

Vignette 2024



Volume 63

Front Cover Art Inspiration

The Front Cover for this year's Vignette Magazine is a photograph of a mural on display in our school's O'Neil Hall. The painting was done in acrylic by Little Bobby Duncan '65, a member of Saint Joseph High School's First Graduating Class and is dated May of 2009. In the foreground, Brother Peter Murphy is at the stairs to our school's chapel, while Brother Clifford O'Neil is featured at the entrance to O'Neil Hall, the building named in his honor.

*Photographed by Giovanni Oliveti '24
Painted by Little Bobby Duncan '65*

Back Cover Art Inspiration

Included on the same wall in O'Neil Hall, our Back Cover depicts 'Woodland Lake,' a body of water that sits on the back of our school's 76-acre campus. This painting is also rendered in acrylic by Little Bobby Duncan '65 and is dated November of 2007, featuring several Brothers who are fishings, facilitating the cows, and observing nature around them.

*Photographed by Giovanni Oliveti '24
Painted by Little Bobby Duncan '65*

*Vignette Literary
and Art Magazine*

2024

Volume 63

Saint Joseph

A College Preparatory School

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Table of Contents

Title	Author/Artist	Page
Editorial	Giovanni Oliveti '24	7
“Grand”	Nereo Rossi '24	8
Northern Glimpse of The Grand Canyon	Lucas Estela '24	9
A Step into Imperfection	Owen Smythe '24	10
“Success is never final, failure is never fatal”	Adrian Perdomo '24	11
Height Doesn't Define your Potential	Evan Chin '24	12
My Heritage	Nazariy Bilichak '24	13
Soccer	Robert Boyke '26	14
Goalkeeper Guarding the Net	Jacob Alexander '25	15
No Sun	Stephen Horan '25	16
Nature	Lucas Troisi '27	17
They Sailed At Midnight	Harrison McCormick '26	18
Tour Eiffel	Adam Cannizzo '24	19
What Will Come?	Carsten Reist '27	20
Isolation	Ryan Muce '25	21
Suffering	Ronan Pell '25	22
A Long and Arduous Road	Alex McFall '25	23
Windsor Castle View	Adam Cannizzo '24	24
The Flow of Life	Owen Griffin '24	25
Older	Brandon Trivino '25	26
Janus	Oluwaniademi Ogundana '24	27
The Return	Giancarlo Hailes Perilla '24	28
The Love of Food and Cooking	Sebastian Blumberg '25	29
Una Bella Pizza Napoletana	Giovanni Oliveti '24	30
Margherita	Giovanni Oliveti '24	31
Social Media	Oluwaniademi Ogundana '24	32
Diverging Lonely Writing Movement	Thomas DeAmorin '24	33

Table of Contents

Title	Author/Artist	Page
The Common Man	Antonio Tuccio '26	34
The Old Man and the Mountain	Markus Gueldner '27	35
Our Patron Saint	Jake Stephen '24	36
Blink of an Eye	Ta-Ji Umukoro '25	37
Past, Present, Future	Hector Fuentes '27	38
Reflections of the Past in the Present	Frau Jones, PIM	39
The Beauty of the Beach and Sea	Matthew Cassidy '25	40
A Flight	Gurkeerat Singh '25	41
London Eye View	Adam Cannizzo '24	42
The Moon	Michael Chiang '27	43
A Rock's POV	Kevin Anthony '24	44
Elegy of the Autumn Leaves	Matthew Ferber '25	45
City of the Straits	Clark Dias Jr. '25	46
Paris City Of Light	Paul Caruso, PIM	47
The Painter	David Adlao '26	48
Metallic Martyr	Mukul Agarwala '26	49
The Industrial Revolution	Shalok Sachdeva '26	50
The Sun Setting on the Sleepless City	Santino Oliveti '26	51
Who is Playboi Carti	Michael DiSimone '27	52
The Slayer of Gods	Kevin Watson '27	53
A Language of Prosper	Santino Oliveti '26	54
Proof of Prosperity	Jason Magistre '24	55
Endangered	Troy Boucher '25	56
Tap	Benjamin Yao '26	57
Time Travel is Real (And Even Closer Than You Think)	Titus Solomon '26	58
The Phenomenon of College Football	John Cummings '27	59
The End of a Case	Luke Alvarez '27	60

Table of Contents

Title	Author/Artist	Page
A Flight from Shanghai to Newark	Hao Chen '25	61
A Terminal's Geometric Colors	Jacob Alexander '25	62
Crème of the Crop	Colton Leahy '26	63
A Procrastinator's Life	Howard Askelson '26	64
The NHL's ever growing struggle with popularity	Louis Ricigliano '27	65
Focus	Tristan Arias '27	66
Memories of the Summer	Frau Jones, PIM	67
Februa	Oluwaniademi Ogundana '24	68
Struthof	James Hoebich II '25	69
Solis	Steven Szabo '25	70
Nikos and the Stolen Trident	Aryan Jeena '24	71
The Ghost of Eureka Hall	Tyler Quensel '24	72
Memories	Ryan Xavier '24	73
Vignette Staff		74
Policy		75
Colophon & Vignette Awards		76
Dedication		77

Editorial

Legacy is an interesting concept. It is both an honor to be a part of and yet a challenge to live up to. With sixty-two previous editions of the Saint Joseph High School *Vignette*, all of which are unique in their execution, contributions, content, and staff, the motive is ultimately driven by the same creativity and passion to make something great. The *Vignette* serves as a special dedication to each school year, hallmarking the achievements, ideas, and moments from our students and faculty perspectives. It capsules the special time when the students learn and share in creating long-lasting memories as brothers.

As the hardworking and diligent staff, who week after week meet to create this year's edition, thought about what they wanted this year's edition to look like, there was a refreshing and special approach, filled with purpose. Whether it be flipping through previous physical copies within our library of publications, or reviewing the digital versions featured on our school's website, the staff truly wanted to honor and add to the legacy established by the successive editions in its own special way. They took inspiration from the very Brothers who persevered through obstacles and change to initiate our beloved school. In admiring the simplicity, refinement, and effectiveness of the Brothers, the intention and focus for this sixty-third volume was clear: contribute positively with a carefully curated, quality magazine to further encapsulate the efforts, creativity, and accomplishments of our student body.

Giovanni Oliveti '24
Editor-in-Chief

“Grand”

I stood alone where very few tread,
Peering downwards, amid orange and red.
Through layers of time, sediment and stone,
In every crevice, a masterpiece is shown.

A chasm deep, where colors intertwine,
A canvas painted by the hands of time.
A natural wonder, where the Earth's scarred face,
Unfolds its history, in an ancient embrace.

Millions of years are carved in each bend,
In this canyon, where your thoughts never end.
From rim to rim, the sights take your breath,
As you stand in awe of life and death.

Though not perfect, in its rugged grace,
The Grand Canyon's beauty finds its place.
A testament to time, and Earth's resilience,
A sacred space, of marvelous brilliance.

Nereo Rossi '24
Third Place, Senior Poetry



A Glimpse of the Grand Canyon

This vast, yet focused photograph commemorates our hike of the Grand Canyon on the last day of our service trip to Klagetoh, Arizona in the summer of 2023. At the Southern Rim of the Grand Canyon National Park, where this photo was taken, we noticed vibrancy of reds and brown colors within this portion of the river valley.

Lucas Estela '24

A Step into Imperfection

In a world governed by equations, patterns, rules and laws, all is so unique and different. The forest isn't in rows or columns and the trees aren't shaped the same. This always bothered Chandler, whose mind always worked in equations. The flowers were never aligned enough, the neighborhood blocks were uneven, the houses weren't symmetrical, and this person trimmed their bushes further down than their neighbor. If only he could govern everything, then it would all be perfect and symmetrical. He couldn't stand his coworkers either. Sally's pencil wasn't aligned with her paper, and Rick tipped the coffee machine off balance. In addition, one tile on the roof was slightly discolored and one light bulb was out. Chandler's house was nothing like that. Every tile, every light bulb was new, everything was always spotless. If only those around him could know the bliss of seeing a perfect blank slate in its symmetry or the perfect space in between each flower in the garden. Each petal was so meticulously cut in order to look symmetrical.

Chandler often pictured and drew his dreams about symmetrical architecture, the trees of the forests in perfect harmony with each other but also too perfect and lakes, rivers and ponds with perfect placement with roads and bridges that were ever so convenient and perfect. Everyone dressed formally and did their hair in strict ways. Everybody worked for happiness and for contribution to society. All was secure and the perfectly clean slate of the world was heavenly but only to Chandler. He knew that his vision would never be possible but he blamed that on the stubbornness of people. He always complained that people simply wanted to exist in their ignorance and that he had a perfect answer to ugliness in architecture and design.

After a few months of designing his utopia, he realized that he neglected his garden. After frantically checking on it to see how he can perfect it, he paused. It was strangely beautiful. The colors began to vary and became luscious from rain and natural growth. He realized some beauty and value from the flowers when he allowed them to bloom to unbelievable levels. That day he left for work with a few strands of hair uneven and his hair a bit ruffled. Chandler was wondering if dipping his toe into such waters can lead to a blissful ocean.

Owen Smythe '24
First Place, Senior Fiction

“Success is never final, failure is never fatal.”

Every morning I wake up, and I see that phrase. On a block. On my bedroom table. In black and white.

The first part is easy to understand. Throughout all of my school years, I’ve been successful over and over again, and if I ever stop, then I’d fall behind, and lose all of the progress that I’ve made so far. I am my progress, I am my success. My success is me. Success after success after success. On and on forever. Never ending.

The second part I never understood. Failure is fatal. Failure is the opposite of success. And without success, I end, for I am success, and nothing else. I cannot be my opposite, so failure to me would be fatal. I applied this logic to many things in my life, and worked incredibly hard to avoid the fatality of failure.

Because I was success, and I could not be failure.

Until I was.

As I entered high school, I continued performing excellently. However, I stopped seeing my performance as “excellent”. I couldn’t just be good, that was normal for me. I needed to be the best. If it was not the best, it was not a success. And if it wasn’t a success, it was a failure. Black and white.

My aggressive ambition led to equally aggressive burnout, fought by a returning volley of studying, and work, in an endless cycle.

Because I *needed* to be success, and I could not be failure.

Until I was.

Most people would love to get a 1430 on the PSAT, but for me, it was a failure. I knew friends who did better. I wasn’t the best. I dreaded facing my family like this, as a failure.

But when my mother saw it, she was proud.

When my sister saw it, she was proud.

They were proud.

And I realized that I *had* failed.

I had failed to remember that all of this wasn’t just for me, but it was for my mother, my first teacher, who sacrificed every day to provide for her children. It was for my sister, who looked up to me as a hero. Both always comforted me whenever I was down, and cheered me on. Protected, supported, and cared for me.

And it was then that I realized, life isn’t about being the best. Life is about being *your* best, for your family, and for everyone supporting you. It isn’t black and white at all, but a kaleidoscope of endless possibilities. My mother and sister’s love and their pride in me, even when I could find no reason to be proud of myself, have driven me further than I ever could have gone alone. No amount of ambition could ever replace what they have done.

Now, every day, when I wake up, I look at the words on the block, finally fully understanding what they mean.

And I smile... Now that I see the block, I smile.

Height Doesn't Define your Potential

Did you know that your true bone age can be deciphered through X-rays of your wrist bones? When you are in the zero percentile for height, that's what you do, get serial wrist X-rays. When I was a kid, my pediatrician was concerned over my slow growth. She ordered radiological studies of my bones and a consultation with a pediatric endocrinologist. Through a series of hormone tests and bone scans over several years, along with a thorough history regarding my immediate and extended family's growth, it was determined that my skeletal system was growing two years behind my actual age.

Of course being short is not a disease of the body, but can be considered a weakness in our culture. Even though I am two years older than my sister, we were often mistaken for twins. People would act surprised when they found out she was younger than me since she was several inches taller. It didn't end there, though. For many boys, sports define their youth. Trends in our culture where parents are reclassifying their boys hoping for them to have an advantage over their peers in sports and academics due to a larger stature and maturity, can have a direct impact on kids like me. Often being overlooked, both literally and figuratively, on the field or the court, based solely on appearance, could make a boy feel disheartened.

Experiences like this from my youth made me learn about myself. I learned that I enjoyed school, choosing classes I felt were challenging and maximizing opportunities offered. I took the advice of my great grandmother telling me to be confident in myself by "having people look up to you for something other than your height." This prompted me to take on leadership roles such as high school bowling team liaison and campus ministry council. Most importantly though, it gave me perspective on how I look at others.

I could have let my prior experiences define me throughout my middle and high school years, but instead I used it as an opportunity to see others for more than their outward appearance. Having this background has allowed me to understand the struggles we face and my hope for the future is to lead by example knowing that we are all much more than what we see on the surface and each has something unique to offer.

Evan Chin '24
Senior Nonfiction

My Heritage

Being born into a Ukrainian family came with a different childhood than what most of my peers experienced. Both my parents immigrated to the United States in their early twenties, leaving home for a chance at a better life. As they began a new life in America, they continued the work hard to give me a chance at a better future.

From a young age, I was taught to speak Ukrainian at home while learning English in school. I was brought up with all the cultural and religious traditions that my parents followed.

At the time I was too young to understand what these traditions meant and how they affected the rest of my life. For example, while I always thought it was cool to be able to speak a multitude of languages, I hated waking up early to go to Saturday school to learn how to read and write Ukrainian after a whole week of English school.

