Throughout the publishing of writing, creators of all sorts of work will find that not every publisher is into what they pour their soul into, or that they can help the writer realize that they aren't doing that. The process of publishing can serve as a reality check I guess.

*As an alumnus of North Plainfield High School and being published in the Canuckling literary-art magazine of NPHS, what advice would you give to those currently involved in the creative writing process?*

Become comfortable with yourself and all the words you write down. Grow with them and steadily become more succinct along with those words of yours, as well. Time really doesn't wait for anyone so you shouldn't wait around much either.

*Any final thoughts?*

Make sure to write for your own reasons. Everything happens for a reason, so writing is no different. Make the most of it like anything else and have fun, in moderation of course.



**“Hands”** by Jasmin Guillen (Pencil Drawing)

(Jasmin Guillen is in tenth grade. She loves to involve herself in creative hobbies such as writing, art, and fashion design. )





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# MELANCHOLIC MOMENTS



**“Blooming Cranium”** by Jasmin Guillen  
(Pen Drawing)

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# What Is Life With No Time?

Nico Pucciarelli

When time holds you close and dearly inside  
And you see your fate right in front of you  
We forget our lies and show our true side

We tell our lovers our feelings with pride,  
Go to places we couldn't when alive  
When time holds you close and dearly inside

No more slack, our work ethic amplified  
Take off our masks in front of other's eyes  
We forget our lies and show our true side

Every war and fight will promptly subside  
Force ourselves to achieve, with no more doubt  
When time holds you close and dearly inside

Show our bulbs by putting our shades aside  
Show all folds when opening our blankets  
We forget our lies and show our true side

Some can't live with it, even if they tried  
Others will find sentimentality  
When time holds you close and dearly inside

We see everyone's homicide defined  
But don't shame since we somewhat act the same  
We forget our lies and show our true side

The one time and day we'd most want to hide  
No matter where the circumstances lie  
When time holds you close and dearly inside  
We forget our lies and show our true side

(Nico Pucciarelli is in twelfth grade. He likes creative writing because he does. He's a filmmaker, and thinks he makes videos for living, but doesn't actually make any money off of it. Check out Pixel Tree on YouTube and follow @pixeltreephoto on Instagram.)



# **Wash Away**

Abraham Guillen, NPHS Alumnus-Class of 2018

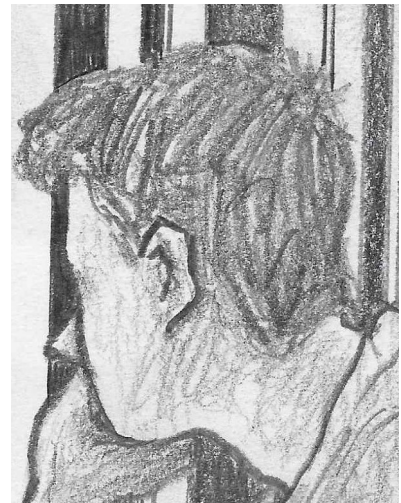
It bothers me where everything goes  
Animals skimper between restless walls  
Leaves release battered by waves of wind  
How much time has passed again  
Since I've hung out with some friends  
Oh how it bothers me where everything goes  
Where did the time go  
Where did the smiles go  
Where did everything go  
I need a quiet place to lie down in  
But there is no space within a cluttered mind  
Where did the time go  
Is there an ocean beyond the waves  
Beyond the waves where does everything go  
Where does everything wash away

Everything's an hourglass  
Everything a shattering vase  
Vague shameless mirror possessing a shaking base  
Weak to sound it easily breaks  
Wondering why, how time has escaped  
While twiddling bitten thumbs  
Occupying even the sturdiest of minds  
It bothers me  
Where everything exits  
'Cause sometimes they decide to hold up in  
Most hopeful of beginnings

It bothers me where everything goes  
It bothers me where everything goes  
Beyond the waves, is there an ocean  
Spiraling thoughts smash drums with some  
Sticks that use to be bones  
Where does everything go

Where does everything go  
Bloodstreams empty into an echoing infinity  
Frantic eyes race before a scattered brain  
Each response dissolved into a  
Black painted greeting  
"Hello, hello."  
"Hello?"  
"Where does everything go?"  
"No, no, I'm fine how are you-"  
"But where does it all go?"  
"Where does it go?"

Hiding behind closed, sinking eyes  
A fear rustling is not one  
Of being afraid of dying  
But what comes after the great precipice  
Of the unknown  
Where everything goes  
Beyond  
Shores of plastic  
Dreams imagined  
Waves of incomprehensible bombast  
Efforts dumbfounded  
Before a daunting conclusion  
That it will just wash away  
Its only home a gentle obscurity  
Treating all the same despite their names  
An ending limp, lame  
Nothing  
Washing away



(Abraham Guillen graduated North Plainfield High School in 2018. He has poems published in previous issues of the *Canuckling*. Be sure to read our interview with him on page 8.)



## **Dear Sadness**

Amaya Nicole Shallo

You make the tears fall out of my eyes. You take away my breath and pound hammers on my chest. You scribble my thoughts until the pen spilled overflowing ink. It spills all over my brain and now my brain is drowning. You make it feel like those happy memories were all hallucinations. The only thing I can focus on is you, oh Sadness. You make me feel like I am fighting for my own body. Sadness, your taste is the medicine I hate to taste. The type of medicine that will make me feel better after the spoon full sip.

## **Underneath**

Amaya Nicole Shallo

The same person wrapped in a present  
Under all those layers  
Unraveling  
And after all that,  
There is a chest  
With its own key  
Locked inside.

(Amaya Nicole Shallo is in ninth grade. She prefers to be called by her nickname Amai. She may look like your average girl, but she is more than that. She writes her own poetry and songs, rarely does photography, but when she does, it will be the greatest things your eyes will ever look at. She'll also beat your butt at videogames. )



# Barbed Wire

Jasmin Guillen

Unknown people, but all the same  
Born to live, the game has begun  
The rules are set  
We never cross the barbed wire

Death in harmony, just like the choir  
We all live by our wits, or else we're done  
Tear the skin, form a new face  
It's our name, you can fact this  
Don't call us anything, but plastic

We live in a TV show  
Holding cameras in our hands  
Putting on costumes to live our lives  
But one has crossed the barbed wire

They do not wear the sheep's clothing  
Torn to shreds by their words  
You cannot be you  
You have to be me  
So they rip your skin  
Rename themselves plastic





## **Expectation**

Ashley Dawsey

So what do you see when you look at me?  
Is it a porcelain doll without mind?  
I see a girl lost in the deep blue sea.  
But my soul is bound and my eyes are blind.  
Expectation is swallowing me alive.  
I am being dragged into a whirlpool.  
I sink deeper because of all the lies.  
The start of this uncontrol is at school.  
I see the disappointment in their face.  
It is killing me slowly but surely.  
But I must learn how to live with some grace.  
So I'll unbound my soul and heart purely.  
Happiness will give me a peaceful life.  
Expectation will never get me twice.

