

ROAMINGS Literary Magazine



Roman Catholic High School Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 2023-2024

Editor's Note

I initially took an interest in *Roamings* when I saw in the school announcements in fall of 2021 that they were accepting submissions to be published in the magazine. I had a stockpile of stories I had written and submitted to magazines all over the country, all of which had been turned down. I figured I had nothing to lose sending them into *Roamings* and seeing what its staff thought about them. Well, it turned out that the whole *Roamings* staff had graduated the year prior. Instead of my submissions being met with the usual rejection letter, they were met with an invite to help edit the magazine and send more stories in. I initially wanted to turn down Mr. Gallagher when he asked me if I wanted to help edit in addition to contributing to the magazine. I'd formed a bit of disdain for editors in grade school when the school paper editors would chop up my writing to meet word-limit criteria.

I told my dad, an editor of a magazine himself, about Mr. Gallagher's invitation to help edit and he encouraged me to try it despite my unease. I accepted Mr. Gallagher's offer and began looking over other people's work, adding commas here and breaking up run-on sentences there. Surprisingly, I actually liked it. When it came time to start putting the magazine together online, Mr. Gallagher asked me if I knew anyone who worked well with computers, would be able to learn a new online editing platform relatively quickly, and could contribute in the way of submissions as well. I referred Mr. Gallagher to the best computer/word wizard I know: Matt Bera.

With Matt onboard, we were able to put together a really great magazine our first year working together, which ended up winning an award from the National Council of English Teachers. The next year we worked hard again and came out with another award. Now, we present our final edition of *Roamings* as editors.

What started out as sending in a couple of poems and stories to the school magazine turned into hours of hard work—editing, formatting and asking around for submissions—with a good friend, Matt, and getting to know other students through their art, writing and photography. With this being our last year working together on *Roamings*, we started to think about the legacy we're leaving behind and the legacy we were left, which inspired the theme for this year's edition. We were fortunate enough to be left with templates of prior editions made by Roman students, which we used for guidance. We were also fortunate enough to be left with the burden (yet privilege) of big shoes to fill. The editors that came before us set the bar high, encouraging us to live up to the standard they set. It is our hope that the editors that come after us use our old copies as inspiration and keep *Roamings* strong for years to come. We hope they outdo what we did every year.

Obviously, we could not have published three successful copies of *Roamings* without the help of all our teachers, parents and classmates, but there is one unsung hero who deserves the dedication of this year's edition: Mr. Gallagher. Mr. Gallagher, the moderator of *Roamings*, was the glue that held this magazine together during the three years we served as editors. When morale was low, he rallied the troops. When we made a mistake while working on the magazine (there were countless), he helped us fix it. When we ran out of ideas, he was ready with one to bounce off us. Matt and I are incredibly grateful for Mr. Gallagher's support during the last three years. Thank you, Mr. Gallagher.

Without further ado, we present this year's edition of Roamings. Thanks for reading.

Sean Mc Loone '24

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2024 Co-Editor

Matthew Bera '24

Matthew Bera

2024 Co-Editor

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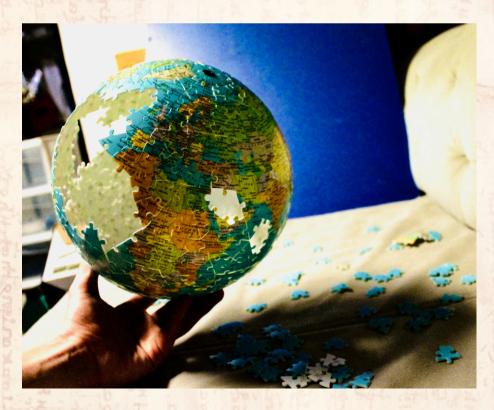
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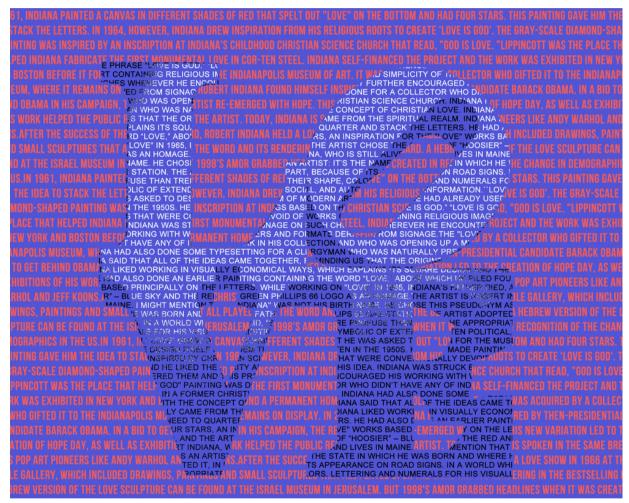
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Special Thanks

Special thanks to all of the contributors for their talent, hard work, and creativity.





Angel Garcia '24





Patrick Dugan '24

What you'll read on the following pages is "Chapter 1: The Glow," the first chapter of what will become the science-fiction novel *NHD*, by Ryan Regan '25.

Ryan also provided the excerpt below from a distant chapter that succinctly captures the mood and theme of the work as a whole.

"Two hands gripped the mat like an excavator ripping into a block of marble. Two lean and veteran arms lifted a great sage into view. Two eyes rose cold, perfectly clean and calculated. He was Euclidean by naturalization; he hailed from a country that no longer existed. He was a Western man, tanner and taller than any citizen of the great tower. As he lumbered into view, the Euclidean audience roared and shouted in their unusual dialect, for their king had ascended his throne. Often did he bleed, but never had he fallen. He was Bill Magnus, The Survivor, Leatherskin, Griffin. He was the lord of every man with fists. No Pyrean had ever defeated him."



Chapter 1: "The Glow" from the forthcoming novel, *NHD* by Ryan Regan '25

The caravan's pace slowed to a crawl near the outskirts of the city. Their party was weary and defeated, and after many hard battles, they were on the verge of collapsing. At the first sight of a safe campsite, they did just that.

The dusty sandscape offered no reprieve from the floodwaters. They poured through the openings in the walls of the tower where its windows had once been and down through its abandoned streets. Every drop carried away another grain of greysand from the foreign slab beneath their feet. The ancients that had constructed the tower so long ago apparently hadn't accounted for inclement weather. The sage of their group had once made an argument, that in fact they had, but they had called him contrarian. He had said he had received a vision of a great lake at the tower's peak, and there the god of their land resided, letting their gifts flow freely to the lands below. This time, he was crazy.

They had no time for debate now, for there were mortal matters at hand. Though they all had suffered greatly, one had been nearmartyred in their last encounter. They couldn't afford to lose another comrade, another friend. As soon as their leader allowed it they lowered the cot and the doctor began her work fixing the gash in his chest.

Fresh water flowed from the storm beside them, but they knew it was poison. The never-ending rain had been there when their flasks had run dry, and they had drank. The experience had been like nothing they could ever describe. It was as if Matthias himself had touched their mind. The colors and the images had swirled around them, showing them visions they knew to be deception. In their

home, the greatest sages had called them psychedelics. They knew their minds were much too feeble for them, and from there on had elected to get their water from other sources.

But the situation was dire, and there wasn't much of a choice. The doctor cleaned the wound with the ambrosia and bottled some more. They knew it was risky, but not doing something meant certain death. Written all over the man were the signs of dehydration, so the doctor raised the drinking flask to the unconscious man's lips and poured. It was then that he awoke.

The river rushed down his throat and he sprang to life. He at least attempted to, but found his body useless. He was shivering with fever and cold and had no idea where he was. His brain was splitting open behind his temple, and his eyes were on the verge of shriveling up and blowing away. His chest was the only part of him that felt perfect. Somehow, in the wet and unforgiving night, it was a perfect spring day on his stomach. He slowly raised his head and looked, first in curiosity but then in horror. He remembered.

Their quest for the tower wasn't all travel and mind-altering rain. There were people there still, remnants of the civilization that had once been. They were gods no longer, but they hadn't lost everything. The man had been struck down by a greatsword-wielding druid who had shown him as much mercy as a hunter killing a deer. He had dropped and thought himself dead.