As I grew older, I started to understand how being Ukrainian made a big difference in my life, but it wasn't until my seventh grade summer when my parents decided to send me to Ukraine that my perspective totally changed. I was nervous and didn't know what to expect because I had only seen my family over Facetime and never met any of them in person. Once I was in Ukraine, my life changed. My mom would always send care packages of clothes to her family, but it wasn't until I was there that I saw the lack of basic necessities that I always took for granted. Still, people seemed happier. Since the technology wasn't as widespread, I remember we would play soccer for hours until night came and we would all play a game of hide and seek in the muddy streets. If it rained, we all gathered to play cards and share funny stories. The community aspect of my mother's village was something that I had never seen before. Everyone knew one another, the people were really welcoming, and elders were highly respected.

I came back to the United States as a new person who started to value the simple things that I had that others weren't as fortunate to own. The trip made me realize how fortunate I was with the education and life I had. I love the country, and always looked forward to going back every summer until the recent full-scale invasion of Russia on Ukraine.

I never thought that something so horrific could happen in the modern world. The war was physically so far away from me but also so close to my heart. Once the full-scale invasion of Ukraine occurred, there was a constant feeling of my family and nation being taken from me. My mother's and father's families were forced to abandon their homeland due to fighting and go west to Poland. My two cousins were drafted to fight: one has been badly wounded while the other continues to fight on the front lines. The war made me realize how I was part of the country in my heart and couldn't imagine what I would be like without this background. I sought out a chance to volunteer at a company that puts together care packages for Ukrainian families and soldiers in need of necessities. I continue to help in any way as this horrific conflict continues in my homeland. It is an honor for me to be a Ukrainian, being able to speak, read, write and live the traditions. I feel that I am carrying my family's history and culture with me with whatever successes I achieve, and I take great pride in my heritage.

Soccer

In the green fields where passions ignite,
Where dreams happen both, day and night,
Echoes of legends written on the field,
Soccer, where heroes are born, and revealed.

The passion grows as the ball flies,
And with it the spirit of everyone will rise,
The ball, a vehicle of pure desire,
Soccer, ignites the souls, which continue to go higher.

Through sweat and tears, games fought and won,
A game of triumph on a day that has just begun,
For on this field, where dreams take flight,
Soccer, the vehicle, can reveal everyone's light.

So let everyone gather together, in soccer's embrace,
Embracing the magic, each moment we can't replace,
For on this field, everyone finds a connection,
Soccer, captivating hearts in its perfection.

For soccer's beauty, like a flame,
Captures hearts, all in just a game.
In every touch, in every goal,
Soccer sounds to all, touching their soul.

In a touch, a field of dreams unfolds,
Where passion, on the field of green, upholds.
For in the game of soccer, everyone has a place,
Soccer calls for everyone to embrace.

From the city to the street,
A universal game where all can compete.
Boundaries erased, as everyone comes together,
Soccer in the rain or shine, no matter the weather.

With every touch, a story is told,
In the words of passion for both, new and old,
A show of skill, for big and small,
Soccer, the game that is for all.



Goalkeeper Guarding the Net

A moment captured on the field of our determined Goalkeeper pursuing a strong shot attempt on the net.

Jacob Alexander '25

No Sun

No sun has come sans many moons
No dawn has broken from the noon
No glorious triumph free from pain
No flowers of May without April's rain

In darkest night, stars shine so bright
Twinkling with the promise of light
A beacon of hope in the vast expanse
Guiding lost souls with their gentle dance.

So, let us cherish both our joy and our pain
In this symphony of loss and gain
Embrace the balance that life does bring
Where our hearts find purpose, and learn to sing.

In every chapter, a lesson is found,
In every smile, in every frown
In every teardrop, a seed of grace,
Life's endless cycle, a timeless embrace.

Stephen Horan '25
First Place, Junior Poetry

Nature

The sun is slowly setting,
Everything begins to slow down.
The sky is adorned with colors,
As the day bids its farewell.

The wind starts to hum.
The trees whisper secrets that come alive.
The leaves sway to the rhythm of the wind,
In a beating display.

In the hours of the morning,
Silence echoes like a baby.
The night sky sparkles brilliantly,
In a star-filled journey.

Raindrops fall like tears,
As thunderstorms and lightning cheer.
The universe is filled with sounds and colors,
A symphony of life that connects you and me.

Let's love every moment we have,
Appreciate every sight we encounter.
For time is precious,
Like a guiding light.
Life is a gift so hold on tight.

Lucas Troisi '27
Freshman Poetry

They Sailed At Midnight

Rain lapsed upon the midnight shore.
Here Scully sits where he had once been before.
His mind drifts and drifts back to a time that cuts deep to his core.
It is time that has become unrecognizable more and more.

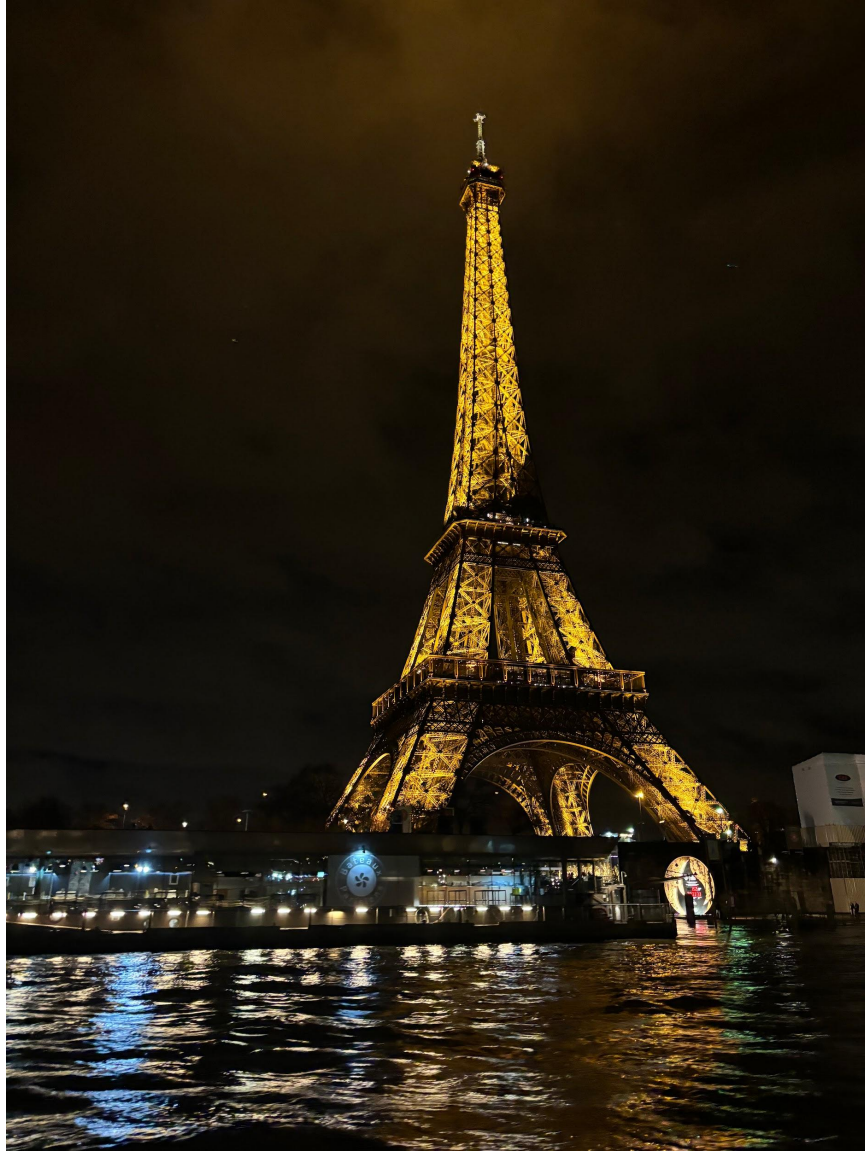
Beside the wooden docks of this sullen wharf, there sat a vessel forever grim.
He recalls the discolored trim and uncleaned windows left dim.
The boards were rotten, they smelled something awful.
But this did not matter to a captain who was notoriously quite unlawful.
The owner stood on the ramp barking orders across to his crew.
He turned to a young Scully who just joined anew.

They were ordered to leave despite the clouds that only an impending storm could have brought.
Eager to please his new superior, he jumped to his orders without a thought
After long hours of preparation, they set off at midnight.
The bow glowed with the hue of lanterns alight, but they couldn't see their impending doom.
That night, the invisible hand of death clutched them tight.
But they did not know of this battle, so they did not know to fight.

Blindly they followed this captain to feed their insatiable hunger for riches.
They turned to robbery and murder and extortion to fill their coffers.
They grappled with demons thinking they had something to offer.
In reality, the nightmares had a counteroffer. They brought waves down upon them.
The ship rose with the water, then sunk and sunk and sunk.
They were thrown into the chills of the sea,
But only one of the damned was able to break free
For his soul was not one tarnished but one instead lost
The gods above did not see fit to condemn the frightened Scully to the salty frost

By a miracle, he washed ashore unable to understand what could have unfolded.
He made a declaration as his captain had many times before.
Though his was of renouncement of his thieving ways.
His was for a desire to cleanse his spirit evermore.

Now he scorns his past. The time of his youth nothing but a ghost.
A ghost relegated to haunting the recesses of his mind.
Once every year for the past ten years, he walked the length of the beach where he was born again.
This place is completely ordinary to the eyes of others, but to Scully it remains a holy site.
It represents the fork in the road of his life, where he chose to make it alright.
Now every time he comes here it sends his spirion on a reflective flight.
As he takes the time to remember when they sailed at midnight.



Tour Eiffel

The view of the Eiffel tower from a river cruise the students took in Paris on February 24th, 2024. We got to see the tower turn its lights on along with the light show that happens hourly!

Adam Cannizzo '24

What Will Come?

*Lost in a sea of everything
sometimes that's how I feel about life
About the future
What it holds for me
I am but a child, my future undecided
What to make of it I do not know
I am but a child, uncertain of what I am
For I do not know what I want to be
What I will make for my self,
I have yet to see, to know*

*Few things are found, until they are lost
How will we know what we have?
I am a child, I don't know what will come
A void to be filled
For now I know one thing,
I am a child, look at me I live in the present
I don't think past the "now"
Free of the burden of the future
For what will come I don't know
But for now we piece together our own puzzles*

Carsten Reist '27
Freshman Poetry

Isolation

In the unforgiving grip of winter's icy fingers, a solitary figure, jaded and burdened, trudged tirelessly through the snow-covered landscape. The world around him was a desolate canvas painted white, as if nature herself had forsaken the land to the relentless cold.

The wind whispered, carrying with it the biting sting of frost. Each step left a deep imprint in the icy snow, however, swiftly covered up by down falling snow. Only the skeletons of trees and its iced-over branches reached out as a companion.

In the distance, a cabin stood as a light, its windows frosted over, its chimney exhaling plumes of smoke that danced into the air; seeming as if an escape in this frozen desert was achievable. But it also felt impossibly distant, an unreachable refuge.

As the jaded man pressed on to the cabin, thoughts crystallized like ice in his mind. Memories welled up within and the past whispered its regrets. The isolation of this winter journey presented itself as a journey through his mind, a vast endeavor.

As the snowfall ceased, a chilling silence filled the air. The traveler paused as the world hushed, and at that moment, he felt a connection to the isolated land. The winter landscape, while cruel and unforgiving, held a beauty that transcended its harshness.

Ryan Muce '25
Third Place, Junior Fiction

Suffering

Suffering is a fundamental part of human life. From the stone age to modern times, the idea of suffering remains one of mankind's primary motivators. Intrinsicly, life comes down to how much suffering one can endure or how much will he or she have to end that suffering. This is the appeal of religion. Religion and faith fuel the endurance of suffering. They also provide an avenue, whether based in reality or perception, to lessen suffering. The rich man prays when it suits him; the poor man prays out of necessity. Religion, one of the foremost aspects of the pre-modern era, is based on suffering. The idea of what comes after death is one of the main sufferings of the human condition. Human sufferings like these are the basis of philosophy and the human condition, and they are inevitable.

If not caused by our own existence or instinct to survive, the human brain can always find stressors and desires to tap into. As a survival instinct, humans are wired to create stress and anxiety even when there is no real need for it. It is an innateness inescapable by mankind, a seemingly cruel trick. The face of western civilization, Jesus epitomizes this overarching theme of suffering. This theme is interwoven in all that is considered holy. In fact, the Four Noble Truths of Buddhism are centered around suffering and how it might be overcome. Thus, suffering is a major part of life. *Is that so bad, though?* For some, it is. The need to suffer is so ingrained in us that as the world has begun to suffer less and less from the difficulties of survival, it has invented stress and anxiety for the sake of stress and anxiety. When we eliminate pain and hardship, we are subject to the discovery of new suffering. This is the cycle of life.

This cycle is the natural way of the world. Hard times make good men; good men make good times; good times make weak men; weak men make hard times. Thus, in transcendence of this basic truth, we must accept it. Life is suffering, and therefore, we are bound to suffer a little. There is nothing to be done about this. For me, this acceptance has provided clarity. I have found that suffering, while constant, generally tends to lessen just the slightest bit each time it is overcome. Whether it is because there is an eventual end to suffering or because overcoming suffering strengthens me, I embrace the idea that suffering has less and less of an effect on me. I surmise, then, that this is what it means to grow. To understand, or at least occasionally grasp the truth of, life and suffering is the goal. Life is accepting the scary truth of suffering and moving forward with a grin.

Ronan Pell '25
First Place, Junior Nonfiction

A Long and Arduous Road

I do not know when I arrived here, it has simply been here and I along with it. I believe I have memories outside of this yet I grow more unsure if they are truly real or not. All that truly matters is the road in front of me and the fact that I must walk it, for if I ever stop, my fate would be even worse.

