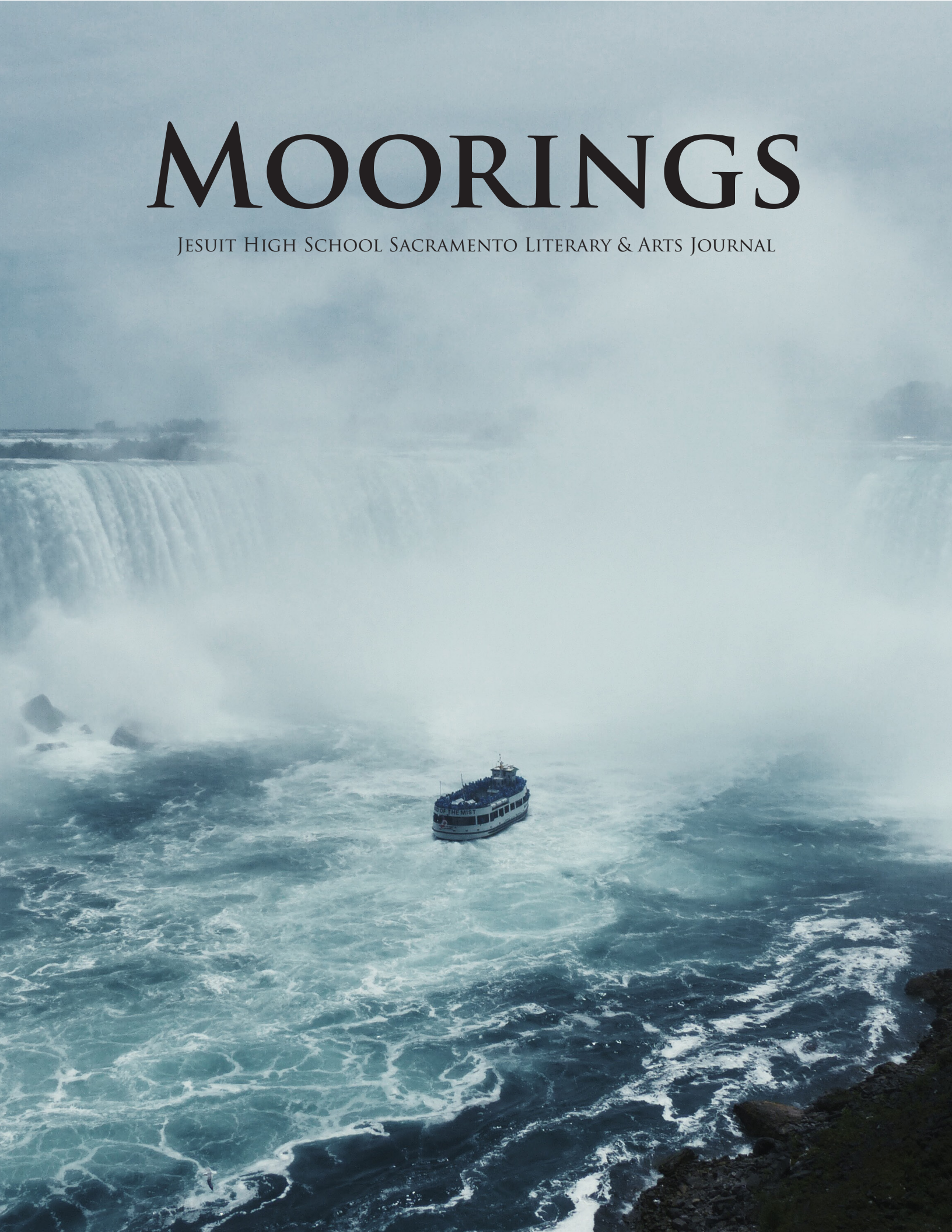


MOORINGS

JESUIT HIGH SCHOOL SACRAMENTO LITERARY & ARTS JOURNAL





COVER PHOTO:
FALLING DEEPER
ANTON GUTIERREZ, '17

1ST PLACE, PHOTOGRAPHY
1ST ANNUAL MOORINGS
LITERARY & ARTS CONTEST

MOORINGS



JESUIT HIGH SCHOOL SACRAMENTO LITERARY & ARTS JOURNAL
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From the Editors

Welcome to Moorings, the new Jesuit High School Literary & Arts Journal. This publication serves as a platform for our student artists and writers to share their creative works.

Over the past few months, we have endured the tides of submissions, laid bare the hazards of Microsoft clip art, trained under the waterfall in the delicate art of Indesign, and scoured the seven seas for only the finest array of sleep-deprived rants, war poems, meditations on mortality, literary kaleidoscopes, cat photos, mental railroads, pictures of water, pictures of more water, and much, much more.

Of course, we do not work alone. We, the editors, would like to extend our eternal gratitude to the fantastic beings we have met in our journey, including Indesign guru Ms. Mala Paul, Shipmaster Mr. Nick Luppino, '98 and his Plank crewmen, Contest maestro, Dean Tim Kelly, Supreme Overlord Mr. Michael Wood, '99, and our very own Captain Mr. Jeremiah Loverich. Our sincerest thanks also go out to those who bravely threw their work into the fray, both those who were published and those who live to submit another day.

With the academic year drawing to a close and the ferocious, frothy squalls of homework giving way to the calm blue of exam books and summer skies, we think it's a perfect time to just take a step back for some good old-fashioned introspection.

The name "Moorings" was chosen to evoke in our readers that spirit of quiet reflection and calmness in the face of a bustling world, not unlike the respite a sailor would receive from the biting wind and roiling waves at... well, his ship's moorings. That said, our title pays similar homage to the important role such ports would play in spreading culture, color, and ideas among the bustling crowds that would frequent them. It is our desire that you find this journal similarly engaging, and hopefully with less rats than our namesake.

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Liminal Space

Carson Black, '17

2ND PLACE, PHOTOGRAPHY
1ST ANNUAL MOORINGS
LITERARY & ARTS CONTEST

Working Hours

Andrew Sheleby, '19

My son and I see differently.

He plays on the beach while I work beyond the shore. He smells the fresh

water,

while I smell the foul scent of fish.

He hears the clashing of waves on the rocks, while I hear the shouting of

men.

The time he spends is with hermit crabs and sea shells, while the time I

spend is with dying carp and barnacles.

But we both see something good, beyond where we stand.

He looks towards a storm, and sees a hero, tirelessly fighting nature on his little wooden boat, so the young boy can live happily another day. I get paid

very little, but that is no matter to me, for when I look towards land and see

my boy, waving to me, I see his smile, and the glow of his mother's eyes.

For that is the true payment for the working hours.

On Serving the Homeless

David Crowley, '18

The other day I crawled on the floor of a soup kitchen bathroom, scooping as much vomit into the dustpan as I possibly could after a drunken guest just nearly missed the toilet. As the manager of my serving crew, the dirtiest duties fall on me, and sadly that includes all vomit related tasks. Half covered in it myself, I started to ponder whether what I was doing was actually making a difference, whether these people actually appreciated the time and effort that I put into providing something as simple as a hot meal every night.

I have been scooping drunken vomit, having plates of food thrown at me, and dealing with disrespectful, unthankful people for three years now in the small building at 1868 Broadway. But for some reason, I still return. Each night at the Upper Room Dining Hall, we serve hot meals to an average of 129 people—from all backgrounds—including soup, salad, a main entree and dessert. In addition to this service, we provide sack lunches for the following day. As expected with the people soup kitchens attract, the volunteers of this establishment have some stories to tell after each and every night of work: the only thing to expect is the unexpected.

Although when people think of the homeless, synonyms such as drunken, lazy, and unappreciative surface, surprisingly, I have found the exact opposite. Nevertheless, all stereotypes have grains of truth, and the same applies here.

The first day I took over as the manager at

the ripe young age of fourteen, sixty-seven year old John Mason decided it was a great day to overdose on heroin in the parking lot. To my dismay, just an hour later I was then on the phone with 911 as Mr. Mason had collapsed and was now completely unresponsive on the floor. During the whole process, other guests still requested food, as to them this was quite normal. Although shocking to me, drug overdoses and the fact of death are an ever present reality in the homeless community and for John Mason, it was his last.

Although stories of drunken guests seem to be the most prevalent, the unique, less threatening ones are the most memorable.

One man for example always wears a hard hat and reflective jacket. Upon asking him whether he was a construction worker or not, he simply replied that he likes the outfit. Although strange, we have one of the best relationships of any of the guests. He may not be normal by society's standards, but in most cases, who is?

The truth is, whether homeless or not, they are all human. In my line of work this understanding may seem to fade, but it will

Some call him the General, some call him Wayne, no matter who he is, he is vulgar, disrespectful, violent, and unpredictable.

always be something solid that I can rely upon. Nevertheless, work at the soup kitchen is stressful, and always full of surprises.

One guest in particular has tested my limits. Some call him the General, some call him Wayne, no matter who he is, he is vulgar, disrespectful, violent, and unpredictable. After countless incident reports of him cursing at, throwing things towards, and even stabbing

other guests and volunteers, he has finally been banned from the establishment. In the past he has threatened to arrest me, on what grounds I don't know, and even thrown a plate of meatloaf directly at my face. Thankfully his drunken aim is not as threatening as his volatile tendencies. Even though I have never used my pepper spray that I keep in my right pocket each night, it took all of my composure and restraint to not unleash a torrent of eye burning liquid directly at him.

"The General" may be the image that comes to mind when one thinks of the homeless, but he is actually part of the minority.

One of my favorite parts of serving at the soup kitchen is the sense of love and hospitality.

"Tony, we are all volunteers. You don't have to be here. Anything you can do to help us is appreciated—no matter how slow."

We have one volunteer, Tony, who drives over an hour to wash the dishes

for us. With a bad knee, two hip surgeries, and a date of birth from before Calvin Coolidge took office, he still returns every week. He once apologized for being slow one day while helping; I simply replied "Tony, we are all volunteers. You don't have to be here. Anything you can do to help us is appreciated—no matter how slow."

Carol, more commonly known as "The Salad Lady," volunteered for over eight years at The Upper Room, working up until the week she passed away at eighty two. I have still not met a nicer, more caring woman than Carol, and she will always be remembered as one who loves unconditionally, which is quite difficult with the people she served.

Although the Upper Room Dining Hall may not attract the most amicable people, and bizarre occurrences seem second nature, there is a sense of love that truly provides a home for those who come each night.

Even though Merriam Webster defines homelessness as "having no permanent residence or place," I see it as not having a home metaphorically. In the past I have been told repeatedly not to say that I am feeding the homeless when I volunteer—as some of our guests are not necessarily without a residence, just hungry. Nevertheless, I prefer the phrase feeding the homeless because our guests may not be without a home literally, they are all without a home in the abstract sense. To have a place to sleep is quite different than having a home. A home is a family, a sense of love and care, and although many people we serve have places to sleep, they return each night in seek of more than just a meal. Our clients may lack this value, yet we provide them with more than a place to eat, we provide them with a home, a sense of love, a place to come together each night. And just as every family has their differences and disputes, the people we serve are not perfect.

Society assume all homeless people are the same: the drunken, the disrespectful, the lazy; yet, I have more positive stories than negative ones.

Tuesday night shifts are usually the most understaffed of the week, and thus I'm usually running the whole operation with less than five volunteers. Nonetheless, some guests take the liberty to help, assisting us with dishes, serving and clean up. One guest, Greg, who used to come and eat for over two years, has now turned his life around for the better and no longer needs a soup kitchen to get his meals. Nonetheless, he now volunteers at least once a week—showing his thanks to the establishment and people that cared for him

when he fell on hard times. He has seen the soup kitchen from both perspectives, guest and server, and is a veteran of the homeless lifestyle. In some instances, people may be living off of social programs like the soup kitchen intentionally; yet hitherto Greg's first meal, he was taking a step towards self sufficiency and a stable life of his own.

I find it funny how on certain days, it is easy to see which people are simply those who have fallen on hard times like Greg, and those who are the more stereotypical homeless person, such as the General. Whenever we have to call 911 for some offense or the other, which happens at least once a week, the majority of those eating leave in a bustle, namely, those with outstanding warrants. The soup kitchen tracks how many people eat each night, and simply by looking at the chart I can easily identify which days the police were called, as significantly less people came to dine.