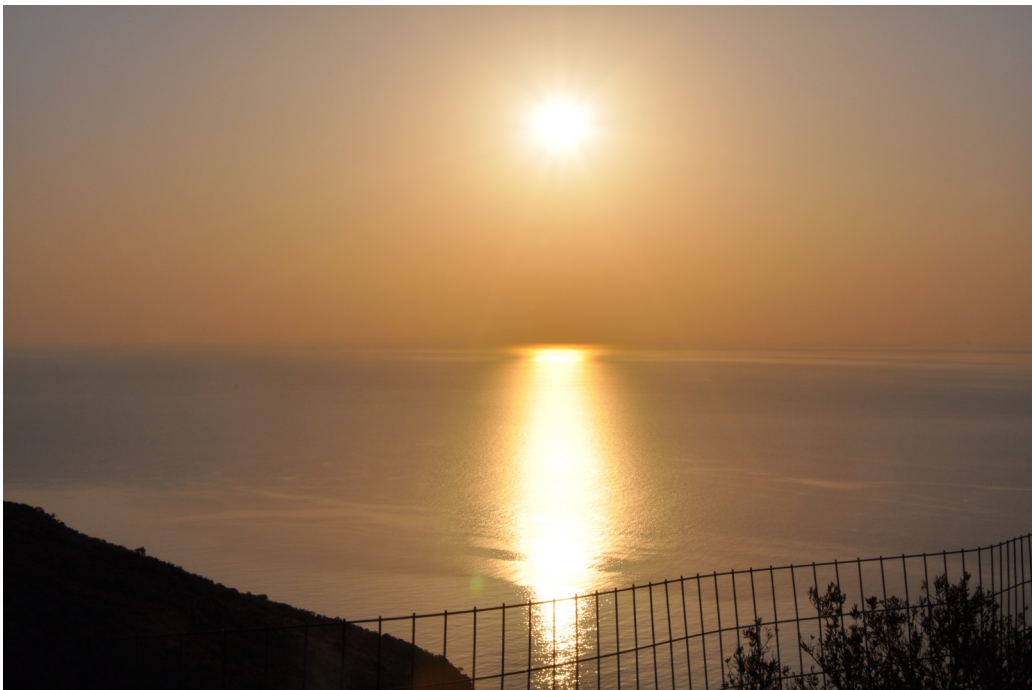
(Ashley Dawsey is in tenth grade. She is in the ROTC program and is a part of the drill team. She loves pineapple pizza and most carnival foods. She is in the Creative Writing class to express her deepest thoughts and hopes to inspire others through her work.)

# Eyes

Isaiah Medina

What is the window to a human soul?  
Eyes give rise to many theories of  
How can an object even darker than coal  
Be as beautiful as mourning doves  
As bright as the sun, as dark as the moon  
Spectacles often accompany  
For gazes only the blind are immune  
Your effects as loud as a timpani  
Your gaze as powerful as a spell  
Commanding crowds with powerful looks in  
Seconds, minutes, without much effort  
Canals and streams crisscross within  
The beautiful world could never be seen  
Without the deep dark circle with a gleam

(Isaiah Medina is in eleventh grade. As he spends his time unwisely, he is completely submerged in music and writing. Follow his music page @DaBlackBean.)



**“Eye in the Sky”** by John DeLaurentis (Adviser) (Digital Photo)



# **Woven Cloak**

Jkhia Gaskin

She wore loneliness like a woven cloak  
As blood trembled through the lace of her skin  
Sanity tripped over each word she spoke

Lines blurred between dark ash and heavy smoke  
While she stood silent, amongst her vast sins  
She wore loneliness like a woven cloak

Shielded from the flames, her heart would not choke  
But love could not flourish entwined in silk  
Sanity tripped over each word she spoke

It tainted the very word in which she awoke  
Ruined by time and laden with guilt  
She wore loneliness like a woven cloak

To keep the stars from falling, to stay afloat  
To remain contained, and safe within as  
Sanity tripped over each word she spoke

She carried the weight of her heart alone  
As she mourned her broken blood-stained limbs  
She wore loneliness like a woven cloak  
Sanity tripped over each word she spoke

(Jkhia Gaskin is in ninth grade. She likes to sleep, listen to music, and draw. She likes the Creative Writing class because it allows her to learn new things about writing.)

## Haiku Poems

Jkhia Gaskin

*{ Honey }*

Honey on her lips  
The sunshine blesses her eyes  
As her hands fall limp

*{ Hands }*

Wild hands reach for mine  
Gentle, they sway side by side  
"Honey," the girl sighs

*{ Home }*

You really should go  
Down the hall out, out the door  
Please, please go on home

*{ Walk }*

Walk with me, feel free  
Walk to the city with me  
Walk until you bleed

*{ Dark }*

Melt the moon for me  
Float amongst the unlit stars  
Silent, in the dark

*{ Storm }*

Quiet the cold storm  
Stare into cloudy eyes  
Wait, for she still cries

# Truth in Time

Jonnathan Josias

Thinking back to my childhood  
I played games all the time  
And everything I did was good  
Before all of the lies

I used to be a very good kid  
I was pure in every single way  
Now I have changed and for the worse  
I'm dirty all over

But is there still time to become new  
Now all the days fly by  
I am now running out of time  
I only want to cry  
But I do not even have time  
Now all the stars fly by  
Now being happy is a crime  
I'll find strength if I try

I remember being a little kid  
And I thought the world was a safe place  
And then I heard about suicide, homicide  
And racism



I used to think life would be simple  
I used to think that I could grow to be what I wanted to  
But now I know  
As I grow that's not how life is

I wish time would reverse so that I could go back to the fun times  
As I walk to a new future  
I'm forced to have my back turned  
I am not able to see  
All the things that made me happy  
Time just continues to pull back its hand  
Pulling me out of my dreamland  
Pain comes with passing time

Time is what I'm desperately chasing  
Because it's the one thing that I want to keep with me  
Without my younger days with me  
It would be as if I have nothing

As I look down the horizon  
I see a small boy  
And that boy is me  
Before time had abandoned me  
As time runs further away from me  
I start to change majorly  
Will I find truth in time

(Jonnathan Josias is in ninth grade. He likes sports, eating, and sleeping on the weekends. He likes to write because it expresses creativity that can't be shown just in speaking.)

# ABSOLUTE IN DOUBT



**“Angelic Peering”** by Josselyn Maliza (Drawing)

# Absolute in Doubt

Tiffany Chacon

We met because of a track  
meeting at the weakest point of our life  
Our past held us back  
Despite it all, we had each other  
Never had a strife  
But you aren't like a brother  
Month after month pass  
We always walk  
We take each other to class  
But we don't talk  
You said you loved me  
I always said it too  
To me you're as beautiful as the sea  
To you I'm a pebble in your shoe  
All the things you've said  
Will stay inside my head  
I began to think a lot  
All those fights I fought  
You told me to keep my head high  
I promised to never pout  
When you finally say goodbye  
I'll be absolute in doubt

(Tiffany Chacon is in tenth grade.)

(Previous page: Josselyn Maliza is in  
twelfth grade.)



## ***Love Story—Take 2***

### **A Reimagined Ending to the Erich Segal Classic Novel**

Jehosafat Melendez-Saucedo

"Do you know whose fault it is?" I asked, not mincing any words.

"No one's," replied the good doctor.

"I beg your pardon?" I asked confused.

"There is no fault, Oliver. The reason I called you here is to tell you, and I talked to Jenny earlier too, that everybody is fine. My nurse only screwed up the lab results. We thought that Jenny had leukemia, but after we ran the tests again, everything turned out fine. I just didn't want you to be worried, and I wanted to give you the good news in person."

The news hit me like a bucket of cold water on a hot summer day. I had been so worried thinking something was wrong that now that I knew everything was fine, I felt refreshed. I knew I had to see my wife, and I wanted to surprise her. I called my office and told them I had to go home for the day since I wasn't feeling well. I picked up some roses on my way home, and I couldn't wait to see Jenny's face. I arrived at home, and Jenny was there playing the piano. She turned around and saw me, and she looked rather surprised.

"So you know then?" she remarked sarcastically.

"Know what?" I asked, as I didn't know what she thought I knew.

"Dr. Sheppard didn't tell you?" Jenny asked, and I shook my head.

"No, he just told me that everything was okay, that we were both fine. What did he tell you?"

I started to worry again. Was something wrong and he told her and not me? Why would he do that? Maybe I'm the sick one and he told her not to tell me.

"Let's just say that if you think you would be a better father than Oliver Barrett III, this is your chance," said Jenny, and I couldn't tell if she was serious or not, and then I figured it out. Before I could say anything, Jenny added, "Oh, I'm pregnant."

