

MOORINGS

JESUIT HIGH SCHOOL LITERARY ARTS JOURNAL



Letter From the Editors

Welcome to the Fall 2019 edition of *Moorings*! As the Jesuit High School Literary & Arts Journal, we seek to foster creative expression amongst the student body by showcasing the best written and visual works produced at Jesuit. Enjoy at your own pace.

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Cover Artwork: *Mysterious Road*, Soren Peterson '20, Photography

MOORINGS



JESUIT HIGH SCHOOL SACRAMENTO LITERARY & ARTS JOURNAL
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Godspeed Old Friend

Chris Raboy '21

PROSE

It was a hot day on July 20, 2018. The temperature was in the mid 90's and without a breeze, for most people it felt like opening the door to a hot oven. The rays of sun glistened on the grass and shrubs. There was a grueling summer heat wave outside, and a depressing, cold storm brewing inside. Thoughts and feelings were bottled up, waiting to explode from all the growing pressure. They could not be released yet because today I was taking my history final in summer school. They could not be released yet because people were watching me. They could not be released yet because I should not even be crying right now.

The history final was over before I knew it. I felt as if I was on autopilot up until the point where I had to go to the funeral. However, the previously bottled-up emotions were leaking now. The car ride felt like a never ending journey to the inevitable. I did not want to face the inevitable. I did not want to bury my friend, because once I did, it would seal my chances of seeing him again. The church where the funeral service was being held was getting closer and closer. The roads became smaller and smaller, and out of nowhere in a neighborhood of tightly packed houses was a church the size of a small school. It was packed and the entire parking lot looked as if the cars could not even breathe. I stepped out of the car and could hear the tiny rocks of asphalt beneath my feet as I walked from the old parking lot to the church. There was a presence in the area and I could taste the grief wafting in the air before entering the church.

I opened the old creaky door of the church and immediately was immersed by the trapped, musty air inside. I saw a vast church with a pretty purple cloth hanging over the altar and overhead was a statue of Jesus hanging from the cross. There was a sea of people in every pew, all familiar faces, all sad faces. There it was, Peter's casket in front of the altar with a framed picture on top of it. I sat down on the outside edge of a chair of the church because all the pews were

There was a sea of people in every pew, all familiar faces, all sad faces.

There was a blanket of silence over the entire church.

occupied. Suddenly, time froze and I was swept up by the storm inside. I thought of how could such a good, whole hearted person be taken from the earth so fast? What if I died tomorrow? What if I died today? I started to realize that every single day is not promised. Memories of Peter started to flood my mind now. I saw him dancing to music at track practice. I saw him laughing at memes I was showing him. I saw him in front of me as I was handing off the baton to him in the 4x100. He was always so happy and I did not understand how he could always be so happy.

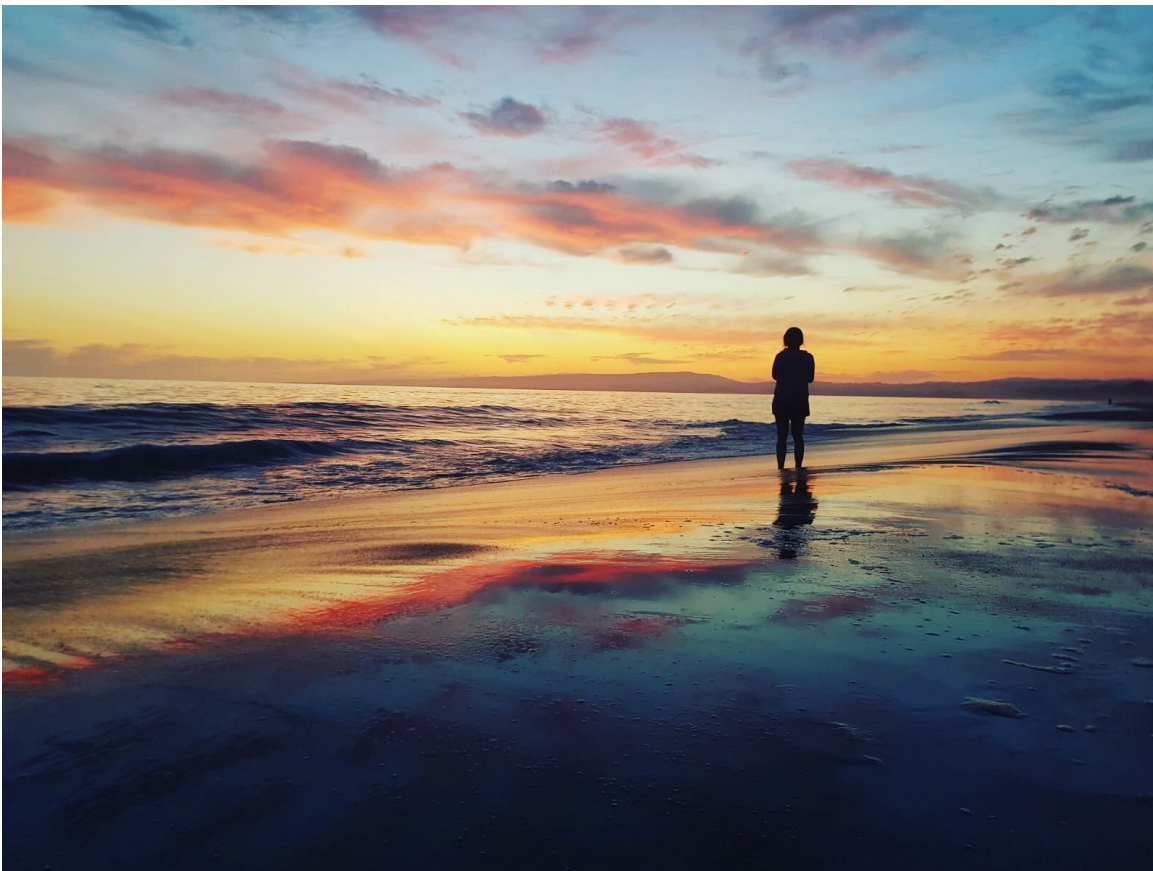
The storm was now on the outside. I couldn't hold back my tears anymore as I heard his young cousin say during the service, "He is not gone, I still see him everyday and he is with me wherever I go." She was right, he has not left, he has merely just stepped into another room waiting for us to visit him one day. All of a sudden I saw it, I was at the eye of the storm. Everything was calm now and I realized what it was. He was never afraid to be himself. If he wanted to dance he did, without embarrassment or shame. That is what I need to strive for. I need to enjoy life like Peter did, because if I lived like Peter, then I would have no regret if I died today or tomorrow. I would have been content with my actions and how I lived. That is what Peter did because he lived and died content and happy with everything he did. He was dancing to music in the hospital all the way up until he passed. Never letting go of hope and never letting his current situation define him.