Nevertheless, we do not like to use law enforcement for every trivial occurrence. For example, a man named Dallas always brings multiple knives, and even an axe every day when he comes to eat, but sometimes it is simpler to confiscate the weapons and return them after a nice meal than to get the police involved. Now, whenever Dallas comes to eat, he places his multiple sharp objects on the counter before we even have the chance to ask for them.

Behind his threatening, tattooed appearance, Dallas is actually an extremely respectful and cooperative person.

Although running The Upper Room is a grueling task, and dealing with people such as Dallas being one of them, we tend to have like minded people by our sides. Such as, there are always at least two missionaries from the Church of Jesus Christ and the Latter Day Saints, which make the whole process run smoother. I was asked once what I am thankful for, and I simply replied, "the Mormons." Without their

endless support and dedicated service, I guarantee that our nightly average of over 100 people would not be met.

Because the volunteers and guests alike come together each and every night, we are able to create a family, a home for those less fortunate. Although we may literally be serving the hungry, we serve the hearts and souls of the homeless, whether they have a place to live or not.

At some point in my life, like anyone else, I may end up without a place to sleep. Nevertheless, I hope that when I'm living on the streets I will never be homeless—for that is a far worse reality that I am not prepared to face.

*Now, whenever
Dallas comes to eat, he
places his multiple sharp
objects on the counter
before we even have the
chance to ask for them.*



Polizei

Anton Gutierrez, '17



Dart, Dip, Sip

Jaden Fong, '18

The Hummingbird's Travail

Risheek Pingili, '18

Like a hummingbird, travelling swiftly from place to place
So small, yet so powerful, so depended upon
Billions, trillions flying through the air
Delivering pollen to their needy flowers
For the flowers would surely die, lest they get their pollen
And some flowers may bear fruit, but many simply wither
Yet these hummingbirds, so beautiful is their work
Carrying nothing but ones and zeros
Go unnoticed by the flowers, taken for granted

Hummingbirds seek no reward, receive no praise
This web of birds, each carrying pollen all over the world
This web, built upon the backs of the hummingbirds
Yet this web's hummingbirds receive no fame
Not even the copper paths they take
Not even their speed, nearly instantaneous
Yet each flower, hungers for more pollen, more data
These flowers, searching for some pollen or the other
These flowers, sending pollen amongst themselves
Knowing not, and caring not, for the hummingbird's travail

Our Ailing Mother

Austin Weideman, '18

Trees had reached while oceans fell deep
Ere the blight was called
Her beauty was clear fore God decreed
One flaw shall plague it all

From Her meadow's brush to river's rush
A sickness does reside
No caring touch nor gentle hush
Can cure the ache inside

This disease strides fast as fire
My nursing Mother blazes
No desire for Her ills to expire
As She fades into forgotten hazes

We are left to finish Her death
We, Her beloved birth
Our home, She expects Her final breath
For we infect Her earth

A Flower in the Wasteland

Joshua Wigger, '17

I awoke to the crackle of distorted lightning. A sickly green light poured in from the sorely patched roof above me, and I felt the radiation on my skin like a bad indian burn. I checked my monitor to see how many rads I had soaked up in my sleep, and was relieved when the meter was still within safe levels.

Journeys out in the wastes like this were often enough for me that I shouldn't feel so lonely, but for some reason, not seeing Sophie next to me made my heart sink a little. I didn't always travel with her. In fact, there were many years that I traveled alone, not feeling a lick of sadness before I met her.

* * *

"Wow! A person! A real life person!"

I had just shot the last of a reaver scouting party, and turned my rifle in the direction of the voice as the lifeless body fell to the ground.

"Hey, easy! I'm not looking for trouble." A girl climbed out from behind a slab of concrete with her hands over her head. It'd been a very long time since I had seen a non-reaver, and I guess that curiosity got the better of me. I somewhat lowered my rifle and stared at the girl as she walked closer. She couldn't have been more than nineteen, but to survive out here for this long, she was definitely skilled at something. Her auburn hair was put back into a ponytail that hung just past her shoulders. Her face, while covered in soot and dirt, beamed with curiosity and excitement. Her hazel eyes dashed from my cap to my boots as if she was trying to soak in all the visual information that she could.

"I," she cleared her throat "I'm looking for a flower."

"Is this real? Are you here?" she said. She adjusted her bag and shouldered rifle, causing her equipment to rattle a little.

"Unfortunately." I said as I lowered my carbine the rest of the way.

"This place isn't safe. What are you doing out here?"

It almost seemed as if she had been waiting for someone to ask her that question her entire life. "I," she cleared her throat "I'm looking for a flower."

I laughed. That was the funniest damn thing I had ever heard. Ever. But obviously she wasn't joking because her bubbly face turned into a slight scowl. "A flower? You came all the way out here to find a flower?"

"Yes, a flower! I bet you've never seen a real one either." She folded her arms, obviously a little annoyed with me. But she was right; I had never personally seen a flower except for in a few books and on some posters in the old mall area.

"If a flower is so pathetic, may I ask what you're doing out here?"

I stopped laughing. It was a good question. I simply didn't have an answer to it. "I dunno."

"Sooo... you're out here. Just cuz?"

I nodded my head. This was all I knew. The wastes, scavenging, killing. It was all a routine for me. I decided to try and change the subject. "What do others call you?"

"Huh?"

"You know... what's your name?"

"Oh!" She held out her hand. "I'm Sophia! But you can call me Sophie. What's yours?"

This was getting a little embarrassing. Again, I didn't have an answer, so I simply shrugged.

"Oh come on, it can't be that bad! You can tell me."

"I... I guess I had a name at one point. I just can't remember." I looked off to the side. It's not like I hadn't tried to remember my name, but in all honesty absolutely zero memories before all this came to mind. I had simply woken up one day with nothing but the clothes on my back, my rifle, and a backpack full of 5.56 ammunition.

"Hmm... a man without a name, and without any idea why he's out here." She looked at me with even more curiosity as she stuffed her hands in her pockets.

"Well, nameless man, mind if I tag along with you for a bit? More chance of finding a flower if two sets of eyes are looking."

I ignored her question and walked towards the dead reavers starting to scavenge would I could from them; food, ammunition, first aid supplies. Sophie squatted down in front of me and I could feel her eyes burrowing into the top of my ragged cap. Just the feeling was enough to make my eye twitch.

"Please?"

The sound of that word was enough to stop me in my tracks. I took in a deep breath and sighed before looking up to meet her eyes.

Through them, I saw her pain. How she went through this entire destroyed town looking for something that may have just as well been a unicorn at this point, and who knows how far she had actually come just to get here.

I had simply woken up one day with nothing but the clothes on my back, my rifle, and a backpack full of 5.56 ammunition.

"Sure." my face softened a little as I tried to give a little smile.

After we had swept the area for as much supplies as we could and put the bodies in a bonfire, we continued our journey to the next town, following a sign that said "Savannah-118 miles."

After a few miles of her humming and whistling, she went quiet and proceed to stare at the side of my face. Again, that burrowing feeling made my eye twitch uncontrollably.

"Can I help you?"

"Hold on..." she seemed to stare even deeper into my complexion as if she was having a conversation with the scars on my face. All of a sudden, her face lit up and she snapped her fingers. "I know what I'll call you!"

Curious, I turned to face her. "Hmm?"

"Adam. you're the first man I've met out here, and Adam was the first man in the Bible. Thus, you shall be Adam."

I was silent for a bit, a little embarrassed to ask my next question. "What is a... bible?"

She stopped in her tracks and turned to face me, clearly confused. She grabbed my arm and made me stop too. "You really don't know about the bible? Do you know about God?"

I shook my head.

She opened her bag and took out an ancient leather bound book with a lowercase "t" on it.

"Here, you can have it. I've read it at least a dozen times over. Sorta a family heirloom." She handed me the book and waited for me to take it in hand.

"Wouldn't your family want it back?" I softly pushed the book back towards her.

She looked down instead of answering and shoved the book into my chest.

“Oh.” I took the book and stuffed it into my satchel. We continued along the broken highway for a bit in silence again. I could tell that I had reminded her of something bad when I mentioned her family and I wanted to lighten her mood.

“So what’s with the “t” on the cover?” I was completely unprepared for the response that came afterwards.

She spent hours on end telling me about this guy named God who created everything and loved unconditionally, and how he sent down his son from this place called heaven just to try and save us. Then she went on to explain the significance of the “cross” and how it was a symbol of the Christian religion; how they were a group of people who tried to do good in the world. They faced persecution and death, and somehow for some reason, they kept their beliefs.

Somewhere along the way, we found a little shack that was somewhat intact and decided to make camp there. She continued with her stories as we rolled out our bedding, made a fire, and began dinner.

“So, where’s this God guy now? Why didn’t he stop the world from going to hell?”

“I dunno, but I know he has a plan. He always does.” She stared into the fire, watching the flames dance around each other as if being serenaded by a slow tune.

“How do you know God is real?”

“Honestly, I don’t know. That’s why I want to find a flower. Finding something so beautiful in a place like this would be a miracle in itself. Then I’d know that God is real.”

She looked up from the flames and took the pot of stew from the pit. “I guess... that’s why I’m out here. I need to know.” She slowly poured some of the contents into a tin mug that she had grabbed from her bag. She then handed the pot to me, and I poured it into my foldable bowl, and reached into my bag for a spoon.

“Well then,” I said, “I guess we’re just gonna have to find you that flower, aren’t we?” I extended my bowl out to her and we gently clashed our containers together.

“Cheers.”

* * *

I finished packing my gear and stepped out of the shack and into the oncoming radiation storm. It was hard enough to see out of my goggles with all the dirt and grime that coated the lenses, but the greenish fog cut visibility down to nearly nothing. Not that it mattered; I’d walked this same trail for years with Sophie and knew every inch of the path. It wasn’t a very secluded one, but it was the fastest path from the city where we scavenged to where we had set up a home for ourselves. Our home wasn’t much, but it protected us from the elements, had heating, and we even had a solar panel that powered a single light inside the main room of our pod structure.

* * *

“It’s... nice?” I had never settled down anywhere for more than eight hours somewhere, so having a home was a pretty foreign idea for me.

“Of course its nice! It’s a bit of a fixer-upper, but that’s an easy thing to deal with.”

I walked around the welded pods, inspecting every inch of the structure. In

*“So, where’s this
God guy now? Why
didn’t he stop the world
from going to hell?”*

comparison to the other buildings I had seen, this one looked very new. “You sure no one lives here?”

“C’mon Adam. Have you seen any other people besides me?” She rolled her eyes and leaned on the structure. “There’s a reason that man stopped being nomadic centuries ago. People need a home. Look at it this way: we can stockpile more supplies than just what’s on our backs, we can have a safe, defensible place to sleep every night, and it’s got electricity! Have you ever seen a working light?”

“My flashlight?” I pulled the heavy metal tube from my thigh pocket and flashed the light in her face. She covered her eyes from the brightness and groaned.

“You’re missing the point. We have a place now.” She walked closer and covered the light with her hand.

“You and me. This can be our sanctuary; away from the reavers and the fear of not waking up some day.” I could tell that she really wanted this, but I wasn’t sure if it’d be something that she’d regret. If we settled down, we’d have less of a chance of finding a flower, and wasn’t that the reason we began traveling together in the first place?

“What about your flower?”

She gently grasped my free hand with hers. “Adam, you are my flower.”

* * *

I’d never had flashbacks before, so remembering these moments was heart-wrenching for me. I moved my gloved hand up to wipe away the tears that began to trickle down my cheeks, but instead I only managed to smudge my goggles and respirator against my scruffy face.

The once bright town now looked sickly

and deranged; the greenish haze that floated through the air and reaver carcasses that littered the streets created an almost-alien atmosphere in a place that I had thought I knew well. It wasn’t too long ago that Sophie and I walked these streets on our way back home from our outings. Occasionally, we’d see a wild deer eating the foliage off of the buildings or a few birds resting on the broken street lamps, and when the weather was just right, this place was almost serene; and when the broken city was the most calm, is when I should have been the most ready for the unexpected.