I don't exactly remember how I felt, happy of course, I mean we were going to start a family, but also worried, because thanks to Jenny, I was also thinking that I didn't want to be like my father.

I must've been silent for a while thinking, as Jenny then said, "Well, say something at least."

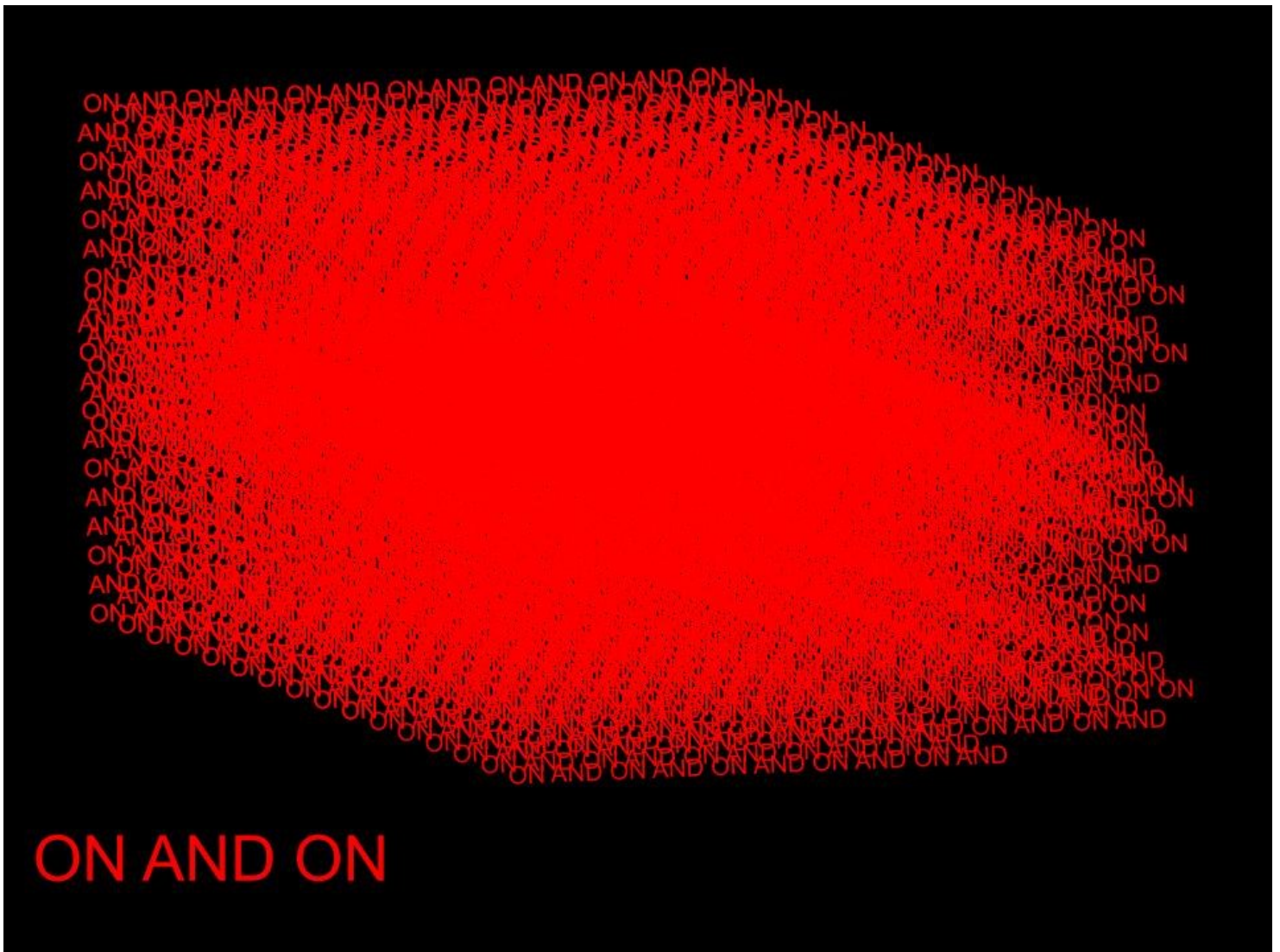
I don't know why, but then I responded, "Bozo Barrett is coming?"

Jenny rolled her eyes and nodded, "Yep, Bozo Barrett is coming."

I then ran to Jenny, and hugged her very tight, and I knew that my life was better than ever. As I hugged her, she whispered in my ear, "I love you Oliver Barrett IV."

"I love you, too."

(Jehosafat Melendez-Saucedo is in tenth grade.)



**"On and On"** by Adam Stevens (Computer Created Graphic)

(Adam Stevens is in ninth grade.)

# Insecurity

Amaya Nicole Shallo

each and every day you're away  
what if your loyalty doesn't stay with me  
I want to trust, but it's hard to trust when you're insecure  
Remember you're welcome to my door  
am I just as welcomed to yours?  
or will I be shut out

I'm sorry I can't control my doubts  
if you were to shut me out  
the only time you'll let me back in  
is when you have a drought

you've trapped me to you  
and I'm not ready to let go  
cause I'm not ready to be free  
or am I just that insecure?

O' Yeah...  
I am because I'm the one who closed the door  
I'm the one who shut you out  
so you wouldn't see my doubt  
written all over the expression of my face  
and you wanted to come in to fix my drought  
I still continued to lock you out each and everyday  
I'm inside my room hiding from you, one of my many fears

I want to tell you  
how insecure I am  
you might get mad  
you might hate me

but it's my fault the trust we use to have, faded away  
slowly faded each and everyday  
than one day you sadly walked away

# Lost and Found

Christina Aguilar

She wandered through the night searching  
Leaves flying everywhere  
Her mind raced with uneasy thoughts  
This was like a nightmare

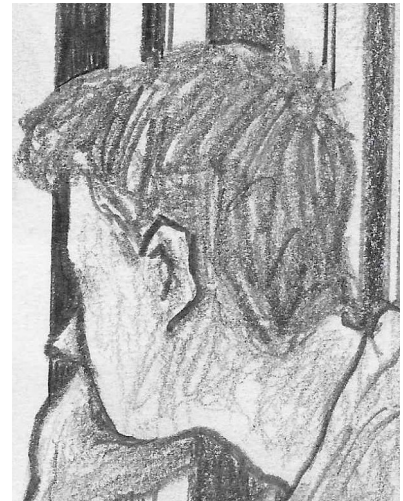
Thoughts of dying made her worry  
Where on Earth was her child?  
Did she have to run off like that?  
These thoughts made her wild

Maybe it was something she said  
Was her child locked away?  
How could she let this happen?  
Would she wait until day?

She stopped and let out a big huff  
Alas, 'twas getting late  
She turned around and walked back home  
She would just sit and wait

She longingly headed to warmth  
For it was a bitter night  
She hoped she would find her daughter  
The cold began to bite

She entered the house, mouth agape  
Before her was her daughter  
Sitting there on the couch sleeping  
She was there unbothered



(Christina Aguilar is in tenth grade. She loves chicken tenders and fries. Her favorite show is *Bob's Burgers*, and her favorite character is Tina, obviously. She loves creative writing because she loves writing unique pieces that entertain others.)