His parents made a speech and there was not one tear or cracked voice during the speech which made me realize they were at peace. That realization made me see that the storm was over now. I started to smile and knew this was not what Peter would want for me. If I wanted to be happy now and the rest of my life, I needed to start being myself, and stop censoring my feelings and thoughts because of what people might think of them. The funeral service was over after the speech and it was now time for the final goodbye. Everyone stood up in unison and there was a blanket of silence over the entire church. The herd of people slowly walked out of the church and stood at the entrance that overlooked the old parking lot. Waiting near the sidewalk was the hearse with Peter inside. Peter's parents and family members entered the car. I

remember feeling like a blade of grass in a field, looking over all the people in front and trying to see the hearse. This was it, my final goodbye. Once that car drove off, it was the last time I was going to see him and I felt content. I finally made my peace.

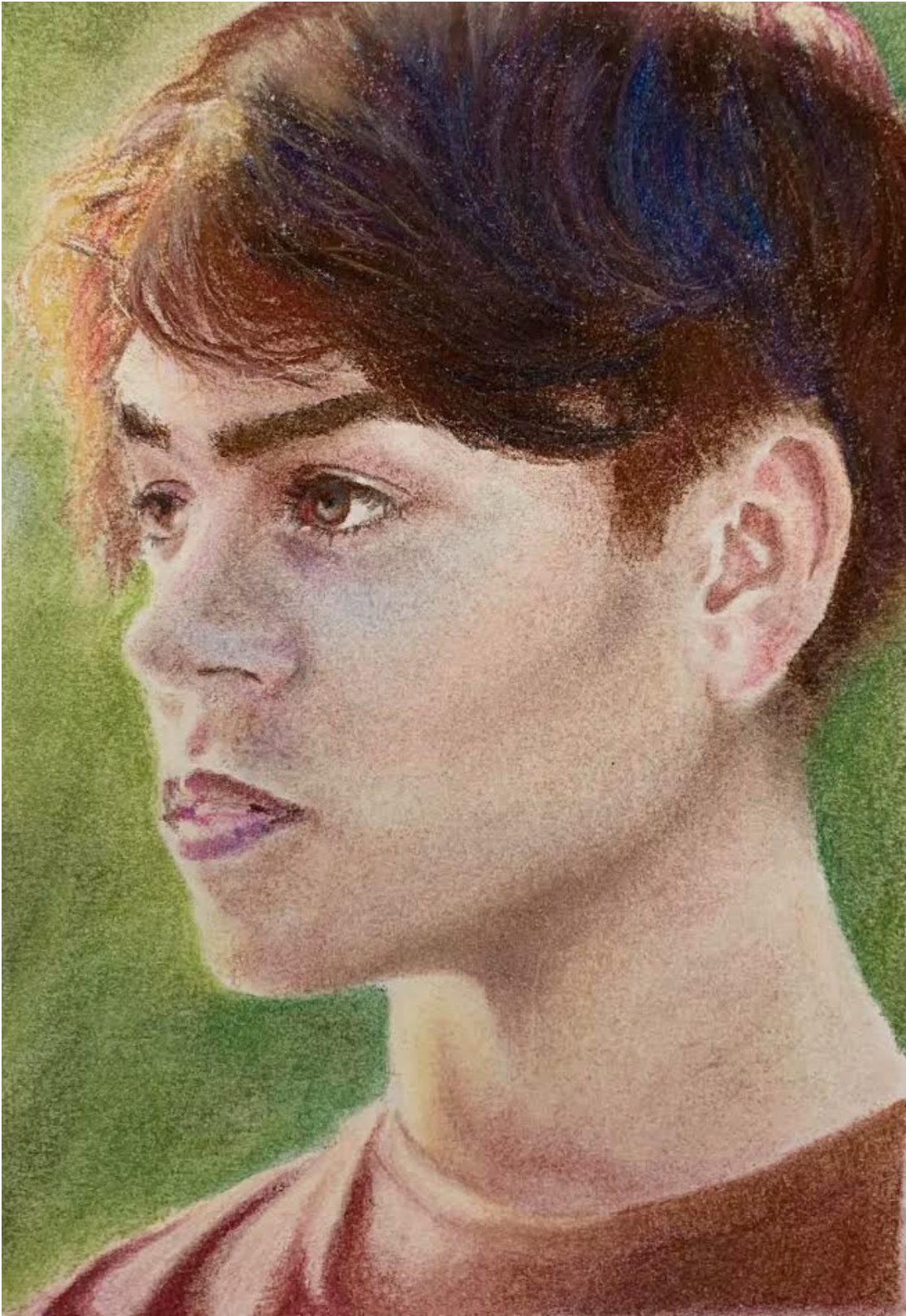
The car drove off leaving a long drone of silence amongst the crowd. I saw my friends in the corner of my eye and I walked over and hugged them, and felt like a weight had been lifted off my shoulders. We all talked about the crazy things Peter did there was no sadness anymore. Therefore, I made a promise to myself that day, that I need to start living like Peter, so that way I will never forget about him because "... he who is not forgotten is not dead" (Samuel Butler). The sun was shining bright and lively, and for the first time I could see and feel the sun again. It was finally summer.