* * *

It was a cloudless night and the stars in the sky lit the way home. A soft breeze moved at our backs, gently pushing us along on the cracked blacktop as we slowly walked hand in hand. With her free arm, Sophie pointed out all of the different constellations. Of all the ones she showed me, she spent the most time talking about Orion the hunter and his loyal dogs Canis Major and Canis Minor.

“Ultimately, Orion’s ego got the best of him. He bragged that he could slay all the beasts on earth, so Mother Earth sent Scorpio to kill him.”

“Where’s this Scorpio then?”

“Oh, we won’t be seeing him for a while yet. He’s a summer constellation.” She dropped her pointer finger and tugged my arm towards one of the multi-story buildings in the plaza. “Mind if we sit on the roof for a bit? Go for a better view?”

I shrugged my shoulders and gave her a smile. We made our way up the large building, skipping over broken stairs and jumping over the holes in the flooring. When we got to the top, I used the stock of my rifle to break off the rusty lock that led to the roof. The ancient door

swung open loudly and we stepped out into the open once more.

We had a completely unobstructed view of the brilliant night sky. Even the Milky Way seemed to extend from horizon to horizon as it emitted a soft glow that illuminated the building around us. Before I met Sophie, I had never really noticed how beautiful this ravaged earth was. She taught me to look for the light in everything, even the light in myself. Now, when she was with me, it was easy to see the good in everything.

She drew me close and I smiled into her warm embrace, feeling the wave of calmness that wrapped itself around me like a warm blanket. For a while, we simply stood there holding each other and looking up in silence. The wind picked up and drew with it a foul smell that seemed to seep into the city. It wasn't a smell that we encountered often, but the scent of rotting flesh, blood, and sulfur was familiar enough to cause us to tense up.

"Reavers."

We looked out over the side of the building to see a horde of them crawling around the outskirts of the city. Dead reavers look just like normal

humans, but the live ones act completely different; they act like

zombies connected to a hive mind. They have no spoken language, no education or mental development, yet somehow they were intelligent enough to use tools and weapons, and that is what makes them so dangerous. Well, that and their numbers.

We rushed down the building and began making our way through the back alleys and

deserted streets. Slowly but surely they began what looked like a patterned search of the city, as if they knew we were there. For what seemed like hours, we evaded group after group, inching

our way to freedom. We were two blocks away from the open road when they finally boxed us in.

Before I met Sophie, I had never really noticed how beautiful this ravaged earth was.

"Hold up." I held my hand up to signal for Sophie to stop as I

peeked around the corner of a building. "Looks like we're gonna have to fight our way out of this one," I grumbled as I ducked back behind the wall and readied my rifle.

"How many on this street?"

"Seven. But I'm not thinking about these ones, it's the others that'll hear the shots that have me worried."

"Hey," she leaned in and gave me a soft kiss. "We've made it out of stickier situations than this. We'll be okay."

I exhaled slowly and collected my calm before giving her a soft smile. "Alright, ready?"

"Ready."

* * *

My attention was brought back to reality with another crackle of thunder as the sound echoed throughout the city. I suddenly became very tired, but I kept on moving anyway. After what seemed like forever, I reached our home but I didn't stop inside. Instead, I made my way to the back where the mound of dirt and a makeshift cross peacefully sat.

I unclipped my backpack and removed my mask and goggles and sat down in front of the grave.

"Hey there Sophie... I'm sorry I've been

gone so long.” I could already feel a lump forming in my throat. It had already been a few months since our last reaver fight, but the crushing feeling I felt didn’t feel any less painful than the day she died.

“I’ve got something for you, you’ll never guess what I found.” I unzipped my backpack and pulled out a black box. I gently put it on the ground before I began to undo the latches that kept the box together.

My attention was brought back to reality with another crackle of thunder as the sound echoed throughout the city.

“This is why I was gone for so long; ‘went all the way to Mississippi for it.” I lifted the box cover to reveal a purple buttercup flower, gently nestled in fertile soil. I scooped a little bit of dirt out of the top of the grave and gently began to transfer the flower.

“Don’t worry, I’ve been stopping frequently so it can get some sunlight. Wouldn’t have done much good to stop today though; kinda bad weather.” I let out an empty laugh. But quickly, my laugh turned into heaving sobs as the tears began streaming down my face. I tried to find some comfort in smoothing out the soil around the flower I had planted, but it was hard for my hand to feel anything underneath my thick gloves.

I took off my gloves and placed my hand on the mound of dirt in front of me, sitting in silence.

“I can’t stay here. I think you’d understand that.” The wind picked up for a moment as the storm finally began to die down, slowly revealing a dark, starry sky.

“Don’t worry, I’ll stop by and visit when I

can. But I need to move on.” I wiped off my hands and put on my gloves and headgear before standing back up. I took a few steps away from the grave but I stopped and turned around, staring at the flower that now guarded Sophie.

“You’re my flower too, Sophie.” And with that I turned around and began walking back into the eye of the storm.



My Sister's Rose

Steven Noll, '19

Fearless

Joshua Wigger¹, '17

I stared at Death across the no man's land
He seemed at home in the grey, pocketed wasteland.
Once or twice, he too looked at me,
But he did not fear me, for Fear was beside him
Feeding ammunition into their shared tool of destruction.
Their black cloaks fluttered behind them
As the air combusted in front of the muzzle of their machine gun
Mowing down anyone who dared rush across the mud and wire to challenge them.
I should be among the dead and dying
I too should have rushed across and challenged the oppressors.
But I was frozen in place.
As if the bloodied mud had seeped into my boots
And had solidified around my feet.
Then Courage appeared beside me as he began to rally the troops,
Back straight and head held high
As he beamed words of commitment
And duty to king and country.
The few of us left began to share his rally
Growing in confidence and shedding our fears
I was among them as Courage gave the order to fix bayonets.
I climbed the ladder half-way
Crouched
Waited for the whistle.
And as I crouched in anticipation
I felt a hand on my back and turned to face my comrade.
Hope stood behind me,
Fire in his eyes and a smirk on his bloodied face.
I too now had a fire in my eyes and in my heart,
I was ready.
The whistle sounded and We went up and over.
I sprinted across the mud and wire with my brothers as we all yelled in unison.
Fearless.

1. In approximately one year Joshua Wigger will be an Army Ranger

Reading?

Zachary Neil, '17

“I hate reading.”

Matthew texted,

when the subject arose

in the group chat of his like-minded friends,

with whom he had been conversing for the past hour.





Dawn on the Sea of Cortez

Peter Grimmet, '19



Self-Portrait

Josiah Davis, '17

1ST PLACE, ART
1ST ANNUAL MOORINGS
LITERARY & ARTS CONTEST

5150: Penal Code for Crazy

David Crowley, '18

2ND PLACE, PROSE
1ST ANNUAL MOORINGS LITERARY & ARTS
CONTEST

“You know sometimes, I don’t know why,
But this . . . just seems so hopeless.
I ain’t really sure, but it seems I remember the
good times
Were just a little bit more in focus.”
—Tom Petty and Mike Campbell,
“Here Comes My Girl”

I don’t know my grandfather.

I know the run down house we visit every Easter. I know the image of an aged, bearded man. I know the mentally withdrawn expressions of a man named Lyle Hosford— but I do not know my grandfather.

Lyle is a man of stories—or at least that is the only way I know him—for I’ve never met my grandfather, nor he, me. It’s hard to describe the feeling of when you go to your grandparent’s house and your very grandfather doesn’t know your name, and his fifth wife doesn’t bother to clean the dingy cigarette ash off the countertop, or even notice the rotting dog poop that dots the front yard of tumble weeds and sand. I know Crazy Grandpa, which is what the whole family refers to him as, more through their stories and experiences than through my own—mainly because every time we make the three-hour-trek to visit the dreary town of Yerington¹, we are more concerned with being shot in a freak *In Cold Blood*-style accident than truly connecting with family.

Many of these stories are told in a sort

1. Yerington is a city in Lyon County, Nevada, United States—with a population just over 3,000.

of comedic fashion, and are perfect for “one-upping” someone who unwisely claims they have a “crazy” family. Often, they go like this:

Out of the blue he told me ‘don’t go to the barn,’ which was strange as we always played in the barn. The first time I went up there, there was a dead horse left in its stall to rot. The second had to be when we found all of the marijuana plants and grow lights in the hay loft.

This, of course, is my mom speaking.

*The first time I
went up there, there
was a dead horse left
in its stall to rot.*

Teresa is the youngest of three daughters²— at least with that wife. There is another long string of children—too many to name or even keep track of—that follow with the

other four wives. She grew up in a hectic manner: living off food stamps, farmed rabbit meat, and the toil of manual labor. However, what’s undoubtedly true, is that she had a strange childhood.

She recalls, “I remember the first time my dad said ‘I never want to see you again!’ I was probably 14 or 15 at the time, and called my friend to take me to a bar down the road and eventually to go stay at my mom’s for awhile. It’s sad really. Still to this day he has never called me on my birthday.”

Now, she is well into her late forties—married and successful—but the strain of a broken childhood still wears on her.

“I don’t really think we realized the crazy s**t he was doing until we were grown up,” she said. “Sometimes it’s hard to think that your dad would do all these things, but looking back lots of the things he did were pretty clear—just not to us at the time.”

2. Carrie is the eldest daughter, Marilyn the middle, and Teresa the youngest.

“My first memory of him was when I was five,” my aunt Marilyn recounts. “... when he and Mom were going to get divorced, and he was gonna leave. I was sitting on the kitchen counter and he asked which parent I wanted to go with. It’s like, who asks a five-year-old that? ... that was my first memory.”

After probing her more about her childhood, she realized too—similar to my mother—that Lyle seldom if ever expressed any sort of affection towards them. “Interestingly enough, I don’t remember him telling me he loved me until I was like sixteen. We always knew he did...but he never said it.”

“He asked which parent I wanted to go with. It’s like, who asks a five-year-old that? ... that was my first memory.”

Nonetheless, most of the stories I hear about my grandfather are more recent—long after my Mother and Aunt lived with him.

One of our favorite stories to tell—one I hear often—is the story of how he was sent to federal prison. It all started about a year prior to his conviction, in the early 2000s, when he was living in Telegraph, Texas. He soon found he could make a pretty penny—about “five grand a pop” in Marilyn’s words—smuggling Mexicans across the Río Grande into The States. In actuality, he was one of the center members in Texas’ largest smuggling ring—which served as an Underground Railroad of sorts for undocumented immigrants. He would bring them across the border, house them on his farm or a nearby hotel, and then send them with the next person further north into the country. His price for more than \$50,000.00 in illegal income? A mere 18 months in low-security federal prison.

Nevertheless, his mental state was already

fleeting at the time. “I remember him saying ‘I didn’t do that.’ And I’m like, well Dad, if you didn’t do that, why did you sign this paper in court saying that you did—and when you were arrested you had three illegal Mexicans in your pickup.” Yet, this was not the first time Marilyn noticed his mental state slipping.

“And then we found some weird stuff . . .” Teresa recalls. “. . . Barbara was doing some weird shit—she was renting cars—we found receipts to strange things. . . I think she was living high on the hog when he went to prison.” Although some alone time in prison might be good for his alcohol-induced insanity, it continued again afterwards. “You’d think . . . because he can’t have any alcohol in prison it would be a great time to sober up, but when Barbara picked him up, she picked him up with beer and it started all over again.”

However, the smuggling that led to his felony charges, was not his first illegal activity. Strangely enough, when my mother was working at the Department of Justice³, his file came across her desk—which consisted of pages upon pages of offenses ranging from grand theft auto to breaking and entering and assault with a deadly weapon.

“I was probably twelve when I really grasped what happened to Roy,” Marilyn recounts. Roy was married to a woman named Barbara, who was also Lyle’s girlfriend, and soon to be wife number four. Roy was shot in a drive-by shooting that is still today a cold, unsolved murder investigation. Marilyn continues: “I remember asking him, I was probably sixteen at the time, if he killed Roy. His statement to me was ‘they can never prove it.’”