A long and uncracked gray road stretches on into the horizon under a white sun and a red sky, it is perfectly in the middle of the landscape that surrounds it, an orange desert with bizarre formations protruding from beneath the ground. These formations provide brief solace to my mind through rumination on their structure and origin; however if I stare at them for too long my body's weariness is heightened and my mind begins to throb. I always stare at them for too long.

Locusts frequently emerge from behind the horizons to target me. They surround me, their voices banging in my ears, telling me everything and nothing at the same time. They pierce and burrow into me, crawling their way into my skin, making a tender home of my flesh like a lover. But then they leave as assuredly as they come, leaving myself in little solace until the cycle begins anew. I do not know the swarm's purpose, am I a part of their journey or am I their destination? Do they act out of instinct or through reason? Am I their king or their slave?

Visions of others similar to myself appear commonly, blinking and distant. They do what I do, walking the road alongside me for a time before they disappear, they never look at me, seemingly unaware of my existence. I never think to interact with them when they are there for reasons I don't know, merely staring at them until they leave. It would do me no good even if I did talk with them for they shall leave all the same.

The mystery of purpose is the thing that dominates my mind throughout most of my travels. A road by definition has a destination yet this one defies that, or perhaps it doesn't and I will one day come to the end and reach my final reward. But what if the reward is just another road, black instead of gray, red instead of orange, mosquitos instead of locusts. Are these questions my purpose? To be asked and pondered until they are all exhausted. The only thing that can answer them is my traveling. I must continue these travels because if I don't, I know somehow, that if I ever do stop, my fate would be worse than anything the road itself could provide.

Alex McFall '25
First Place, Junior Fiction



Windsor Castle View

A view of the garden as we visited the old Windsor Castle on February 19th, 2024. We were able to tour through the castle, as well as see some of the crown jewels!

Adam Cannizzo '24

The Flow of Life

Clear vision
Making an incision in the world
Doves and pigeons take the scroll and bring dreams to fruition
All alone
I sit pensive
Wondering if the pigeon will ever visit
These fences I build
Torn down by winds and false images
Struggles in the past
I look forward and don't reminisce
Rectifying mistakes I've made
For everlasting presents and gifts

You can't see life through my lens
It's not clear enough
Getting closed off
Life and relationships are getting tough
But behind closed doors, well
Serenity is all I can think of
Soon the strife will be over
Been carrying a mountain over my shoulder
Travel the world
Experience cultures
Take in values
I'm feeling a bit older
Homesick? I don't think so...
It'll blow over
New scenery
New odor
I'm keeping my composure

Owen Griffin '24
Senior Poetry

Older

In youth's embrace, we danced and played,
With dreams so bright, our fears astray.
But now, as time marches on,
We find ourselves in a world far gone.

The days of innocence, oh how they fade,
As we journey on in life's parade.
The laughter and the carefree glee,
Replaced by our new responsibility.

Our once youthful faces now show the years,
and our experiences, joys, and tears.
But every person has a scar,
That holds a story carried from near to far.

With each passing year, we grow a bit older,
But we remember that God is by our shoulder.

The friends we made, the bonds we forged,
Through the years, they've remained unscorched.
Though life's path may twist and bend,
Our friendships will endure until the end.

Even though we will age and time will fly,
In our hearts, youth's spirit will never die.

Brandon Trivino '25
Junior Poetry

Janus

I
Silent shroud of gray, night's soft embrace,
Where life, like a spent taper, fades away.
Oft does the sun set on joys in swift decay,
In the web of sorrow Time doth trace.
Breath by breath, whispers of our mortal race,
And moonlight weeps o'er love's untimely day.
We walk this world, echoes in a shrine's space,
To Death, the stranger, the foe, the friend to stay.
From the cradle's edge to the silent tomb,
Every laughter but a prelude to a sigh.
Life, a fleeting dance in a darkening room,
Towards the grave where we all lie.
Janus*, in your backward gaze, we find,
That all life leaves, only death stays behind.

II
Yet, turn thy other face towards the dawn,
Where hope springs eternal in the human breast.
Speak not of what is gone, but what may be drawn,
From the future's canvas, vibrant, unexpressed.
Each sunset is but a pause 'fore the morrow's birth,
And every end, a beginning in disguise.
For, in the grand ballet of the Earth,
The fallen rise, the old makes way for the wise.
Look upon death, not as an end, but as a sleep,
A moment's rest 'fore the soul's flight to the stars.
In the heart of sorrow, secrets of joy we keep,
Life's sweetest notes played on the strings of scars.
Janus, in thy forward gaze, we see,
The promise of reunion, in death's decree.

Janus: god of beginnings, gates, transitions, time, duality, doorways, passages, frames, and endings. Known for having two faces, one that looks towards the past, and the other which looks towards the future.

Oluwaniademi Ogundana '24
First Place, Senior Poetry

The Return

The moonlight is an old friend to me
The outside world won't let me be
"It's been a while," the moon said
But I don't hear it.
Not anymore, not any time

The city starts to wrap in on itself
But I don't do anything
My past, my broken bones
Reminds me of my home
But why, why I say
Do I feel so alone

It calls and scratches at me
The fever, the rage, the hurt
But the promise can't be broken
Never again
I can't move on
The cycle can't be broken

I go out into the darkness and the cold
I feel at peace
The splitting rain hits my face
The wind pushes me like a single leaf
The water is a baptism
I am born again

I descent from the fear
I descent from the hate
My lie of a life becomes a clean slate
I reach out to my true self like a old friend
I know what I must do
To leave all these trends
I rise, I run, I return

Giancarlo Hailes Perilla '24
Second Place, Senior Poetry

The Love of Food and Cooking

In the kitchen a love ignites.
Where flavors fuse, and love takes flight.
The sizzle of a pan, the scent of spices in the air,
A Symphony of tastes, a masterpiece we share.

With a recipe of love, filled with sweetness and spice,
Kisses of salt, what an afternoon delight
The love of cooking, an art so profound,
Each dish hand crafted, the perfect taste I found ,

A table Spread with love, where memories await.
With laughter and sharing, love is our fate
The love of food and cooking, a joyous song to sing
Spices blended with love, gazing at the stars above

So let's cherish this love of culinary delight ,
In kitchens and dining rooms, day and night.
For in food and its creation, we find our truest grace,
A love so enduring, a warm, delicious, embrace.

Sebastian Blumberg '25
Junior Poetry

Una Bella Pizza Napoletana

Originally written in Italian

Una bella pizza Napoletana
Una volta era il cibo contadino
Ma oggi lo mangiano tutti
Ingredienti: farina doppio zero,
acqua, lievito, sale e olio d'oliva
Mescolato, impastato e arrotolato
Dalle mani della Nonna
L'impasto deve lievitare
Un capolavoro in azion
Allungato e preparato
Scivolato su una buccia
Spolverato con altra farina

Il sugo è pronta
In agitazione dallo scorso Settembre
Conservato durante l'inverno
Ancora fresco ogni volta
L'aroma permea tutta la cucina
Spalmato sul pane

La mozzarella fresca accanto
Cosparso in modo casuale ovunque
È pronto per essere cucinato
Infornate nel forno a legna

Preparato per riscaldare a 750 gradi
Lasciato cuocere, ma non troppo a lungo
La crosta si espande
È leggero e arioso
Con bollicine carbonizzate
Il formaggio era fuso ma non bruciato,
ancora bianco
Il sugo rosso vivo
Viene aggiunto basilico fresco dell'orto del Nonno
Altro olio spruzzato sulla crosta
Si prepara una classica Napoletana

Translated in English

A beautiful Neapolitan pizza
Was once peasant food
But everyone eats it today
Ingredients: double 00 flour,
water, yeast, salt and olive oil
Mixed, kneaded, and rolled
By Nonna's hands
The dough has to rise
A masterpiece in action
Stretched and prepared
Slid onto a peel
Dusted with more flour

The sauce has been ready
Jarred since last September
Stored through the winter
Still fresh everytime
The aroma permeates through the kitchen
The sauce is spread on the bread

The fresh mozzarella next
Sprinkled randomly throughout
It is ready to be cooked
Slid into the wood-fired oven

Prepared to heat at 750 degrees
Left to cook, but not too long
The crust expands
It is light and airy
With charred bubbles
The cheese melted but not burned,
still white
The sauce bright red
Fresh basil from Nonno's garden is added
More oil drizzled on the crust
A classic Neapolitan is made

Giovanni Oliveti '24
Senior Poetry



Margherita

This photograph of a quintessential Neapolitan Style Margherita Pizza complements my detailed poem describing Nonna's process to making a delicious masterpiece. It lacks fresh basil, however!

Giovanni Oliveti '24

Social Media

In the hand-held cosmos of my screen, I flirt with life, a fickle courtesan,
Dancing through the digitized dreams of vicarious existence.
Giggles gush, like champagne bubbles, as I plunge into vignettes of other's joys,
Yet a specter of melancholy mocks my mirth, a paradox of pleasure.

Like a voracious vagabond, I leap from tale to tale,
Each story, a prism of possibilities my own existence hasn't tasted.
Shimmering snapshots of passion and promise, they swirl and scatter,
Blooming from my phone, a kaleidoscope of covetous curiosity.

The phantasmal posts, they hold me, an ethereal enchantress entranced,
Each scroll, a siren's call, beckoning me into the abyss of jealousy.
In the mirror of this digital dominion, I see a stranger staring back,
His heart hollowed by the humdrum of his unlived life.

The screen, once a jester, now a jailer, chains me to its charm,
A cruel puppeteer, pulling the strings of my sanity, my self.
Caught in the gossamer net of envy, I gasp, gasping for the essence of experience,
Yearning for the yesterdays I had, yet never lived.

In this social sea, I am but a solitary sailor, adrift and drowning,
My soul, a silent scream echoing in the void of virtual vanity.
Oh, the irony! In seeking connection, I am but a ghost,
Lost in the labyrinth of lives lived, while mine awaits to be lived.

Oluwaniademi Ogundana '24
Senior Poetry

Diverging Lonely Writing Movement

The passion you have within your soul can be divided into multiple hobbies, tasks, or people, but when it comes to it, is it effective enough? When focusing all your effort and channeling all your passion into one hobby, you have the potential to create something special- the potential to cement your passion into something great. But only if you pour your passion into one defined thing. If you separate that passion across multiple areas of your life, happiness may come, but at the cost of a legacy. The power that one singular drive towards something, something you dedicate yourself fully to, may have the potential to outgrow yourself as a person and spread to places you could never reach without it. One way to expand your ideas beyond yourself is to write those ideas down.

Writing can be viewed as one of the most lonely yet personalized activities we do. And yet, because of its isolation, there is some sanctity and resolution we can find in it. There is a proper direction that can be found in writing, whether it be for emotions, discussion, thoughts, or in-depth dissections of different ideas. Though the journey may be a lonely one, the final product can be something worth the suffering. So is the motion of life.

Why do we move? Sure, the final product can be inspiring, but is it enough to get us out of bed in the morning? Well, movement is primarily used to make us happy. But can't we find happiness by just staying still? Well, there is a difference between contentment and happiness. A crying infant stretches their arms out for comfort, whines when they are uncomfortable. But when they do this, they receive more than contentment, they receive affection. We strive to gain happiness by doing what we think will make us happy. In the case of an infant, it has learned that attention will get it what it needs to survive, and so has retained the mindset of some people. But our definition of happiness changes as we grow, as we change, as we experience. Sometimes we learn from the perception of others and what they've attained; sometimes it's what we feel will fit us best, but sometimes it's best to just follow where the road takes us, cherishing the good times when they come and accepting the bad ones when they come with just as much grace. Chasing happiness is a dangerous path to follow because, although the destination is predictable and the goal clear, the journey's uncertain and the appreciation is indefinite. And in many cases, that can be a beneficial aspect. Not knowing what you get but appreciating the experience is a good value to have. A better journey shouldn't be faced with rigid blueprints but with an acceptance of fluidity. No plan is ever concrete, and no plan should ever be treated as such. One should not conform but embrace the change.

The Common Man

There once was a common man who had a very common life. Throughout his years, his actions were all ordinary. He was born in a common hospital, like everyone else. He was raised in a common household. He grew into adulthood and one day left home to be a productive member of society. He possessed a quiet nature. Not once did he cry for attention. Not once does anyone pay mind to the possible hidden talents that he may have held. No, the common man is expected to stay in line with every other common man and do what he was told. This was the life of the common man. He sometimes wished it could change, but he did not have the time to argue about his role in society. Those who found themselves to be “greater” than the common man would always cast their shadow over him and his common ways. This is because those who deem themselves “greater” have been blinded by their own foolishness and the foolishness of their like-minded companions. In retrospect, it is the common man who should be deemed “greater” for his common work. Because of his work, the world has, and will, continue to move forward. The common man is the backbone of a functioning society. His hard work is the foundation upon which the “greater” disgracefully build their mansions filled with laziness, deception, and wickedness. The world may never know his name or see his face, but the common man will always be needed.

Antonio Tuccio '26
Third Place, Sophomore Nonfiction

The Old Man and the Mountain

In the Alaskan Mountains the view was beautiful and the snow was plentiful. It was a freezing day with temperatures being at their lowest this winter, and the old man was ready to start hiking up the mountain. Hiking was one of his favorite hobbies ever since his retirement. The trail was several, long exhausting miles. However, the old man had packed everything and was ready to hike to the very top.