In Loving Memory,
Peter Charles Jurisich
May 17, 2002–July 12, 2018



Solo in a Sunset

Avi Shapiro '20
Photography



Untitled

Brandon Ryan '21
Art

Forlorn Tides

Matteo Radoslovich '20

PROSE

Back when he was small and the world was big, the enclosed sandbar was a wonderland of mystery and imagination. The waves were massive white and green fists that struck down upon the moist banks. He could hear the pounding and the crashing as soon as he started down that steep flight of splintery wooden stairs, hoping the sand caked on his feet was enough to protect them. The aroma of the effervescent sea spray stimulated his nasal microbes as he romped through the sand with heavy legs. The crumbly cliff faces arched up to the fuzzy coastal grassland above. Salient spikes of stone jutted out to stab the air like huge jack-knives of rock. He would climb these cliff faces, starting with the smooth sandstone inclines at the bottoms and later to the wobbly rock wall above. Eventually he would leap down from the miniature mountains for fear of going too high. The gossamer seaweed slipped and slithered on the complacent stoney banks. They were slimy to the touch, and whenever he touched them he felt a strange yet pleasant shivering sensation run up his spine. The sea breeze sylphs fluttered carelessly, picking up wisps of sand from the big dusty basin they resided in and scattering them elsewhere. The wind blew through his hair, dampening it with the cool salty moisture. Even though the bank was not too far from the rickety staircase, it felt like it was on the other edge of the world.

When he got a little bigger and became a teenager, the giant sandbox of sensation turned into a special place where others his age would practice the primitive mating rituals that dated back millions of years. The girls would taunt the boys into chasing them and the boys would comply bashfully. They chased after each other with thighs and lungs that burned from passion and cheeks as red as the small crabs that dwelled in their little tide pool ecosystems. Their feet splashed and splashed in the quiet indigo waves as the rusty sun retired far far away. He participated in this charade with a familiar feeling that he knew all too well, but he never ended up catching any of the fish that he casted a line for. That is, until he met the neighbor's girl.

Talking to her made him far more nervous that scaling the crumbly cliffs ever did.

She was a short girl, with glasses and dark hair who came from all the way across that massive sea. Her family moved into the big spruce house next to his big spruce house a few weeks prior. All that separated them was the Marram grass and their own timidity. That changed, however, when he approached her one night at one of the regular festivities. Talking to her made him far more nervous that scaling the crumbly cliffs ever did. When he met her the sun set on the soft horizon and the big green ocean turned black. The light of the bonfire illuminated the right side of her face as the sunlight receded from the left. Her ebony locks, dark and shiny as the summer night sky, consumed him far more than the cool black ocean ever did prior. After meeting her, he had less of an interest in those rolling tides. They returned several times, but most of their get togethers involved house parties, school dances and late night movies. Occasionally, he would watch the beach from his foggy window, but somber viridian waves and their flat froth did not seem to be as big and strong as the serpentine sea surf and soda pop fizz he saw all those years ago.

As the boy grew older and less boyish, he eventually left that small coastal town (and the girl from across the sea) for something he thought would be greater: a big city. The bustling concrete jungle was as wondrous to him as that small secluded beach was all those years ago. So much to do, so much to see, so little time to do or to see. The college coffee shops were his substitute for the missing "third place" that had previously been ruled by the isolated cove. He made lots of acquaintances, many close friends, and even a few girlfriends. Since he was so caught up in all the wonder and worry of his day to day life, the years flew by.

As incredible as the city was, there was something off about it. The concrete buildings, unlike the rocky cliffs, were smooth and directly perpendicular to the busy streets down below. The noises of the cars and people were not charming and soothing like the crashing of the waves, but grating and distracting. The metallic and skinny fire escapes were rickety like the old wooden staircase, but they led to nowhere desirable. After the luster of the late night lights wore off, he decided to come back to the coast to see his family.

He returned to that rickety old staircase, which was just as wobbly and splintery as he remembered it. He took his shoes off and climbed down the splintery staircase with his hardened soles. Sand fell from it as the creaking steps gave into his weight. When he reached the bottom, his rough feet touched the hot sand. He felt the pleasurable burn of the densely compacted granules between his toes and the rough texture scratch his heels. He inhaled deeply and felt the spicy salty aroma of the moist air enter his nose, tickling his nostrils. He took off his shirt and felt the warm evening sun on his back. The ancient orange vigil warmly greeted him with a kind old smile as it massaged his shoulders tenderly. A feeling of comfort and nostalgia rushed through his mind and soul.

The boy inside him took over and he ran out to the sea. The waves rose up, crashing into his bare chest, like a big crisp hug that said “Welcome back, old friend.” His shorts were soaked, and his shirt and shoes were long gone, buried in the sand somewhere. But that did not matter to him. All that mattered was the vibrant sunset. The sun was burning with the familiar glow he had known forever. White fluffy marshmallow clouds flourished throughout the cerulean sky, soaking up the strata of purples, reds, and oranges. He stayed there that night until the sky turned black and the sun rolled under the calming tides. There, in that place farther than the universe, the liberating deepness of the blue was all that consumed his mind.