## **Peace**

Jonnathan Josias

Has a fight ever lasted through the night  
There is no question why the punches land  
But that does not mean that it is all right  
Therefore it should immediately end  
Or the cannons will continue to blast  
Destroying everything in its path  
And it will create more pain that will last  
Also no one will be getting the last laugh  
So can we finally just have some peace  
Because no one would get the victory  
Can we at least have all the violence cease  
So that the future could have a story  
We should not fight just for all the glory  
Because in the end we will just feel sorry

# **I Spy**

Isaiah Medina

If we playin' I spy  
Then my inner eye spots a nebula  
I see amazin' things on a regular  
But is it really what I see  
Or are my eyes playin' tricks on me  
Until the day I transcend time and space  
And take my place among the stars  
I'll be locked up by metaphorical prison bars  
Anotha day  
The same routine  
So most of the time I lay  
And think about my big dreams  
I get them inner visions like Stevie  
No wonder  
Once I catch drift of a small thought  
I steal it, like thunder  
And I spin the idea to words  
And the words get weaved into a tapestry  
I'll fill the syllables to capacity  
Then I'll put my art out into the galaxy  
So hopefully  
They'll remember me  
And one day they'll honor my legacy  
Real talk  
Before I go, I don't want to wake up from this dream  
The real world ain't nothin like it seems  
When you view it through a TV screen  
The glitter and gleam is all good  
But remember to see the things that can't be unseen

# Life

Tiffany Chacon

Things always happen  
Problems are gateways  
But we can't talk about that, can we?  
Arguments lead to murders  
But who cares, right?  
Men and women are always being raped  
But nobody talks about the men  
They're the ones who are supposed to like it  
And we don't talk about the women because they're just supposed to take it  
But who cares, right?  
Racism is still an issue  
People being killed for their skin color  
People being kicked out of the place they had to move to for protection  
Just because they cannot pronounce a word correctly  
But that doesn't matter, right?  
Children are being ripped from their parents  
Just because their parents were in a rush to find a safe place for their child to grow up  
Children are being murdered and raped by the old men that stalk them  
when they walk home  
But we can just ignore that, right?

Homosexuals, lesbians, transgenders and bisexuals are constantly fearing their lives  
As they walk outside and get derogatory terms thrown at them  
For something that isn't their choice  
They fear walking outside  
Because they don't want to die  
But it's not normal to defend them, right?  
Teenagers are afraid to live their lives  
Because they're afraid to speak out on what happens  
And they're afraid of being falsely accused of something they haven't done  
Teenagers are told they cannot understand something because "they have not lived"  
But many of them deal with depression and other illnesses  
Things like this lead them to suicide  
But let us blame social media  
And act as if they aren't humans either  
Problems are everywhere  
We can't escape them  
But the unaffected people still have the audacity to say  
That life is beautiful





# Of Beauty

Jkhia Gaskin

I'm walking on a razor-thin, fine line  
A battle between those of old, and those of new  
A war that has been fought repeatedly through time  
One where I've been silenced, denied every right to be true  
To love, and be loved carelessly without prying eyes  
It's scary I know, for you to believe otherwise  
But to live freely, to be heard and to thrive  
Should never be mercilessly criticized  
Our hearts should be able to falter, and stagger at the sight  
Of beauty we see in someone despite the fear that haunts us at night  
Of the beauty in someone, we're forbidden to admire  
Of the beauty in someone society said was wrong to like



**“Frozen Beauty”** by John DeLaurentis (Adviser) (Digital Photo)

**“Barcode”**  
By Jasmin Guillen  
(Pencil Drawing)









# REMINISCENCE



**“A Quiet Reflection”** by Jasmin Guillen (Oil Pastels and Colored Pencils)

# Autumn Morning

Abdon Andahur

Mother rises and father rests,  
Continuing their tango,  
Her round face illumines, pale blue,  
Whilst his is bright, like a mango

As she rises, I'm freefalling  
Into Morpheus' black clouds  
The earth takes me in loving arms  
A veil, cover, a shroud

Father rises and warm tan brews,  
The robins singing clear  
The squirrels prancing in open air,  
When there is no such thing as fear

Onward to food on the table  
There's people all around  
We eat and drink, merry and gay,  
And the world drones with sound

The new day begins, a fresh start,  
And off to work and play,  
We humans go, our joy we show,  
Until Mother rises again

Good night little ones, you've had your fun,  
And now the day is finally done,  
A pale faced lady dominates bombastic mango  
And Mother and Father continue their tango

(Abdon Andahur is in ninth grade. When he's not sleeping, cooking, or practicing witchcraft, he can be found writing! He has written poetry of all kinds, and is currently working on an album.)

# The Power of the Game: A Football Memoir

Zubair Ahmad

FOOTBALL GAME AT 3!!!! LET'S KILL THEM!!!

We are not brutal people; we are simply expressing our need to win at all costs. The New York Giants are playing the Buffalo Bills, their most hated opponent. I had this game circled on the calendar since two months ago. The thermometer on this Monday night read 46 degrees, but the atmosphere in the stadium burned like desert heat, during a heat wave.

"It doesn't get better than this," John says as we reach our seats just a few rows up from the end zone.

"I wouldn't trade this for anything else," I said. "You, me, the people, the noise, the action. What more could I want?"

The countdown to the opening kickoff nears five minutes. The crowd starts filling in their seats, while the players run onto the field through the huge Giants flag. Everyone stood up during the singing of the National Anthem. The Bills then win the coin toss, and they choose to receive the opening kickoff.

"That's the only thing you guys are gonna win tonight!" I said.

John was my best friend since I was five years old, and basically we were the same person. Except he loves football, like absolutely loves football. We always hung out together, and this past Saturday I surprised him with the tickets to this game. One year ago, I would have said football never interested me. I thought of it as a pointless sport in which a bunch of fat, muscular people jump on top of each other. I fell asleep the first time John spoke about football. I figured I would have to put up with this nonsense until I die. But now I allowed John to teach me the game. He helped me understand it.

"Touchdown, your New York Giants," the announcer said.

Sixty-five thousand Giants fans stand cheering in the aisles; thirteen thousand blue-clothed, blue-faced Bills fans sadly sat in their seats. John and I as of two weeks ago carry out our own touchdown ritual. We alternate high fives between our left and right hands six times: one for each point scored. Olindo Mare kicks the ball through the goal posts as if aiming at us, and we exchange another high five for the extra point.

"They just can't beat our defense," John says.

The Giants take a quick 10-0 lead, and our defense destroys the determination of the Bills when they threaten to score. The Bills offense drives down to the three-yard line after the Giants defense commits a pass-interference penalty. They attempt two runs and a pass; all three fail. On fourth down, they must kick a field goal, but they fail to convert the kick to a score because a linebacker blocks the kick. John and I scream like wolves. We laugh at the Buffalo fans seated two rows in front of us.

After just half a season, football established itself as an institution in my household. Every Sunday, I found myself glued to the television screen for nine hours soaking up football. Consequently, I spent a good amount of time with John on our reclining couch. Most of the talking

involved football, and beer and car commercials supplied key opportunities for other topics to slip into our conversation, such as my schoolwork, my progress in my job, and other things. Deeper subjects such as marriage, my relationship with my father, and our feelings about my mother came up as well. Football provided us with the perfect excuse to get to hang out more.

"And that's the end of the half with your New York Giants leading the Buffalo Bills 20 to 10."

We leaned back in our seats and put football aside for a while. "So when are you taking the SAT?" John asked.

"I'm taking it in April. It doesn't count, though, you know. I just want to see how good my verbal is so that I know what improvements I have to make.

"So, do you have any girl interests right now?"

"No, not really. There was this one girl I liked a few weeks ago, but she's too fake for me. How's work going?"

"It's all right. Some of the tech stocks took big hits this week, but the Nike stock went up nicely."

"When are you going to Minnesota to visit your dad?"

"Not this coming weekend, but the next one. It's starting to get pretty cold up there."

We continue talking until the game resumes. The Giants score a quick touchdown to secure its lead. The offense drives on cruise control, and the defense stands its ground. Time winds down, and the Giants win by a score of 30-13. The victory song ("*Na-na, na, nah; Na-na, na, nah; Hey, hey-ey, good-bye*") plays over the speakers. Players run to the locker room raising their helmets high above their heads; fans pack into the parking lot, shouting cheers of joy.