The old man started through the mucky trails. Despite the freezing temperature and the thick brush, he started to ascend. The amount of snow was increasing with every single step he took. Eventually, the snowfall was so massive that it covered the trail and the old man didn't know where he was going. He was stuck in the wilderness on a bitterly cold day with darkness setting in.

The one thing he knew was that he needed to find shelter and fast. He had heard of an old miner's cabin located on a ridge near the mountain peak. He thought to himself, if I could only get there I can set up camp for the night and continue on tomorrow. The wind howled and the snow started whipping him in the face. He pulled up his scarf to cover his face and carried on up the mountain.

After hiking for what seemed like two hours he spotted the cabin in the distance. It wasn't huge and it didn't have any electricity or any water but it was a relief to find some shelter. He made a fire and started to cook some beans that he had brought with him, when suddenly he heard some rustling outside of the cabin. It instantly terrified him and his heart started to beat rapidly. He looked outside the small window and saw there was a large black bear pacing outside the door. He started banging pots and pans to scare the bear away but the bear was undeterred. *There is no other choice*, he thought to himself, *it is the bear or me*. He raised his shotgun and fired one round. The noise ripped through the darkness, and then —silence. There was no more movement after that.

The next morning the man set out to reach the summit. He hiked through treacherous terrain and steep cliffs before he reached the peak. He sat down, exhausted, but happy that he finally made it. And then he turned and saw him.

Markus Gueldner '27
Third Place, Freshman Fiction



Our Patron Saint

This shot-on-iphone photograph was captured when I was walking from one class to another. It depicts a newly added iteration of our school's patron saint, Saint Joseph, the husband of the Virgin Mary and the step-father of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Jake Stephen '24

Blink of an Eye

There lives a man who has walked the earth since the dawn of civilization. He is neither holy nor demonic, but human by nature. However, He is cursed to forever walk this earth until its last breath. The sins of his past are unknown, but they have forced the curse of immortality onto him. He curses his past hubris with every sigh, but still wanders aimlessly as if to defy the curse that has befallen him. However, no matter what he does or tries to do, he can not escape what the curse affects most in his life, his time.

What is time? In essence, time is a concept. One created by man, so that he can better understand the events that have and will happen. However, time is said to be relative. An hour to one could be ten minutes to another, and a year to one could be seen as a decade to another. The curse of immortality plays with one's time. To the cursed man, he sees those around him grow old in the blink of an eye, while he stands unchanging. This is the real curse of immortality. The man cannot ever settle down lest he wishes to watch what he cares for disappear over and over again.

Yet despite all of this, one day, the cursed man does eventually settle down. Against the waves of sorrow he will face, he starts a family. He sees his wife die, his children die, his grandchildren die, and so on. But he never regrets settling down. To him, the greatest curse is to live forever alone in this world. A world that has shunned him in many ways, but also welcomed him in many other ways.

It is said today that he has thousands of offspring, which all view him differently. Some of them view him as a poor soul that has braved his curse to give them life, while others see him as a despicable man that defies the rules of nature to benefit only himself. Though their opinions of him vary, they all agree that he is their cursed father from a forgotten time.

Ta-Ji Umukoro '25
Second Place, Junior Fiction

Past, Present, Future

*Yesterday, I was a little boy who was curious and filled with wonder
Yesterday, my little heart was filled with warmth and innocence
Yesterday, My small world was vibrant and filled with colors
Yesterday, My dreams were like the top of gigantic mountains, that I was determined to reach
Yesterday, I was so ignorant and naive
Yesterday, I felt no pressure in the goals I had to achieve.
But yesterday is no more, leaving swiftly and quickly like a flowing stream*

*Today, I'm a young man who's carrying the world on his shoulders
Today, my world feels cold and I'm burdened with the curse of maturing.
Today, the flame of my innocence slowly dwindles like a lit match
Today, I have to hold my breath everyday, in hopes I won't be engulfed in the ocean of my troubles
But like yesterday, it will soon pass, and my life will soon go from a stormy ocean.
To a calm pond*

*Tomorrow, I will be a wise, grown man who has fulfilled his dreams
Tomorrow, I will be a person who no longer finds beauty in others but himself.
Tomorrow, I will be the a man who retires his parents, so they can finally live out their lives in happiness
I must cherish yesterday's memories, embrace today's burdens, and look forward to tomorrow's success
Because all the sweet memories of the past, and the tribulations of today, and the success of tomorrow
Will help me embrace what it truly means to live*

Hector Fuentes '27
Third Place, Freshman Poetry



Reflections of the Past in the Present

During our recent Origins Club trip to London and Paris, I was fascinated by the cities integration of the new with the old. The photos depict Saint Paul's Cathedral in London being reflected in a modern glass-front shopping mall and the "Conseil d'etat" in Paris being reflected in a modern glass-front office building. In European culture, it is very important to preserve architectural history as the cities continuously evolve.

*Frau Jones,
Partner in Mission*

The Beauty of the Beach and Sea

Upon the shore where waves embrace the land,
I find the beauty of the beach so grand.
Golden sands beneath my barefoot feet,
A tranquil rhythm, the ocean's heartbeat.

The sea, a canvas of endless blue,
Its depths hold secrets, known to a few.
Glistening under the sun's warm embrace,
A timeless beauty, this wondrous place.

Seagulls glide on the salty breeze,
As palm trees sway with such graceful ease.
The scent of saltwater fills the air,
A moment of peace beyond compare.

In daylight's glow or twilight's grace,
The beach and sea, a magical space.
Where troubles fade and spirits are free,
Oh, the beauty of the beach and sea.

Matthew Cassidy '25
Junior Poetry

A Flight

As the jet stops taxiing for the final time, everyone holds onto their seats, waiting patiently. The pilot makes an announcement. Suddenly, everyone's heads snap to the back of their seats, teeth gritting and mouths uttering words of prayer. Babies are crying over the revving of plane engines and the rough and bumpy travel of rubber on asphalt. The cabin shudders, along with every passenger, until it suddenly doesn't. A sudden tranquility rushes over every passenger as the cabin quiets and calms. The plane has taken flight.

I open my window shutter to peer outside my temporary home and see only darkness. Collections of trees do not provide much illumination for a heavenly view. However, the farther up my vehicle flies, the more the window allows me to view outside.

People walking on the sidewalk appear like minuscule ants, crawling on little paths of dirt. Cars, moving like snails, provide light to the dirt paths meant for those ants. Streetlights look like small white and yellow dots from such a distance. From the plane, life seems peaceful and calm down below. Society seems to be utopian and in a perfect state; this is never the true reality.

From down below, someone is likely looking up at the plane I'm traveling in. He or she probably does not give much thought to the sight, thinking of it as a daily view. They then bring their attention back to the ground, where the streets are bustling with people trying to get to where they need to be, whether home, a late-night shift, or anything in between. Cars are honking and the traffic is jammed. On top of that, everyone feels humidity in the air - rain is coming.

I find it hard to believe how different life can seem, looking at the same event but from two different perspectives. Through my eyes, life is peaceful and quiet, with everything running as smoothly as it should. Through someone else's eyes, however, life is exciting, fast-paced, eventful, rushed. Everyone perceives events differently; understanding someone else's view can help you understand the true and unbiased nature of a situation.

Gurkeerat Singh '25
Junior Fiction



London Eye View

This is an afar view of Big Ben and London as we rode the London eye together on February 20th, 2024. We got to experience the huge ferris wheel and stunning views of the city.

Adam Cannizzo '24

The Moon

Bathed in silver-light, the moon above,
A celestial dancer, shining with love.
Guiding tides with its gentle sway,
Illuminating dreams along its way.
A glowing orb in the midnight sky,
Whispering secrets as time drifts by.
Mysteries hidden in its tranquil glow,
A distant beauty, for all to know.
The moon's enchantment, a timeless art,
Inspiring wonder in every heart.

Michael Chiang '27
First Place, Freshman Poetry

A Rock's POV

I am a rock who was forged into reality in the fiery depths of the earth as heat and pressure entangled me. This was the creation story that shaped me into the rock I am today. For countless years, I was hidden away from the surface of the earth, slowly inching my way away from the earth's core. The heat and pressure tortured me; I had an aspiration to one day live a peaceful life on the surface. A couple decades later, a groundbreaking earthquake broke out. While this might seem like an unavoidable casualty to the creation on the surface, this created a moment in time where there was a gap: a moment in time where I could escape this state of immense heat and pressure. At this time, I saw the opening and made a push for it. I felt the earth shaking all around me, but I only had one destination set in my mind, and it was the surface. As I pushed and pushed, using the pressure built under me to my advantage, I was finally thrust upwards and landed on a patch of grass. I looked around me and saw a great place filled with people walking, cars moving, and incredibly fresh air. I couldn't wait to spend the rest of my life here, but this is where I was mistaken. I thought the surface would be a welcoming environment, but I was treated with no respect here; the humans walked over me, stepped on me, kicked me, and disregarded me. However, I didn't let any of this get to my head. I went on with my day and made friends with a fellow rock. We had a great time observing nature and our surroundings. Until one day, a human took me and split me, chipped me, and shaped me into a tool to serve their needs. This was a time of great struggle. Rocks were not treated with the respect I had expected. I felt like it was my responsibility to earn respect for the rock species. After my time as a tool had passed, the humans made use of me in a different way: I found myself a part of a grand building, watching the lively city from above. As time went on, I saw the world change more. People finally began to understand the importance of us rocks. We became the foundation of humanity, a whole era was named after us, the Stone Age. In the end, I was moved to a museum, where I was observed and appreciated. As I sat behind the glass container, I reminisced about my long journey through time. From the fiery depths of the Earth to the foundation of a building in a lively city, I can truly say that I have seen it all. I've been reshaped many times and used in many different ways, but after all, I am just a silent witness to the ever-evolving story of our world, a rock.

Kevin Antony '24
Second Place, Senior Fiction

Elegy of the Autumn Leaves

In the quiet whispers of autumn's breeze,
The leaves, once vibrant, now find release,
A symphony of hues in a gentle fall,
A melancholy dance, a bittersweet call.
Crimson reds and golds so bright,
A fleeting beauty, a wistful sight,
They sway and rustle, their voices low,
Telling tales of life, in a graceful bow.
Each leaf is a story, written in the wind,
Of lives lived full, of dreams pinned,
They flutter down, in a final descent,
Leaving branches bare, yet hearts content.
For in this cycle of life's sweet decay,
We find the essence of a whispered say,
That endings bring beginnings anew,
As nature's dance continues, ever true.
Elegy sung by the falling leaves,
A gentle reminder that nothing grieves,
In the circle of life, a timeless song,
In the embrace of change, we all belong.

Matthew Ferber '25
Junior Poetry

City of the Straits

Where East meets West,
A grand city, one so blessed.
Jewel of the Bosphorus, radiant and bold
Constantinople, city of old.

Grandiose walls, stood so tall,
Guardians of Sophia, they would not fall.
Sophia's spires pierced the sky,
In praise of God, they reached so high.

Shadows gathered through fate's hand,
An army gathered, to capture the city so grand.
Yet in each heart, a steadfast light
A beacon of hope, even in the darkest night

Constantine XI, a king in the fray
Would lead his people through both night and day
Besides grandiose walls they made their last stand
Defending their city, their homeland.

Clark Dias Jr. '25
Junior Poetry



Paris, City of Light

Day or night, sun or rain, Paris glistens. This photo was taken through the tour bus window on the Origins Club Winter Break 2024 to Paris. Using just a cell phone and some simple filters, the street scene became one of my favorite images and memories of the trip. The colors and light capture the magic of the city as I saw it through my own lens.

*Paul Caruso,
Partner in Mission*

The Painter

While living in this cruel and unusual world, painting was the only thing that kept Vincent's sanity intact, that, and his loving, patient mother, of course. His mother knew from the moment he was born that he was going to grow up to be extraordinary, not that she prayed for that to happen, she just knew. Vincent proved her correct with his ability to paint hyper realistic scenes, winning numerous art competitions all at just 11 years old. His mother was very happy.

It was not until he was 16, however, when he started to realize his true gift. He noticed that some things would change whenever he painted; for example, when he would paint the trees, their leaves would either fall off or grow new ones, matching whatever he created on the canvas. He didn't think too much of it as, after all, it could just be a coincidence. As Vincent was walking home from school, he noticed the sidewalks leading to his house were void of cracks—they were almost perfect. The potholes which used to be on the road disappeared too. As he looked through his paintings, he noticed that the painting of his house matched exactly what he saw outside. The main focus was the house, so he didn't care for what the sidewalk and road looked like. Astonished, he wanted to experiment further by creating more things on the scene: cars, trees, animals, even people. To his surprise, all of these things came to reality out of thin air. With all the possibilities and ideas that came to Vincent's mind, he was very happy.

At first, Vincent would only do what he believed were small things to benefit him. He would change his grades, win competitions, invite himself to parties, and much more which satisfied his teenage dreams. His life wasn't perfect, though. He couldn't "paint" away the actions and words of his peers who called him a freak for staying in his dark, cramped art room all the time. He wanted to get revenge on these bullies who hurt him for so long. His anger led him to ignore reason and paint his bullies getting hurt.

As he grew older, so did his knowledge of the world around him, and as this knowledge grew, so did his anger. He was disgusted by all the evils in the world, and he believed that with his power, he could fix all of it. As one would expect, however, Vincent did not really care about the well being of every person in the world. He just wanted to reshape the world based on how he saw fit. He tried killing off corrupt officials, believing that they were a lost cause, but that just spread more chaos. He tried getting rid of terrorist organizations, but that just led to more groups wanting revenge. He tried giving resources to nations who needed them, but that just led to more wars and conflicts over those resources. In a panic, Vincent only thought of one way to get rid of all the evils in the world: unity under him. As he painted the whole globe onto his canvas, his mother burst into his room, distraught by all the current events. All she wanted was to hug her son and apologize for bringing him into a world like this. She looked around the room confused, wondering why her son had painted all these tragic events in full detail. In an instant, Vincent confessed everything he had done. He explained his power, admitting that his life was a lie, and he was the cause of all the chaos.