Busy Beach

Soren Peterson '20
Photography

The Lost Eyes

Aidan Singh '21

PROSE

As the wind was blowing, sand went into my eye. My friend Ellis and I stumbled upon the shiniest rock I had ever see. The Oregon beaches were the most beautiful places I had ever been to. As the waves came crashing down on this sleek and shiny rock, Ellis and I had become fascinated. So intrigued in fact, we ran our fingers up against this cold, slimy rock. Our fingers seemed to just sink into the rock, but not all the way. Birds stared and his mom started to wonder what we were touching, It wasn't until she saw its eyes, then the fear kicked in.

Getting closer and closer to the summer break of our fourth-grade year, my best friend Ellis invited me to go to the Oregon coast with him, his mom, and his aunt. We had been friends since the first grade and are still my friend to this day. Ellis, despite being friends with everyone in our whole grade came

up and asked me to go to Oregon with him. I said yes on the off chance that my parents would approve too. My parents did say yes, after all, who wouldn't want their kids out of the house for a whole week in the summer. Ellis and I were very much excited to be going to Oregon together. He was telling me about how he has gone many times before, and how great of a place Oregon was to him. My emotions were running high off joy every time a minute passed, knowing that I was going to Oregon with my best friend. And boy, did we have the time of our lives there.

After, what seemed to be a four-hour plane ride, we landed in Portland, rented car, drove another three hours to Lincoln City, and got to our hotel. Everything was going great, for the first time ever, reservations held up to its name, for me at least, and we had the most beautiful view of the Oregon coast. Just looking at the clear light blue sky, complimented with the darkest shade of green on the ferns surrounding the hotel was giving me chills, I was fascinated by our hotel living room view, and not to mention the water. The water had its own characteristics to it, with its yellow foam touching the sand, with a dark blue background, and not only did it freeze, but it kept others out of its

***It wasn't until she saw his eyes,
then the fear kicked in.***

***Our fingers seemed to just slip through
the rock, but not all the way.***

waters. Now, being from California, more specifically the Pacific coast, I knew the water was bound to be cold, but that didn't stop me from getting in. I had influenced Ellis to join me each time we went to a new beach. Each beach giving me a new experience and having the freedom to doing anything on the beach was exhilarating, nothing could stop me, at least that's what I thought.

Our trip to Oregon was solely for the purpose of going to almost all of the beaches in the span of the week. Pods of seals fighting for a small spot on some rocks, cavernous caves that housed all sorts of sea mammals, coral reefs where the light shined upon the compacted clams, a place where the weather is so foul, that it can take you to heaven if you jumped in the same spot you were standing, and my favorite, getting to see the tail of a blue whale. We went to a small, little beach too. There was no one but us. Ellis and I ran in the sand chasing each other, the wind blew, bringing sand into my eye as we chased. I lost my sense of sight and fell face down into the sand. I got up and saw the waves come crashing down on this sleek and shiny rock. Ellis came back to see if I was hurt, but all I was, was in awe. Ellis looked to where we were about to run towards and became fascinated. So intrigued in fact, we ran to the rock, ran our fingers up against this cold, rough yet slimy rock. Our fingers seemed to just sink into the rock, but not all the way. The birds wouldn't go away, and neither would we, nothing could stop me. It wasn't until his mom saw its eyes, then the fear kicked in.

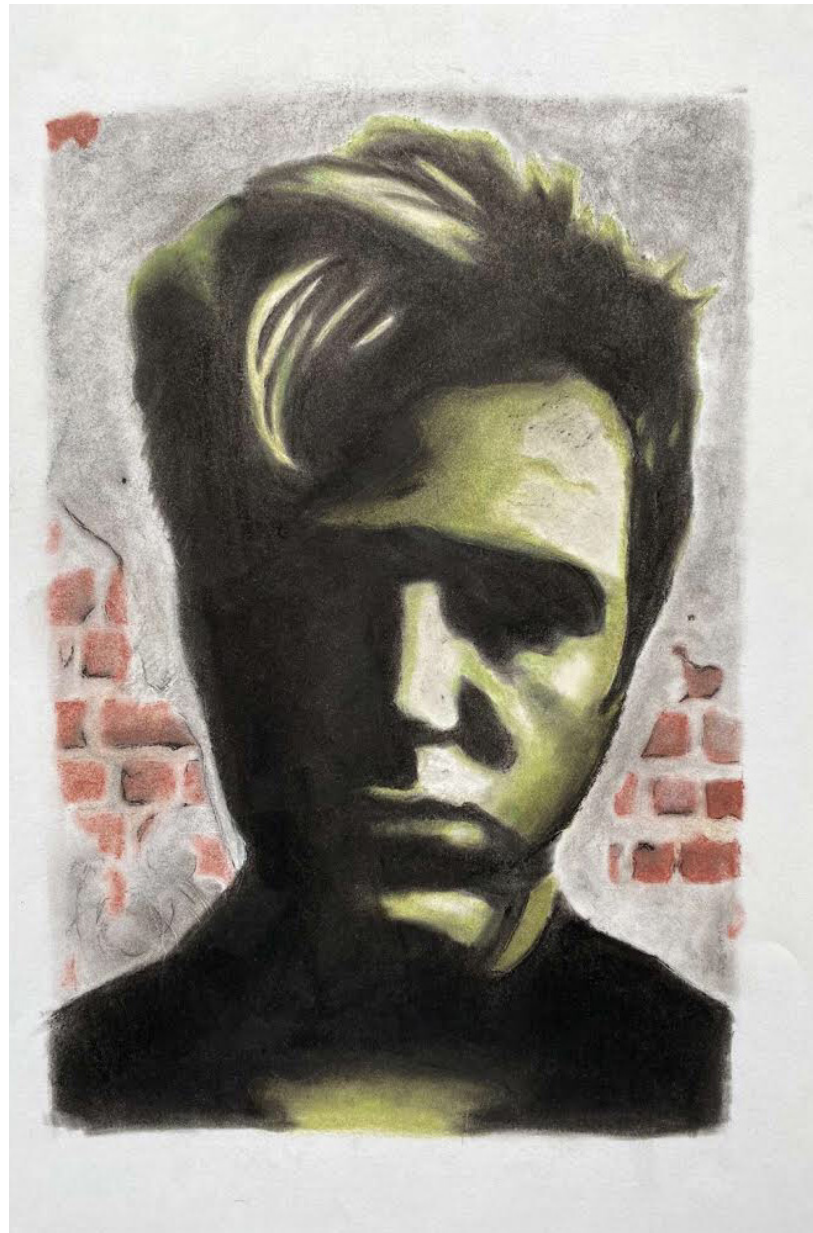
Immediately after his mom saw its eyes, she told us to carefully step back from the rock. Me being me, and knowing what kind of tone she was carrying, I stepped away, and so did Ellis. His mom went to go see what we thought was a rock, while his aunt was pressing us with questions of why. It wasn't until the end of the bombardment of questions that we finally got an answer to our own question of why. Our answer, it was a dead seal. The thought of a dead seal didn't occur to me in the slightest. In my head, I was denying the possibility, but upon further inspection, they pointed out the eyes to me. The seal's eyes that belonged to the sea, closed, its fat, round body not moving, lying there on its stom-

