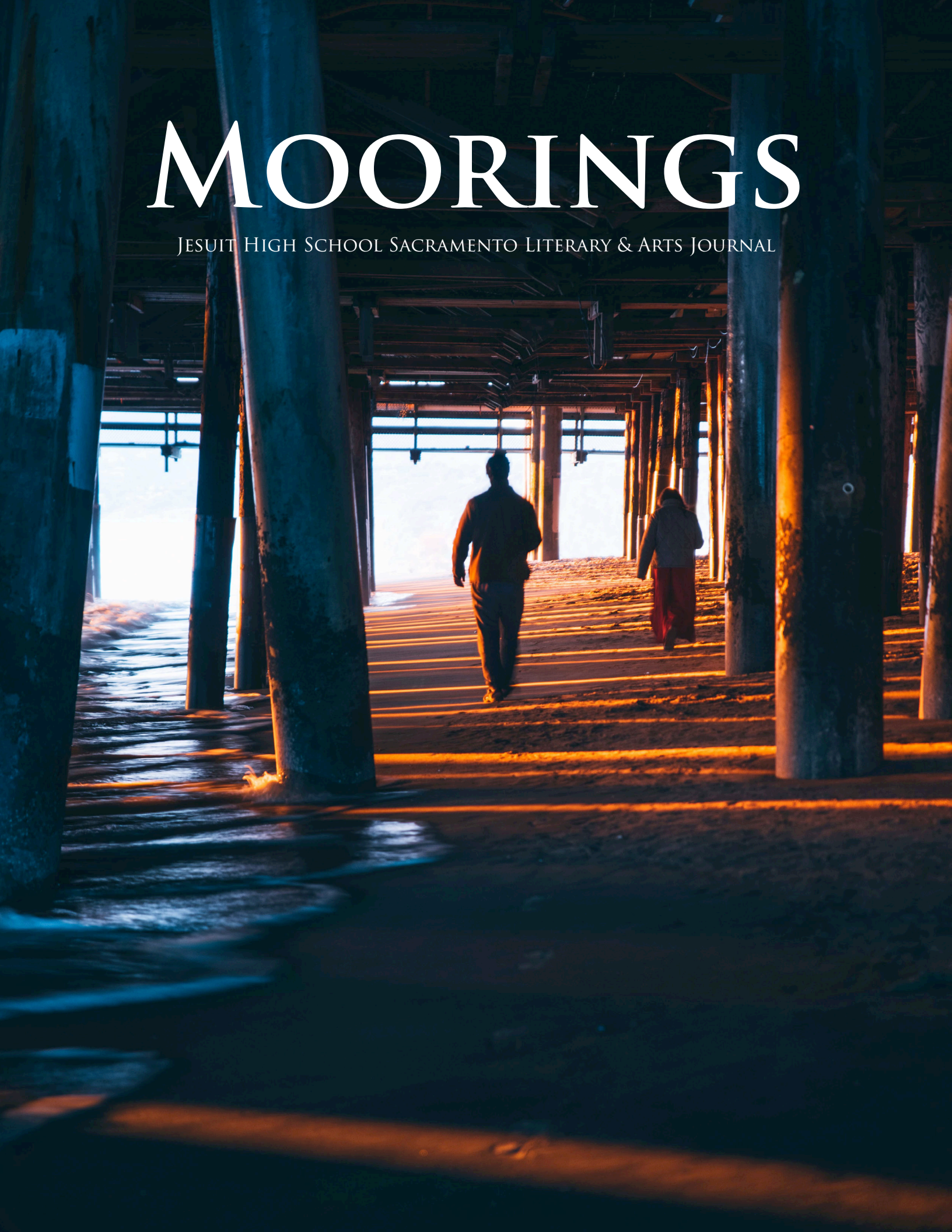


MOORINGS

JESUIT HIGH SCHOOL SACRAMENTO LITERARY & ARTS JOURNAL



Letter From the Editors

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

The pieces in this edition embody the many emotions and moods of the season. “Rippling Sunset” and “Yellow 004” celebrate the upcoming freedom as the photos “Sumidero Canyon” and “Pfeiffer’s Eye” showcase the beauty of the natural world soaked in sunlight. But spring is also the end of the school year, and more solemn, reflective sentiments can be felt in the painting “Monument of Flesh” as well as the appropriately titled poem “Spring” while “The Other Side” ponders the mysterious unknown.

As editors, we cannot create *Moorings* by ourselves. First, we must thank all the students who put themselves out there and submitted their work to us. We also want to thank Mr. Loverich, our leader, for always pushing us to make the journal the best it can be and Mr. O’Connor for offering his invaluable input in numerous instances.