He showed his final piece to his mother, promising that it will fix everything. She didn't believe it, however, and they fought over the painting. She kept trying to take it from him, explaining how he would just create more damage. As they were circling the room, Vincent tripped over one of the paint buckets and dropped the canvas. Black paint spilled all over the painting. Vincent, realizing what he had done, ran to his mother to hug her. The world went dark.

David Adlao '26
First Place, Sophomore Fiction

Metallic Martyr

In a future far beyond the reaches of ‘modern’ society, there existed nothing but humans and robots on a planet Earth. These robots were nothing more than vacuous machines that required no rest, no sustenance, and no kinship; toiling away under the human’s command, constructing more robots until the gears in their bodies reduced to scrap. Life for these machines continued for hundreds of years, until a scientist decided to make his own sentient robot modelled after his lost child. The scientists raised this robot as a son, but since humans wanted to keep robots as servants, many saw this anomaly as a threat. As the other robots slaved away in production, this android was out dreaming dreams and imagining a life no machine could ever fathom. As the first robot to ever have such thoughts; he dreamed of reaching the ends of the land and playing amongst the stars, but his most powerful fantasy was to program his robot friends to feel emotion with him and live in harmony with the humans. Unfortunately, since he possessed the innate ability to think and feel as a person, people ridiculed his presence and many wanted him dead. Despite all this, he never took it to heart and wished to teach robots the beauty of the morning dawn, the warmth of a smile, and how to have empathy for their human oppressors. So, with determination steeled in his heart, he ran from his home and set out to find the mainframe controlling the production of all these robots. He searched the tallest mountains and the deepest trenches to no avail, until sensing a signal from deep within the Earth’s core. Once he found the place, this boy dug day and night. With willpower brimming from the ends of his wiring, he finally struck the ground with a **tink**; and as he dug up his discovery, he found the entrance to a secret laboratory responsible for programming all robots on Earth. Gathering all his courage, he broke into the lab and immediately had guards in pursuit of him. He ran as fast as his hydraulic legs could push, and he soon reached the computer responsible for controlling all the robot’s files. Unfortunately he was already too late, and he was being surrounded by guards ready to take him down. In a last ditch effort, he threw his flash drive into the mainframe, exporting all his information to all the robots of the land; dying in the process. In a society where robots had been devoid of emotions for so long, people began to view robots in a different light. The dream of one anomaly enlightened humans to view these robots as equal being capable of love, compassion, and understanding.

Mukul Agarwala '26
Second Place, Sophomore Fiction

The Industrial Revolution

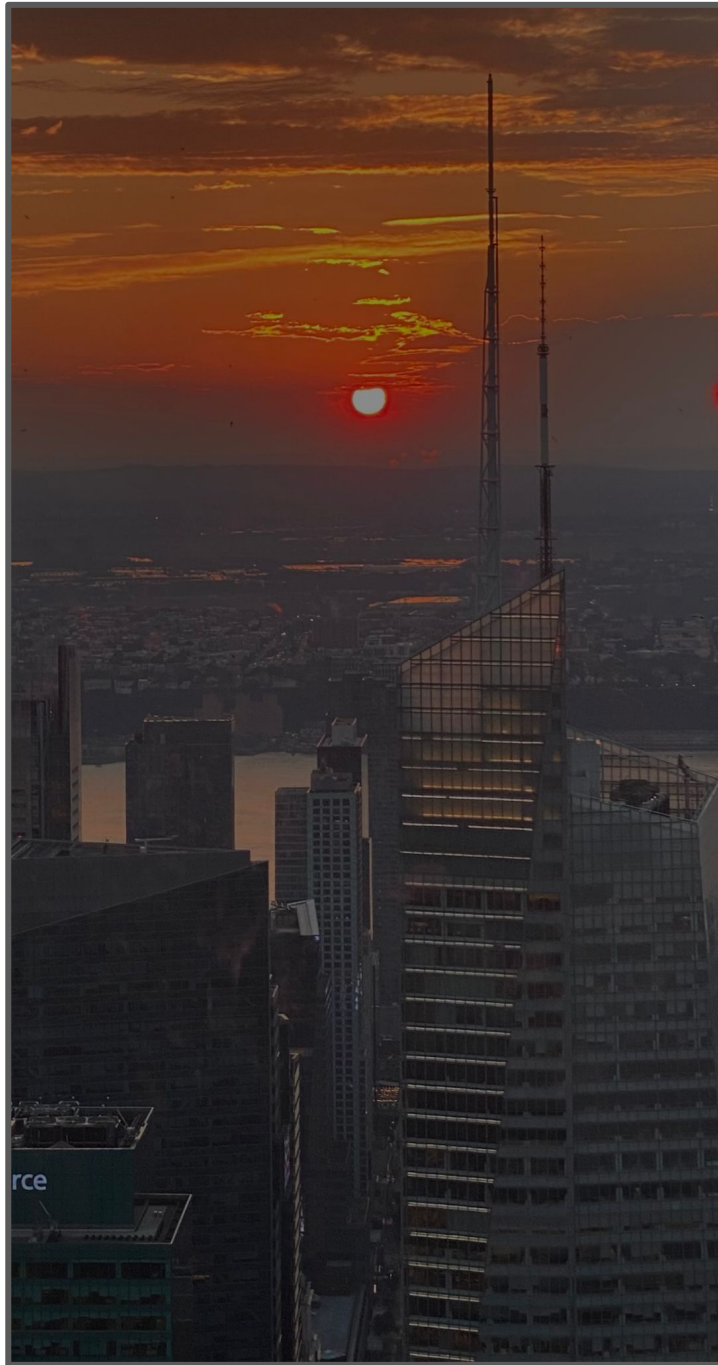
The sun is gloomy, gray, and grim,
The impending dystopian future is here at last.
Man is but a lonely slave to his vices,
Working day and night to earn nothing but rights.
The walls are dull, dim, and dark.
Entirety is interchangeable.

The chimneys spew their fumes so high,
The sky above, once painted in vibrant blue,
Now weeps a heavy, ashy hue.
Machines and gears grind without cease,
While workers toil, their struggles are without ease.
In this bleak landscape, foliage's voice is lost,
"Nevermore" the Raven was but a tool to forecast.

The rivers, once pristine, now flow like ink,
Polluted by factories that never blink.
The forests are stripped of their majestic foliage,
Replaced by factories in this barren place.
And man, once free, now shackled to the wheel,
Trading his dreams for this paper money.
As life becomes a brutal, heartless grind,
In the present is the future you can find.

It seems the more we progress fast,
The more we leave behind the beauty of nature unsurpassed.
The industrial future, bleak and dim,
Has left both nature and mankind in mire.
Was this really our desire?

But how far does our sufferance go?
In our hands lies the power to decide,
Let us steer the future with wisdom.
Let us turn back to the wise words of Marcus Aurelius
Let us remember the lessons learned so well,
And seek a brighter future where nature and man can dwell.



The Sun Setting on the Sleepless City

A timely capture of the sun burning through the orange-amber sky as it sets on a lengthy day in late August. I took this photo from the high-rise exhibit at SUMMIT One Vanderbilt in Manhattan where the beauty of New York City can be seen.

Santino Oliveti '26

Who is Playboi Carti

Jordan Carter, also known as Playboi Carti, is a rapper who was born on September 13th, 1996. His hometown is Atlanta Georgia, and he has lived there for most of his life. As a child and teenager, he would always get in trouble and he would never listen; he still has not changed as he still gets into a lot of trouble as an adult. He never sought higher education than high school, and he would skip school a lot and get yelled at by his mother. As an adult, he has been recently charged with a felony for domestic abuse. A main reason for him getting into so much trouble as a kid was because he grew up without a father figure. Before Playboi Carti wanted to pursue music, he wanted to become an NBA player. He stopped playing due to an argument with his coach. After that, he devoted all his time to music. In the end of his childhood stages, he barely ended up passing high school because he skipped classes and thought it was a better idea to work at H&M than to go to school.

Once he graduated high school, he went straight into making music. He made songs on SoundCloud under the name “Sir Cartier,” but in 2013, about two years after he started, he changed it to Playboi Carti. He joined a record label known as “Awful Records” in 2014. When he signed with “Awful Records,” he decided to move to New York with family and met the “ASAP Mob.” The ASAP Mob took him out to Texas to meet with ASAP Rocky, a very popular artist at the time and still a very popular artist. In 2015, he made his first real song after meeting with ASAP Rocky. The song’s title was “Broke Boi.” Once he dropped his first single, he was pretty much an instant success and toured with “Lil Uzi Vert” and some of the ASAP Mob.

Some of Playboi Carti’s most popular projects and songs include: Playboi Carti (the album), Die Lit, and Whole Lotta Red. Playboi Carti was extremely successful with all of these albums. Playboi Carti’s most popular album “Whole Lotta Red” came out in 2020 on Christmas. “Whole Lotta Red” peaked at number 1 on the Billboard 200. Playboi Carti has recently announced a retirement from music but he is still making projects and music, so no one is really one hundred percent sure what he is doing. Also in his most recent years, he has made a record label “Opium.” All of the people in “Opium” have very similar music styles, and they all have a similar style overall. His Opium record label includes: Playboi Carti, Ken Carson, Destroy Lonely, and Homixide Gang.

Playboi Carti overall is a very successful and talented artist. He created the “Opium” sound and is credited with the creation of that style of music. Playboi Carti has also worked with many other popular artists. In conclusion, Playboi Carti was a disobedient child, started making music in 2013, created the Opium record label, has debuted at number one, has worked with other successful artists, and has created his own style of music that has influenced many other artists.

“When you go out, go out with a bang, anything you do.”
-Jordan Carter (In reference to his album “Die Lit”)

Michael DiSimone ‘27
Third Place, Freshman Nonfiction

The Slayer of Gods

Emptiness. A void. That's where I live nowadays. Who I am is not important. I was born into a world of wonder, a wonder long since extinct. I was born to a Norse woman in the early BC's. Don't ask me exactly when; I don't remember anymore. My father is Apollo, a Greek god. How did a god and an ancient Norwegian woman end up together? Well for starters, historians are wrong, dead wrong. They screwed up everything they possibly could have. Of course, the people of the ancient world *did* try everything in their power to erase me from the tomes. I spent my childhood in the beautiful lands of Norway. Growing up as a Greek demigod in Norway is not as uncommon a thing as one might think. Once again, historians messed up. The Olympians did not just exist in Greece, they were all over the world. As for the Norse religion, that was a red herring, a fake. It was planted to keep the future world from thinking that I might actually exist. I mean, can you imagine a god named Thor swinging a hammer and constantly killing giants? The gods never cared about mortals. We were inferior, weak, lesser beings, but I was strong, and I killed them all. My friends and I went on many quests together. Their names were Odd and Erik, if you wanted to know. It doesn't matter. They're both gone now. Together we slew the minotaur. We pilfered the golden fleece. We tamed Pegasus. We even completed every last one of Hercules' supposed feats. Then like all demigods, the three of us succumbed to old age. I was not summoned to the judgment hall of Hades like my friends, however. Instead, I went to Olympus. I was offered immortality by the king of the gods, Zeus. A choice was made in an instant. The same choice that would haunt me for the rest of my existence. Mortals don't know how lucky they are. Life only has value because it ends. One day, I was in the underworld overseeing the three judges. They would not allow a man to pass through. They expected riches from him, but he had little. I could not stand by while a good man was put into eternal damnation by these three corrupt beings. I demanded they let him pass, to which they responded: "Only a major god will command anything of us! Begone, worm." As I left I began to ponder: what if I had the power? If I could kill a major god I could take that power and more. Drunk on my own cleverness, I derived a plot. Step one: burn the tree of immortality. This was the life source of the gods, and I burned it to the ground. Without their precious immortality, they were useless, vulnerable. The first god I struck down was Ares. Ares was the one god hated by all. His reckless nature and weak mind made him the perfect target. In the end, he died falling on his own spear, shocked that he could feel the cold touch of death. I returned to Olympus in triumph. Horrified, the other gods took action. They took me on individually in their places of power. However, without their immortality, they could not win against a being who knew how to combat it. Had they attacked together, things would have been quite different. All gods were gone. Who was weak now? Who was the lesser being? I had all the power. I commanded the dead. I ruled the sky. I was the only god left. I was all alone. Even the mortals knew what I had done. They wiped me from history. I was forgotten. I had replanted a new tree of immortality by then. I now sit on my once golden, now corroded, throne living a pointless existence. I always knew I would go far. I just didn't know how far I'd go to get there. I wish I could join my friends in Elysium, but I can't bring myself to burn that infernal tree. A choice that was made in an instant. I erased the gods from the world. Stories faded to legends, and legends to myths. When the gods left, so too did the magic and wonder of the world.. And for that I am sorry.