The wound he saw on his own body was that. The druid's plasma blade had cauterized the skin instantly, stopping the blood loss, or so he heard the doctor saying. Deborah was working frantically to patch him up, to do anything to stop the bleeding. He couldn't tell whether it was rain or tears streaming down her face.

The rest of the party was around him, some shielding their gaze and some unable to look away. He wanted to tell them to continue on without him, to keep going, but he knew they wouldn't listen. They wouldn't be able to in a few minutes.

In the past getting his robes wet had meant unbearable discomfort. He'd always had a thing for staying clean and presentable back home. Slowly, the tower had stripped that away from him, until there he was, so disoriented and numb that he couldn't even tell if he was wet or not. He knew he was, for everything in their living hell was. The entire tower was drenched spire to foundation in rain, petrol, and human blood. He now knew why the gods had left it so long ago.

After a few minutes, the doctor realized what the man already had and called over their leader. He pushed his way through the torn leather robes of his fellow travelers and looked down upon his comrade. His face was torn with grief. Flashes of lightning reflected on the outside of his eyes.

He knelt down and took the hand of the man, and at once the man knew what he wanted to say. The words bubbled up through the fluid in his lungs like the words of a fish.

"Let me see the grass," he croaked.

Their leader nodded and wiped his eyes. So many weeks together and he had nothing to say, the man thought. However, he did not think it with any disdain. Tom's silence said more than a million words.

Tom lifted up his cot with the help of another man and brought him to the edge of the tower, to where the window had been and the water rushed in. The group formed a human chain behind them, as they always did when they approached the edge. Tom stuck out his hand and parted the waterfall, and as the man lay there dying, he saw the world he had left behind.

Before them were great, grassy meadows. It had been nearly a year since they had crossed them. The hills rolled away until they met the horizon. Somewhere, many hills and valleys beyond, were the mountains where they had started, the village they called home. There they had clean water to drink and fires at night, and there were no visions to haunt their dreams. The man could imagine his parents looking out at the same night with hopeful eyes, waiting for the day their son would return. Still, he felt no regret. They'd come so far, and the view they had earned was like nothing he had ever seen. They had climbed hundreds of levels, so many that only their sage still had the count. It was as if he had stacked his home mountains on top of each other and sat atop them, like a child climbing a tree.

He smiled, his teeth stained a dark red. Sitting on their shoulders, he was the closest to Matthias that any man had been in a millennium or more. Even if he died, even when he died, he knew that his efforts would not be in vain. Even if his comrades died, they had brought their descendants further than any others before. They had started something larger than themselves, and even if it wasn't them who would reach the top, someone would. Someone would conquer the tower, and that was all the man needed. He closed his eyes and died.

A nudge sent Dylan off his seat and onto the floor.

The impact brought him to life, though he wished he could have kept dreaming. The room was too bright and the wooden floorboards were much too hard. He had a splitting headache, whether it was from the fall or the bartender's special he didn't know.

"Had a little too much to drink, huh Dylan?" said the aggressor. Dylan turned and squinted up. It was Jack, a smile wide across his face.

"What's up?" Dylan mumbled. He rubbed his eyes with one hand and lifted himself back onto his stool with the other. He felt the curious stares of the bar's other patrons all over him, checking on the poor drunkard who was too sad to stay sober and too drunk to have any fun. Their misconception made him uncomfortable.

"Just checking in on my friend is all," Jack said. "You look pretty pale. Maybe order some water next." Jack extended his hand and helped Dylan to his feet.

"I just had the wildest dream."

"Yeah? Was it the falling one?"

"I think it was about to be. I was on one of the higher levels, looking out at the meadows. Only they were completely untouched. Everyone was wearing robes like the Masons have, only they weren't Masons. I think I died at the end." His chest tingled where the dreamscape druid had delivered the fatal blow, yet there were no holes in his shirt nor slices in his skin. It had seemed so real, but already so much of it had faded. Something from it was nagging at him, though, pulling at the back of his mind. He tried to remember.

He opened his eyes fully and found Jack grinning at him like a hyena. "You really are drunk, huh? Was it three or four glasses this time?"

"One." Jack laughed in response. Dylan rubbed his aching eyes and looked around the bar, expecting the whole dozen tables to be looking up at him.

The bar was virtually empty. There were a few nighthawks slumped over their glasses in the back and the eternal poker game in the corner, and none of them had eyes for him. It wasn't a radio night or anything special, but there were always at least a few people speaking over them. Wooden chairs with unbalanced legs had been left askew around the bar. Candle smoke was settling in sheets over the empty tables and greasy floorboards.

"What time is it, Jack?" Dylan asked.

"About midnight. The bartender and mostly everyone else have already gone home. I was gonna wake you, but you seemed so peaceful."

"Bull! How could the bartender go home before us?"

Jack thought for a moment, then chuckled. "You're right, that was a poor joke. It's like eight or something. The bartender and the rest of them went outside to watch some cold-weather wrestling. I came to invite you."

He was grinning like he always was, but Jack didn't joke twice. Dylan had been asleep for an hour or so, which wasn't too bad. It explained why he could still feel the bartender's special kicking around in his system. The fight also explained why Jack was dressed in his puffy winter coat. The leather on the outside was cracked and the down poked through at the joints, making him look like he'd stuffed dandelions in his clothes. Just thinking about how hard he'd laughed when he'd first seen it made Dylan's head split open in the present. He'd been a little harsh, and alcohol may have been

involved, but that was all in the past. The slick black jacket reminded him of one of the rain-drenched leather cloaks from his dream. Suddenly, Tom was standing in front of him, and rain was filling the room. He could hear the cries of his companions as he faced the big sleep. The attention didn't bring him any discomfort, though. He was proud.

Dylan had hardly noticed his eyes go through tunnels and his knees buckle. Jack caught him on his second express trip to the floor.

"Whoah, buddy. Let's sit you down," Jack said, but Dylan steadied himself and lightly pushed him away. Jack insisted and brought him back to his stool.

"I'm fine, really. Just lightheaded?" Dylan justified, though he didn't feel that way. He wasn't sure if it was the special or the dream that was tearing his head apart, and didn't really care. Perhaps it was best if he sat down.

"Seems like you want to stay in here," Jack said. "Shame."

Dylan looked at Jack and Jack looked at Dylan. Jack was freshening up his nails, trying not to smile. Dylan saw the punchline coming, but it would be ineffective. This time, his health was his top priority.

"You know, I thought the bartender serving free drinks outside would be enough to raise any man in this bar from the dead, but I guess not. Hey, maybe next time, right Dylan?"

"You know, I thought the bartender serving free drinks outside would be enough to raise any man in this bar from the dead, but I guess not. Hey, maybe next time, right Dylan?"

The fight was going swimmingly.

The squall outside coupled with the unforgiving December conditions had covered the pavilion outside the bar in a thin layer of ice. Things in the city were not usually prone to freezing, but with enough wind and snow, certain levels were known to experience cold snaps. Level 195 was one of those levels. The side of the bar facing the harshest conditions was completely frozen as if it was trapped in an ice cube. Dylan saw the bartender chipping away at the frozen facade with an ice pick, then realized that Jack had been full of crap.

The area was like an oil painting with its snowdrifts and warm amber lights. Sunlight was long gone, and even moonlight was beginning to dwindle as a massive snowdrift cut off its view. About a dozen street lamps from the bar began the houses, monotonous and stuffy. The space was filled like the home of a hoarder, with the roads barely big enough for two people to pass one another and the alleys a cold breath wide. The main thoroughfare, Smithingstone Road, had been giving more breathing room, most likely because the developer had needed some way to get the building materials in. The original developer was long forgotten, however. Nemonia Grass' work had become The Weeds, and her story had been reduced to an oxidized plaque on the way to a bar in the bad part of town. Besides the bar and its patrons, few walked the streets of the Weeds after dark, and fewer had good intentions. Even before Dylan was born, the people had moved out and sold their homes to ghosts and specters.