Thank you for taking the time to gaze at the photos, paintings, and drawings produced by the many talented student artists at Jesuit and to read the poems, short stories, and essays carefully crafted by our writers. May their works entertain, surprise, amaze, scare, and most of all inspire you to be creative in your own way.

Garrett Emmons ’19, Editor in Chief

The Editors

Allen Chen ’19

Baxter Givans ’19

Peter Grimmett ’19

Hunter Hechtl ’19

Steven Noll ’19

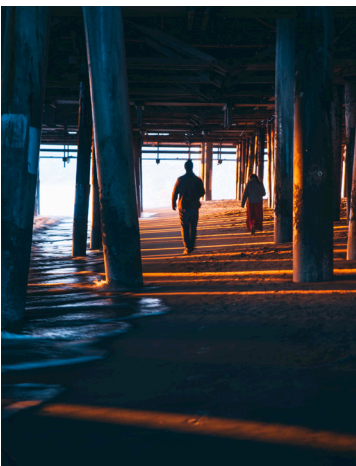
Dean Babb ’20

James Eric Johannessen ’20

Santiago Chang ’21

Peter Wisner ’21

Alfred Yu ’21



Cover Artwork: *Light Dance*, Soren Peterson ’20, Photography

MOORINGS



JESUIT HIGH SCHOOL SACRAMENTO LITERARY & ARTS JOURNAL
VOLUME 3, NO. 2
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Rippling Sunset

Soren Peterson '20
Photograph

WINNER, PHOTOGRAPHY

Lost in Thought

Alfred Yu '21

My eyes reach out
Grabbing as much of the sunset as I can see.
The orange rays grip my eyes
Forcing them in place.
We work every day for our lives
But tonight I do not work.
Tonight I sit and think.
I think of a simple question
Without a simple answer.
What if?
What if my parents had survived?
What if my siblings were alive?
What if there was somebody in the world
Who had the same blood
Dashing down their veins?
The evening blue disappears from my eyes.
The black overtakes the sky.
Tonight, I trust in the faith of my village
Because in my village
They say we live forever
Secured in the twinkles of twilight.



Self Portrait

Jack Minor '20
Pen on paper

Tennis: The Gilded Game

Dean Babb '20

Tennis is meant to be a gentlemen's game, but it is twisted in competition. While one might expect the tournaments to be filled with cordiality, it is filled by the desperateness of the players. Tennis is a gilded game. The golden surface showing the chivalry of play covering the corrupt, hollow center. Junior tournaments cracks that shell, exposing the darkness and bringing it to light.

Junior tournament sites are places of fear and anxiety. While one might expect the site to be casual or for “weaklings who can't get roughed up” because “it's tennis;”¹ however, the site is (mostly) full of hard-working and result-oriented players. We all strive to win, and competition is fierce. But that same competition can lead to the lowest moral strategies one can think of. Everyone tries to get an edge over their opponent in any way possible. Some of these strategies are player-profiling, playing mind games, cheating, and coaching. While that might seem like the worst comes from the players, that isn't even the end. The worst comes from the players' parents and the tournaments' head coaches.

When one consistently goes to high-level tennis tournaments, you usually develop an “eye for the competition.” At this level, the competition is less of “let's play for fun and get better” and more of “let's win no matter the cost.” At the NorCal tournaments, I see the same friends, same opponents, and occasionally unknown opponents. Before the official start, all of the players and I are waiting near the tournament desk (the place to check in) asking each other who they are about to play against. I always talk to my close friends to hear and give information pertaining to my opponent and theirs. When I talk with them, I also size up my opponents by “checking them out.” I look at the brand of racquet, the type

¹A common misconception that tennis players are wimps who do not want to play physical contact sports. This belief is always held by those who have never held a tennis racquet and play the common American sports like football or baseball. It is only that they have not experienced all that comes into play in tennis, for if they had, they would have a great deal of respect for the sport.

of clothing, brand of shoes, whether or not they are wearing tourney clothing, if they are showing signs of calm or nervousness, and if they seem like they are a gentleman of the game (a player who follows the rules and has a good reputation for it). The last part makes a huge deal for everyone; for if you play morally low, it can be challenge, not only physically but emotionally and mentally. I basically perform a psychological profile of my opponent. Based on purely knowing the brands and level of tournaments, I can figure out the play style of my opponent. Racquet choice always depends on the style of the player. Each brand has a racquet for every playstyle, but certain brands have better quality racquets for a certain playstyle.² Everything taken into account

Tennis is meant to be a gentlemen's game, but it is twisted in competition.