Carrie, the eldest of the three daughters,

3. Teresa worked at the Department of Justice between 1989 and 1991

has her own experience with Lyle and guns. She recalls that “it was Father’s Day, probably 2005.” When she was unloading the car, she felt a sharp sting in her upper thigh. “I turned around and yelled at Randy,” her husband, thinking that he had hit or pinched her. “But there was Crazy Grandpa, standing on the porch with his gun. He yelled over: ‘I was aiming for the dog.’ He shot me right in the ass,” she says, and still has the scar today to prove it—a living example of how mentally unstable people who are already seven beers deep by noon do not mix well with firearms.

“He shot me right in the ass,” she says.

Although the shootings and illegal activity were more unique instances, the day to day life on Lyle’s ranch, much like everything else, never proved lackluster. “A few days before Thanksgiving . . .” Carrie recounts, “the donkey died and our oven broke, all within a few hours.” Lyle proceeded to look through *The Gold Panner*⁴, a Craigslist of sorts that is printed in the local paper of El Dorado County, for a new one. He found one that was slightly functional, and at the price of free, it was perfect. While he brought it into the house, he instructed the kids to bury the now stiff and rotting donkey corpse, as guests would be arriving soon for dinner, and the scent of dead donkey is not the most appetizing. Since they couldn’t get it out of the stall, their only option was to bury it where it was. “And as if the situation wasn’t already unpleasant,” she says, “the oven was too big to fit in the place of the previous one—so Lyle got his chainsaw and cut about six inches off of the cabinets to widen the gap. Surprisingly,

. . . he instructed the kids to bury the now stiff and rotting donkey corpse, as guests would be arriving soon for dinner, and the scent of dead donkey is not the most appetizing.

4. *The Gold Panner* is an El Dorado County newspaper publication, founded in 1979, used to advertise and sell used goods.

this was a pretty normal year.”

I’ve learned quite a few lessons from growing up with a mentally damaged felon for a grandfather, one being, never eat food prepared in his house. While living in Texas, he had a large freezer filled with every different variety of meat known to man—from deer and rabbit, to hogs and beef. The whole time during the three-day drive while moving to Nevada, with temperatures easily peaking over 100, the freezer sat on the trailer. When he arrived, it was leaking quite profusely with blood, meat juice, and whatever other liquids that might come out of a freezer of now putrid meat. His solution? Simply plug it back in.

When all three sisters had the chance to sit down and discuss their peculiar childhood, many negative anecdotes arose. However, they all agree that their upbringing was not plagued with negative memories:

Teresa seems more nostalgic than spiteful towards her father. “Anytime we went to the grocery

store I always held onto his pinkie—that was my way of staying with him. And I remember, no matter where we went, he would stop and talk—everybody knew him.”

Marilyn agrees, “Everybody knew him . . .”

“ . . . and loved him. He was very charismatic,” Teresa adds.

Carrie, the eldest chimes in, “We couldn’t leave the house without him stopping to talk to someone.”

Marilyn changes the topic, “. . . And did he always walk really fast?”

“Super fast.”

“And do you still walk fast to this day?”

“I do walk fast,” Teresa replies.

Marilyn reminisces in the past, replying “So do I, and so does Jen⁵, because he would take Jen when she was little, and she would have to walk really fast to keep up.”

Teresa shifts the conversation towards more jovial childhood memories. “And I loved going to get hay with him. We’d take his big flatbed truck and we’d go to some big huge hay barn and get hay—maybe it was in Sacramento...”

“I think it was,” Marilyn confirms.

“...While he was there talking to the people me and Cathy⁶ would climb all over the hay bales—hundreds and hundreds of bales of hay.

“Back when it was okay to do that,” Marilyn jokingly adds.

All three sisters also agree that their tireless childhood was overall beneficial. Teresa states, “He was always very active and we were always outside doing things—even though we hated our chores.”

Marilyn agrees, saying “. . . But you know, I think in the long run it was really good. . . He always kept us busy. . . We were always having

5. The eldest of Marilyn’s four children

6. Family friend of the three sisters (Carrie, Marilyn, and Teresa) who would often spend time on Lyle’s ranch during the summer

fun there over the summer.”

Carrie shifts to a more depressed topic, revealing the sad truth about their father. “We always had fun . . . but he drank a lot. He was great fun. Now it’s sad. He just seems . . . lost.”

Marilyn agrees: “It’s really the alcohol that got him to this point. And Barbara will tell me, ‘I bought him a twelve pack and he drank the whole thing in a day.’ I’m like, well no shit.” She continues with another story of his drunken lifestyle. Back in ‘97 while trapping wild hogs, Lyle caught a bobcat. Any civilized person would simply open the door and let the cat go, but Lyle decided to keep it and name it Sassy. He was never good with animals. Often drunk, he would forget to feed them, and Sassy was no different. Finally, six years later when he was moving from Texas to Nevada, everyone agreed that the bobcat was not going to be crossing state lines. My mother found a wildlife rescue a few hours away, and Marilyn was chosen to be the driver:

I remember, when it was time to relocate the bobcat . . . we got it into this little wooden crate in the truck. I didn’t have a cell phone then or GPS so we must of just had directions. I think it was like State Route 12, which is just a dirt road, that appears to go nowhere. And remember, it’s hotter than hell. First we had to stop and pick up beer for dad, I think he got an eighteen pack. And we started driving, and I don’t know, he’s probably six, seven, maybe eight beers deep—and I’m lost. We are now two and a half hours into what’s supposed to be a two hour drive. He’s drunk, I’m lost and that’s frustrating as hell. I find my way but before we get to the location he keeps going on and on about how he doesn’t want to live,⁷

7. That night, Carrie had to round up all of the guns and bury them in the yard after he continued to voice his suicidal intentions.

and I might as well run the truck into that tree. He started talking about the war, how no one can take as good as care of his bobcat as him, and ‘that bobcat loves me.’ At this point, I just wanted to stop and let him and the bobcat out, and just drive off down that dirt road.

*We turn our kids
loose to hunt for candy-
filled eggs hidden in
tumbleweeds, old deer
skulls, and rusty car parts.*

Marilyn, like many of us, has experienced Lyle’s alcoholic tendencies first hand—seeing exactly how quickly he transcends into a delusional state. Now, in his alcohol-induced, dementia riddled state⁸, it takes a few beers to get him back to any sort of lucid manner. However, it’s difficult to convince a slightly buzzed, mentally unstable alcoholic to quit after a mere three drinks. The phrase “snowball effect” comes to mind..

I find it strangely fitting that when we make the trek to Yerington every spring, our Easter-egg-hunting experience does not match the American ideal of freshly mowed lawns and nice clothes for the whole family on a church going Sunday. We turn our kids loose to hunt for candy-filled eggs hidden in tumbleweeds, old deer skulls, and rusty car parts—the last living symbol of Lyle’s downward spiral from the man everyone knew around town, to the alcoholic we know today. His house fits his current state. It has the appearance of being vacant—grey sand fills the front yard lined of field fence, no two curtains match, although their patterns jibe, and fittingly, to envelope the whole shamble: the melancholy tone of overcast clouds.

8. Lyle Hosford was later diagnosed with alcohol induced dementia in 2009, after he drove for hours around his home town unable to find his own house. He eventually found the police station, which allowed an officer to lead him home and refer him to mental health treatment

We return each spring to witness the same withdrawn exterior of a man named Lyle. Although the stories may portray him as a little rough around the edges, his sad decline from charismatic and loving to crazed and incriminating is mainly attributed to alcoholism. His pleasant past may be but a distant memory, yet what’s undoubtedly true, is that Lyle Hosford is not your average alcoholic, smuggler, felon—or grandfather.



Keyhole

Anton Gutierrez, '17

Home

Ian Hallford, '17

The rain fell as it had for many weeks prior upon the sloped roofs of a nondescript suburban neighborhood, projecting an atmosphere of stifling silence. Pattering, pattering it falls, slipping over the roof's lip, dripping down the gutter, and rushing out the drain pipe, pooling in a poorly drained gravel bed uniformly grey as the clouds above. The house itself was distinctly faded to those who knew it, despite its relatively untouched beige paint, standing in twilight between the glowing events of its past and the grim reality of its present.

A common house, aluminum sided and rectangular, the front appears orderly enough, drought-resistant

plants well-contained to their respective beds, but a distinct aura of subtle disorder pervades the scene. The rear, invisible to the typical onlooker, is choked with weeds, the few remaining cultivated flowers wild and unkempt. The sound of the rain rolls through the narrow halls, a march of resounding finality in tandem with the beating hearts of those within. There is laughter still but broken and defiant, a wan shadow. Rain drums against four windows, four corners, four rooms, four individuals. The doors remain open but an unspoken barrier stands betwixt, the sickness of one body traversing into the minds of all four. Light reaches still through the windows of the first three, casting in stark relief the figures of a father, a son, and a daughter. The daughter and son are close, sharing interests and comfort to ward off a creeping, insidious hollowness. The father stands apart, shoulders heaving beneath the weight of his burden, pride denying him assistance. The fourth

The doors remain open but an unspoken barrier stands betwixt, the sickness of one body traversing into the minds of all four.

room's curtains are drawn, the source of the darkening. A mother lies there with labored breath and pounding heart, younger than the father but far more aged. Unwilling though she is, no matter how she might scream and rage, the source of this heaviness inexorably driving a wedge between the four corners of the house is her. The kitchen's heart lies cold and still now, no longer throbbing with jubilant energy. Though some remnants persist — a joke about better days gone past or some small meal cooked and eaten together — the truth hangs unyielding over the house. Life can never be the same. The front door's iron rusts away gradually in the rain and wind,

corroded piece by piece by greater powers. Close once, but now no longer, trapped beneath a truth most somber, a home becomes a house. The rain falls, the wind shifts, and a home becomes a house. Slowly, silently, sorrowfully, a home becomes a house.



Moonrise
Jared Fong, '18

On Insomnia

Austin Weideman, '18

1ST PLACE, PROSE
1ST ANNUAL MOORINGS LITERARY & ARTS
CONTEST

“There is a romance about all those who are abroad
in the black hours.”

—Robert Louis Stevenson

It is 3:42 a.m., and I am wide awake. My face is illuminated by the dim light of my computer screen. All else is dark. My fingers are busy tapping at my keyboard. All else is silent. When should I get to sleep? In two hours tops, but I'm not making any promises.

I have been named a variety of things in reference to my sleepless nature. For reasons unknown to me, humans have some fascination with dividing whole sets of people into two distinct groups. Nowadays, I can either be a morning person or an evening person, an early bird or a night owl. In fact, my parents have used the terms night owl and evening person to describe me on more than one occasion. I am a night owl because I stay awake longer than normal. I am an evening person because I am active when the sun goes down rather than as it rises.

Yet, these words feel empty to me. Anyone can stay up late. Anyone can prefer night to day. Sleeplessness has made an indelible mark on my body. It has chiseled its name into my human nature; it has tattooed itself onto my soul; it is a part of who I am. Sleeplessness is no longer a matter of choice; instead, it has ingrained itself into my daily routine. I am not awake for pleasure. I am not awake for delight. I am a person with a

*Sleeplessness has
made an indelible
mark on my body.
It has chiseled its
name into my
human nature; it
has tattooed itself
onto my soul.*

momentum. I am a boy with a frenzied mind.
I am an insomniac.

Insomnia is habitual sleeplessness or the inability to sleep. It is a simple word with simple origins: the Latin prefix in- aligns with the word somnus (sleep) to form insomnis (sleepless). The modern English derivative is most commonly used as medical terminology for self-diagnosis of sleep problems. This diagnosis can be divided into primary and secondary insomnia. Secondary insomnia can be thought of as a side-effect of something else, like illness, stress, anxiety, hormonal imbalances, or depression. On the other hand, primary insomnia is not a result of medical problems, medicines, or other substances. My sleepless nights result from the primary variation, the state of self-induced insomnia, and that is what I will be referring to from now on.