Standing at the fight, however, you wouldn't know it. The circular pavilion boomed with the crowd's raucous cheers like an amphitheater over capacity. The tight circle of winter coats and

excited spectators made it nearly impossible to see anything of the fight. Perhaps a giant could catch a few glances, but Dylan was barely of average height with his back straightened out and his feet flat on the ground. Sure, they ended up a little further away than he would've liked, but Dylan's eyesight was exceptional, and the snowdrift they had mounted gave him a better view than any person on the ground.

From above, the arena was a pearl with two imperfections. They'd been going at it for a good hour or two before Dylan had gotten there, and by that point, the ice had been scratched to a blinding white by the men's spiked shoes. The men grappled on the ice as well as any on dry land, perhaps even better. This was no petty feud. The two men's careers went back decades, back to when fighters met on the frozen lake of Gryphon Park and tussled in broad daylight for crowds in the hundreds. They didn't pull the same numbers at the bar, but ever since the arrest of Bacillus the Younger, the great fighters had taken to more shaded venues. The more hotheaded ones still met on the lake and in the other ancestral arenas, but too many had caught the wrong end of a judge's gavel because of it. It didn't used to be this way, the old timers always said. You could fight and fight and as long as no one died you wouldn't have the muzzle of a pistol on the back of your head. So the great fighters and announcers largely left the city limits, and the radio became king of the ring. The few who remained sought secluded areas where law enforcement wouldn't come knocking. Luckily for them, Good Times' Saloon on level 195 being visited by law enforcement was about as rare as seeing the owner of the bar. In all his time going there with Jack, Dylan had experienced neither event.

The wind was a wailing siren to the left of Dylan as it barrelled through the open window. Whatever material advantage protected the city from temperature did nothing against aerodynamics.

The altitudinal gusts screamed through like the opening was a pinhole in a balloon, and proportionally speaking it was. The "window" was two Dylans stacked on top of each other even before the ice melted, and stretched from the foundation halfway to the slab. Other levels often installed bars or glass where the ancient windows stood, but for whatever reason the window at the mouth of Smithingstone Road had gone unadulterated throughout the centuries. The only defense between a drunken fool and the long fall was a metal railing, which the humongous snowdrift had engulfed long before they had gotten out there. Dylan often wondered if the day would ever come when an old man would ramble on about someone falling off in a stupor, but he'd never heard one story. Perhaps it was taboo, or perhaps it was simply that people went missing and that was that. Gone forever, without a whisper of their existence save their bar tab and tipsy line of footsteps up to the edge. They'd fall for a good few minutes before crushing a few tree branches, and then they'd hit the ground and that was that. On that side of the tower, falling meant leaving the city borders, and that lowered the chances of body recovery to none. Dylan imagined a pile of bodies at the foot of the tower, in varying stages of decomposition. He shuddered.

"Which one do you think has it?" Jack said.

"What?"

"The match. Who're you betting on? Not to suggest anything, but I've got quite a bit of coin on the old Pharaoh." As he spoke, his eyes stuck to the fighters. It was hard to hear him over the shrieking wind and the taunts of the audience.

Dylan cleared the awful thoughts from his mind and turned his attention to the fight at hand. They had been standing there nearly a half hour and Dylan hadn't once concentrated on the fight.

Pharaoh, much to Jack's delight, wasn't having any struggles. The old timer was nearing his sixties, or older if he was lying, which men like him often did, and had fought with the best of them. The depictions of the man Dylan had seen had all looked the same, at every stage of his life. It was as if someone had taken a giant and put them into a hydraulic press. His arms rippled under a forest of hair, much of it still its original brown instead of gray, and he had maintained a fine handlebar mustache. His hairline had eluded his anti-aging, however, and as he fought his dome flashed like a snowball in flight. He'd been an angry man in his youth as one of the first to protest the anti-organized fighting laws, and he'd been one of the last released when the prisons had filled with vagrants and political prisoners. He hadn't come out any taller, but he'd put on a lot of muscle and brushed the chip off his shoulder. But the world he'd emerged into wasn't the same one he had left, and there hadn't been much space in the ring for a fifty-something who barely stood to his opponents' necks.

He was far from destitute, he would tell you. He'd had a college degree before his sojourn out of society and had come out of it with the idea to start a weapons manufacturing plant in the neighborhood of his youth. Ten levels above them, two hundred people called him boss or Mr. Yet at Good Times' Saloon he was still Pharaoh, the stout fighter who would talk over the radio telling you about the city before the change. He fought whenever he got a chance, and in the ring he never wore a shirt. He smoked as if his insides were perpetually burning, which was maybe how he fought shirtless in the winter. The people loved his fights and he loved to fight, and even after all the years he still hadn't lost his touch.

"I think you're gonna win, Jack. But I don't know about this new guy. Something about him just feels off to me." Dylan responded.

"Oh yeah? What gave you that impression? The scars or the black clothes?"

Dylan chuckled. "You know what I mean. Pharaoh's strong out there, but this guy has something up his sleeve."

"Oh, absolutely. He's almost certainly modified. He wouldn't have lasted this long against Pharaoh otherwise," Jack said, then paused. "Do you see something on him? Do you see any threads?"

Dylan shook his head that he didn't. Jack's vision wasn't all that it had been during his college years, due to Jack having less than utmost respect for safety regulations. In the past, he could've seen the threads on a fighter's hands across the city from the porch of their dorm room, but now, Dylan would be surprised if he knew who the two fighters were. It didn't help that the telltale signs of cybernetic enhancement had disappeared in the years since they'd graduated. All it had taken was a single surgeon from the city to flee into Euclid and share the Mason's secrets. Within a year threading disappeared, and it became nearly impossible to discern who was working with a heart and who was working with an engine.

The secret was in the Masonic technique. Foreign, dark market approaches to modification always leave the patient with something to show for it. For Pharaoh, it had been a metal arm and steel ribs. Even in the dim light, his ball bearings shone through his artificial skin and his mechanical lungs could be seen by the naked eye. He had the threads and had had them since before his prison sentence (their presence hadn't done him any favors in his sentencing, either). His opponent had none of these, at least any that were visible. The lanky young man wore a thick black shirt and tight black pants to fend off the cold, which was a stark contrast to the half-naked senior. He had been on the defensive the entire fight, dodging the old grappler's grabs and parrying his punches. He was fast, but not inhumanly fast, and Pharaoh had definitely felt his punches, but they weren't inhumanly strong. The man in black seemed the type to blow over from the strong gusts, let alone fight, but Pharaoh was yet to land a hit on him. That was what was so suspicious.

Jack continued to talk to Dylan and Dylan continued to listen. Jack was a lot of things, many of which did him little good, but he had never been a nervous gambler. That night, Jack was as calm and collected as he had ever been, and he barely ever talked about the fight. He told Dylan about the university and his projects and his job as an assistant professor, yet rarely commented on the fight. It was as if he knew Pharaoh was going to win. Dylan wasn't so sure.

Something was off. There was an unscratchable itch on the back of his head that wouldn't go away, as if someone was looking at him. He'd turned around multiple times as if he'd find someone standing there with hands ready to choke him, but all he'd seen was the blank expression of the snowdrift he stood upon. It was probably the drinks doing it, he had thought, but they'd never done this to him before. Dylan felt like he was underwater, like he was being buried in the snow every second he stood there. The wind pierced his thin winter coat, and yet he was burning up. He couldn't shake the feeling that Pharaoh's opponent was responsible for how he felt. Every time he saw him dodge a punch or slide across the ice, he got a thick sense of deja vu. He saw not the black-clad man, but instead a man in leather robes and a scarlet shawl. Dylan felt his heart beat in his head.

Pharaoh slid across the ice with the grace of a figure skater, feigning a jab as he went for the legs. The tall man moved his right leg out of the way but fell off balance in the process. Suddenly, he was on the edge and Pharaoh was the pusher. The jolly gnome slid back over and delivered a meaningful cross to the man's gut. He slid back across the ice and to the edge of the arena. There, in a ring all the way around, the good patrons of the bar had carved out a sizable portion of ice, leaving open waters. In the warmer months of the year, Level 195's windows flowed freely with water, so much so that holding lakes had been dug in each cardinal direction. Good Times Saloon had originally been a part of the city's water department before being repurposed after the city had given up. The tall man wobbled as he failed to regain his footing, and

went feet-first into the depths. Pharaoh offered no hand to help, nor did he deliver a finishing blow while the man was down. He laughed heartily along with the audience. The man sank down to his waist before reaching the bottom. He seemed indifferent to it, as he had for the entire fight, and hoisted himself up out of the water.