allows for me to have an idea about my opponent. However, coupled with information, I can know how I will play to win and what the possible weaknesses are. (Knowing the

opponent's weakness beforehand helps a lot in the match. I usually talk with my friends Max and Emon because Max plays a lot of the same players as I do, and Emon is a walking player-analysis encyclopedia (Even though he is in the younger age division, he studies every player because he loves “stalking” the potential competition. A truly trusted wealth of information.) I trust them because we have known each other for years by competing from low-level challengers to national tournaments). While my friends help to alleviate the mood, the site is a place of fear. The atmosphere is somewhat lively while still having a subtle, cold tone. It is like the facade of merriment covering the anxiety beneath. We all say we like to play for fun when in reality, we want to win more than anything. The goal is to win with a

²If you use a Babolat racquet, like myself, you tend to play more aggressively and usually are an aggressive baseliner like the famous Rafael Nadal. If you use a Wilson racquet, you tend to be more focused on the finesse aspects of tennis and are somewhat of an all-court player like the “GOAT” Roger Federer. If you use Head, you tend to play passive or as an aggressive baseliner and wait for the opponent to make errors or attack when you can like Novak Djokovic. All of the brands have their respective figure and conform their racquets to suit their icon's playstyle. Babolat allows for easy power and spin, making it a great tool for aggressive players. Wilson allows for good control and accuracy for touch-and-feel play, making it great for players who play at angles and vertical court movement. Head allows for consistency, making it a solid tool for scrappy players.

huge margin between the winner and the loser. Being result-oriented can lead to nervousness and anxiety. Being a perfectionist in school doesn't really help with my tennis performance. I have to think of this tournament as nothing more than practice. That way I can guarantee my performance by playing the way "I play."³ Being calm, I am able to play my best.

Sometimes the profiling isn't enough for some players. Some are even willing to choose to break the rules and engage in immoral playing: cheating. In tandem with breaking the rules, many go around the rules with the use of "mind games." These players become known pretty easily because reputations are made quickly, especially for the worst reasons. When word spreads of a new rule-breaker, the complaining begins. (Usually from the victims of the cheater.) They whine about whether the opponent "hooked" us - called a ball out that was definitely in - or about how the opponent annoyed the crap out of us by stalling; untying and re-tying shoelaces; taking too much time on breaks, going to the bathroom between sets, which breaks an opponent's momentum and is a valid and legal strategy; asking for a referee for a completely reasonable call;⁴ or trying to change the game score when I am the server.⁵ All of these tactics are part of the common psychological warfare that is tennis. For some, this is all they have. They don't have skills or physicality, but they do know how to play a game of minds. They know the ins-and-outs, what makes players tick, and they use it to their advantage. Occasionally, this can backfire and I will pull the same fiasco, except magnified by ten. One time, I played at Rio Del Oro Racquet Club for a championship where in my first match, the player was an absolute, and I mean absolute, jackass. He would loudly cheer for every point that I lost, even the unforced errors where he did nothing, and took longer than twenty seconds

³ It is that I should play my playstyle, or "my game." Instead of playing the opponents' playstyle, I play my own because I know that by playing my game and not theirs', I have a greater chance of winning. For if I play their game, they might be better because that is what they know best.

⁴ I call well and even call generously because I am nice like that.

⁵ The server is supposed to call the game score before every point, and I am absolutely sure that I will not miscount.

between points. This triggered something in me, probably my testosterone, because after losing the first three games, I became a war-monger. I played HIS game. I yelled as loud as I could every time I won a point. I got the attention of the referee which was six courts away. I played low, really low. This was the first time I have ever done something like this. When the referee came to see what the problem was, my volume was that of music concert speakers. I politely asked for him to time my opponent between points since you only get twenty seconds before the next point. After the referee called him out three times for stalling, I

This triggered something in me, probably my testosterone, because after losing the first three games, I became a war-monger.

broke him mentally. I continued to effortlessly win the next twelve games in a row. Not my proudest achievement, but definitely one for my mind. Although it was a time where I had to cross my moral standards, it absolutely led

me to becoming a better player. It let me see how to deal with mental problems created by other players and that I can defend myself. The goal of tennis for me is to have fun and to show my skills, but I also want to not only a good player but a good person. Tennis was thought to be a sport of high morality and honor, but this border has never been built for junior tennis. I love to see the professionals as they play while having a good attitude towards tennis. All players love to see when the number 1 seed loses to the underdog but does so graciously, complementing the underdog for their achievement. Some liked seeing John McEnroe with his anger and how he insulted the referee for a ball that he thought was in or out or how he threw and cracked his racquet out of frustration. For me, I like to see tennis as a sport where you could be a great player and still be a good person.