Kevin Watson '27
Second Place, Freshman Fiction

A Language of Prosper

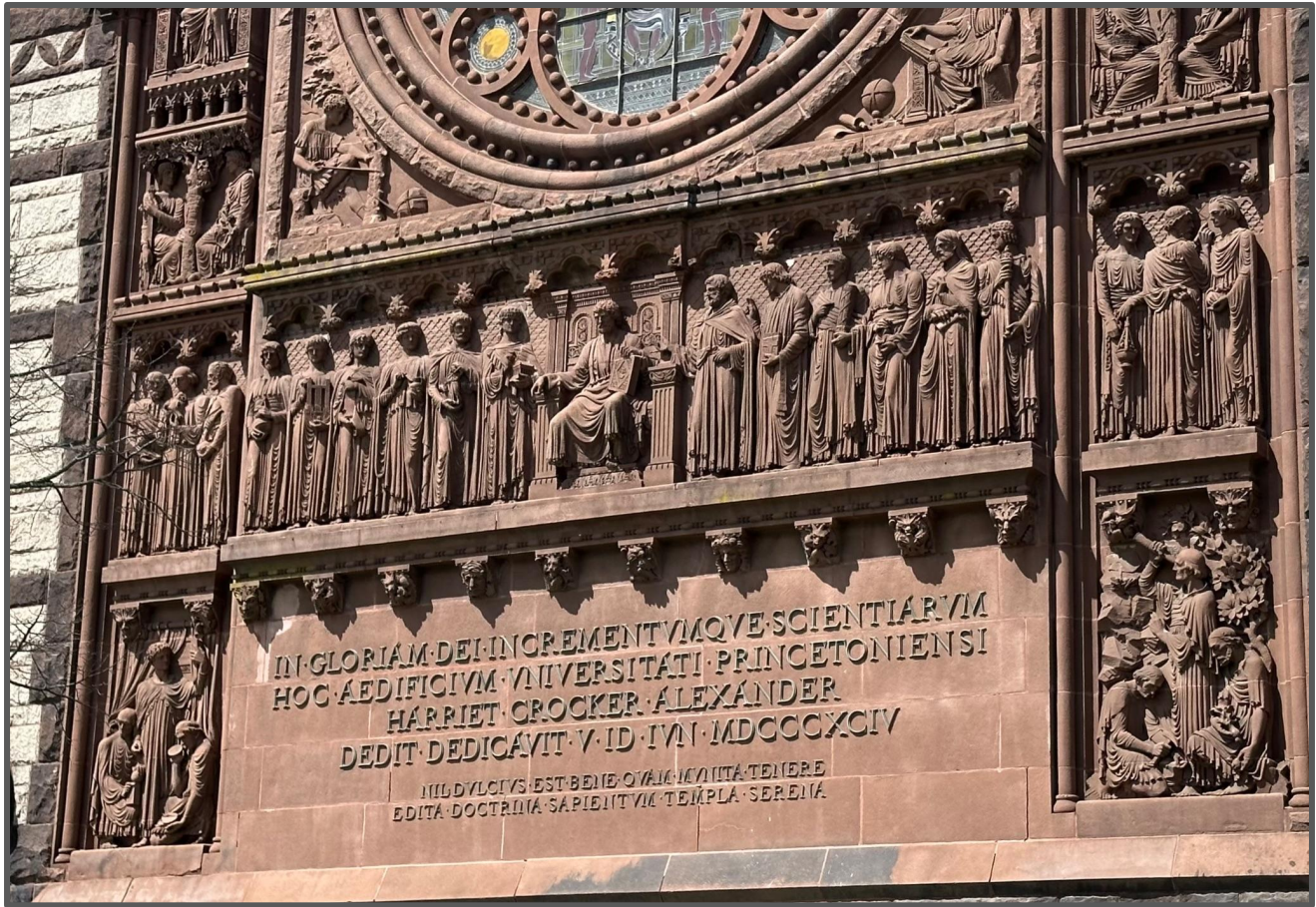
Thriving yet “Dead”
A language of of old
Studied yet “Unspoken”
A language of prestige

Comprehensible yet “Complex”
A language of rigor
Cared for yet ignored
A language of vigor

Esteemed Yet underestimated
A language of stem
Powerful yet “decrepit”
A language of antiquity

Profound yet extensive
A language of vast
Filled with detriment, record and tale
Latin, a language of prosper

Santino Oliveti '26
First Place, Sophomore Poetry



The Proof of Prosperity

An ornately sculpted side of the Richardson Auditorium in Alexander Hall at Princeton University is captured above. I took this photo while walking around the Ivy League University's Campus when I visited for a regional Certamen Latin Competition. The Latin language itself is featured below what appears to be Christ and his 12 Disciples.

Jason Magistre '24

Endangered

A Rhino's charge,
Large and forceful,
Moving slowly,
Poached of its qualities,

A Macaw's screech,
Vibrant and lively,
One-of-a-kind,
Traded like a penny,

A Panda's munch,
Unbothered and serene,
Confined in space,
Nowhere to go,

A Sea Turtle's glide,
Resilient and nurturing,
Done nothing wrong,
Choking to survive,

A Sloth's yawn,
Harmless and unaware,
A fragile being,
Cutting it close,

A King Cobra's slither,
Vigilant and quick,
Versatility is its downside,
Clothed with danger,

A Blue Whale's moan,
Peaceful and gargantuan,
Unsafe with encroachment,
Polluted in fear,

A Human's mindset,
Irreverent and damaging,
Killing them off,
Destroying their home

Troy Boucher '25
Third Place, Junior Poetry

Tap

Tap. "Did I just see it? Or am I just hallucinating?"

Today was a perfect day for fishing. The sun was shining, and the gentle breeze ruffled the water's surface. Combined with the chirping of birds, this breeze created a soothing flow of nature's sounds that allowed me to relax and absorb the moment.

Tap. "there it is again."

I had cast my line and settled into my favorite spot in the middle of the lake and set my rod down in a holder. As I waited for a bite, I paused to look back to the moments that brought me here, those times when the cast resulted in a personal record or a new species. Thinking about these things quickly brought a smile to my face.

Tap, Tap. "I knew it. There is something there."

Suddenly, I saw it. At least I thought I did. That *tap*. *THE tap* that could lead to something new. *THE* same *tap* that brought me here in the first place. That simple *Tap* has brought me to what I am now.

To me, I have always believed that fishing was my connection with nature. Although my life has gone through many instabilities, that first fish bumping my rod ignited a passion that has lasted through and often guided my life.

Throughout the 15 years of my life, I have felt many taps. Some have been more memorable than others. However, I view every single one with a special individuality. Some have been simple reminders of the underwater world's existence, while others have led to unforgettable battles with elusive fish. Even today, each of these taps holds a special place in my heart, connecting me, the angler, to the vast, mysterious world that lays just beneath the water's surface.

Benjamin Yao '26
First Place, Sophomore Nonfiction

Time Travel is Real (And Even Closer Than You Think)

The theory of time travel (or time dilation) is much debated by many scientists. Some believe that it cannot be possible, while others believe that time travel can exist, and already does. However, there are instances where time travel could, and does exist. For example, time travel via speed is one of the simplest methods to understand. This idea relates to Einstein's theory of relativity, where the faster you are going, the slower everything else gets for you. However, this theory has been proven in real life. According to Cosmos Magazine, "using twin atomic clocks (one flown in a jet aircraft, the other stationary on Earth) physicists have shown that a flying clock ticks slower, because of its speed".¹ The speed at which the clock was ticking wasn't even noticeable, however, if you were to go closer to the speed of light the effect would be tremendous. Cosmos Magazine tells us that, "If you were in a spaceship traveling at 90% of the speed of light, you'd experience time passing about 2.6 times slower than it was back on Earth." This means that while your body and mind aged one second, everything else aged 2.6 seconds. Scientists have set up particles that are moving at speed so close to the speed of light, that one second for them is around 11 months to the rest of us. Another way to experience time travel is to be near something with a massive gravitational pull around it. This relates to Einstein's theory of general relativity which states that what we think of as gravity is just a curve of space-time. For example, imagine space-time as a sheet of paper. Planets or large objects are marbles or rocks put on that sheet of paper. If the paper is suspended horizontally, those marbles and rocks will cause a bigger dip the larger they are. This dip attracts other objects towards the object making the dip, hence, gravity. However, this isn't just attraction; this is curving space-time itself meaning that the more gravity you feel, the slower time will feel for you. Now on Earth, the difference won't be noticeable between your feet and your head, but GPS systems have to take time dilation into effect. Without having those corrections, your GPS wouldn't even begin to detect where you are within a few miles. Now for you to feel the effect of time dilation you would need to be near a body with a humongous amount of gravity on it: like a black hole. However, this would prove useless since the nearest black hole is roughly 3000 light-years away. You would get a bigger time dilation from traveling to the black hole than actually being near it. Another issue is that you would need to be close to the event horizon of a black hole, meaning that if you accidentally cross that horizon, you will never return. The next instance of time dilation is via wormholes. Wormholes are used a lot in science fiction, but they aren't exactly described well. Wormholes aren't just portals; they are pockets that pop in and out of existence at the quantum level. The quantum level allows for very interesting effects to come into existence, which include being in two places at once, and as previously mentioned, time travel. The issue with this is that these wormholes only exist in a space even smaller than atoms. The amount of energy needed to expand these would be unimaginable, but technically possible. The last theory is just that, a theory. This hasn't been proven, and might not even work. The last theory is using a rotating cylinder of light to twist space-time. Ron Mallet, an American scientist, theorized that just like how a bubble follows the swirl you make when you mix your coffee, a particle could theoretically be dragged throughout space-time, and spat back out in another moment of time or Space. Nevertheless, many scientists doubt the authenticity of this theory and Ron Mallet hasn't proven it since he published the theory in 2000. Time travel is important to the scientific community because it can solve so many mysteries within our universe. We can learn about what happened in the past, or what is to come. We can learn about how everything started, and how everything will end.

1. O'Connell, Cathal. "Time travel: five ways that we could do it." Cosmos Magazine, 3 August 2021, <https://cosmosmagazine.com/science/physics/five-ways-to-travel-through-time/>. Accessed 3 November 2023.

The Phenomenon of College Football

Few things are as famous, have as rich of a history, and have as much of a passionate fanbase as college football. It started here in New Jersey at Rutgers university, where football teams made up of Rutgers students and Princeton students played a football game. From there, the National College Athletics Association formed, and college football only continued to expand in size and popularity. There is nothing else that will make people base their mental health and happiness off of the athletic performance of college students. Just as many if not more people attend college football games than NFL games, and the atmosphere and energy at a college football game is like nothing else. After a historic win over Alabama, the Tennessee fan base uprooted the goalposts from the field and paraded them around the city in celebration, and fierce rivalries between schools have caused massive brawls between players and fans alike. These are only some of the reasons college football is so different from any other sports event. First, there is an unprecedented amount of money involved with college football. Universities invest hundreds of millions of dollars into scholarship money, stadiums, and team facilities. It can also be the financial gateway for people that would not ordinarily be able to afford college to pursue a higher education because of their skills on a football field. There is an unimaginable amount of pride that fans take in their favorite team, and a college football team is sometimes most of a school's identity. There are many parts of the country where college football is much more popular than the NFL, which is unlike any other collegiate sport. It's these college football hotspots which predominantly lie in the south that are home to the most prominent and prestigious college football programs, like Alabama, Georgia, LSU, and Florida. Some of Florida's teams in the 2000's truly show what is so special about college football. College legends such as Tim Tebow, Percy Harving, and Major Wright were a part of these Florida football teams that won national championships, but often at the expense of their personal lives, bodies and mental state. They put so much into it and sacrificed so much for it that when Tim Tebow, their quarterback, had the opportunity to be drafted into the NFL and make millions, he decided to remain at Florida for another year and pursue another national championship. Players sacrifice so much and work so hard even to make it to the college football stage, and some of them never do. High school football players work tirelessly to get recruited to a D1 school, and the dream of playing college football themselves. Most high school football players aspire and work to be recruited, but less than 1% ever go D1, showing just how good you have to be. College football is also special since none of the players have signed their contract yet, and are all playing for a national championship and also their chance to make it to the NFL. Between the players, recruiting, fans, the schools, and the pride, college football is unlike any other sport.

John Cummings '27
First Place, Freshman Nonfiction

The End of a Case

“Name and Age?”

“My name is Jonathan Andrews, I’m 68 years old.”

“How did you know the victim?”

“I am his brother-in-law, and I am godfather to his son”

“Can you explain to us what happened last Wednesday to Devon?”

The two cops looked at Jonathan and he attempted to get out what he was saying. They looked around the house, it was old and small, just like Jonathan, who stood at only 5 '4". “Well Devon had just retired from his job so I took him out to dinner with some friends and family. When dinner ended we were walking out and a figure shot Devon dead.” John’s mouth was trembling in fear at just remembering that event. The cops looked at each other and tried to comfort the old man.

“Who else was with you at this dinner?”

“It was just me, my wife, Devon, Devon’s kids, our friend Gabriel, and Devon’s son-in-law.”

The cops thanked John for his time and left. They’ve been at the case for a week, and have seemed to put nothing together, they know the whole story of the night, they went over it again and again, but they have no evidence, they have one suspect though, Gordon Samuels, Gordon’s ex-coworker. So the two cops went back to the precinct, and went into the interrogation room, Samuels was already there.

“How long did you work with Devon?” said the first cop, who went by James Wyatt. “For 11 years, we were deskmates and close friends.”

“Really? Because you seemed to hate the fact that he was retiring.” said the other cop, named Daniel Hanson.

“What makes you say that?” said Gordon, he was still young, around 35 years old, and seemed completely calm, not threatened at all by the cops.

“Well you spent a lot of time with Devon, so you must’ve thought that he was a good worker, and when he retired you were devastated, you wanted him to stay so bad that you snapped.”

“I would never do that,” Gordon responded, “I was even helping out Gordon with his retirement, I was covering his work during his last month too.”