In either case, according to the National Sleep Foundation, insomnia results from disruption of sleep-regulating body systems: “sleep/wake homeostasis, and the circadian biological clock.” Sleep/wake homeostasis increases sleep drive after long periods of time spent awake, thus creating a balance between hours awake and hours asleep. The circadian clock works by timing the release of sleep and wake inducing hormone. For example, when light hits the eye in the morning, the “Suprachiasmatic Nucleus (SCN), a group of cells in the hypothalamus that respond to light and dark... sends signals to raise body temperature and produce hormones like cortisol,” thus giving us the boost of energy we need to get out of bed in the morning. Homeostasis and circadian rhythms can be shifted by staying awake for long and irregular periods, leading to restless nights and drowsy afternoons. Insomnia stems from the prolonged disruption of these two

systems—from doing the opposite of what the body wants.

Over the course of my life, I have beaten my biological clock like a punching bag. Ever since my childhood, I have been fascinated with the middle of the night. I viewed it as a time when I could be completely undisturbed by the commotion of the busy day. As I began finding myself increasingly anxious during the day, I longed for a time when I could be completely isolated, completely silent, and completely still during the night. The hours after midnight offered solace to my young body. At first I thought sleep awarded all the same benefits. But sleep did not allow me to savor every minute after midnight. Sleep did not break the chains and let my mind run free. Most importantly, sleep did not let me do all the things I wanted to do.

So I found myself staying awake longer and longer, fostering the insomniac inside me. I can recall the night, after many similar nights before it, when I finished the final chapter of the last Harry Potter book after hours of quiet reading. I can look back to the night when I first learned to solve a Rubik's cube, after many tortuous minutes of twisting the puzzle under my bedside lamp. I can even remember the night when I attempted to write the first two chapters of my own short novel. With each abnormally long night, the hands of my internal clock gradually shifted in the wrong direction. Little by little, the gears began to spin counter-clockwise. It began with mere seconds that I hardly noticed, then came minutes, hours, and soon my clock would be completely flipped. I entertained myself in knowing I shared the same hours as the nocturnal tawny owl who scoured the woods for mice in the dead of night. I shared the same minutes as the gray

I have beaten my biological clock like a punching bag.

wolf who stalked the white-tailed deer in the jet black forest. And I shared the same seconds as the ball python who lunged at its prey under the disguise of darkness.

Unfortunately, my restless nights are no longer filled with the amusement of my past. Like any ordinary teenager, age and responsibility have caught up to me, and my night-time activities have shifted from wonder to work, from pleasure to necessity. Nowadays, I find myself in the dark hours, taking notes, solving math problems, or drafting essays, doing what could not be done in one day. On the bright side, the dozens of nights I have spent awake have taught me some valuable lessons. The very first thing I do when I know I'm in for a long night is set an alarm, a backup alarm, and a backup-backup alarm. I have slept in too many times to ever make the mistake of pressing "snooze" again. Once I am ready to leave the house, I always bring along a cold water or a hot coffee for

With each abnormally long night, the hands of my internal clock gradually shifted in the wrong direction. Little by little, the gears began to spin counter-clockwise.

my car, which thankfully has loud enough speakers to blast my brain into focus. My insomnia is funny that way; it keeps me

up all night but can make me drop at any moment during the day. School is the time, however, when my body kicks into peak and determination prevents me from nodding off during class. Then, I return home and likely resist another night of sleep. This cycle continues throughout the week until I reach the light at the end of the tunnel—Friday. I cannot stress enough the importance of weekends to an insomniac. They are a flowing river in a desert of sand, salvation after years of torment. But the insomnia fights Friday

night sleep, telling my body it has hours to go before it can rest. With enough effort, however, I am able to trudge through the sand, and I can refill my empty canteen, attaining those precious hours of sleep to make up for those I have lost. After my brief rest, my body continues on, the insomnia pushing its agenda the whole week through.

Over time, I have grown accustomed to the night. I like to think that the human body can adapt to whatever challenges it might face. While this idea is hardly true, my own body often surprises me. The headaches become increasingly easier to endure, and the weight of fatigue becomes less stressful to bear. I can get through each day with less hours of sleep backing me up. The relentless insomniac inside me grows stronger by the day.

When it comes to insomnia, though, I am certainly not alone. The word insomnia is frequently heard being tossed around by last-minute workers, busy students, and ordinary people without enough hours in the day. The lawyer who finds himself draining mug after mug of coffee, typing away as the night sky turns and finally fades to a brisk morning, might call himself an insomniac. The single mother who finds her eyes always drooping but never closing, forever watchful for the faintest stir of her youngest child, might call herself an insomniac. And the biologist who slaves away in his lab from one day to the next might call himself an insomniac. But what do all of these insomniacs have in common?

Every instinct tells their eyes to close shut, their heads to lay back, and their bodies to shut down. But for whatever their cause, no matter how urgent or how trivial, they push on. The insomniac keeps looking when his

eyelids are too heavy. The insomniac keeps hitting when the punching bag won't budge. The insomniac persists in his quiet quest under the shield of the stars, no matter the discomforts he may feel the next day.

*The single mother who
finds her eyes always
drooping but never
closing, forever watchful
for the faintest stir of her
youngest child . . .*



Keen Eye

Anton Gutierrez, '17

Mornings

Aidan Cordero, '17

He awoke, and knew the day would be as it always was. The stale scent of his unkempt laundry pile mingled with the air and filled his nostrils, as his dread swallowed him. Today, he thought, would not be a fine day. However, he supposed that despite the coming horrors of a day office job, he would treat the morning as if it were unlike any other.

With childish fervor he sprung from his bed and let the covers sprawl inelegantly across the carpet floor. He skipped toward the bathroom, and conjured a gleeful diddy in his head; this is the opening theme song to a TV show, he thought, and I'm the star. He showered, and his mind tugged him to and fro between the many avenues of imagination. At one moment, he was the star of a romantic tragedy, and the lukewarm, snake-like streams of water slithering down his body fit his gloomy mood, and the next he was a youth in love, letting a torrent strike him as he stood in love-struck stupor. He turned off the water, and stepped out of the shower, emerging as if he were a horrid creature from the nocturn depths of a vast, navy ocean.

Then, he was a millionaire hot-shot, dressing for a big day of business dealing and money spending, or whatever it is, he supposed, that the wealthy do with their time. With an aura of pompous self-satisfaction, he tied his cherry-red tie in a dignified knot and adjusted it with four precise movements; left to right, right to left. He slicked his damp hair back, combed it once, twice, and sprayed it all down with a can of hairspray. The scent

was womanly, but he wished it masculine, and it was so. He strut to the breakfast table, and pictured he was waiting for his butler to bring him a plate of succulent breakfast delicacies. Mr. Weatherford was the butler's name, he decided. He swapped bodies for a moment, and as Mr. Weatherford he stood from the table and prepared the most scrumptious bowl of cereal he had ever laid his eyes upon. He scarfed it down with the ravenous appetite of a man gone without food for years. Once finished with his meal, he had the misfortune of turning around. 7:30. He was running thirty minutes late.

*At one moment,
he was the star of a
romantic tragedy, and
the lukewarm, snake-like
streams of water slithering
down his body fit his
gloomy mood, and the next
he was a youth in love*

Without thought, he grabbed his scarred leather briefcase sitting beside the breakfast table. He shuffled down the hall, surrounded on either side by tattered, monochrome walls. Once at the front door, he turned the metal knob. The worn oak swung open with a creak. He stepped out of his decrepit home, one foot after the other, as was custom when walking. The musty odor of moldy porch flooring and dried lawn grass filled his nostrils, as his dread swallowed him. Today, he thought, would not be a fine day.

A Big Decline

Casey Gilles, '18

The NBA had long been dominated by the behemoths of the low post. The monstrous men dueled in the paint and fought to protect the basket, scrap for rebounds, and punish the opponent with their strength. Big men like Bill Russell, Wilt Chamberlain, and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar epitomized the culture of the NBA in the 1960s, 70s, and 80s, making it a center's league. Meanwhile, the up-and-coming generation, notably Shaquille O'Neal, sought to carry on the legacy of the gritty, low post play of their predecessors. However, Shaq's presence may have concluded the last big man era that the NBA culture will ever see. And, although Shaq insists that his domination made guys afraid to face him in the paint, and thus shoot from the perimeter instead, there has to be more meat on the bones of this change. So what happened? Why are these dinosaurs on the brink of extinction?

NBA big men have always been physically and psychologically tough guys. The guys willing to brawl and scrap in the paint for their team. The guys who battle in the post, get knocked on their butts, and shake it off, regardless of feeling their arm on the verge of breaking. Willing to do the dirty work and push their minds and bodies to exhaustion, these types of big men used to be the hallmark of the NBA. Yet these players are in deep decline. Cal Berkeley graduate and journalist for numerous sports news franchises such as Sports Illustrated and The Atlantic, Kevin Fixler explains the decline of the traditional low post player in his article, "The Mystery of the Disappearing NBA Center" (The Atlantic, 15 May 2012). Fixler explains that the NBA used to be replete with big men that executed

specific fundamentals and techniques to dominate the low post that modern centers just can't or aren't eager to employ. He also says that modern stars aren't willing to undertake the dirty work necessary to fulfill for a team to win, which had been the bread and butter of a typical workday for the centers of yesterday. In other words, everyone wants to be Mr. Big Shot, shining in the spotlight for all the world to admire, yet their avenue to success doesn't include diving on the floor

... their avenue to success doesn't include diving on the floor for that out-of-reach loose ball or setting that hard screen to free up a shooter

for that out-of-reach loose ball or setting that hard screen to free up a shooter, knowing good and well that a lick to the chops is a good exchange for their team's success. Contemporary stars don't

prioritize this kind of play as much as the gritty big men of the past have, and, as a result, the behind the scenes work is less valued in today's NBA culture.

The lacking fundamentals of post play expressed by Fixler is also attributed to the dwindling college experience of players. Fixler asserts that lack of college experience hurts a center's development and doesn't allow them to fully mature before reaching the NBA. Star players rush out of college after only one year to indulge in the lifestyle of being an NBA player. But they leave something behind: proper development. This modern one-and-done attitude of college basketball scars even the most skilled centers with lackluster fundamentals of low-post offense and defense that were formerly developed in college. Soon enough, these college "centers" are trapped between a near extinct position of the traditional NBA big man and a power forward. This setback, along with the social media era and the modern three-point shot crazed game plan, has victimized the back-to-the-basket dinosaurs into a dying species.

The implementation of the three-point line in the 1979-80 season also shifted the culture of how the game has been played. Basketball teams began to emphasize perimeter shooting more, and an increase in perimeter shots per game has pervaded the league ever since. Basketball Reference, a popular website that records NBA statistics and history, reveals that the NBA league average for three pointers attempted per game in the 1979-80 season, the year of the three point line's inception, was a meager 2.8. That number has since skyrocketed to about 25.8 threes attempted per game in 2016. Possessing an outside shot took precedence over having quality low post fundamentals, and the fascination with the long ball gradually left traditional NBA centers in the dust. Although the desire for a traditional low post player in addition to three point specialists had remained prevalent throughout the end of the 20th century, it has plummeted in the early 21st century.

Along with the rise in three-point attempts, the rise of a social media era has altered the NBA culture. Smartphones give fans access to gameplay and countless highlights through the use of apps like Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat. These constant feeds of new excitement on social media cause fans to crave more show-stopping performances from NBA stars. What if every player was a high-flying dunker, a dribbling virtuoso, or a three-point assassin? Are fans more excited to watch these players or fundamentally sound, systematic, low post players who dominate the game with a repertoire of high-percentage 3 footers? The big men just don't produce likes on Twitter. This rise in social media led to a decline in the appreciation of a solid big man and in

*The big men just
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Twitter.*

turn replaced their value with more athletic power forwards that have developed three-point shots. Replacing back-to-the-basket big men with more athletic power forwards, many teams have adopted a small ball strategy. This strategy casts out the necessity of low post play and instead swaps it with a smaller lineup of three-point shooters and athletic forwards to create a faster, more versatile, and higher scoring lineup.