Dylan's legs and hands began to burn. It was as if he was being flayed by old men with tremors in their hands. Everything from the belt down was screaming at him, as if his body was commanding him to simply cut to the chase and remove his legs entirely. In that moment, had Dylan had a knife, he would have attempted it. He tried to loosen his belt to remove his jeans, but his hands were too numb to feel where the air stopped and he began. Unable to do anything else, Dylan yelled out in agony. The crowd roared along with him. The wind pierced his clothes and cut his soul.

He was having a heart attack. No, that wouldn't explain it. Maybe an internal organ had ruptured. He'd never been a huge drinker, but then again he never did find out what was in the bartender's special. That was karma, he supposed, for that and a lot of other things. Dylan took another step forward, then faltered, his feet dragging in the snowpack.

Jack was saying something, but he wasn't paying attention. How had it escalated so quickly? His life... was this where it ended? Frozen to death in a snowdrift, shoveled out of the tower with the rest of the drunkards? No, the world wouldn't do that to him. The world had taken enough from Dylan Argentine.

The tall man was sprawled across the ice, writhing from the cold water. Dylan imagined what the audience was thinking. After two hours his youth had given out and the superior will of Pharaoh had prevailed. He had his dignity, and his face gave away no pain, but everyone knew it was the end. Pharaoh wouldn't hold a grudge after.

If the tall man bandaged up his wounded pride, they were likely to become the best of drinking buddies. But the fight needed to end. Pharaoh had given the challenger time enough. The crowd cried out for blood. Dylan cried out for mercy.

He took a shaky step down the snowdrift. Jack's hands were on him, and he was saying something, but Dylan wasn't picking it up. He was numbing by the second. He took a shaky hand to his lips in an attempt to capture the warmth still residing there. When he brought it back, however, his fingers were stained with blood.

It was the man. Dylan knew his pain was somehow the man's doing, and he knew that if he didn't stop whatever it was soon, he wouldn't be able to ever again. Dylan took more steps toward the ring of people. How it had happened was unimportant. The man was the cure.

Dylan staggered and dropped to his knees. No one in the crowd noticed. Jack was frantic about him, trying to keep him from getting up, but Dylan had a mission. He looked through thickening tunnels at his unknowing killer on the ice.

The tall man did not stare back. Frozen in the middle of the arena, the man in the black clothes had his amber eyes fixed not on Dylan but on his assailant. Dylan wanted to cry out, but he found he couldn't. He could only watch helplessly as the fighters prepared for the end of the ritual. Then Pharaoh, with the force of a cannonball, collided with the tall man's stomach. His knees finally buckled.

They hit the floor and the world disappeared again.

***That's the intriguing first half of Chapter 1 of Ryan's novel, NHD.

Next year's edition of Roamings will feature the second half of

Chapter 1 - if not more! Stay tuned.***



Joshua Brown '24





Ayden Starr '24

"One Common Thread" by Matthew Bera '24

Within these walls, a sight to see, the colors of black, and blue, and green. Hues of crimson, azure, and night, a sea of puffiness, a warm delight.

For many, the cold they cannot bare, uphill to school and back, they've had their fair share. Braving the elements, day after day, these puffy companions help guide the way.

Valiant defenders, they ward off the chill, leaving those without it forlorn, desperate, and shrill. For the cold is wicked, it knows no bounds, a shared adversary to overcome, freezing all it's around.

One common thread between them, the cold they all bely, their billowed forms convey a smile, a tear in the eye. For victory is upon them, their confidence is floored, like the beating of stern waves, their triumph is assured.

Everyday they grace these hallowed halls, united they stand, answering nature's calls. From winter's bite to spring's embrace, these puffers hold a sacred place.



Nathan Ruppert '25

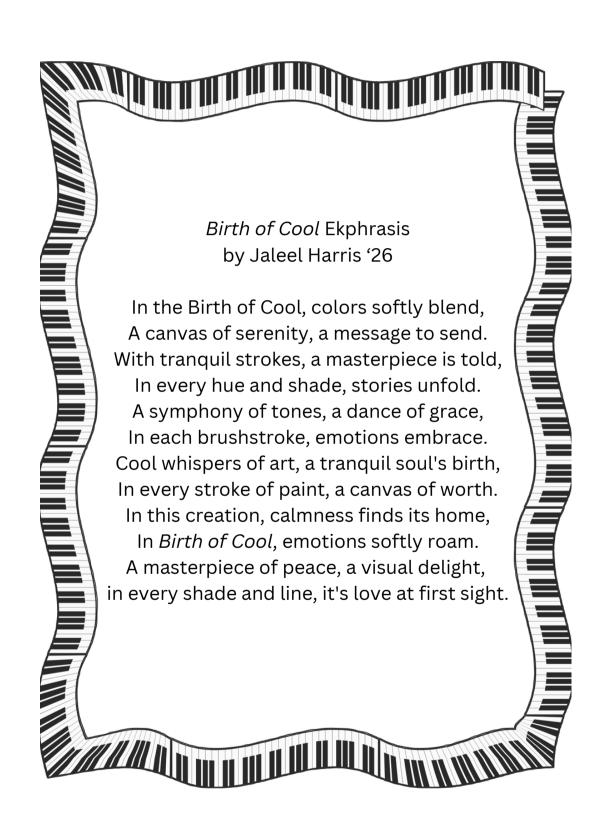


Anthony Miami '25

In Ms. Bakey's sophomore English class, students composed original ekphrastic poems about an image of their choice. "Ekphrasis" means "description" in Greek, and an ekphrastic poem should vividly describe an image, usually a work of art.



Jaleel Harris selected Everett Spruill's well-known painting Birth of Cool as the subject of his ekphrastic poem. The original, AI-generated graphic above is inspired by Spruill's painting. Read Jaleel's poem on the next page and then check out Birth of Cool online to see how Jaleel describes the famous image.