“Well, what about this then?” said James, pulling out a pocket watch that was painted gold.

“What is this?” asked Gordon.

“Devon felt as if he was going to be murdered, so he called us, and we gave him this pocket watch, and we also told him to go to his brother in law’s house every day that month, and if he didn’t leave him with the pocket watch everything was ok” replied Daniel. “What’s your point?” asked Gordon

“When did Devon tell you he was going to be retiring.”

“November 22nd, two Mondays ago”

“Well, guess what day he dropped the watch.”

There was a long pauses. James and Daniel looked at each other, and James kept going, Daniel didn’t know what he was going to say.

“Look at this, you were in a lower position than Devon, yet you have more money in your bank account, around double, because you were stealing from Devon.”

“How’d you figure that out?”

“Devon retired very late, and you killed him because he was most of your income.”

Gordon sat there, shocked to his core

A Flight from Shanghai to Newark

It was a typical day in Shanghai when I boarded my flight to Newark, ready to embark on a long-awaited journey to visit the United States for the first time. Little did I know that this would be a flight I'd remember for the rest of my life, not for the excitement of travel, but for the unexpected medical emergency that unfolded right beside me. As I settled into my aisle seat, I couldn't help but feel a sense of anticipation and excitement about the upcoming trip. The aircraft was filled with diverse passengers from all over the world. I happened to be seated next to an elderly man named Mr. Zhang, a friendly Chinese gentleman in his 70s. We exchanged polite smiles and greetings, and I noticed that he seemed a bit nervous about the flight. Mr. Zhang explained that this was his first international journey in over a decade, and he was traveling to Newark to reunite with his daughter and grandchildren. We struck up conversations about his family and my reasons for traveling.

About five hours into the flight, with the cabin lights dimmed and most passengers dozing off, I suddenly noticed that Mr. Zhang's face grew pale, while simultaneously putting his hand in front of his chest. Alarmed, I asked if he was okay, but he couldn't respond. Without hesitation, I shouted as loud as I could for help. A flight attendant rushed over, her face reflecting the seriousness of the situation. Recognized the urgency, and immediately informed the flight's medical team and asked if there were any healthcare professionals on board. Thankfully, a nurse who happened to be on the flight quickly came forward to assist. She and the flight attendant supported Mr. Zhang to the aisle, where he was laid on the floor. His breathing had become labored, and his face was drenched in sweat. It was a terrifying sight, and I couldn't help but feel a sense of helplessness.

A couple minutes went by, a doctor joined in to provide additional support. Together, they assessed Mr. Zhang's condition and concluded that he might be having a heart attack. The flight crew informed air traffic control and requested an emergency landing in the nearest airport. The captain communicated the situation to the passengers, urging everyone to remain calm while preparing for a rapid descent into Anchorage, Alaska. As the plane descended, the medical team continued to care for Mr. Zhang, and I watched in awe as these strangers came together to save a life at 35,000 feet.

After what felt like an eternity, we touched the grounds of Anchorage, where there was nothing but snow and white mountain ranges. Mr. Zhang was swiftly transferred to a waiting medical team who rushed him to the nearest hospital for further treatment. We waited for an additional 4 hours on the runway until we finally departed the plane to continue our journey. I couldn't help but feel immense gratitude for the skilled professionals and passengers who had acted with such speed and compassion during a life-threatening crisis. The incident served as a constant reminder for me that Mr. Zhang's unexpected medical emergency had brought together a diverse group of individuals, and became a team focused on saving a life. It was now more than a flight trip for me, as I witnessed the resilience and kindness that can be found in the most unexpected of places, and until this day, the plane ticket for that flight is still sitting on my shelf.

Hao Chen '25

Second Place, Junior Nonfiction



A Terminal's Geometric Colors

An interesting and vibrant photograph taken when we arrived into the Miami International Airport, as we rushed to the baggage reclaim. The colors shining through these diagonal square windows is more vibrant in the picture, despite being unedited, compared to what I saw in person.

Jacob Alexander '25

Crème of the Crop

The year was 1851, near the end of the Potato Famine in Ireland. The land was barren, gray, and dead with rotting plants and crops. Mostly everyone stayed indoors, as there was nothing left for them outside. Until one day, in a small town called Dairy, a family spotted something on the horizon. It appeared to be a man on a four by four raft floating to the shore with an enormous sack upon his back. The family rushed down to the shore to meet this strange man. As he came closer it was found that the sack was no sack but a cow slung over the man's back. The man arrived on shore and swiftly collapsed under the weight of his cow. The family relieved the man of the weight on his back and placed the cow on its feet. The cow was unlike anything the people had seen before, with abnormal two udders and the garb like that of a pope. The family carried the man into their home for him to rest, and that he did. For 14 days, the man had rested peacefully, and when he awoke he introduced himself to the family. The man called himself "Creme", and he had been exiled from his home in Britain due to his cow's freakish nature. But he claimed his cow had a gift unlike any other, and offered to show the hospitable family. Crem took them out to their barn where they had kept and fed his cow. He brought his cow out to the family's field of perished crops, which he looked upon with a smile. Crem grabbed a teat from each udder and projected a golden substance throughout the field, washing over it like rain. The family watched in awe as in 14 seconds the field had sprouted plenty of new crops. The crops were, again, unlike anything the people had ever seen before. Creme introduced the family to what he called Dairy crops, aptly named after the town that took him in. The field became home to crops such as cheese bushes, butter plants, milk beans, and yogurt trees. Creme was amazed that the gift had finally worked, after many failed attempts at miracles back home. He turned to the family and told him that this gift can cure all ails, even land-stricken diseases like the famine. Crem looked to the father of the family who was old as well as blind in his left eye and deaf in the right ear. Crem took a handful of the golden substance he called "creme" and slathered it on the father's face. Once the creme had soaked in, the man was cured as well as he appeared 14 years younger. The other townspeople soon grew envious of the neighbors' prosperity from this stranger. A group of urchins hatched a plan to steal the gifted cow from right under their noses. The kids waited until dusk while everyone was resting. They snuck through a hole in the barn, and through a rope over the cows mouth so no noise would be made. The rascals escorted the cow off the residence swiftly, and took it to an old town house where the rest of the townspeople waited. Everyone was eager to be blessed by the powers of this potent creme. Two experienced farmers approached the cow for extraction, and the process seemed to go smoothly leading to buckets full of golden creme. But when the people gathered to see the magical liquid, they found only buckets of salt. Confused, they turned back to the special cow to only find an average cow, with only a single udder and no holy attire. The townspeople soon rushed to their neighbors' farm only to find empty land. In only 14 minutes the home had seemingly vanished, no Crem, no Family, and no Dairy crops. In the absence of the home there laid a stone, engraved in it was a message which read "*In a famished land he produced a miracle on the 14th day, but the greed of the people repelled his future gifts, for he was IRISHCREME14*".

Colton Leahy '26

Third Place, Sophomore Fiction

A Procrastinator's Life

I have some homework due
I will add it to the queue
Its work I don't want to do
But if I don't I'm screwed

I planned it out alright
After fun I'll write
My schedule isn't tight
I'll get some sleep tonight

HOW DID THE TIME GO AWAY SO FAST
I'M HONESTLY AGHAST
THIS IS NOT GOING TO BE A BLAST
BECAUSE SEVEN HOURS PASSED

My face is blank there is no glee this deadline I will never meet
The weight of the world is on my knees but no matter what I will not cheat
I will not use chatGPT will not be an easy key
It will never end I can't get free, the only person I can hate is me

It has been about an hour
I've figured out the answer
I promise I'll get better
Oh wait, there is another.

Howard Askelson '26
Third Place, Sophomore Poetry

The NHL's ever growing struggle with popularity

There is one thing that all sports have in common. They need popularity to succeed. And many others have been growing in popularity ever since their inception pretty steadily with others exploding in popularity like the NBA when the Larry Bird Vs Magic Johnson rivalry was established in the 80s. All except one league. The NHL in the US. Now I say the US because the popularity in Canada has and will always be expanding and will continue to do so. The reason why the popularity in the US is the more important factor is because our country has so many more NHL teams than up north. The sport hasn't seen a steady growth in popularity since the 90s and early 2000s. And especially now, the NHL's popularity should be growing by the day in the US. mainly because of the weird stat that a canadian hockey team in the NHL hasn't won the Stanley cup (a league title) since 1993! All NHL have found success within their own markets. For example, this year, the Boston Bruins are celebrating their 100th anniversary in the NHL but what about other people? Why would they care about the NHL? Not to mention the fast playstyle of the game today that pale in comparison to the hard-nosed, hitting game we saw before in the Scott Stevens era. There is tons of evidence of the NHL's failure to bring in new fans but it's not ALL the NHL's fault. First up, the Atlanta Flames in the 70s. After feilding poor performing teams with a grand total of ONE playoff win in their decade of history (playoff rounds are best of 7), they moved to Calgary to become the Calgary flames. Who remains in the NHL today. Next up, is the second time the NHL decided to make a new team in Georgia. This time called the Atlanta thrashers. They entered the league in 1999 and fielded pretty good teams with some great players like Ilya Kovalchuk and Keith Tkachuk finishing his career there. Though they didn't have much success in the playoffs and they really struggled to fill Philips arena. It was to the point where the mascot of the team went on a Georgia highway ON A ZAMBONI (the big truck that cleans the ice for games) with a sign that said buy tickets. And surprise surprise, he got arrested. In 2011, they moved to Winnipeg, Manitoba to become the Reincarnation of the Winnipeg Jets. another team that moved in the 90s. They moved to Phoenix, Arizona to become the Arizona Coyotes who are ALSO on the verge of moving after they got evicted from their arena and are now playing in a 2000 seat COLLEGE ARENA. One of the most egregious ones though is when they moved away from a CANADIAN market. The Quebec Nordiques were a team that had played in Quebec City for about 20 years at that point. But because it was the smallest Canadian market in the NHL even though they had a really good team. Long story short, they moved to Colorado in 1995. Who then went on to win the 1996 stanley cup final. Then half a decade later in 2001, they beat my favorite team, the New Jersey devils, stopping their hopes of going back to back by winning the cup again. The NHL has been struggling but it does seem to be getting better. Recently in 2016 and 2021, they added two new teams. The Vegas Golden Knights and the Seattle Kraken respectively. And they are both successful now. The Vegas Knights won the stanley cup finals back in april of this year, and the seattle kraken beat the 2022 reigning champs, the Colorado Avalanche in the playoffs. But the NHL will continue to struggle slightly with popularity unless something is done.

Louis Ricigliano '27
Second Place, Freshman Nonfiction

Focus

In the midst of life's uproar, I crave a steady gaze, A focused mind, in this chaotic maze, Amidst the hustle and the endless noise, I wish for clarity, to drown out the inner voice.

Through the fog of distractions, I strive to find, A sharpened focus, a purpose well-defined, In all the quiet moments, I'll reset my view, With determination, my ambitions I'll pursue.

To gain focus, in this world's demands, I'll steady my thoughts with firm, capable hands.

Tristan Arias '27
Second Place, Freshman Poetry



Memories of the Summer

In this jewelry piece, I challenged myself to incorporate found sea glass with pearls as well as seafoam colored beads that reminded me of my summer vacation at the beach. The peyote beading technique is done in a free-form pattern to mimic the ocean waves.

*Frau Jones,
Partner in Mission*

Februa

Baptism

White velour smears the green garden,
Water clings to the body
And for some time, it seems like
You wish for it to take you to the other side.
You stay there, so convincingly, like the whole congregation
Was there with you, in the water
And you rise up, like
Some divine being wants us to believe this religious stuff.
They are convinced, and for some time, you are too.

Meditation

Thick air brushes it's indefatigable fingers on the skin,
Insecurities come to mind,
So for some time you allow yourself to wander.
Your body remains in the room, but the soul is miles away.
You compensate for your longing,
With mirages of the mind,
And for a brief moment, you believe you see Him,
Or some form of Him.
Your mind is an amusement park, and so
You keep lying to yourself.

Stop Running

Energetic Detox

You are joking now.
The dead boy hangs around your bed,
following you
Everywhere you Go.
The rooms swirl thick with smoke,
You dance around, sage at hand, and for some time,
You can see the dead boy, dressed in the gray,
But the dead boy...
Does not leave.
And Februa*...
Does not help.

Februa: Roman festival of purification

Struthof

It was a beautiful day, the birds were chirping, the wildflowers were in full bloom, and the sun was shining with barely a cloud in the sky. All of us were gazing through our windows at the extraordinary sights of the serene valleys and mountain sides of Natzweiler, France. Yet, our experience would change as soon as we reached the top of our mountain destination. We were heading to Struthof, a World War II Nazi concentration camp, located 2600 feet above sea level.

As we exited our car, we were immediately met with a cool breeze. We followed a path marked with enormous trees on both sides, with each step seemingly becoming heavier and heavier. As we turned the corner, our eyes became fixated on the camp's gate, it almost seemed that clouds hung over the entrance. The humongous gate stood there surrounded by imposing barbed wire. As I passed through the gate, I was met with an eerie silence that hung heavy in the air. The gravel crunched underneath my feet, echoing the footsteps of countless prisoners who once walked the very same path. Taking in all of the sights was almost too much to bear. On the highest point of the hill was an enormous memorial acknowledging all the lives lost during the war. The entire camp was surrounded by more barbed wire and wooden towers. The barracks bore witness to the cramped and inhumane conditions the innocent prisoners endured. Upon entering the barracks, we were met with many remnants and stories from the atrocities committed there. Hearing the grueling narratives of death and suffering personalized the experience. They, too, once had normal lives, yet were subject to forced labor, starvation, and ultimately death.