ach, lifeless, slowly getting pulled into the ocean each time a wave came crashing down on it, trying to get the lost eyes of its friend.

After the trip, a few months passed, and my grandma suffering from diabetes fell in her old nursing home and was taken to the hospital. She fell on her hip again, but somehow they couldn't do anything about it this time. So that fall after the trip, my grandma passed away and death had come back in my life. This time really showing itself to me, and I was beaten. The blows to come from death hit me harder, and each one I felt, the more serious of an injury it was. Death would become known to my family that whole year, and it soon followed my mom the next year. At this time, I was reflecting on myself. I couldn't handle all of this loss in my family, the thought of it was sickening. Each time I tried to forget, the memory of that seal comes back. I was in awe at the presence of death, and I didn't have a clue in the world. I lost my eyes to that seal, the filter of a child was gone. I couldn't handle this whole new way of understanding, because it just came out of nowhere.

Broken Soul

Pace Walder '20
Art





Stacked Views

Soren Peterson '20
Photography

Golf:

One For All Or All For One

Jack Deaner '21

PROSE

It was five in the morning on a late spring Monday. I had just woken up to the maddening alarm clock. Most of the time when I hear that alarm clock, I want to throw it out of my window into my backyard, but for some odd reason today I popped right up and out of bed.

The night before, I had impatiently waited in the Phoenix Airport for what felt like a millennium. I was tired of studying for finals and sitting around, in the same back right corner seat of the airport, trying to put a barrier between myself and the rest of the people. I was tired of watching the sun slowly dim over the burnt orange and brown desert mountains. First a sliver, then a quarter, then a half, then three quarters and completely out of sight. I glanced upon the new darkness outside, while inside I felt darkness pulling me with ease like a piece of Play-Doh.

I had just finished a golf tournament in Phoenix before the grueling wait in the airport. My thirty-sixth tournament round since the start of March, golf was taking an emotional toll on me that I never thought would happen. Golf was always sport for me. From March to May, however, golf slowly began feeling like my job. Golf made me feel the highest of highs when I played well, but the lowest of lows when I played poorly. Now, the lows had slowly crept into my self confidence on the golf course. I had started to doubt myself more and stop trusting in my abilities to determine where the golf ball would go.

I first started to realize the toll golf was taking on me in that Phoenix airport, sitting in the bland black chair, looking out into the darkness of the night, sipping my twelve ounce Red Bull and trying to comprehend Bolshevism in Russia post World War One in my heavy Western Cultures book, with so many words to each page, it felt like it took an hour to read each one.

After what seemed to be an eternity, I finally got into the crammed line, with all of the other passengers waiting to board the Southwest, Boeing 747, where I made awkward eye contact with the other restless men, women, and children. My dad and I walked onto

the plane, found a window seat for me and an aisle for him on the left side, sitting parallel with the wing of the plane. The whole flight I stared plainly out into the darkness, while listening to *The White Album* by The Beatles and watching the wing of the plane motionlessly guiding us back into Sacramento. My dad and I landed at 11:30 p.m., where my mom waited, grinning with delight to see us. Arriving back home, I walked up my thirteen tan carpet staircases, took a sharp right and landed face down in my bed, dreading the thought of waking up at 5 in the morning, having to play yet another tournament. This time not for myself, but with my teammates, and for my whole school. Tomorrow was the Northern California High School Golf Championship, and I had no idea how I was going to help contribute to my team. I fell asleep with the dreaded thought in my head.

So when I woke up at five in the morning after four hours of sleep, I was truly perplexed to wake up with such ease. I got out of my bed, gracefully walked into the bathroom that my sister and I share, turned on the blinding light and blasted *Miss You* by The Rolling Stones that woke not only myself, but the rest of my family too. After my mom yelled at me to turn down the music through our white, eight foot tall door, I jumped out of the shower, got dressed into my crimson red Jesuit shirt with the Marauder logo parallel with my heart, a matching dover grey Jesuit jacket, black pants and belt wrapped around my waist. I made my way downstairs to a cup of Pacific Bold coffee for myself and my dad, who was going to drop me off at the school, where I would meet the rest of my teammates and coaches.