The Golden State Warriors embraced the small ball mentality by utilizing a lineup full of outside shooters (Steph Curry, Klay Thompson, and Draymond Green) and athletic forwards (Harrison Barnes, Andre Iguodala, and, take a guess? Draymond Green) to win an NBA Championship in 2015. The fate of the back-to-the-basket behemoth of old times seemed jeopardized when the Warriors managed this amazing feat with no big help from their centers. This nail in the coffin of the big man's importance created a culture change, and now, more than ever before, the center is less valued. The NBA All-Star Game 2016 was a testament to the new small ball culture of the NBA. Of the 28 players in the All-Star Game, only 3 chosen were centers. And get this: None of those three even started for either team (but is this really a shock?).

Basketball has become a much more individualized sport in young people's eyes. With the greater use of social media, children have been exposed to and fallen in love with the spectacular highlight dunks, ankle-breaking crossovers, and three-point moonshots of their favorite NBA stars. This exposure causes young players to see value and importance only in these show-stopping plays, and they develop an individualized approach to the game by trying to imitate the plays that put them in the spotlight. Blind to the importance of the behind the scenes work, young players shove the true big man's

work into the backseat. The idea of dirty work: diving on the floor, scrapping for rebounds, setting hard screens, and more, has been devalued in young player's minds because of this change in NBA culture. Basketball is at its roots a team sport, which means players

Blind to the importance of the behind the scenes work, young players shove the true big man's work into the backseat.

should have a team-oriented mindset. Yet, the individualized approach to basketball allures players, leading them to lose touch with its roots. Again, everyone wants to be Mr. Big Shot. The fundamental, tough, back-to-the-basket big man isn't in vogue. But, who knows, maybe the near extinction of these dinosaurs of the old NBA will see a rebound. And maybe not. Perhaps the NBA will just trend toward more and more perimeter shooters and high flying dunkers as it seems to be doing so. Nevertheless, the legacy of the true NBA big man has reached near extinction, and Shaq may be able to claim the seat atop the throne of the last real big man of the NBA. Maybe he really did scare them away a bit after all.

train of thought

Jaden Fong, '18

2ND PLACE, POETRY
1ST ANNUAL MOORINGS LITERARY & ARTS CONTEST

sometimes i wonder why we think
how our train of thought works
why what matters to me may not matter to someone else
but then our thoughts speed up like a bullet train
likewhenyoumakearealization
or other times it
may
...
be
...
slower
because you cant process the rush in your veins
when you hear a certain name
so
you
stop

...

and then suddenly realize
itsbecauseofsomethingtheydid
but thoughts the jumbled become may
because there's so many things going through your brain
questions, ideas, worries
and then after struggling
organizing and recollecting
pondering
you understand
your thoughts shape you
and you shape your train of thought

On Being A Gamer

Jacob Sasaura, '18

I was breathing heavily and perspiring nervously. I took a moment to take in the situation, finding myself on the ropes, physically and mentally. Despite my escalating desperation, I pressed forward, having gone too far to give in so easily. I advanced to the clearing, where the great warrior loomed. He was prepared for this moment as the final obstacle between me and the fulfillment of my dream. We began to trade blows, locked in an impassioned battle, neither of us able to make any headway. In my eyes, the fight dragged on for innumerable hours. I struggled in vain until I could struggle no more. Completely drained, I paused the video game and put my face in my hands.

* * *

If the average person happened to see me in such a state as a result of that video game, I would have most likely left a poor impression:

"Gamers" are just a bunch of pimply, awkward, and pathetic nerds. If they knew any better, they would go outside into the real world; it is absolutely absurd for those gamers to take a fake system made up of code so seriously. Fictional books are so much better. It is in no way pathetic to be heavily invested into a world of fantasy like this. After all, a book, unlike a stupid video game, is on paper, making their worlds and stories infinitely superior. A mere gamer could never understand. Sure, it doesn't have a tangible world to immerse the reader, but that's of little importance. How about movies? Everyone watches movies. Ergo, they are exempt from the ridiculousness of looking at an electronic display, unlike some gamer. There is nothing better than to sit back and just spectate

Gamers are just a bunch of pimply, awkward, and pathetic nerds. If they knew any better, they would go outside into the real world.

characters in grand narratives out of the viewer's control. Better yet, just go outside, and enjoy real life. There is nothing better than the good 'ol pigskin, or some other physical activity.

These mediums are perfectly fine in the eyes of the majority. And when the average person plays a video game, they dismiss it out of hand, seeing nothing of real value to the pixels.

I am an emotional person, enjoying jokes, acting, stories, and engaging friends. It is probably due to this fact that I see video games in a different light than the norm. When I play a video game, I am not moving the character on the screen. Instead, I am that character, in every sense of the word. Their thoughts and actions are mine, and I to revel in it. With a book or movie, I cannot be the one to bear the One Ring, or bring balance to the Force. In a video game I achieve, I feel, I become. When it comes to storytelling, nothing else compares to video games.

I feel that *The Legend of Zelda Skyward Sword* is a fantastic example of what video games can really do. In this game, the character I play as, Link, begins as an unfulfilled face in the crowd, never leaving his floating city of Skyloft, content to hang around with his best friend, Zelda. As he talked to her and traversed the skies, as they always had, she ceased to be some projection. I looked into her eyes, and exchanged sheepish grins. I was best friends with her, just as Link was. With this in mind, imagine what happened when Zelda was taken away by dark forces that not only Link was powerless to stop, but me as well. I immediately resolve to save her, and begin my search of the uncharted lands below my lofty home. Though the risk was high and the path uncertain, I could

not forsake my friend in a time of need. As I get better at playing the game, Link grows more skilled in the game, becoming the hero we both have the potential to be. I just kept pressing on, longing for, no, desperate for, my dear Zelda. It is an intimate quest for fulfillment which I can only wish lasted longer. Nothing else before or since has ever made me feel so accomplished and happy, and no one can take that away from me.

However, some cynics maintain that even if the video game feels real, the fact remains that it is simply not, and that my pride and joy amount to nothing in reality. In that brutally literal sense, I suppose they are right. But gamers are not limited to the boundaries of the games. People who might normally be generally antisocial or hiding behind a fit-in persona, find common ground to relate to where other mediums can't. Our single player games, which would seem to be isolating, become unique stories that we can relate to together. Others games provide a direct communal experience, whether it be a duel to the death or a cooperative romp through a fantastical world. Though these adventures and narratives, we gamers bond, competing with each other to better ourselves, or assisting each other in our endeavors, literally knowing each other's struggles as our own. Those experiences are most certainly real. With our companions at our side, gamers can always play video games and find some real happiness.

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* * *

It all happened so fast. I lifted my face out of my hands. Something inside me flickered. I looked up and steeled myself. I told myself I

would succeed. There was no other way to see her again. I resumed the game, and a roaring fire burst out from my soul. By means I cannot recall or explain, I began to fight in ways I never thought possible. I could see the warrior almost imperceptibly faltering. He dove at me with the intent to finish the fight, unaware that I was not about to give him the ending he wanted. Like lightning, I evaded his desperate lunge. Putting everything that I have left into a final attack, I gave a roar of triumph. The attack connected. I won.

“No way! How did you do that?!” a spectator exclaimed in amazement.

“You did it! You beat him! I knew you would, of course,” added my friend.

“Wow, can you teach me how to do that?” pleaded the kid next to me.

I don't respond to anyone, since I'm too busy embracing her. I lean back in my chair and look around me, reveling in a happiness so deep that only a gamer could feel.



Spring Bloom

Joshua Noll, '20

Don Clark

Conrad Hawkins, '17

1ST PLACE, POETRY
1ST ANNUAL MOORINGS LITERARY & ARTS CONTEST

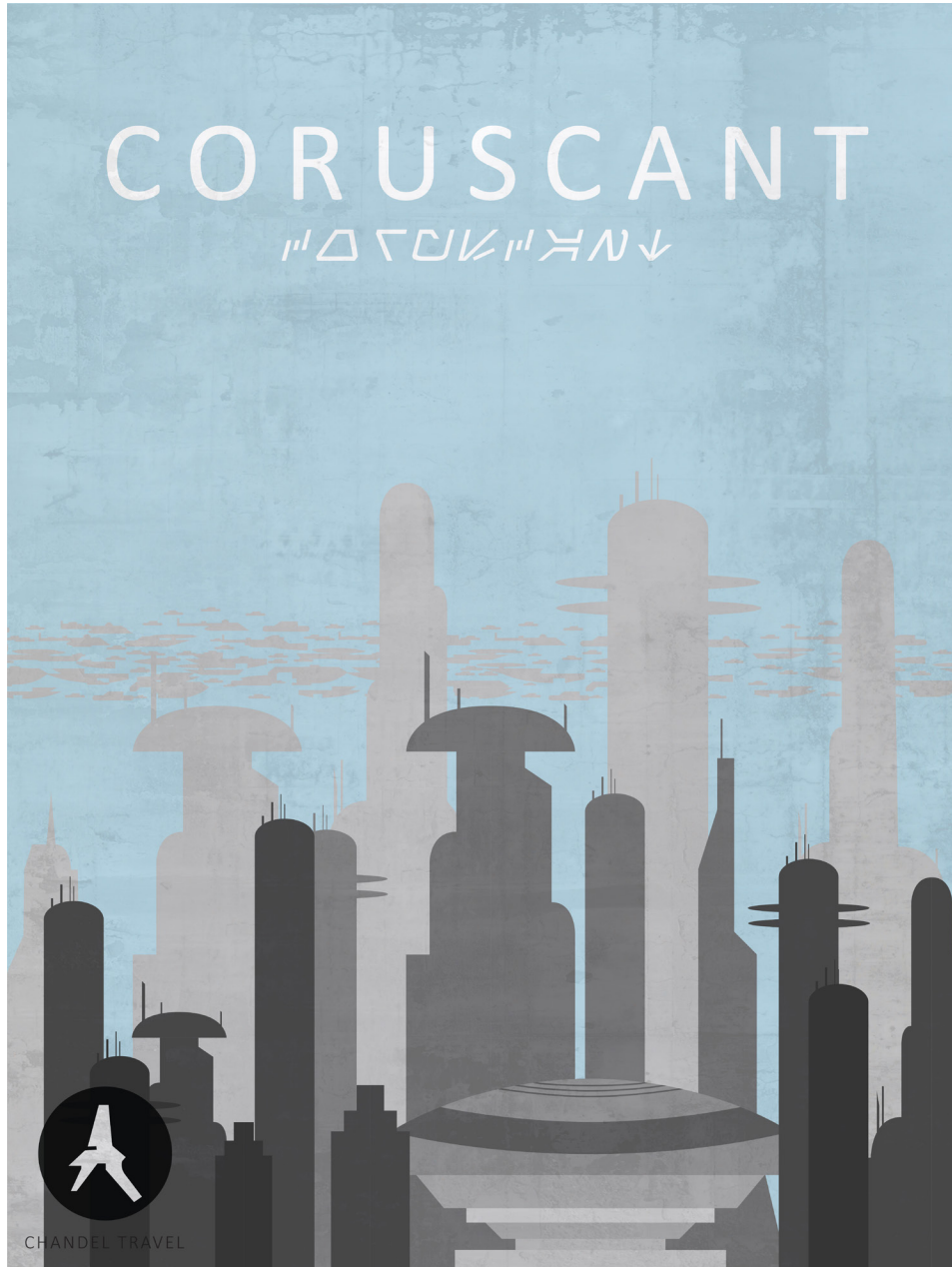
September 14, a day to be remembered,
the wind silent, not a single leaf shuttered
the rain fell upward, forever defiant.

The white flag was never waved, a man's soul never caved.
A life lived without regret, and shook death's hand
in duet.

The blue Jay sang and the lyrics hang,
the concentric circles, of an aging tree,
reminiscent of the time,
the memory,
that once stood before me.

The roots dug deep in the earth,
the minds, the memories,
and hearts of a family's hearth.

The omniscient embrace,
to the kingdom above,
his immortal love,
and a family's face.



Coruscant

Caelin Sutch, '20

2ND PLACE, ART
1ST ANNUAL MOORINGS
LITERARY & ARTS CONTEST

Flying High

Chris Appel, '17

"Now gather 'round children, I've got a story fer ya. This isn't one of your moving pictures, this is a real story."

"Don't you mean movies, Grandpa Dusty?" the boy, Oakley said.