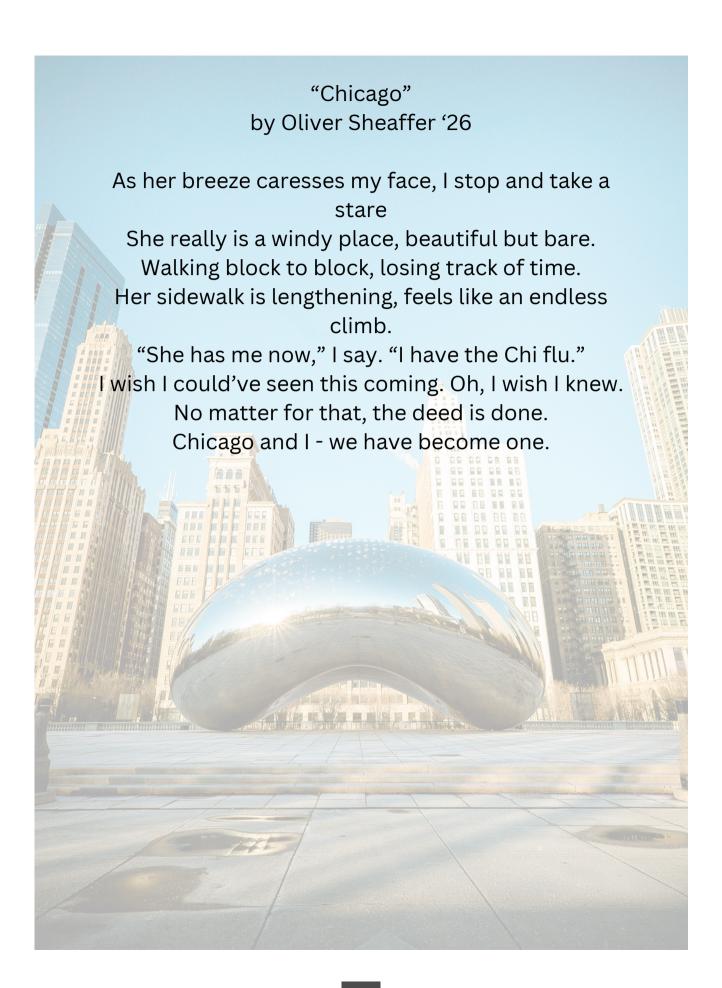




Sean Neitz '24



Matthew Bera '24

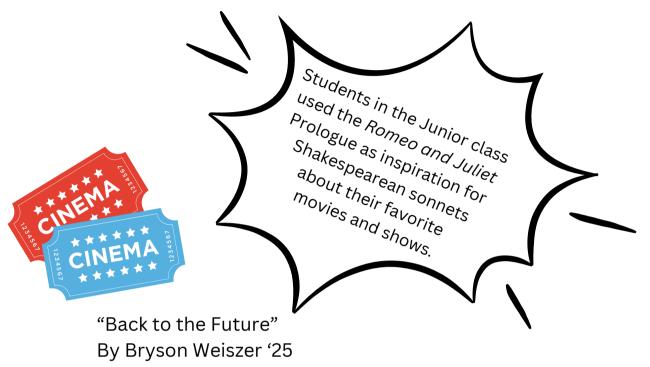




Sean Mc Loone '24



Steven Kobielnik '25



In Hill Valley a crazy tale begins
Marty's thrown back to the year '55
Doc Brown's brilliant invention spins and grins
While Marty's parents love's barely alive
To set things right Marty must persevere
With skateboards, clocks, and rock-and-roll guitar
But Biff's a bully causing problems severe
The clock ticks - no room for problems afar
Marty's rock-and-roll guitar strums the key
With frightening lightning strikes, time unfurls
To bring Marty home fast and care free
The year from '55 to '85 whirls
Back to the future Marty sets things right
In a DeLorean far out of sight



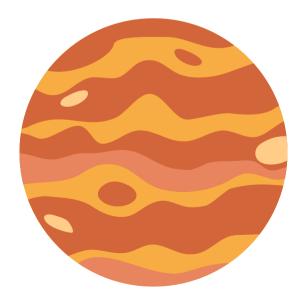
Angel Garcia '24



Joshua Brown '24

"Star Wars"
By Byaire Whiting '25

Long ago in a galaxy far, far away,
A boy named Anakin from Planet Tatooine
Was a slave until some Jedi came his way.
He was the chosen one: He was meant to succeed.
Anakin left his home to train in the force.
In Anakin the Jedi were invested,
But his life eventually went way off course
Because by the council he was rejected.
He killed the Jedi, his wife - joining the dark side.
He embraced the empire; he was known as Vader.
His forgotten son's morals he tried to deny
Because of his son Luke he subdued his anger
After Vader died, the empire lost the fight.
With the Universe free, Anakin joined the light.





Joshua Brown '24



Matthew Bera '24



"Spider-Man" (2002) By Anthony Miami '25

In New York a mighty hero is born
Peter's given the great gift of spider sense
A man named Norman swears revenge to scorn
A misty green fog takes over so dense
Spider-Man travels the city a-swing
Green Goblin flies on a board just to crash
Spider-Man shoots a web, a sticky sling
Bricks and stone fall as they both begin the smash
Peter seeks the man who killed, full of hate
A thief known as the Goblin who is green
His life shortly taken as it's his fate
Unleashes deadly sharp attacks so mean
The colors of a hero blue and red
The Goblin dies, laid to rest in his bed



Matthew Bera '24



Edmund Arquitola '24

"South Paw" By Nathan Ruppert '25

He once had a fun, lavish lifestyle.
He once had the clothes, money, and fame.
The tears they flowed, they ran like the Nile
As there was so much that he overcame.
Billy Hope - a pro boxer he once was
Until fatal tragedy struck one day.
An argument between two was the cause
Of his wife's sad death - on the ground she lay.
He knew he really had to persevere
And persevering is what Billy did.
Once again, he trained without any fear.
He took a job - not for him, for his kid.

After everything, he was not rattled.

Billy Hope put his head down and battled.



Sean Neitz '24





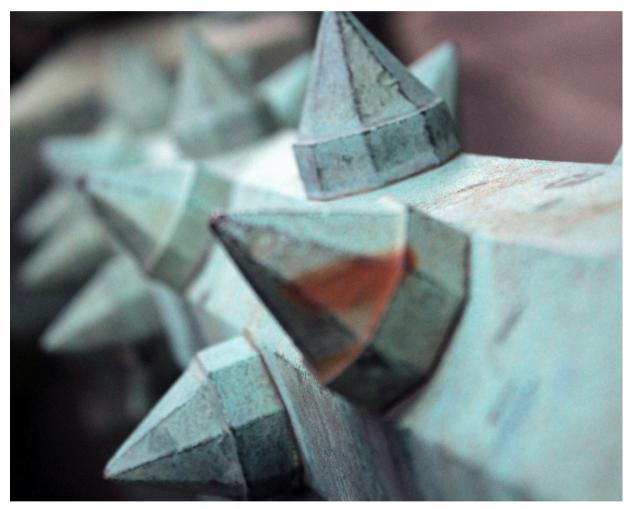
Aiden Ross '24

"What I'll Remember" by Matthew Bera '24

Years from now, when I reminisce about my time at Roman, it won't be the memory of my own accomplishments that evokes a smile on the lip, a tear in the eye. Instead, I will fondly remember the moments shared and memories made with my fellow Cahillites.

I'll remember the roar of the crowd as Kabe Goss nailed a jumper at the buzzer and secured another city title for our basketball team, the cheers of Cahillites reverberating through the halls of the Palestra. I'll remember the countless hours spent playing ping pong with my friends in the learning commons, our laughter echoing through the once quiet library. I'll remember the videos my classmates and I filmed for school projects, spending hours in front of a green screen, all to capture that perfect 30 seconds of footage. I'll remember the Union League dinners where I was able to network with so many great alums and friends of Roman. I'll remember the open houses and discovery days, surrounded by my fellow Cahillites, our bonds together strengthened. I'll remember and forever hold dear the connections forged as both a participant and a leader at our Kairos retreats. I'll remember the late nights in Pittsburgh spent memorizing speeches for Mock Trial, and the time my teammates and I set up a pollyanna and exchanged gifts. I'll remember when the seniors took on the faculty on the volleyball court, narrowly missing out on a victory.

Importantly, all of these memories are not ones that I created alone. What ties all those cherished memories together is not that they were individual achievements, but rather alongside the community that defined my Catholic High journey. Those memories formed with my fellow students, friends, mentors and faculty - who have made this time in my life so meaningful and unforgettable - those are the memories that make me proud to call myself a Cahillite.



Salvatore Aversa '24



Edmund Arquitola '24

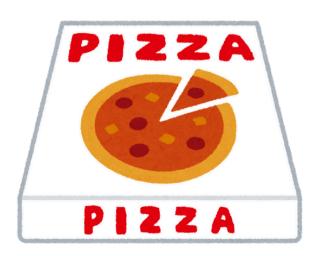


Mock Trial 2024

The 2024 Pennsylvania Mock Trial case involves a murder trial where Addison Booker, the owner of Onomatopizza restaurant, is accused of murdering Geoffrey Esper, the owner of The Hole in the Wall bar, after years of sabotage and underhanded tactics between the two business owners. The defense argues that another bar owner in the local square, Sam Chestnut, committed the crime.

Roman Catholic High School's mock trial team faced tough competition this year.

Despite having many younger members and less returning participants, the team performed admirably at the Pittsburgh, La Salle, and UPenn invitational tournaments, achieving an impressive 20-4 overall record. They advanced to the City Competition, where they secured the city title and their 11th plaque in a hard-fought round against Math, Civics & Sciences Charter School.



"Defense Opening" by Matthew Bera '24

Sam Chestnut got one hell of a deal – two for the price of one. Sam Chestnut, the owner of Sam's Old Town Tavern, was competing against the two other bars in town. My client, Addison Booker, owned the first. The victim, Geoffrey Esper owned the second. The third bar was owned by the government's star witness, Sam Chestnut. It was 2023 and Sam Chestnut's bar struggled for business. When Sam Chestnut learned that my client and the victim were in a public feud, Sam Chestnut hatched a scheme. A scheme to kill one rival and to frame the other for the murder. They used a hitman to eliminate Mr. Esper and left a trail of breadcrumbs leading to my client. Sam Chestnut got two for the price of one.