"That was awesome." My words come out weird after yelling for hours.

"We couldn't have played a better game."

"You got that right. Saquan Barkley got us 30 points tonight. We only allowed one touchdown, and Mare was perfect on his kicking."

It's always great to leave the stadium like this. Especially after a Monday night. The last thing I'd want is to lose.

I'll only get three hours of sleep, because I've got school the next day. The intensity just wears me out.

"I had a great time, John. It's always fun watching with you. You get so into it. You're a nut!"

Through our same enjoyment of football, I have acquired a more brother-like warmth with John. The beauty of football lies in its power to unite crowds and intensity. I am definitely buying another game ticket as soon as I get my paycheck in two weeks. Today was an awesome day to be alive.

(Zubair Ahmad is in tenth grade.)



# Skin

Ashley Dawsey

My skin is darker than some in this place  
Color so beautiful like a dreamland  
But beware that I'm not dumb in the face

Hair is kinky, it's a part of my race  
Oh so beautiful handful is its brand  
My skin is darker than some in this place

During the winter my body feels cased  
So I wish to go to a place with sand  
But beware that I'm not dumb in the face

My ears are not big and they live in grace  
I don't live in the wild nor am I banned  
My skin is darker than some in this place

My "ignorant" friends stick to me like mace  
Traveling together like an 80s band  
But beware that I'm not dumb in the face

I walk highly leaving behind a trace  
So you can see my mistakes and be grand  
My skin is darker than some in this place  
But beware that I'm not dumb in the face

# Equinox

Adam Stevens

Rejoice to all the able men,  
For Winter's come and gone again.  
No cause for alarm,  
Don't ring the bell.  
Spring has sprung,  
And all is well.

Trees fly high above sky,  
As we fall down, below the shade.  
We climb up to reach the branches,  
Where all the greatest things are made.

I have but a single will to remember,  
I want to forget the bleak December.  
Living life upon the hill,  
Among every poppy and daffodil.



**“Spring Has Sprung”** by John DeLaurentis (Adviser) (Digital Photo)



## **Stronger**

Sheiry Ibrahim-Georgi

You are so much stronger than what you think  
Crying for someone that doesn't shed a tear  
But you are this brave strong person, don't shrink  
Grow your beanstalk, beat giants without fear

If you fell  
It's okay  
Skin grows back stronger  
It always did

There's a path made for you don't let signs switch your lanes  
You played the game, you won because cheaters never win  
But no one can change your opinion but yourself, just remember  
You are so much stronger than what you think

(Sheiry Ibrahim-Georgi is in eleventh grade. She likes Chinese food, procrastinating, and listening to music.)

# Luna

Abdon Andahur

she's coming up the valley in minutes  
the waters of the world react slowly  
every swimming ghoul's anxiety glows  
the pack of predators will hunt tonight

she takes the stage  
from lands o'rain to Shangri La, up and down  
she makes the earth bleed red

vespertine queen, serenading tonight  
the nightingale is her secretary  
the swallow, her aquatic harbinger  
she's coming up the valley in minutes

and I'm calling a la lune



**“By the Light of the Moon”** by John DeLaurentis (Adviser) (Digital Photo)

# The Drive

Ashley Dawsey

"On November 17, 2018, Wendy Adams was involved in what seemed to be the most gruesome crash in almost twenty years. She is 24 years old and she is African American. She was driving along the slippery NJ Turnpike and her vehicle started to hyperventilate. The car slid off the road, hitting three cars away and then finally hitting the tree. Her body was found by the ambulance bloody and launched through the windshield, with her breathing faint. Everyone in the town of Knowington is praying for her survival. That's it for the 5 o'clock news," says reporter Jeff Harley.

"Simone, get your butt up before I come up there and drag you out of bed," Mama yells up the stairs.

"I'm coming, I'm coming," I mumble. I get out of my creaky old bed and walk across the creaky wood floor into the bathroom. I hop into the shower and as I turn off the hot water the knob comes off.

"Mama, the knob is broken again. I think we should just move into a modern home and get out of your definition of a proper home," I say as I walk down the railing-less spiral staircase.

"Don't start with your criticisms so early in the morning, child. Sit down and eat your breakfast."

"Sorry, Mama, I can't today. I am nervous for my interview and I don't want to regurgitate my breakfast."

"Mmmm."

"I'll see you later, Mama, I love you," I say as I kiss her on the cheek and walk out of the door. The November air pains my face as sharp shards of wind puncture my skin. It's currently 5:30 and I have to be at work at 5:45. At times like this I really wish that I had a car. My car has been in the shop for the past three days, and I don't like to take public transportation. Everything in Knowington is dirty, that includes the people who inhabit the area as well. I tend not to talk to many people being that I am not an attention seeking whore like most, if not all, of the females in Knowington. Boys are...boys, which is a statement that I say because it depends on the person. I personally believe that boys are actually the attention seeking whores, but no one wants to hear my opinion since Mama hates it when I "curse" even though whore is not a curse word nowadays, and I don't think that it ever has been.

It's now 5:40. "Ah shoot," I say panicked. Being that I am still ten minutes away from work, I begin to run through the crowded sidewalks and streets. I am running what seems as fast as the crack of lightning when I run into the street not realizing that the light is still green. My heart freezes and everything looks hazy. The town is spinning and then everything goes black. I wake to see all white. The bed is white, the chairs are white, and the walls are white. This gown I am wearing is uncomfortable and my head is killing me. It all feels like I have been here before, but I reassure myself that there is no way.



"Hello?" No response. "Helloooooo?" I say a little louder, but still no response. I hop out of bed and the floor feels like a trampoline. It feels as though I am in a crowded trampoline park and kids are jumping all around me, and I can barely stand. I stumble to the chair in the room, then to the door. As I open the door, a gust of wind hits my face. The hospital-like building is buzzing. Doctors and nurses are running in and out of rooms and the line at reception is never ending. Every person I try to get a hold of ignores me as though I am invisible. Someone screams an unbelievable screech and everyone rushes into the room I was just in. Within seconds the hallway is a ghost town. I cautiously walk towards the now empty reception desk and I look at the calendar hanging up.

"November 17, 2019?" I say confused. Maybe they just have the wrong calendar up. I walk towards the room where everyone was to find a body lying in the bed. The body has the bed's cover over its face, and all that is visible are the patient's caramel finger tips. In the room, people are crying while others are writing reports. As I walk through the group of people, I hear a familiar voice and freeze as I realize who it is.

"Lord, lord, not my child," Mama says as she rocks back and forth in the plain white chair. I look at her and then I look towards the body in the bed. I pull the covers off of the body and I see myself lying there. I have scratches from shards of glass all over my body and a deep scar around my waist. My eyes begin to tear up and I drop to my knees right next to my mama.

"Mama, I am right here, right here," I yell, shaking her arm vigorously.

"Why did you take her? Why? She was only 24." I take a step back when she says that.

"24? Mama, I am 25," I say faintly. Then I look over at the table to find a report, it reads:

*Name: Wendy Adams*

*Age of death: 24*

*Cause of death: Car Crash*

*Date of death: November 17, 2018*

"I've been dead for a year?" Salty cold tears begin to run down my hot face and everything begins to make sense. This place is familiar because it is where I died last year. No one can see me inside the hospital because I am merely a ghost. Everything that has happened today was a recognition of my past life. I stare at my dead self and I embed my soul within the corpse. My soul is finally at bay, and I can now continue on in another world that seems to be filled with only white.