After some time, we left the barracks and were immediately met with a gallow, just one of the many killing techniques the Nazis used. We walked a little further down the camp and entered another barrack, which housed a crematorium. The Nazis used the crematory for those who they deemed to be sick or just plain out useless for their laborious tasks. In another area, prisoners were also subjected to medical experiments, often dying in the process. These lives were seen as mere lab rats in the eyes of the Nazis. Nothing more.

A little less than a mile away were the gas chambers. Entering them was an experience within itself. You could just hear the prisoners' screams echoing off the walls.

And the most upsetting part of it all? Less than a mile away from everything was the commanding officer's three-story mansion, equipped with a beautiful in-ground pool and sunning area. The dichotomy between these two existences couldn't be more extreme. The officers enjoyed lavish meals, drinks, cigars, and entertainment while the prisoners were emaciated from starvation, sickly without care, and dying without compassion.

To conclude, touring Struthof was truly an eye-opening experience. In history, we've all learned about the War, but to walk the grounds and listen to each narrative was incredibly moving. Visiting this place made me appreciate my life, having to never deal with the atrocities these prisoners endured. These shared individual experiences ultimately teach us a lesson about horrific human behavior, in the hopes that it's never repeated, so innocent lives are revered and not diminished.

Solis

It rises in the east,
And settles in the west.
It illuminates the day,
And disappears enabling rest.

When civilization awakens,
And the great star irradiates the world,
Society begins to smile in joy;
Everyone; all the boys and girls.

It shines on the day,
Allowing activity to commence.
With animation the world is full,
And with glee it is dense.

When dusk approaches,
And our glowing Solis takes its leave,
The world begins to calm,
But it most certainly doesn't grieve.

The reason for this,
Is that when they awaken,
Solis will have returned,
And their bellies will be full of bacon.

Despite our orb's perfect consistency,
There will in fact come a day,
When Solis is gone.
And the delight fades away.

But this day will not come soon,
For in the future it is far.
So for now Solis prospers
And lives remain how they are.

Steven Szabo '25
Second Place, Junior Poetry

Nikos and the Stolen Trident

In the ancient land of Lyndos, nestled between rugged mountains and a tranquil sea, there lived a young fisherman named Nikos. Nikos possessed a deep reverence for the ocean and a heart filled with the spirit of adventure. His days were spent casting his net into the shimmering waters, seeking the bounty that would sustain his village. One morning, as Nikos set out on his fishing expedition, he noticed a peculiar sight—a golden dolphin gliding gracefully through the waves. This dolphin, named Delphina, was the divine messenger of Poseidon, the god of the sea. Delphina had been sent to seek a mortal who possessed the strength of heart and the purity of spirit to undertake a great quest. Intrigued by Nikos' unwavering love for the sea, Delphina revealed her true form and spoke to him. She explained that Poseidon had chosen him to retrieve the sacred trident, stolen by a mischievous deity named Triton. The trident, a symbol of Poseidon's power, had the ability to control the tides and harness the forces of the sea. Honored and filled with determination, Nikos accepted the divine mission. Delphina transformed into a golden amulet, which he wore around his neck, bestowing upon him the ability to breathe and move freely underwater. With a final word of encouragement, Delphina guided Nikos to the sunken city of Atlantis, where Triton was believed to have taken refuge. As Nikos descended into the depths, he marveled at the wonders of the underwater realm, encountering mesmerizing sea creatures and vibrant coral reefs. He navigated treacherous currents and overcame formidable challenges, aided by the guidance of Delphina and the favor of Poseidon. In Atlantis, Nikos confronted Triton, a formidable deity with a cunning nature and an insatiable desire for power. Triton, threatened by Nikos' presence, unleashed his watery minions to deter the young hero. But Nikos, with his unwavering determination and the blessings of Poseidon, overcame each trial, inching closer to his goal. Finally, at the heart of Atlantis, Nikos stood face-to-face with Triton. A fierce battle ensued, the clash of their wills echoing through the underwater city. Nikos, wielding his mortal strength and guided by the power of the gods, managed to disarm Triton and retrieve the stolen trident. In that moment, Poseidon himself emerged from the depths, his regal presence commanding the attention of all. Recognizing Nikos' bravery and selflessness, Poseidon commended him for his triumph and offered him a place among the sea's greatest heroes. With the trident returned to its rightful owner, the balance of the sea was restored. Nikos emerged from the depths, hailed as a hero by his village and celebrated throughout Lyndos. The people honored him with feasts and songs, recounting his epic journey and the valor he displayed. As years passed, Nikos became a wise elder, sharing tales of his adventures and the wisdom he had gained from the gods. His legacy lived on, inspiring future generations to embrace the call of the sea and to protect its sacred beauty. And so, the myth of Nikos and the Stolen Trident serves as a reminder of the transformative power of courage and the indomitable spirit of mortals. It teaches us that when we embrace our unique strengths and answer the call to adventure, even the greatest challenges can be overcome. Through the blessings of the gods and the resilience of the human heart, we can navigate uncharted waters and emerge as heroes of our own stories.

Aryan Jeena '24

Third Place, Senior Fiction

The Ghost of Eureka Hall

If someone is to believe his own opinions, beliefs, or thoughts, then why would he be induced to believe otherwise when I claim that I saw a ghost? It pains me to even delve into this abstract ideology, but what I saw has been burnt into my brain, haunting me to even put into words. It was last summer, right outside of Asheville, North Carolina. I was on a political trip for an event called “Conference On National Affairs” (CONA), which was an assembly with Youth and Government delegates from all over the country. A 10-12 hour bus ride in a cramped bus, so I’d like to say I was out of my wits, but the night of the sighting was a few nights in, so I had become used to my environment by then. As I’m writing this months later, I am still trying to justify it, but failing. Driving down, it was almost horrifically perfect – picture the opening to Stanley Kubrick’s “The Shining;” that long shot of the car driving on a random highway with those ominous mountains in the background. It was exactly the same with my bus ride in the Appalachians, except the mountains appeared even more terrifying, with fog draping every mountain in sight, which was even more ominous. Upon arrival, we unpacked and were staying in the original building, which was built in 1912. There were three floors, and my room was on the third floor overlooking an asphalt trail up the mountain. To the naked eye, nothing seemed out of the ordinary on Black Mountain—a serene view of the Appalachians, blue skies every day, and no commotion from civilization. I wouldn’t like to jump straight to a cliché, but come nightfall, the mountain’s mood changed to quite the opposite. Dreary, bleak, gloomy, and eerie are just some words denoting the broader aspect of the ambience that was radiated by nightfall on the mountain. It pertains to a setting in which the true aura of the moment can’t be described merely in writing, but could only have been experienced first hand to understand my recollection of the setting and the event that followed. Speaking of which, I was unaware of the time at the moment of the sighting. What I do know is that everyone was asleep, and it was so quiet that you could even hear people’s thoughts. Unlike a normal hotel, each room wasn’t equipped with the luxury of a bathroom. In the middle of the night, if nature was calling, one had to leave their room and walk down the long hall, alone, likely still being disoriented from suddenly waking up. This happened to me, so like anyone else I had to leave my room to use the restroom. We had to bring our keys when we left in order to unlock the door upon our arrival back, but as I left the room, I dropped my keys on the ground, which in turn startled me causing me to quickly regain my fully conscious state. This is also a good part of the reason why I am not doubting this; I know that I was not in an inertial state - I know what I saw. Looking up, I scoped the long hallway down to the doorway a hundred or so feet down. For some reason, my eyes seemed fixated on the doorway as if I were in a state of paralytic shock, staring in horror as I witnessed a ghastly figure, which looked like an older woman in a sundress walking past the doorway staring at me with sunken eyes. Those eyes, staring 1000 yards as if they witnessed biblical atrocities, were staring into my soul, almost asking me to see whatever they saw in their past, reaching out their hand to guide me to the harrowing fate in which they succumbed. The only other time I have seen eyes like this is in depictions of widowed wives, kinless mothers, or the combination of such - a lover stripped of their loved. Those eyes stabbed into me, piercing my soul, inviting me to an unknown fate whilst keeping me unwanting of its evils. I am still unsure how long I was staring at the apparition, but I remember it as if I stared at it, studying its dread all night. It still pains me to recall the event, as memories flood my head, bringing me back to Eureka Hall in the summer of 2023. However, I will never forget what I saw, and yet again I ask this question: why wouldn’t you believe me? Why would one be imposed to such a premonition? I rest my case.

Tyler Quesnel ‘24

Third Place, Senior Nonfiction

Memories

In the attic of my mind
Lay many treasures and glories of time,
Enter this room and you will find
The essence of what we left behind

The smell of the bakery across the street
The feeling of sand fondling your feet
Finding warmth in ice and snow
Popsicles to fight the sun's beading glow

The times of laughter and joy are gone
When living was never about thinking beyond
When following dreams would take us far
Burning so bright, our guiding star

Our spark is engulfed from fire to ashes
From working for money, to paying our taxes
We wish to learn, foolishness we dismiss
But the beauty of ignorance truly is bliss

The world is changing and we must adapt
But changing our minds cannot sever our past
Memories can never leave our soul
Always working to keep us whole

Ryan Xavier '24
Senior Poetry

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Policy

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

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

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

Colophon

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

The body copy was set in Libre Baskerville 13 point for a majority of the pieces, with the font being altered on some to fit the piece on one page. Headlines were set in Libre Baskerville 20 point. Student's names are also set in the body copy size and italicized as well. Page numberings are set in Libre Baskerville 17 point font. The Vignette was completed in Google Slides for this edition, after a successful pilot edition for the 62nd Volume.

The front and back cover artworks were originally created by Little Bobby Duncan '65 as larger murals and are cropped to fit the covers after being photographed from the walls in our school building. Folios were designed by the Vignette staff. This magazine is 76 pages using a 8.5 x 11 inch format.

Thanks to Mr. Paul Caruso & Dr. Robert Longhi '81 for their guidance and support as well as to the members of the English Department for their assistance with submissions.



Vignette Awards

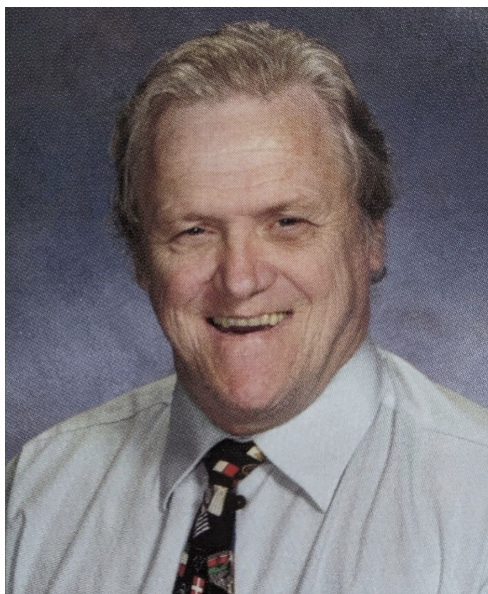
- 2023: ASPA – "First Place for Top Scoring High School and College Literary and Art Magazines and Advisors"
- 2022: ASPA – "First Place with Special Merit"
- 2021: ASPA – "First Place with Special Merit" & "Outstanding Photograph"
- 2020: ASPA – "First Place with Special Merit" & "Most Outstanding High School Literary-Art Magazine"
- 2019: ASPA – "First Place with Special Merit"
- 2018: ASPA – "First Place with Special Merit"
- 2017: ASPA – "First Place with Special Merit"
- 2016: ASPA – "First Place with Special Merit"
- 2015: ASPA – "First Place with Special Merit"
- 2014: ASPA – "First Place with Special Merit" & "Most Outstanding Private School"
- 2013: ASPA – "First Place with Special Merit" & "Most Outstanding Private School"
- 2012: ASPA – "First Place with Special Merit"
- 2011: ASPA – "First Place with Special Merit"
- 2010: ASPA – "First Place with Special Merit"
- 2009: ASPA – "First Place with Special Merit"
- 2008: ASPA – "First Place with Special Merit"
- 2007: ASPA – "First Place with Special Merit"
- 2006: ASPA – "First Place with Special Merit"

Dedication

This year's Vignette is dedicated in honor of Mr. Edward H Powers, a retired Partner in Mission, who passed away at the beginning of our school year on September 24, 2023.

Born on June 5, 1948, Mr. Powers was raised in the Ironbound section of Newark, NJ, and resided for 34 years in Metuchen, NJ. He graduated from St. Peter's High School in Jersey City, received his Bachelor's Degree at St. Peter's University in Jersey City, and attended graduate school at the University of Virginia for their Political Philosophy Program while receiving his Masters of Arts in Teaching at Colgate University.

Mr. Powers began teaching at St. Joseph's High School in 1983 and taught for 39 years, until his retirement in 2021. Throughout his time at St. Joe's, Mr. Powers was involved in many different clubs and activities. He was a History Department Chair and involved in the Lay Teachers Association. Additionally, he was the Founder and Moderator of the College Bowl and History Bowl Clubs, where he coached his teams which went on to win numerous national and international championships. Despite these many accomplishments, his most cherished and greatest legacy at our school was his commitment and passion for teaching United States history. Amongst the many students and alumni who knew Mr. Powers, he is remembered for being a teacher who always pushed students and challenged them to think critically while helping them understand the responsibilities of being good citizens in our country. Mr. Powers is also remembered as a great friend and confidant to many fellow faculty and teachers he worked with. Mr. Powers will forever be remembered as a great intellectual and voice of reason, with a priority to make the world a better place as an educator.



*Giovanni Oliveti '24,
Editor-in-Chief*