When I arrived at the school, the gate was still closed tightly because it was so early. My vexed coach got out of his car and found a way to let the team in. We loaded our bags into the trunk of one of the white Ford vans. My teammates, all Seniors except for me and a Freshman, promptly made me go into the back corner of the bus, where my legs pushed into each other, as they had for the past two years.

The car ride to El Macero Country Club, in Davis, was relatively quiet. All of us were still trying to wake up, even the coaches, but I could feel focus growing among my team.

We arrived to El Macero around six in the morning, all of us now with the sheer determination to go out and do our best. My self doubt was diminished by the confidence and fearlessness my teammates

showed. As I started to get warmed up, I realized I was already playing better than the day before. All because of self confidence. I spent two hours warming up, more joking around with my friends than practice, and when it was time to tee up, I was ready to help my team and Jesuit win a championship.

I strutted to the first tee with confidence. As I walked, I looked to my right at the small crowd of Jesuit parents, teachers, and friends smiling at me and wishing me luck. I got to the tee, met my competitors, and got ready to hit. While waiting, I glanced around the course. Looking at the green grass, scattered with tan spots, I heard birds lightly chirping in the plush trees. The sky was blue, with white fluffy clouds. I was in a trance, awed at the beauty of the world. My trance was broken by the spotty microphone saying, "Now on the tee, from Jesuit High School, Jack Deaner." As I put the tee into the ground my fears suddenly began to pop into memory. The darkness was trying to take over my confidence and determination. I thought to myself, "This shot isn't going to make or break my life, or my golf career. Don't be scared, it's just another golf shot." This put me back into a trance of focus to play well. I stepped up and hit the golf ball right down the middle of the fairway.

Nothing could break my focus for the next five holes. I was playing my best golf of the month, and confidence flooded through my body. Then, when I arrived to the sixth hole my focus stalled. The St. Mary's University golf coach had popped up out of nowhere like a whack-a-mole. My focus shifted from "You got this," to "You better not screw up in front of this coach." My nerves got the better of me, and I got a double bogey on hole six, after being one under. The darkness slowly crept in, and I didn't know how to be positive again. Luckily, Father Engebretson was at the next hole to help me get back on track.

With Father Engebretson's reassurance to trust myself, I went back into a trance for the next ten holes. I stuck to trusting myself, stayed calm throughout each shot even if I didn't hit a good one, and even looked up at my surroundings and reminded myself of the beauty around me.

The seventeenth hole, though, became a relapse of the blundered sixth hole. When I arrived, I was at even par. Instead of focusing in the present, I started to think in the future. I thought to myself, "If I

only play decently on these last two holes then I'll finally get to say I played a good round again." These thoughts got to me and sent my tee shot skyrocketing right like a paper airplane swerving in the wrong direction. I was able to find my golf ball, but it was surrounded, left and right, by twenty-five foot oak trees. I only had a small gap of about five feet to get back into the fairway. I struck my next shot without much thought, and the ball hit the heart of an oak tree, squirting left. I had to hit yet another shot with trees surrounding me. My heart sank lower than the Titanic because I knew yet again that I had screwed up--not from lack of talent, but from lack of focus and the pressure.

My heart sank lower than the Titanic...

On the next tee box, I felt disappointment, but I told myself to shake it off and do the best I can on the last hole. I wanted to hang my head high with my teammates. I finally made my walk to the eighteenth green to greet my teammates who waited with me with suspiciously inviting grins. I asked why they were smiling so much, and one of my teammates, Ryan, said to me, "Dude, we won."

I was so ecstatic about winning as a team that I completely forgot about not finishing well. I turned in my scorecard, then greeted my teammates again in the restaurant where the awards ceremony took place. Jesuit High School was called over the microphone and the crowd erupted like we were a group of celebrities.

The celebration after winning our award was fun seeing everyone laugh and smile contagiously, making me want to laugh and smile with them too. That celebration was short lived with the fact that I had to take three finals the next day, but the thought of being a Northern California Champion with my friends felt like something out of a movie.

When looking back on this span of twenty four hours in my life, I can only give myself a pat on the back for how I handled myself the day of the Northern California Championship. Not because we won, but the way I was able to help stay focused for my team and put them before myself. Golf is such an individualized sport that sometimes I forget when I'm playing for Jesuit I'm not just playing for myself. Looking at the simplicity of nature on that beautiful late spring day helped me realize how to put others before myself and I challenge others to find what they think gives them tranquility, serenity, and peacefulness to help themselves and others.



Postcard from Polaski

Hunter Modlin '20
Art (Notability)

Stripped of Air

Kevin Getzoff '21

PROSE

I thought the water would be warmer; I didn't expect it to be so devastatingly cold. The sun, the sun too worked against me, down to the root of my boiling flesh. Everything, the grass, the trees, even the breath of my dad which smelled warm and had a little tinge at the end of it that smelled like oranges.

A fishing trip was too generic for my overly complicated eight year old sophistication. I could catch a fish, I could do it if I really wanted to. It's the easiest thing in the world, you sit and you wait for a bite. My dad had the same expectation too.

He had brought a tackle box, an old pole with a shiny reel, and some live bait from a store nearby.

I sat with my brother in the boat. We were equipped with inexperienced fishing poles that Dad had bought at a "Big 5" somewhere. The poles looked more like toys than serious equipment, but I knew back then I couldn't hold up the weight of my dad's fishing rod. We sat in the boat for a while, rather poorly equipped and without lifejackets.