As the defense we have no burden of proof. Rather, it's the government's job to prove that my client, Addison Booker, committed 1st degree murder, and that he conspired with Randy Sudo to commit that murder. And they have to prove that to you beyond a reasonable doubt. But reasonable doubt in this case can be summed up in two words: Sam Chestnut. During this trial you'll see evidence about two important facts: Sam Chestnut's motive and Sam Chestnut's scheme.

First, Sam Chestnut's motive. Sam Chestnut's business was on the ropes. Today we'll call one of Sam Chestnut's employees, Phoenix Webb, to the stand. Mr. Webb will tell you how Sam Chestnut's business was failing: how they couldn't keep enough food in stock for a week at the bar, how they stopped using payroll and started paying employees straight from the register, how they were seething in anger about how well the victim's restaurant was doing while their own was failing. You'll hear that Sam Chestnut started acting strangely, creating anonymous Yelp accounts to leave bad reviews on my client and Mr. Esper's businesses.

But Sam Chestnut's employee will tell you about something far more sinister that he saw in Sam Chestnut's bar.

Which leads me to my second point, Sam Chestnut's scheme. Mr. Webb will tell you that in May of 2023 - the month of the murder he saw the hitman, Randy Sudo, walk into Old Town Tavern and talk with Sam Chestnut. Here's what he heard: Randy Sudo said to Sam Chestnut he was desperate for money and would hire himself as a hitman. And what was Sam Chestnut's response? "Give Addison 10 or 12 as an asking price and see what he does." You see, around that time my client's deck had burned down. He needed it fixed. So Sam Chestnut used that to their advantage, and recommended Randy Sudo to my client as the guy to do the job. My client met with Sam Chestnut's handyman in a public cafe, discussed the deck project, and paid the handyman. The evidence will show that just a week later, Sam Chestnut met once again with Randy Sudo, the hitman. You'll hear that Sam Chestnut told the hitman to "make sure the plan gets done quick." Then, on May 23, 2023, the hitman entered Mr. Esper's bar and murdered him. You'll hear that for weeks, the police had no evidence that my client, Mr. Booker, was involved. Mr. Booker allowed the police in to search his home, and they found nothing. But then something changed. You'll hear that weeks after the murder, Sam Chestnut went to the police and told them a story. Sam Chestnut claimed to overhear a conversation implicating my client, a conversation that the evidence will show never happened. But based on that story, the word of Sam Chestnut, my client was arrested. And finally, the government's star witness, Sam Chestnut, got their two for the price of one.

With Mr. Esper dead and my client on trial for his life, Sam Chestnut now controls the bar scene. Their financial problems are gone. Their plan worked. Unless of course, you put a stop to it. And that's what we'll ask you to do at the end of today's trial. We'll ask you to send my client out those doors the same way he walked in them: innocent of these charges. Thank you.

"Prosecution Closing" by Patrick Holahan '25

On May 19 2023, the defendant vowed to kill Jeffrey Esper in front of dozens of eyewitnesses. Four days later, on the night of the murder, the hitman writes to the defendant, "It's done, I made quite a mess, but it's all sorted now."

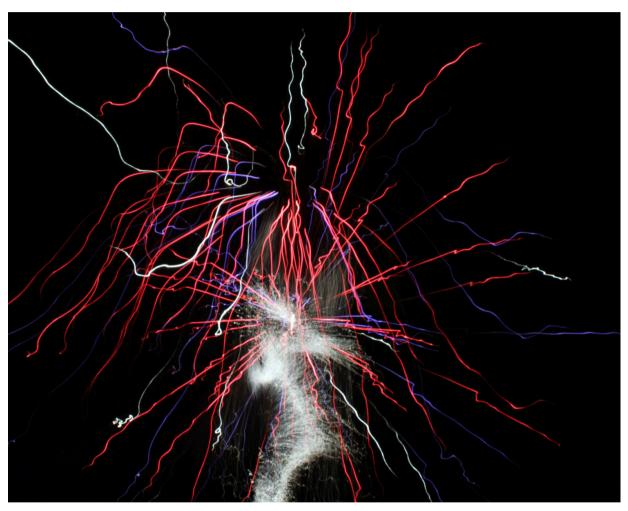
As the prosecution, we held the burden of proof in today's trial. We had to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the defendant was guilty of first degree murder and that they conspired with Randy Sudo to commit that murder. We've met that burden, because we showed you evidence that the defendant didn't pull the trigger, but that they pulled the strings.

Let's start with that first point, the defendant didn't pull the trigger. He didn't kill Mr. Esper himself, he gave that job to Randy Sudo. The gun that was used in the murder, was found in his apartment. And you heard that Mr. Sudo confessed to the crime, that he gave very specific details corroborating all the evidence detective Kobayashi found. But Mr. Sudo didn't just tell how he did it, he confessed who hired him to do it. It was Addison Booker.

Which brings me to my second point, the defendant pulled the strings. A long history of bitter rivalry and competition culminates in an eviction. Mr. Esper storms into the defendant's restaurant, with police, in the middle of a crowded dinner service, and yells, loud enough for all the customers to hear, that the defendant was done. He had to be out of the building by the end of the month. With emotions running high, and their business at stake, the defendant sees one final opportunity to make a profit and fight the eviction. The Savor the Square event. That morning, he receives the news that his bitter rival, the man who was taking away his livelihood, had pulled his supply of beer for the event, and destroyed any shot he

had at saving himself. He was ruined. He runs on stage crying and in a moment of pure emotion, he lets his true intentions show. He scream's, promises Mr. Esper, that quote, "I am going to kill you." Four days later Mr. Esper is murdered. Shot in the back of the head. So what happened. How did he do it? Well, let's take a look at the evidence. On May 4th the defendant reached out to a seasoned criminal, Randy Sudo, asking for a favor. Soon after, they arrange a meeting. That same day, the defendant withdraws 12,000 dollars cash, and gives it to Mr. Sudo for a job. Just two days later, the defendant vows to kill Mr. Esper in front of dozens of eyewitnesses. Three days after the defendant made his promise, the day before Mr. Esper is murdered, the defendant buys a one way ticket to Canada. You don't have to be a genius to connect the dots. The defendant told you himself that he hated Mr. Esper. He couldn't stand the sight of him. So he hired Randy Sudo to fix his problem.

In today's trial, the defense tried to shift the blame. They tried to tell you that it was Sam Chestnut who orchestrated the murder, not the defendant. But the evidence they presented didn't do anything to absolve the defendant of his guilt, it's just further evidence of conspiracy. At the end of the day, the defendant is the one who paid the hitman, the one who ordered the hit. Whether or not Mr. Chestnut had a part in that, is a completely separate issue, and has no bearing on the defendant's guilt. If it wasn't for the defendant, Mr. Esper would still be alive today. He didn't pull the trigger, but he pulled the strings. Find the defendant guilty. Thank you.



Salvatore Aversa '24



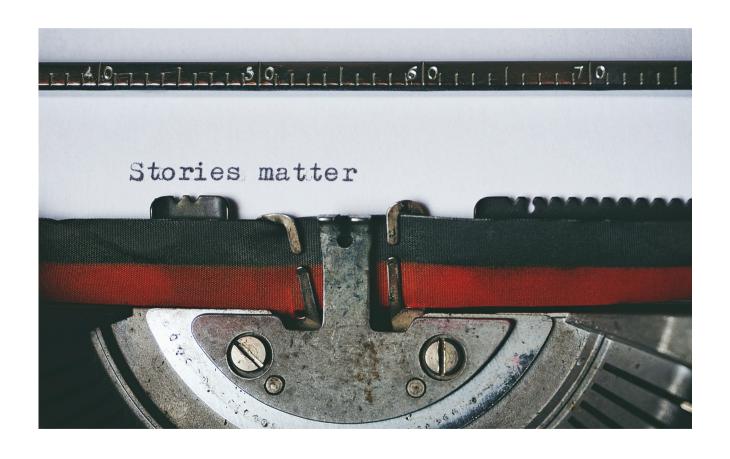


Jacob Wranovsky '24



Last year's edition of *Roamings* contained a preview of Sean's latest novel, *A Franklinside Frib Gone Wrong*. This year, readers can pick up where they left off and enjoy a longer second excerpt from Chapter 1 of Sean's forthcoming novel.