## **His Balloon**

Amaya Nicole Shallo

He let go of his balloon  
Walking along the train tracks  
He looked towards the moon

He smelt the humid air of June  
His tears are his payback  
He let go of his balloon

In his mouth he had a kazoo  
All the bad he always attracts  
He looked towards the moon

He got mud on his shoes  
Remorse the poor boy lacks  
He let go of his balloon

He had to go home soon  
Wearing his brown backpack  
He looked towards the moon

His kazoo had its unique tune  
He is talented at playing jacks  
One last glance and he turned his back  
He let go of his balloon

# You & I

Christina Aguilera

I remember the first time I saw you  
It feels like many centuries ago  
We were always together, stuck like glue  
We still are and continue to grow  
Seeing you in the morning makes me smile  
You manage to take away my sadness  
Being away from you makes me fragile  
Separation from you gives me madness  
The distance from you is oh so tragic  
Your eyes always heating me when I'm cold  
Us being together feels like magic  
Spending time with you will never get old  
Your soul entangles with mine throughout time  
And I know that you will always be mine



# Afro Blues

Isaiah Medina

Constitutional racism, creationism, and patriotism  
All play a hand in the Afro Blues  
Whether you're dark-skin, light-skin, mulatto, or interracial  
Just one drop, blood of an ancestor  
Can turn you for a respected man  
Into a criminal  
Take me  
I've been called the n word, the s word, wetback, among others  
But even around my people, I'm not one of the brothers  
And around the *boricuas*, they call me Negro  
For hair naps not a lot, but enough to notice  
But our leaders might kick me out, too  
If I can't provide the right papers, birth certificates, and social security number  
It's a scam  
It's a scam  
An email sent by a Nigerian prince  
tryna make you rich  
Is America only great for the souls of white folk?  
The blacks, Latinos, Asians, and Native Americans ain't true Americans  
My Afro  
My small little puff of hair  
A statement in itself  
My Afro  
My hair is my crown  
Blues the blues  
The color of blood through my veins  
Blues the blues  
My mood on a perpetual scale  
My Afro  
A symbol of pride in not only my black side but also my Taino side

My Afro  
The Tainos' hair as well as the Negros  
Blues the blues  
The sweet rhythms of Africa  
Blues the blues  
There was an even bigger holocaust than the one that included the Jews  
Gil Scott Heron  
Miles Davis  
Rosa Parks  
Angela Davis  
M L K  
Malcolm X  
They all fell victim to the Afro Blues  
And on one evening in the middle of July  
As I watched the sun set deep into the southern sky  
I thought about all the daughters and the sons before me  
From NYC, the Harlem Renaissance  
To the ATL, sweet soul food  
We all brothers, and sisters, and mothers, and fathers  
And grandmothers, and grandfathers, aunties, uncles, nieces, and nephews  
The melanin enriched skin of my family throughout the world  
We've all experienced the Afro Blues  
From John Coltrane to Mongo Santamaria  
You know, I know, and they know  
Those same old Afro Blues





# New Beginnings

Kayla Barron

Navigating my way through life  
I am happy as I could be,  
I am traveling on this road  
trying to finally find me.

Here I am starting to grow up  
Closing this chapter of my life  
Ready to be a college kid  
but not ready to be a wife.

Still living a life that is free  
Spreading my wings, fly birdie fly  
Leaving the nest for a while  
I tell my family goodbye.

Now starting a new beginning  
Maybe I will fall a few times  
Stumble but pick myself up  
Now this year I am in my prime.

Dorming at a nearby college  
Majoring in Nursing and Math  
I now know what I want to do  
I have carved my successful path.

June, graduating from high school  
with my diploma walk across stage  
Realizing the new beginning  
It is now time to turn the page.

(Kayla Barron is in twelfth grade. She likes to be on her phone, watch *Friends* on Netflix, and go out with friends. She also likes to take at least one nap per day.)

# Family Tree

Abdon Andahur

lock the door  
to that chapter in life  
get ahold of the key  
and never look back

c'mon, let me relive  
the little things we did  
laughing at dumb jokes,  
dad and his smokes,  
the matriarch is playing cards  
with the younger women

the smell of fresh baked bread,  
the way it climbs upstairs,  
up two floors and into my bed  
an aroma reminiscent of motherly love  
and unconditional caring

we, connected by blood  
and bond eternal,  
a link unbroken by life or death,  
what we have is sacred

but when the time comes,  
lock the door  
to that chapter in life  
get ahold of the key  
and never look back

# ON MY SUBCONSCIOUS



**“Mind Explosion”** by Jasmin Guillen (Painting)

## Writing in Pen

Jasmin Guillen

I was swimming in deep seas with  
Waves of superstition  
Sirens, with no will to save me  
Then I was your mission

We fall again, we fall again  
Wake and this derision  
Of content and satisfaction  
All a fruitless vision

Open your eyes, I start falling  
Slow down, you turn around  
Go ahead, smile; I'll lose vision  
Catch me, I hit the ground

Blood still stains when the lights are off  
We don't sleep, yet I doze  
Only reason that I'm lonely  
Is that I'm a black rose

We fall again, we fall again  
Wake and this derision  
Of content and satisfaction  
All a fruitless vision

Got me running from thoughts of death  
I start drowning again  
Keep continuing to mess up  
I'll keep writing in pen



# Vice and Virtue

Abdon Andahur

As soon as we leave the womb  
And enter the bright sterile room  
We appreciate maternal embrace  
Oblivious to tears on a face

As we feed our brain with the essence of life  
We focus on the bright bombastic sun  
And dark, effeminate moon at night  
And ignore the dark energy that floods the world

As we eat new foods and enjoy landscapes  
And travel the world and see such nice places  
We prefer to stay away from negativity  
Though the negativity never leaves

Humans have always been kind  
But somewhere along the line  
One screw-up solidified suffering in time  
And the rest of us just sit, look on and decide  
Hey, it's none of my business, I'm sure it'll be fine  
Too bad this can't go on forever

We are born into a perfect world  
Shielded by nurture and light  
Where life begins and happiness is shaped

Because learning to read and say please and thank you  
Is easier than watching a vigil on TV,  
For a woman that was murdered and raped

We are taught to spread love  
And treat everyone equal  
And be open-minded, supportive of all

To distract from tragic news  
Saying an innocent black man was shot  
And watching his body fall  
On the asphalt.

Because reading Shakespeare and Rowling  
Is far nicer than  
Reading about shots fired in an elementary school

Because listening to the people you love  
Is superior to listening to rumors and insults  
Hurled at the wrong people

It's not until an innocent girl's life is full of music  
From the sad lyrics they wrote to "Amazing Grace"  
At her funeral because people said she was "weak" and "disgusting"  
That people lend an ear and cry rivers of two-sided tears

It's not until that kid they call "homo" and "faggot"  
Is weeping in the corner, and he doesn't dare tell his parents  
Because he'd lose them to "Christian goodness"  
That people offer him a home and food, while those same people  
Were behind his torment all because he liked a boy in his chemistry class

It's not until immigrant children are torn from their mothers  
Squealing behind bars, like the pigs that are racists  
That people step up and shout from mountaintops

Because the world is in flames,  
People's hearts are inflamed  
And the ignorant believe that this whole thing is a game  
And city streets run in blood and vomit  
And our current world leaders don't dare make a comment

And when veins are sliced open and expel dark red streams of strife  
"Because nobody understands or listens to them"  
And cruel people sit still and say, "hey, that's just life"

We need to learn to feel again, be human  
Because this has gone on for far too long

So listen to your friends, talk to your parents,  
Make the isolated feel adored and warm  
Let this serve not as a cry for help, but as an alarm

*continued next page*

And let's rebuild the earth with discipline and no violence,  
Respect and no hatred, let's kill off the silence

Let's create a modern utopia, paradise for all  
Here, and not elsewhere  
So the children can live care free, happily,  
And our elders leave the earth in peace and hope

So, what are you waiting for?

## **Everyday Struggle**

Ashley Chanquin

Everyday becomes a struggle  
At times there maybe days I get into trouble  
Trying to find a kind of way out  
Sometimes I wonder what my life is even about  
No need of negative energy  
Everyday is a new memory  
Got to keep my head high  
Got to tell the negative bye bye

(Ashley Chanquin is in ninth grade.)