It was taking too much time for me, so I laid my pole down in my lap and held it between my knees. I was bored.

As I sat in the black, broiling-hot steel boat, I saw something blue out of the corner of my eye. It was a short, stick-like light blue dragonfly. It hovered around in our boat and then decided that my fishing pole was a good place to land. The light blue color of the insect contrasted against the matte dark blue steel of my fishing pole. I centered my gaze on it making the landscape in the background of my vision blur. I felt that I had made a new friend in this tiny creature, but it was a good thing I didn't give it a name, because my friendship was short-lasting after my father noticed the bug on my pole.

"Dragonfly!" Dad said aloud, and then mused, "That's good bait. Hold still." He clapped his hands over the thin end of my pole. I thought to myself that's what a human skull would sound like if it were crushed. Dad wobbled and balanced to his side of the boat once again, he prodded the corpse of the bug

with his fingernail examining his first catch of the day. The orange-like tang in his breath became slightly more defined in the air.

I was just starting to console myself a little when I felt a small jolt coming from my thighs. The pole was bending over the water.

"Oh! Kevin's got a fish," my brother said matter-of-factly while nodding his head. I was too excited to bother with my brother's disabled speech and got on my feet to start reeling in this thing in the water. The pole jerked back a little and I began vigorously yanking and reeling. I saw the end of the line and pulled it to the surface.

The bait was still there to my disappo-

Abhabaa heb he heeeew, Dad broke out into erratic laughter and pointed toward the end of my line. I looked closer.

Underneath the bobber where the lure should have been there was a bright red thing. It turns out what I had thought was old bait was a piece of flesh. I picked it off the end of the hook and examined it. I had ripped off some poor fish's gill.

I turned the cold bloody organ over in my hand and sat wondering if I had killed the organ's owner in the process.

My mourning was interrupted by my father who decided to pick up the piece of meat and throw it overboard.

And to this day I don't know if that fish survived. It was really all I was concerned about at the time. I had always been an extremely compassionate and empathetic child, I remember almost all the interactions I've had with any animal, plant, or animal.

However, throughout my life I've stumbled on enough obstacles to disregard and forget the names or faces of some creatures. One of those major obstacles was my father.

It was soon after that I had severed that fish's gill off that we had returned to the shore of the lake. There my brother caught his first fish.

It was a rainbow trout about ten to eleven inches long and had a really pretty underbelly. Bright green with blue hues above its gills, red near the cheeks with spots like freckles all over.

Our dad examined it later in the water washing it, making sure it had a little more to breathe. I sat under a smooth dry tree and watched my brother help wash the creature off. He brushed off some dirt here, opened its gills wide to check for parasites, like a glistening green trophy. The fish flapped around and Dad dropped it. He quickly grabbed it and made sure it was clean again. Then it was my turn to hold the thing, I opened my small hands to the object my father held before me.

I felt I should look at its eyes for some strange urge in my head told me so. Those bright golden eyes looked straight into my soul. The humanity in me jumped and told me to return it to the water, but of cour-

“It’s a fish!” my brother gleamed at me interrupting my train of thought.

“I wanna fish too!” I pleaded our father, who looked at me blankly. I wanted to take it back and put it in a tank and watch it for the rest of my life.

Dad smiled and slowly picked up the golden eyed soul from my hands. The orange in his breath smelt stale now. He walked it back to the water and pulled a plastic bag out of his cargo shorts pocket.

The fish would travel with us back to camp in a plastic bag filled with water. It must have been an agonizing two hour hike in a boiling hot bag of water. I watched the fish breathe in its final breath halfway through the hike back.

I remember the taste of it was very bland, but everyone back at camp sounded content with its taste.

All I could think about were those golden eyes. I used to push down on the eye sockets of fish in the market for fun. Those shiny eyes.

It was a waste, originally I wanted to keep it in a tank and keep it alive, but that wasn’t my decision to choose.

It was a good experience though, sometimes though I look back on that day and think of the other creatures living on that place at the lake. A peaceful, quiet and green valley, spoiled by the acts of humanity.

That black boat is probably still sitting in the waters at the docks of the lake, and that lake must hate being tainted with the smell of rotten oranges.



A Happy Face

Jason Reyna-Sheffield '20
Art (Digital)

Shooting For the Stars

Carleton Liden '21

PROSE

In the morning on a cold Colorado day, I was standing on the line with 69 other athletes. It was just one of the many relays at round one of the Olympic Trials, taking place at the Olympic Training Center. I was locked and loaded, and ready to compete at one of the most prestigious events of my sport. But first, let's talk about how I got there.

I began shooting when I was seven years old. It all started when my grandfather, an avid hunter, took me, my father, and my sister to a local range to shoot his .22 rifle. We went to the Lincoln Rifle Outdoor Range, an old, dusty range that few people went to. We sat on the shooting benches, with me on a booster seat excited as I could be.

I took one shot and fell in love. We went to that range countless times, and I never got tired of it. Each

day we shot was a new adventure, and an opportunity for me to improve my marksmanship. When I started high school and set my sights on the United States Air Force Academy, I realized that participating in a sport would increase my chances at acceptance. I had played baseball for several years, but my abilities had reached a peak not high enough for the high school level, and was not interested in watersports. I was too small for football, and a bit too slow for track and field. I was searching for a sport to play, and eventually found one: precision rifle shooting. I tried out for the Lincoln Junior Rifle Team, starting in their beginner program, and began to excel rather quickly. Within a couple of months, I was invited to join the club's competitive team. It was very intimidating toeing the firing line with a group of girls and boys who had been involved in this sport for so long, while all I had done was plinking with my dad and grandfather. Soon after participating in the thrice-weekly practices, my coach noticed my rapid improvement. Soon, I was selected for my first competitive match. Finishing second to last was not what I had envisioned, and left me feeling like I was not good enough. But that experience was a blessing in disguise as it motivated me to train even harder. After months of training, I had finally earned the opportunity to compete at one of the most important matches of my first season;

I channeled this frustration to fuel my passion for this sport

Nationals Qualifiers.