"Move what?" Dusty said.

"Movies, like on the television..." the girl, Annie began.

"Bah, televisions. Those aren't real stories, this is a real story. It all starts with some prince getting shot. Your home country of France was involved in a war against a nasty German dictator."

"Hitler?" Annie asked.

"Hitler who? This man was named Kaiser Wilhelm II. He was so off his rocker, that when the Germans attacked France, the United States wouldn't help our relatives out."

"But Grandpa, if the U.S. didn't help the French, how come you fought in the war?" Oakley asked.

"I was a member of a squadron known as the Lafayette Escadrille. It was a unit led by the French, but filled with American Volunteers like myself. We wore French uniforms and everything. Hell, I remember my first day of training. None of us knew how to put the leather straps of the flight suits on, and quite honestly we were in over our heads."

* * *

"Hey guys, I figured it out. It's kind of like putting a harness on," Victor Chapman said.

"You know it might be a little easier if the damn instructions weren't in French," said Dusty.

"That's what we get for deciding to fight for these damn Frenchies," James McConnell muttered.

"Hey I may not speak it, but I'm French," said Dusty.

"Maybe, but you're also American, as are the rest of us. We don't belong here, but the French need our help," Chapman said as he helped the other two into their flight suits.

"Do you remember where we're supposed to go?" McConnell asked.

"Yeah we're to report to a base just outside of... uhhh Luxel," Chapman said as he read a handwritten note from Dr. Gros.

"I think it's pronounced Luxeuil."

"Who cares, Dusty."

Once they finished getting changed, the three of them made their way towards Luxeuil's airfield. They navigated as best they could in a foreign country, but they still managed to be fashionably late.

"Sir, we are here to report for duty." Dusty and the other two saluted who they assumed was their commanding officer. "You are Captain Thenault right? We were told to report to you."

"That is correct," the man replied with a thick French accent. "You boys are late."

"Sorry, first time in France," McConnell said.

"Fall in line with your fellow

"You know it might be a little easier if the damn instructions weren't in French."

countrymen,” Thenault said.

The three of them joined the other Americans standing at parade rest in front of Captain Thenault, who then proceeded to address the line of men in front of him. “Bonjour et bonjour messieurs. Au nom de la France, je vous remercie pour votre service. Vous êtes parmi les premiers Américains à rejoindre notre noble conflit et ...” he paused due to the general look of confusion he was met with. “Umm, do any of you actually speak French?”

A few muttered “No’s” and some head shaking confirmed Thenault’s suspicions.

“Well, I just wanted to thank you young men for choosing to fight on behalf of the French. Your benefactor, Dr. Edmund L. Gros, has seen to the costs of your training, housing arrangements, and anything else you’ll need. Do please try to at least pick up some French while you’re here, it’s a bit disingenuous to volunteer to fight on behalf of a country whose language you can not understand.”

After an initial tour of the airfield, the men were driven to the building in which they would reside while training and fighting for the French. Their quarters happened to be a Grand Hotel within Luxeuil.

“Hot damn if this isn’t the nicest place I’ve ever slept in!”

“Be respectful, Dusty, Dr. Gros was kind enough to put us up in a suite befitting foreigners fighting for a country other than their own. I’m sure the Hessians slept better than the British Imperials,” said Norman Prince.

Prince was a veteran pilot, and the one who had proposed the idea of American

volunteer fighting in a squadron that they might actually make a difference. Dr. Gros relished in the idea and had given it his full support. Prince, Dusty, Chapman, and McConnell were also joined by Elliot Cowdin, Laurence Rumsey, Kiffin Rockwell, and William Thaw.

“You mean to say we’re expected to die, so they’re treating us nice so that we won’t have any regrets?” Cowdin announced. As he did, there was a general look of uneasiness among the other men.

“Quiet now!” Prince responded in an attempt to regain control.

“He’s right!” Chapman yelled even louder. “These damn flying machines have only been around for fifteen years, and we’re supposed to what fly with them?”

“It doesn’t matter if I’m scared, someone has to help the Frenchies fight the Krauts. Ever even heard of a French war victory?”

“The French Nieuports we are going to be flying are a top of the line aircraft. We’ll be fine,” Thaw said as he pushed up his glasses. He was off to the side reading a book while propped up against the wall. “And if you were so uneasy about flying, why did you volunteer for this anyhow?”

“Like Dusty says, it was the right thing to do. It doesn’t matter if I’m scared, someone has to help the Frenchies fight the Krauts. Ever even heard of a French war victory?” Chapman said.

There was a slight pause, a calm of sorts, and all the men began to laugh. They knew what was on the line, and while it bothered them, they had all come to do the right thing. Fight in a war the French couldn’t possibly win on their own. With a general sense of camaraderie in place, they all began to pack in for the night.

* * *

“Hold on a minute Grandpa, you got to stay in a hotel?” Annie asked.

“Of course I did. Times were different back then. Man, oh man, was it a nice place! We each got our own suite with three rooms. You had a sitting room, a dining room and kitchen, and then your bedroom. They were furnished with some of the best European pieces you’ve ever seen.”

“That’s so not fair Grandpa, I want to stay in a nice French hotel,” Annie said.

“Maybe you’ll get to if we get involved in another World War,” Dusty said, followed by a slight chuckle from both him and Annie.

“That’s not funny you guys,” said Oakley.

“You haven’t asked anything, are you sure you’re even paying attention Oaks?”

“I mean the stories alright so far, but why were you guys so afraid to fly? You know you’re more likely to die in a car crash than when you travel by plane,” Oakley said.

“Well you see, the planes we flew were a bit different. We were lucky to get those damn things moving over a hundred miles an hour, and they flew like rocks.”

“Even if they didn’t fly well, it must have been cool to fly some of the first planes,” Oakley said.

“To us they weren’t ‘the first planes.’ They were just planes, and we just flew them. That was that, nothing special. Where was I?”

“You had just gotten to the part where you guys got to the hotel,” Annie chimed in.

“Ah yes, once we got settled in, the work began.”

* * *

Their training took several months.

They began with a general knowledge of aerodynamics, Captain Thenault taught them how lift worked, and why these machines could even get up in the air. This seemed to ease everyone’s nerves about flying, at least somewhat.

They learned battle strategy, and how to work as a squadron in the air. They were taught things like angle of attack, and they were given a chance to fire the Vicker’s MGs that their Nieuports would be equipped with.

Once they’d learned the basics of flight, and had practiced the rudimentary combat skills and ideas they would need in air-to-air and air-to-ground combat, they were ready to fly. They flew in pairs, a trainer in back, and the trainee up front at the controls. The experience was exhilarating for them. Soaring over a mile in the air at unimaginable speeds, it was incredible. It wasn’t too long before they all began to fly solo.

The excitement of flying, and the pride they took in the idea of defending their allies against an evil Empire had erased any inhibitions the Americans had.

Once they had all become proficient pilots, their individual strengths and weaknesses had become evident. Chapman and Thaw were the best at aerial maneuvers, but Rockwell, Rumsey, and McConnell had better aim. Cowdin was the most cool headed and logical in the high pressure situations that their training had provided. Prince and Dusty were tied for all around best pilots.

One night near the end of their training, Cowdin brought up the question of their identity as a squadron. “You guys...” he began, “What should they call us?”

They all turned their attention to Cowdin. Some were playing cards, some having private conversation, and Thaw as usual was reading

from a book. "How about Blue Angels?" Dusty proposed.

"Why Blue Angels? It sounds kind of lame for a group of badass combat aviators like ourselves," McConnell asked half joking.

"Well I figured because our uniforms are blue, and because we soar in the sky like angels," Dusty said.

"I don't know, I don't think it'll stick. Don't we want a name that people will remember?" Chapman asked.

"How about Lafayette Escadrille?" Thaw offered looking up from his book.

"It's got a nice ring to it, what does it mean?" Prince asked.

"Well, I was reading the other day and..."

"You were reading? Big surprise." Cowdin interrupted. They all proceeded to laugh.

"Hold on, give him a second, I want to hear this name out."

"You know how the French have been our Allies as long as we've been a country, even before that?" he paused. "Well back during our revolution, there was a Frenchie named Gilbert du Motier, Marquis de Lafayette. He was a key figure in both our revolution, and their own. I think we should call ourselves Lafayette Escadrille in honor of him. Escadrille simply because it's the French word for squadron, and we are a French squadron after all."

"So you have been learning your French after all," said a voice with a familiar French accent.

Everyone snapped to attention. "Sir!" they all said in military unison.

"At ease, gentlemen," Captain Thenault said. "So Lafayette Escadrille, this is to be your name no?"

"We hadn't exactly decided, but it felt as though there was a general consensus regarding the validity of that name," Prince said in his usual take charge manner.

"It is decided then. You shall be known as the Lafayette Escadrille. Just in time too. Your first mission is in a week, and your planes are currently on their way. Now that you are officially a squadron, what shall your mascot be?" Captain Thenault asked.

"Mascot?" Dusty responded.

"Oui, of course a mascot. You need a symbol of some sort to be painted on your planes so that in the air you can recognize each other and fight as a unit."

"Well it should be symbolic, but maybe also a little intimidating. Something that strikes fear into the Krauts," Chapman said.

"Well we've got a French name how about an American symbol?" McConnell added.

"I think I have an idea," Dusty said.

"No! We are not putting damn angels on our planes, blue or otherwise," Chapman said.

"It's not that, I was thinking we have an Indian war chieftan as our mascot," Dusty said

"That's actually not a bad idea," said Thaw. "The Indians do have a tendency to strike fear into their enemies using only their appearance, and they are the original Americans."

"Don't we want a name that people will remember?"

"No! We are not putting damn angels on our planes, blue or otherwise."

“Sounds like it’s settled then, Captain,” Prince said. “We are the Lafayette Escadrille, the flying Indians.

* * *

“You were in the Lafayette Escadrille?” Oakley said in a voice of disbelief.

“So you’ve heard about us, eh?”

“Heard about you? We’re studying WWI in history, I was assigned to study your squadron for my project. Grandpa, your friends are in my history book.” Oakley fetched his textbook from his book bag and flipped to a page with an old black and white photograph and a caption that read ‘Lafayette Escadrille circa 1916.’

They had the power of gods, flying thousands of feet above their French comrades on the ground.

“Yep, that’s us. I’m the one right in the middle,” Dusty pointed at a figure

“Grandpa, you’re practically a walking piece of history. That’s so cool!” Annie said

“I don’t know if I should take offense to that, or if I should take it as a compliment.”

“Maybe a bit of both,” Oakley said. The three of them laughed.

* * *

The air was cold on the morning of their first mission. Their briefing had been short, and the Escadrille was excited. This was to be the maiden voyage of their newly manufactured and newly painted Nieuports. Each man had been granted his own personal plane, owned of course by Dr. Gros, but they felt personal sentiment towards their crafts nonetheless. This was part in fact to the hand-

painted Indian chiefs on each of their planes. They would represent America with pride and honor.

Their first aerial engagement was helping to support ground troops in the battle of Verdun. Five days into the fighting, the Escadrille took their first aerial victory, when Rockwell shot down a German Fokker.

In the battles that followed everyone managed to earn an aerial victory, and both Dusty and Prince had achieved the title of ace for having achieved five aerial victories each. The mood at the hotel had become that of a celebratory sports team after a major victory. They had all become quite confident with their abilities in the air, and life was good. They had the power of gods, flying thousands of feet above their French comrades on the ground. Nothing could touch them. Or so they thought.

Rockwell was killed on a routine scouting mission, and Prince perished while single-handedly taking on a bomber. This rocked Dusty and the other men, two of their comrades had perished in such a short span. They were reminded of their mortality.

Their success, on the other hand, had a widespread effect on their fellow Americans. Over fifty recruits joined their ranks, and they became notorious as a unit. The Germans soon learned to fear the flying Indians. As soon as one pilot perished, others filled the space they left, but Dusty never forgot Prince or Rockwell.

It wasn’t long before the United States entered the war, and when that happened the Lafayette was dissolved. Dusty joined the 103rd Aero Squadron with many of the other members of the Lafayette.