# High School

Tiffany Chacon

The prime time to be alive  
Where socializing is all we do  
And we start to drive  
If only we knew  
The costs that came with it  
We may feel alone  
And fall in a pit  
When all we do is groan  
When more stress is given  
With every assignment handed  
This cannot be forgiven  
We feel stranded  
When we try our best  
On that test  
That got us mad  
Because we did bad  
We ignore it all  
And try to stand tall  
And when we talk about the bad  
We're told it's a phase  
And we're only sad  
When we're in a daze  
Because this depression isn't something to poke  
We don't like this feeling  
But they always take it as a joke  
Until someone is hanging from the ceiling.



# Philip and Senjin

Nico Pucciarelli

Here as viewers we stand present  
amongst two of ourselves.  
A man with a mask on his face  
and a fish; both whom dwell

along red stormy horizons,  
atop a tall plateau  
that's obsidian in color  
with a cloud's red glow

draping over them like nothing.  
Tasking about through time;  
productive yet in difference,  
separate paradigms

The man with the Mask on his Face,  
simply known as the Mask,  
looks out into the mess of red  
and sips from his gold flask.

The sentient fish, bear in size  
and secluded like one,  
fosters a campfire for food  
and said this thing once done,

"Us as beings tend to miss things,  
wish to have what's 'used to.'  
I'm sure love will find a way but  
I can't understand you!"

The Mask stands tall in enmity  
on the brink of the cliff.  
One wrong word to a friend; the fish  
then all's lost in conflict.

These thoughts stand tall on the mountain  
that's the Mask's complex mind.  
The mirror in the down depths show  
a human unrefined.

To the fish, the mask is a shade.  
A shade in the canvas.  
The canvas that's the horizon;  
the horizon's madness.

And yet no different than the clouds,  
the fish still holds his faith  
in a man lost in a mad world.  
He retains the same case.

He says "I have no one at all!  
but I know that is me.  
I believe everyone has worth  
over what's underneath."

"Meep" the Mask says in divergence.  
"Senjin," the fish replies,  
"What means does your name hold to you?"  
Senjin points edgewise.

deep below the cliff he stands on,  
and connects back to him  
and motions the eternal storm.  
Humanity's vast grim

surrounding him, nowhere to hide.  
His figure drenched in red  
only in horror, pain, and lies.  
In life he was misread.

This is what the fish determines  
as he looks through the mask  
at a crude hurt soul named Senjin.  
There is no more to ask

*continued next page*

The fish says, "My name is Philip,  
know what that means to me?  
It means being separate from  
my former company.

I miss my fish friends from the sea.  
I don't desire more.  
Loneliness now rings throughout life  
as life is but a chore

and hard to find love, where is it?  
I'm not human like you,  
how can we ever be the same?  
I'm stuck in life. It's true.



**“Masked Faces”** by John DeLaurentis (Adviser) (Digital Photo)

# Don't Hide

Tiffany Chacon

Please

Don't hide away from me

I don't care if you run away

I won't give up on you

Please don't run away

It's going to be all right

Please

Don't hide from how you feel

It'll bring you farther from the goal

Please

Don't hide when you need someone

You're only hurting yourself

You'll feel worse than from the start

Please

Don't go back to her

She's the reason why you lost the knowledge to trust

Please

Don't take your life

**Please don't take your life**

I want you around for a long time

You are worth more than you think

Please

Don't hide





## Schadenfreude

Adam Stevens

Men make plans and God laughs  
So why not laugh with him?  
Make joy from a joyless situation,  
Take pride in your misfortune,  
And derive pleasure from the misfortune of others.  
The Germans have a word for that, you know  
"Schadenfreude."  
It doesn't always stem from malice,  
Or hatred,  
Or fear.  
In essence, it's a coping mechanism,  
And in practice, it's bliss.  
It isn't entirely mean spirited.  
The wounds of others have no need for your salt,  
Though yours are free to take delight from their company.  
Scar to scar.  
Gash to gash.  
You needn't cackle at the bloodied,  
Merely giggle at the bruised.



# Freefalling

Abdon Andahur

the girl lies in a shaded room  
her back has been broken  
and night consumed her soon

this closeted carcass  
drips in white pearls, white tulle  
and whispers poetic monsoons  
describing she did not deserve this

she didn't want you to see her like this  
she didn't want to undo for you  
an echo, a stain,  
ignore her pain  
and appreciate her ancient limericks

her songs of motherhood  
sang to her by her ancestors  
a meditation of motherhood  
and all that is good, tying to  
the 6-million year old instinct

she sings of oceans and bliss in utero  
of social justice and a paradise found

and the depths she dives to  
for her family  
and the heartbreak when he left

she sings of the noise and the silence  
the freefalling, complete



# Shattered Stained Glass

Isaiah Medina

The deadliness of the object  
But the beauty of the art  
The world torn apart by the hypocrisies of nature  
The nature of it is like a circle with gates you  
Circle through never learning from your mistakes  
Learn from your mistakes your momma used to say  
But that was back in the day-  
Today's the new age  
The Age of fighting your elders more than the past  
It's like the shattered stained glass  
The youth took something beautiful and tore it to shreds  
Generational gaps

Things go right over your head  
You need to remember what your mama said  
'Cause if you can't remember what she said  
You'll wind up dead

But they're old, they never had these experiences  
So they don't understand  
Well here's the plan  
Take their hand and cross over to common land  
Help them see through your eyes and don't be surprised when the parallels rise  
Because they indeed went through the same stuff as you  
except thirty years ago  
they didn't have  
the cellular phones  
But they did have the Flintstones  
The same thing you watched as a kid, they watched too  
So don't be coming up saying, "You don't know me, homie"  
'Cause as a matter of fact they do and they were exactly like you

Things go right over your head  
You need to remember what your mama said  
'Cause if you can't remember what she said  
You'll wind up dead

# Shadows of the Past

Jonnathan Josias

Back in those days when the only thing I did was laugh and play  
Times will change, people change, why can't I learn that?  
Looking forward to now my life is filled with sorrow and pain  
I wish I could go back to the better times  
What could I do to go back to the brighter days?  
Or is it that I can't go back to the good old days?  
As I walk down this long road, I see shadows of people that I used to know  
But they changed in a way that seemed inhuman  
I was confused, but now I see things are no longer what they used to be  
So I guess I should change with the rest of them

Dragging my feet along I tried to become like all of them  
But I can't let go of what I used to be  
Thinking back to then when we all used to be friends  
I wanted to go back to my better days  
It hit me that I do not need to go back  
Because as long as my soul stays the same, I'm still living those days  
I was confused, but now I know the past is not where I need to go  
But I need to create a better future

They are shadows, but I am not, I need to show the brightness that I got  
So that I won't become another shadow  
The memories I tried to hold, I'll let them go  
Because I need to try to make the future better than the past  
I remember back in those days the only thing I did was laugh and play

People change, times will change, but I still won't  
With only memories I am weak, I need to be better than I used to be  
So that I could make a better future  
They all tried to push me to change, but I think that I should stay the same  
So that my future could still have a light  
Darkness strikes, but I strike back, a future is something I don't want to lack  
So I fight with all of the light that I have  
The memories I tried to hold I'll let them go  
And then I'll push forward to the future