I was incredibly nervous for the match, and that caused me to have a rough start. After finishing all twenty shots in all few positions, the wait for qualification announcements began. A few days later, the email I had been dreaming about came. It was from my coach, saying "We are taking 11!". Not only had I done my part, my entire team had qualified for nationals. Feeling like weeks, six months flew by and before I knew it, Nationals was upon us. It was my first large-scale match, and very intimidating. Our team ended up doing very well in the match, and I had shot my best score to date. My first season as a precision rifle shooter had been a huge success.

Much has happened since my first Nationals. I started training harder than ever three days a week for an hour and a half each day at our small indoor range in Lincoln, CA. I even have an electronic target at home to train on, which requires no ammunition. My second season was even better than my first. I qualified for the 2019 Junior Olympics - one of the biggest matches a junior precision rifle shooter can shoot in - as well as the 2019 National Air Rifle Championships. I have improved greatly since my first day at the indoor range, but I still have a long way to go if I want to shoot in college. Season three began during my junior year at high school, and I knew that this was the year college coaches would begin scouting my scores, and the pressure to perform was on. Unfortunately, I had a rough start at the beginning of the season. The first match we shot was one of the worst scores I had ever shot since starting. That feeling of not being good enough began to set in yet again. I channeled this frustration to fuel my passion for this sport, focusing more than ever before on my shot process and the technicalities of this incredibly complicated sport. The clock was ticking faster and faster as the big match rapidly approached. Team training went into overdrive once again, and my at-home training time skyrocketed. Within weeks of heading to the Olympic Training Center, I had finally found my sweet spot.

I flew to Denver, Colorado with three of my teammates. We drove from Denver to the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, blasting upbeat music to pump us up. The Olympic Training Center is an awe-inspiring complex where United States Olympic athletes train at, prior to their competition with

the world. The Olympic Shooting Center is located in the front, and the ground was white with a dusting of snow. Hundreds of competitors, coaches, and families milled about the tightly packed building. Vendors lined the entrances, selling their products. It was a place like no other.

Our first day was an open training day. We each had fifty minutes to shoot any number of shots as a way to adjust to the new shooting environment. The second day was pre-event training (PET). For this, we were given an hour and fifteen minutes to train while the range safety officers walked around, making sure all the athletes were abiding by the rules. After PET, my teammates and I went through equipment control. This is a very strict check of all the equipment and gear we use to shoot, to ensure that it is in compliance with the strict set of rules. The lines were long and tensions were high to pass the inspection, which if failed, would disqualify an athlete from the competition. Fortunately, I passed all of the checks, and made it to the stiffness test of my jacket and pants. That is where it all almost unraveled as my suit failed three times before I was finally able to loosen the material enough. It was one easily of the most stressful parts of the experience.

With the first day of matches waiting for us the next day, we all went to bed early to get plenty of rest. We arrived at the Olympic Training Center at 9:00 AM, ready for the day to begin.

I was assigned to firing point 19 for the first of two rounds of the Olympic Qualifiers for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, with nearly five hundred other rifle shooters at my side including previous Olympic athletes. With college coaches watching scores like hawks, and my score determining if I would have a chance at the Olympic Dream, the pressure was on like never before. Athletes stretched down the 40 firing points on each of the upper and lower ranges all fighting for the few spots on Team USA. Holding my Feinwerkbau 800x precision rifle tight in my hands beaded with sweat, I stared through my sights at the small black hole in the large white target ten meters in front of me. As the match began, I knew I had one and one half hours to leave everything I had at that range. I could hear my heart beating in my chest, drowning out the murmur of the crowd and the music

which was played at the firing line. I wiped the sweat from my trigger hand on the towel hanging from my offhand stand, took a deep breath and settled into the familiar position I had thousands of times before. My sights were aligned as I slowly pulled back the trigger. The seal broke, and my first shot at an Olympic qualifying match rang out. It was a ten.

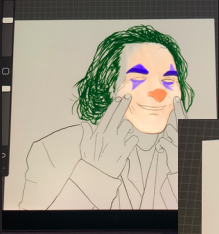
The first match could not have gone better. I had shot a 595.5, which was a personal best for me by twenty points. For some perspective, 2016 Olympic gold medalist Ginny Thrasher had shot a 621. As a team, we did exceptionally well, with all of my teammates shooting close to their personal bests. We went into the second day primed to excel even more. With my performance in the first match being so strong, I was even more nervous going into the second match, now having the added stress of having a new score to

beat. I shot a 595.4, which placed me 69th out of the nearly one hundred and fifty male competitors, whomst were among the best in the country. I was very pleased with the outcome, especially my consistency.

My experience at Olympic Qualifiers was indescribable. I had the opportunity to compete against the top athletes in the country, including some who had competed in previous Olympic and World games. My performance was incredible for only having two and a half years of experience in the sport, and my potential to improve is higher than it has ever been. I met many wonderful people, including college coaches whose teams I would like to be part of. It is an experience that I will never forget, and something that will fuel my passion for the sport for many years to come.

I could hear my heart beating in my chest, drowning out the murmur of the crowd and the music which was played at the firing line.

Appendix: The Making of "A Happy Face":





Marriage of the Land and Sea

Oscar Econome '19, ALUMNUS
Art



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