Chapman signed on to fight with an infantry unit citing that fighting in the

trenches was safer than soaring through the air. He'd never been a fan of flying, and was happy that he was able to serve in a way he was comfortable with. He perished when his rifle misfired and killed him.

As the war drew near to an end, the original members of the Lafayette had been spread into various units of Aero squadrons in order to share their flying experience with the greener American pilots. With the United States fighting against the Germans, it was only a matter of time before the war was won in favor of the French American allied forces. Dusty never saw another member of the Lafayette for the rest of his life.

* * *

"So they just split you guys up like that, that's not fair," Annie said.

"There was nothing we could do. Even though we fought under the French for a time, once the U.S. joined the war, we had to answer to them."

"That kind of sucks Gramps." Oakley said.

"That's life," Dusty sighed with a voice of resignation. "It's not so bad though, I mean I did meet your grandmother after the war. She was such a fox."

"Ewww!" The kids groaned in unison.

"Thanks for the story, Grandpa," Annie said.

"Did you learn anything from it?"

"Just that you and grandma were young and less gross once," joked Oakley.

"Hey now, one day you'll be old and gross too," Dusty joked back. "But really, did you guys learn anything?"

"I learned that you're a pretty cool guy, Gramps," Annie said.

"Here! here!" Oakley seconded the sentiment.

"Oh geez kids, I love you guys." As he said that he began to blink rapidly, and the room began to swirl.

As everything began to settle, an old but familiar voice said. "We love you too, Dusty."

Dusty looked up, and to his surprise, Captain Thenault, and the rest of the Lafayette were standing in front of him. "Does this mean what I think it means?"

"It happens to all of us," Prince said.

"At least I got to tell them one last story," Dusty said.

Until Then

Matthew Nguyen, '17

Days and days go by
Me walking around waiting to cry
Waiting to see you one last time
But people keep telling me to get over it
How could I

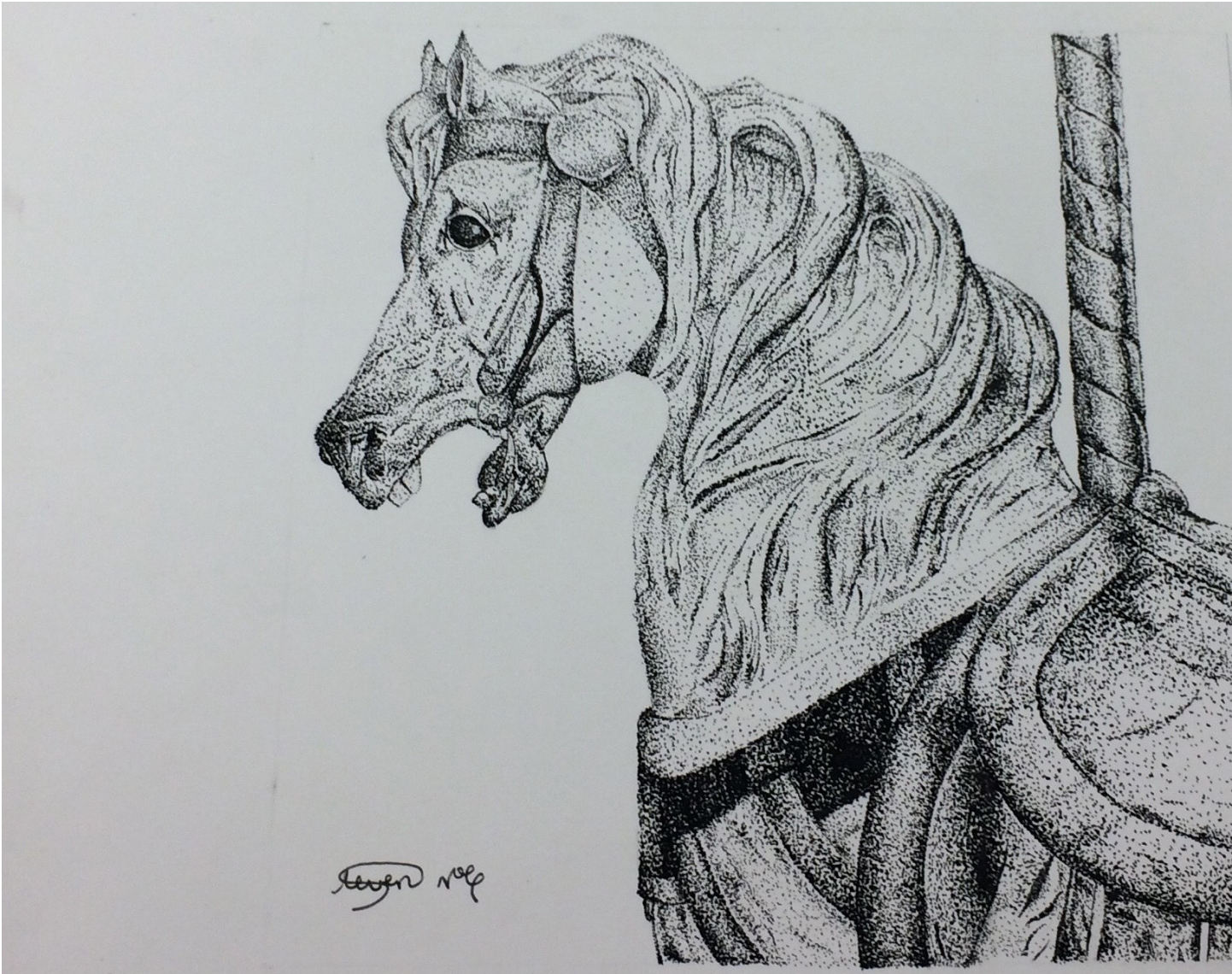
They wouldn't know how I feel
I tried getting over this ideal
Thinking about what is even real
But it's not so simple to understand
As nothing is ever planned

I can remember back in those days
Things were much simpler and I could pray
Thinking I could find my way
I guess I was fool
Hoping that my emotions were not some kind of tool
Because I was happy that I met you
And I promised I could protect you
But things went for the worst
It's still something I curse
Seeing you lying there
Being so helpless and scared
I tried to wipe my tears
As the end was near
You gave me one last smile to my delight
The sun rose up and you went to see the light

I was caught up in desolation
Fallen in desperation
Trying to find my own consolation
I didn't do anything about it and kept repressing
Drowning in my own recollection
Forgetting the beauty in God's creation

I realized it was a mistake
To stay in this helpless state
That brought hate
That tried to make me forget
What I should have truly kept
The love and the compassion
The friendship and the passion
The warmth and smile I could see
That's what really matters to me

I can no longer hide
I have made up my mind
With my head held high
With you in my heart
You're gone and I can't change that
There will always be that gap
But I was able to grow
And I'm ready to show
The same love and compassion
The friendship and the passion
That you gave to me
In all honesty, I miss you
But now I tell your story
So thank you
Until then, see you.



Carousel Horse

Steven Noll, '19

The Wayward

Garrett Emmons, '19

They perch atop obsidian obelisks of their own towering hubris,
with their hollow, slate eyes scouring the unattainable Eden sprawled in front of them,
never able to hold their gaze on a particular want for too long.
And They bawl at each other with quaint words
and retort with cherubic smiles and seraphic laughter.

They adorn themselves with crowns of golden thorns,
pricking their temples, producing tiny jewels of crimson,
while they sit on their ivory rocking chair thrones.
They dig their skin-deep graves out of the worm-infested soil
of their own enlightenment,
and are laid head-to-toe inside forgotten alabaster tombs.
Their fractured hands probe the engravings indelibly etched on their own souls.
Searching,
but never,
finding.

They parade parched pastures of sun-charred thistles
that plead for a momentary respite from the desiccating heat,
where the cobras and cottonmouths writhe on their coarse underbellies.
They reside in hazy swamps littered with bubbling molasses pitfalls
and pale birches and ensnaring vines,
where the sun rarely punctures the charcoal blanket reigning above.

They bestride ebony horses with withering flames in their eyes,
and the same tired, worldly disdain that accompanies their owners,
whose spindly legs and wrought iron hooves trample daisies and peonies,
and whose ribcages protrude through their gaunt flesh.
And They feast upon the meager carcasses that even the leering vultures
and voracious maggots do not engage.
And They imbibe the trickle of merlot that pours forth from their bleeding hearts.

They profess their besottedness to the kings and tyrants
who prance on top of them with their polished moccasins
and who tend to their peacocked brimmed mitres
like an orangutan tends to her baby child,
and who pay no heed to their subjects toiling under the weight of their strained yokes.
They supplement their cries to deaf monarchs by appeasing
any morsel of spirituality they can scavenge,
despite the unadulterated apathy that replies.

They are stalked by the sleek, predatory panthers of mistaken perfection
whose insectile eyes bore bullet holes
in the backs of They who dare not glance back at their stalkers
nor forward at their own lacquered reflections.
They are haunted not by the silhouettes encircling and tightening closer around them,
but by the silhouettes growing within their own being.

They desecrate the pious monuments dedicated to the antique principles long replaced,
which tumble upon the paltry groves of weeping daffodils.
And They quarantine the precious few
who amass the pluck to propose an altered course of musing
that would not fall prey to the same trappings currently entertained.

They bloat themselves with the righteousness that does not befall the slaves and
vagabonds who occupy the same abyss.
Their minds fall asleep on latex mattresses atop mahogany bed frames,
surrounded by pastel portraits and landscapes framed by gilded mounts.
And their dreams are filled with futile grasps at the past
and bitter hopes for the future.

Their imagination cannot venture beyond the shallow tidal pool They inhabit
that is rooted beside the infinite sea of learning whose tide recedes and evades their
feeble grasp every time They draw near.
They hesitate to guide their eyes toward the sole vessel that remains run aground on
their basalt beaches,
whose mast and sail were irreparably splintered long ago.

But will They gnash their teeth and forsake their impotence
when their judgment comes upon them like a hawk to a baby vole?
Will their serene oblivion pervade their calloused bodies
and permeate into every cowering recess of their environment?
For the Wayward know not their own impermanence.

Summer Fake-ation

Will Roberts, '18

The concept of “summer break” tends to be misleading when applied to high school students like myself. The once idyllic afternoons of reclining on a poolside lounge chair and savoring an ice-cold cherry popsicle simply don't exist anymore; rather, summerschool, summer homework, and other “necessary” extracurriculars appropriate our freetime. The word “summer” conjures a bittersweet feeling when spoken. I imagine the freedom I so desperately yearn for throughout the school year and am at last confronted by the dismal reality of growing up when it finally arrives. And the last vestiges of freedom are quickly replaced by anxiety, for I know the piles of summer assignments that are to come. Just when I think I have finished my work, there is always another book to read, another chapter to outline, or another worksheet to finish. Only when I complete the first day of a six-week summer class does hopelessness and loss truly sink in.

Maybe I have misunderstood the word “break” in “summer break.” It is not a noun but a verb—not a time of respite but rather the shattering of my liberties.

Maybe I have misunderstood the word “break” in “summer break.” It is not a noun but a verb—not a time of respite but rather the shattering of my liberties. I look forward, and the depressing reality weighs my heart down. I will be bound, by some form of work, for all the summers of the rest of my life. Sure there are the week-long family vacations, but never again will I sprawl out at home with no stresses infiltrating at my conscience. Never again will I wake up and tell myself that I have nothing planned for the day. Gone are the

days of countless table tennis bouts with my brother or the hours of playing catch at the park. I have dismissed the hollow promises of “let's hang out over the summer” and bid farewell to the evening breeze that once touched my face as I biked aimlessly to any place I wished. I see the gray, ever-approaching horizon of adulthood and face it head-on, for I understand our ineluctable destiny together.

Childhood brings both comfort and misery: comfort to those who live within it, and misery to those who wish they still could. I miss the weightless feeling of freedom that comes with a child's summer—the bright days during which I could truly be myself. As I grow, I regard summer with less enthusiasm than the year before. Summer will come as she always does, but the person she greets every year—the child she once embraced with the warmth of a mother—will be pried from her grasp, all that is left a shadow cast by her sunset.

PARTING SHOT:



Sun Bathing

Matthew Ruggles, '18