# **A Walk in Wonderland: A Memoir**

Abdon Andahur

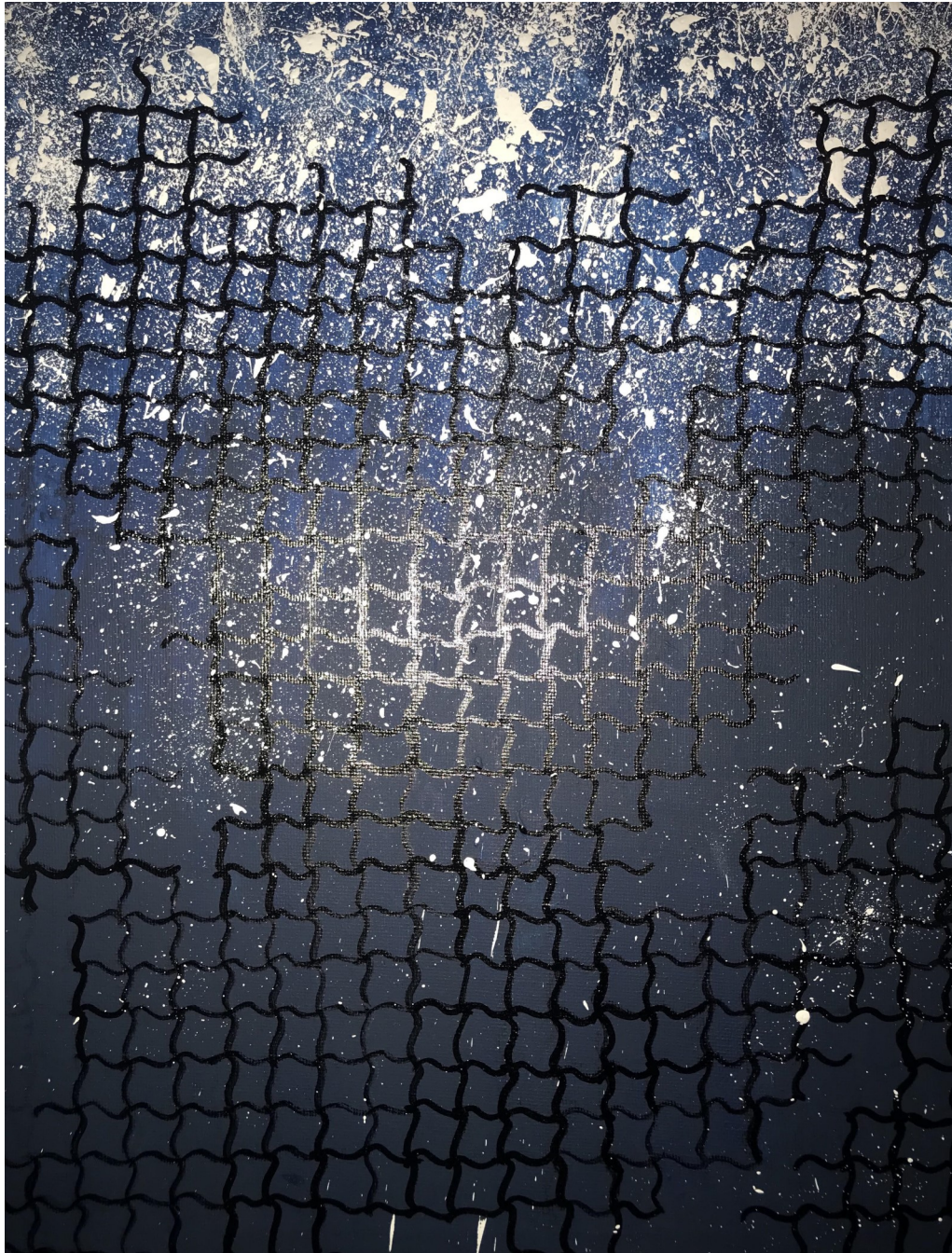
The dawn was rising in the American South. A number of North Plainfield High School music students, packed tightly in a motor coach, were on their way to a four-day vacation in Orlando, Florida. I was one of these students, ecstatic about my first trip to Disney. I was with my fellow chorus students and some members of the band. We would be performing on our second day in Florida, at Disney Springs. When we arrived at Magic Kingdom for our first day in paradise, my eyes couldn't find one place or thing to focus on. Everything was full of vibrant colors and magnificent detail, from the architecture to the rides. We spent the day roaming through the streets, going on as many rollercoasters and thrill rides as we could, and eating more sugar than humanly necessary. We felt like kids in a candy store, and this whimsical world of wonder took us in with open arms. At the end of the day, we all met at the castle, the centerpiece of the park, and watched a marvelous firework display. Moments after that, we all scurried into the bus and headed to our hotel: our home for the next three days.

Once we got to the hotel, we unpacked, settled into our rooms and relaxed for the night. The hotel was nothing too fancy, but it was still really nice, modern, and comfortable. It provided delicious breakfasts, crappy late-night reality television, and clean linens; that was more than enough. The next day, we got up bright and early for a day at EPCOT and our performance. The first half of the day was spent sight-seeing around the park; then we headed to Disney Springs for our performance. It went swimmingly, and we were ready to finish the day off at the World Showcase. After a stroll around a display of international excellence, we witnessed "IllumiNations: Reflections of Earth," and absolutely loved it. Tired from an eventful day, we got to the hotel and ended up falling asleep to the sounds of late-night MTV garbage.

Our last days were blurry and short, but we spent them at Hollywood Studios and Animal Kingdom, respectively. Hollywood Studios was a stunning scene, sectioned into areas themed after backlots, streets lined with neat 50's-styled buildings, and plazas stuffed with lush greenery.



We shopped 'til we dropped, went on as many rides as possible, and ended the day with a Christmas-themed firework show. Animal Kingdom was by far my favorite park, with different areas themed after South Asian countries and African villages. We started our day with the thrilling ride "Expedition Everest," and ate at an African restaurant. Boy, that gyro changed my life. More than anything, my trip to Disney taught me about the world and appreciating life and culture. Disney isn't just a place for children, it's magical no matter how old you are; it's a magical experience.



**“Wondering”** by Daisy Cifuentes (Painting)



## STAFF

Name: **Maria Gonzalez**, Editor-in-Chief

Grade: 12

Favorite Quote: "The moment you doubt whether you can fly, you cease forever to be able to do it." - J.M. Barrie, *Peter Pan*



Name: **Mobolaji Falowo**, Literary Editor

Grade: 12

Favorite Quote: "May the isolated become the enlightened." - Mobolaji Falowo



Name: **Veronica Vega-Diaz**, Literary Editor

Grade: 12

Favorite Quote: "The butterfly does not look back upon its caterpillar self, either fondly or wistfully; it simply flies on."  
- Guillermo Del Toro



## STAFF

Name: **Jasmin Guillen**, Photographic/Art Editor

Grade: 10

Favorite Quote: "Life can only be understood backwards;  
but it must be lived forwards." - Soren Kierkegaard



Name: **Daisy Cifuentes**, Photographic/Art Editor

Grade: 10

Favorite Quote: "Envy is ignorance... imitation is suicide."  
- Henry David Thoreau







**"Mirror of Memories"** by Daisy Cifuentes (Painting)

*74 Canuckling 2019*

## Listen

Song Lyrics by John DeLaurentis, Teacher of English and Creative Writing  
(This song was written for the annual Creative Writing show.)

Have you ever had the world  
Come crashing down on you?  
Have things happened to you  
You could not believe were true?

Have you woken to reality  
And found it a nightmare?  
Have people let you down,  
Hurt you, and led you in a snare?

Listen, listen closely  
You must take it one step at a time  
You must believe the light is waiting  
You must push forward on the climb

Did you ever think that life  
Is not worth living?  
Did you ever lose your faith,  
Shut down, and stop the giving?

Did you ever lose a friend, a partner,  
Or a treasured loved one?  
Did you ever feel like crying  
Thinking you'll never see the sun?

Listen to me closely  
I have seen the darkness fall  
Listen to me when your life starts to stall  
Pursue the light, keep standing up tall  
Pursue the light and capture your life's call



Mr. John DeLaurentis,  
Canuckling Club Adviser





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