Enjoy!



He pulled out his phone and pulled up Peter Terruso's contact. The first time he called it went to voicemail. John assumed, but didn't know for certain, that Peter had had another long night playing video games, and was still asleep. John was right. The second time he called, Peter picked up.

"Hello?" Peter answered, sounding groggy as ever.

"Yo buddy. You just wake up?"

"Yeah, thanks to you."

John rolled his eyes. "It's almost ten o'clock. Go touch grass. It's Summer."

Pete wanted to tell John off, but held his tongue. "All the more reason to sleep in. What's up?"

"You wanna come over my place tonight and sleep over? I'm gonna call the rest of the boys too. Should be fun."

"Yeah I should be able to come over. I don't think I have anything."

"No surprise there."

Pete held his tongue again.

"Anyway," John continued, "it's been bugging me recently how sometimes we all just sit on our phones and don't do anything. I was thinking it'd be nice if we all put our phones down for the night. You know, a tech free night."

"You're out of your mind. I could do it, of course, but why would I? And imagine the aneurysm Luke would have if he couldn't text Jenna every ten minutes."

Jenna Harvinson was Luke's girlfriend. They'd been dating for about four months, but they were due to fall apart any day now. None of the guys really liked them together. They had nothing against Jenna personally, but had a feeling that she would leave Luke when she went off to college in a couple of months. Luke was obsessed with her and would be in a world of hurt when she cut him off for some college guy. She planned on going to Penn State, a common destination for students at Franklinside High who were trying to get as far away as possible from their parents while getting the in-state tuition benefits.

The idea of having a money pool, where everyone paid in and the last person to go on their phone got the whole pot had crossed John's mind, but it seemed sort of pathetic. He knew though, after talking to Peter for only a couple of moments that it would be the only way to get Peter to play his game.

"Whoever goes on their phone last gets a hundred bucks. Everyone pays in twenty dollars."

Peter considered what John said. But he was still skeptical. "I know I could do it. I just don't want to."



"You just don't want a free eighty dollars?"

"No one else will want to do it anyway."

"What if everyone else does it?"

"Then I'll do it."

"Be at my house at seven."

And without a goodbye, the two hung up. They were close enough friends where a goodbye didn't mean much, since it really was only a see-you-later.

It didn't make a lot of sense how Peter and John were friends considering their drastically different personalities and interests. John could never spend a whole day in bed, let alone inside, but Peter did that on the daily.

No more than thirty seconds after John hung up on Peter, Peter's mom knocked on his door. He didn't answer, but his mom came in anyway.

"Hey Pete."

Peter woke up from his fake sleep. It wasn't that he didn't like his mom, but his battery for social interactions was always at zero percent in the morning, and he wanted to charge it before he had to talk to anyone.

"Hi."

"I'm heading to work now, so it's just you Don here. I'm going to need you to take him out soon, and again at lunch. Dad and I should both be at home by dinner time to walk him."

Don was the Terrusos' tiny, annoying Yorkshire terrier. Peter hated him. When talking about Don, he referred to him as "it." When Don was a puppy he peed all over the house because it was a puppy, and everyone justified it. But now that it was six human years old, it was getting harder to justify it. That day, Peter would stay in his room till four and the dog would pee five times in the house.

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"Okay."

"Everything okay, honey?"

"Yes."
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"Okay, good-bye! Be good!" She said as she quietly closed the door.

That was the extent of what Peter would say to his parents in person over the entire weekend. He would be too busy with video games when they got back from work and unable to check in with his parents after he gave John his phone.



He did, however, text her later in the day to ask her if he could sleep over at John's place. He thought about yelling out to her and asking after she left his room, but he didn't have the energy. He was a lazy person. He often committed the sin of sloth, as his friend Nate would say.

Peter tried to get back to sleep, but was too thirsty to get any shut eye. He stretched as far as he could, trying to grab a Gatorade bottle off his desk, but he couldn't reach it. He gave in and got out of bed. It was a mystery how Peter was not an obese individual. He played video games all day and his diet consisted of various types of chips, granola bars and a copious amount of chicken nuggets. He only drank water when there were no sugary beverages left in his fridge. The extent of his exercise was biking to and from a friend's house about three to four times a week.



Peter crawled back into his bed and fell right back asleep. He stayed in his slumber until about twelve. Right when he got out of bed he hopped on *March of the Knights*, a popular game in which people pretend they are medieval knights trying to save other medieval princesses. This type of game raised Peter's self-esteem since he was better at saving the princesses than the other knights.

Next, John called Luke.

Luke was up even before John was. He was always up before most people were.

He was driven by his goal to get a full scholarship to college for his track talent, so he could get as far away as possible from his alcoholic parents, and his soon-to-be condemned home. He had a feeling one day a fella from the government would stop by to check out the house after a neighbor complained. The roof was sagging, the porch steps were all broken, there was mold in the basement, a couple of windows were broken, and of course, there were bottles of various alcoholic beverages scattered everywhere. In fact, on his way out of the house he knocked over a grand total of seven different bottles. Neither of his parents woke up.

Luke hopped on his bike, the only mode of transportation available to him, and rode to the gym. He did a quick lift just to get his blood pumping before track practice. He finished up around 7:30, which allowed for enough time to make it to practice early, where he could do some extra sprints before the rest of his team got there. It was only a fifteen minute ride to the Franklinside High School track, and practice started at eight.

After practice, Luke decided to run another three miles, and then do some more sprints. It was the off-season, but Luke knew if he wanted to get some big offers from colleges, he would need to train like a maniac.

He heard his phone ringing from his bag while he was doing sprints, but ignored it the first time. The second time he jogged over to his bag, thinking it was Jenna, but declined it when he saw it was John. He knew he'd call again anyway. It wasn't that he didn't want to talk to John, he just wanted to finish these last few sprints. No, he needed to finish up these last few sprints. He had to or else he would be trapped in his terrible home for the rest of his life.

Once he was done, he picked up John's call (Luke correctly predicted he would continue to call until he got an answer).

"Hi, celebrity," John said in a joking tone, busting Luke's stones for being so hard to reach.

"Oh, go to hell. I was practicing."

"Whatever. You want to come over and have a sleepover with the boys tonight?"

"Uhhh," Luke started.

"Lemme guess. Plans with Jenna?" John was fuming, but didn't let it show in his voice. He *always* had plans with Jenna. The boys were always option number two for Luke.

Luke didn't respond for a few seconds. Finally, he said, "Yeah. But it should be fine. Just let me ask her." He hated how he had to ask her permission as if she were his mother, but he did have plans with her first. He wanted to see his friends more though. He'd been seeing Jenna almost every day, and it was beginning to feel like a bit much.

"Tell her that I say-" John started before he was cut off by Luke.

"Shut up, I'll be there."

"Alright, be here by seven."

"Alright, see you later." Luke went to hang up, but John interjected.

"Wait! One more thing. No phones. It's gonna be a phone-less sleepover. It'll be fun. I hate when we all just go on our phones and act like zombies."

"John, you know I hate phone zombies just as much as the next guy, but-"

"But what?" John started to get a little annoyed.

"But I gotta have my phone on me, to text Jenna and all."

"Oh come on, just one night? It'll be a nice break from all that social media crap."

"Ehh, I don't know. I'm not feeling it. Peter would never do it anyway. He's on his phone 25/8."

"I forgot to mention, the last person to go on their phone gets a cash prize. We all pay into the pot, and the winner takes home all the money."

Luke was interested now. Any extra money went a long way for him. He didn't have enough time to have a job, and he certainly wasn't getting an allowance from his parents.

It was always embarrassing for him when Jenna had to pay on dates. She said she didn't mind, but secretly always did.

"Fine."

"YES! I'll see you at seven."

Ugh, he thought to himself. How am I going to explain this one to Jenna?

Luke called Jenna and asked if she wanted to go to lunch later. He didn't mention how it would replace the night they had planned. He fingered through the bills in his wallet. He had sixteen dollars. *It should be enough*, he thought.

He took a shower in the school locker room. Yes, he had a shower at home that worked perfectly fine, but he hated his home so much that he tried to spend as little time as possible there. Then, he rode across town to the place where he shared his first date with Jenna: Chickie's and Pete's. It was a chain, but the Franklintown location was the only one for at least a hundred miles in any direction.

Luke wolfed down two peanut butter and jelly sandwiches before she arrived. He told Jenna that he wasn't feeling hungry, but would pay for her meal anyway.

"So, Jenna, I know we planned to sleep over tonight at your place, but-"

"What now?" she said sharply. The way she spoke to Luke with such disrespect in almost all encounters was one of the many reasons the boys didn't like her.

"John invited me over to sleep over with the boys. I think I'd like to go there instead. I haven't seen them for a while."

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"Okay."

"We can hang out until then though!"

"Okay."

"Alright, how's your food?"

"It's okay."
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And the rest of their afternoon went similarly, with passiveaggressive remarks coming from both sides, and neither one of them enjoying themselves.

Across the street from the Chickie's and Pete's was a nice family-run bakery: Fred and Family's Bakery. Inside was an overweight young man who was dying for a break. This young man was Nate Hem, another one of John's pals for life.

Nate woke up around the same time as Luke, but not to workout. He needed to get to Fred's on time.

He ran through his morning routine, taking a quick shower, brushing his teeth, then praying. He was the only one of his friends that went to Saint Martin's, a very expensive, very private and very Catholic school. The rest went to Franklinside High. He knew Luke, Peter, Dylan and John since they lived in his neighborhood, but hadn't gone to school with them since first grade. His parents put him in the public school system when he was younger, but pulled him out because, as they put it, "the pomps of the devil were too prevalent."

His family was always doing something, trying to suck the marrow out of each and every moment God gave them. In fact, Nate's mother, who was on maternity leave from work, was up even before Nate, even though she had nowhere to be. The last time Nate worked a week in the summer that was less than forty hours was three summers ago, when he was a freshman. But after Fred's son, of Fred and Family's Bakery, moved away, Nate took on all of his hours, plus some. He worked about eleven hours a day (which was against child labor laws). He didn't particularly enjoy working so much, but did it because his parents said that working any less would lead to sloth, a deadly sin. However, they permitted him to take a break from working in the spring to play baseball. But from June to March, his life was work and, when it came around in September, school.

He got to work ten minutes before opening time and helped Fred, cleaning the kitchen a little before the day started. Once the doors unlocked, Nate couldn't catch a break. His job was to stay in the back and bake with a couple of other guys, but when it got really busy, like it was that day, he had to do a little bit of everything: cleaning dishes, working the cash register, and - his least favorite of all - waiting on people. He did it all with a smile on his face though, and his kind manners earned him a nice ten-dollar tip from an old man that came in often.

When John called him, he told Fred he was going to the bathroom, and took the call.

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"Hey, John."
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"Yo, Nate. You sound tired. All good?"

"Yeah, all good. I'm getting killed out here though, this is my first break of the day. And it's not even an official one! I'm just pretending to go to the bathroom."

"Jeez, Chunk, it's twelve o'clock!" Sometimes Nate's friends would call him Chunk since they thought he looked like the character Chunk from *The Goonies*. Nate hated it, but was careful not to become angry at his friends, as wrath was another deadly sin.

"I've asked you not to call me that."

"Yeah, yeah, whatever. You wanna come sleep over at my place tonight? All the other boys are coming."

"I'd love to!"

"Awesome. Just one condition."

"What's that?"

"It's gonna be a phoneless sleepover. Everyone coming has to agree to put their phone in a basket, and pay into the money pool. Whoever goes on their phone last gets all the money."

"Oh man, I'd love to. Even if there was no money pool. Phones and social media are two of the main ways the devil works himself into young people's lives."

Somehow John knew Nate would bring it back to religion and God and all that. "Alright, sounds good. Can you make it over by seven?"

"I might be a bit late because I won't be out of work until about 6:45, when all the cleaning and prepping for tomorrow is said and done. And then I have to shower and-"

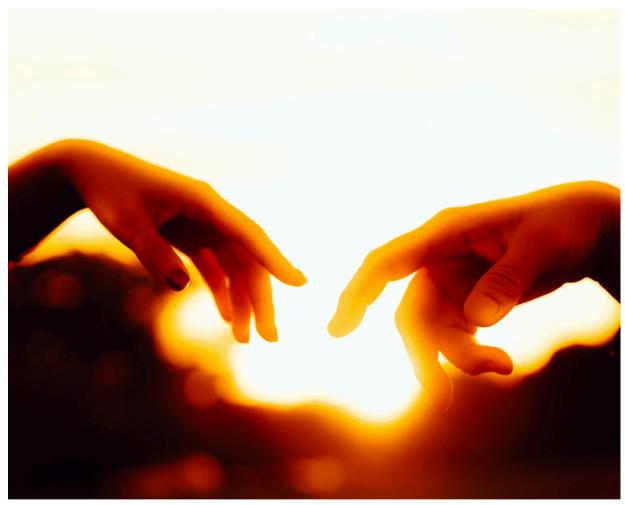
"I might be a bit late because I won't be out of work until about 6:45, when all the cleaning and prepping for tomorrow is said and done. And then I have to shower and-"

"All good," John cut him off. "Just be over when you can. It should be a fun night!"

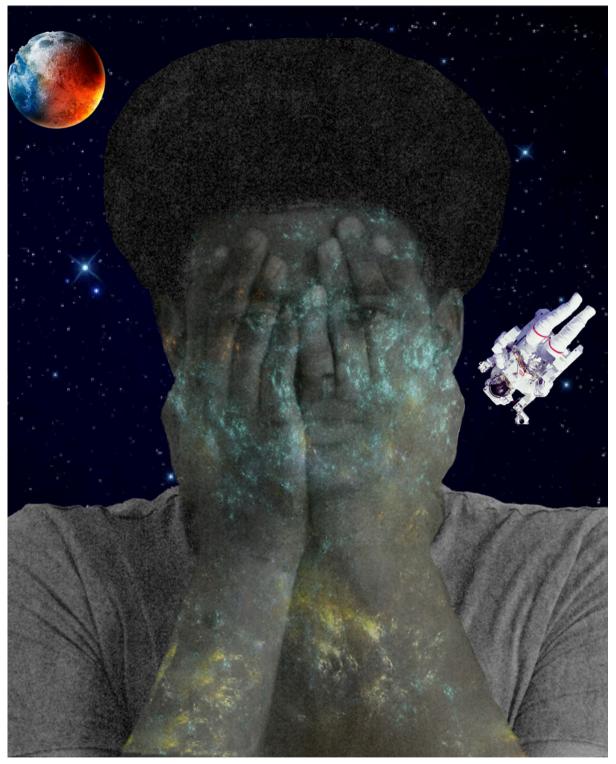
Someone knocked on the bathroom door.

"Gotta go!" Nate whispered, and hung up.

With everyone invited, John packed up his rod and started to head home. He knew he wouldn't catch anything bigger than that rainbow, and he was starting to get hungry. Plus, he'd need the whole afternoon to clean up his basement and pick up some chips and candy before his friends came over.



Edmund Arquitola '24



Angel Garcia '24



"Thanksgiving Holiday" by Oliver Sheaffer '26

The holiday was like every other Being the same as the rest The turkey served with love from mother So fresh and tender, right from the nest. Tossing 'round the pigskin! Up and down the the lawn Feels like we all could play forever, not backing down till dawn. Finally it's dessert time, pumpkin pie galore, All the children lining up, shouting, "More, more, more!" The sun is setting in the trees, stomachs filled to the brim As I'm leaving, there's a breeze, soft like a holiday hymn Sure, this holiday was the same, no different from the rest But this holiday set our hearts aflame, and for that I am truly blessed.



Roamings 2024