By playing immorally or by playing the "mind games," it is shown that it indeed works.⁶ However, the mental warfare and tactics can work *too* well. In many instances at any level of junior tennis, this side of tennis could potentially be dangerous and escalate into true physical violence. This violence begins and mostly stops at "pegging," but rarely it can rapidly escalate into brawls that need to be stopped

⁶ Some academies intentionally teach to cheat and "hook" the first point. That way, they already are in the head of their opponent and have a mental advantage over them.

by referees. The chance of getting hit by the ball, or “pegged,” can be high at national tournaments, especially in doubles. “Pegging” is very fun on one side, but on the other can be quite scary. When I do it, I sometimes chuckle afterward with my partner, away from the competition’s ear. However, when I get hit, I am not in the greatest mood. Although it can be the best feeling in the world to peg someone, it can also be very embarrassing if you are the one pegged. So if you try and peg someone, you are aware that you will be hit even harder. With mind games bolstering the aggression of the players, this build-up of power in each peg can also elevate into altercations. Some get vocal about being hit, and others know the reason why they are pegged and understand if it was their fault, their partner’s fault, or it was because they are playing the mind. Even though many don’t agree with it, pegging is part of the game. So I use what I can to win. Even if it seems to be immoral to want to hurt the opponent, I take it as self-defense because they threw the first punch with psychological warfare.

While many would think that my competitors cheat to win for themselves, they cheat because of their parents. In tennis, some great players come from overbearing and mentally-abusive parents like Andre Agassi. However, by being overbearing, they made the players hate the sport because they hate their parents. The players are being forced into low tactics so their parents won’t get mad for their “failure.” They are so pressured into nothing but winning that they forget the best part of tennis: fun. They miss the central aspect to playing a sport. If the players are not winning, the parents result to coaching. Coaching is against the rules and is where a parent or coach tells their player something that gives an advantage over the opponent. In order to coach, parents find ways to

⁷I finally was able to play the Excellence this weekend at Johnson Ranch Racquet Club because they changed the championship into an excellence to get the national points back into the system. I got 5th because I lost to Max in quarter finals 4-0, 0-4, 9-11. I would have crushed him, but it rained and stopped the match for 15 minutes allowing him to get a few “words of wisdom” (coaching) from his mom. I didn’t get coaching because I try to be a gentleman of the game: a rule-follower (no one is supposed to receive coaching during a small break due to weather, and coaching is only allowed if the match is postponed for more than an hour). The tiebreaker was very close, but I lost because I was playing my aggressive style. I played MY GAME, unlike Max who played conservatively. Anyway, I made it up to myself by winning the 5th-8th place playoffs. We are friends outside of the court, but in a match we are mortal enemies.

surreptitiously aid their player away from the referee’s eyes.⁷ This happens at all levels of tournaments. It is especially annoying because you not only have to play the opponent but also their parent or coach. Coaching makes a 1v1 match a 1v2 match. This problem can be solved simply by getting a referee to watch the parents. If the parents continue, they will be asked to stop; if they continue, they will be reported to the USTA; even more and they will be asked to leave; and lastly, banned from the tournament site. Some parents still go to the last option because of their conviction that their player should win even with their help.

It is not only the juniors or the parents being corrupt but also the head tournament coaches. For example, I signed up for the Santa Cruz Excellence National Level 4 tournament. Excellences are a weekend long tournament as per usual. However, for this specific tournament, it lasted two weekends, expecting the matches will be long and tiring for the players (since we are playing at a high caliber of tennis). The tournament rained out the first weekend and the weather forecast showed it would rain out the second weekend as well. Instead of cancelling the tournament like any normal head coach would, this coach decided the match would be decided by a 7-point tiebreaker, instead of a 2-set, 10-point tiebreaker (48 points together if one player wins every point); or even an 8-game pro-set. This angered so many players and parents because it is obvious that the coach only wanted to pocket the money for tournament registration. The coach clearly neglected the true purpose of holding a tournament: to provide matches for the players to show what they have and what to improve on. The NorCal head council believed they would receive maybe 2 complaints, but actually received around 20 complaints. They could do nothing but shut it down. Of course, the head coach complained, but was denied future tournament holdings for violating the national tournament rules. Even if she held the tourney, no one would have received points because a national match can’t be decided by only seven points. Turns out, being the head coach of a national tournament can have a profit of around ten to twenty grand per tournament. The most corrupt thing about the coach isn’t that she went for the money over the players, but she was given the tournament because of her connections with the NorCal council. She and another coach in Stockton have been making thousands and thousands

for years because of their ties with the council. However, my friend's father is now on the council and a new president of NorCal was elected. They have decided to rid NorCal of crappy, money-grubbing tournaments in order for the players to improve more and play more with other great players. They are striving to improve NorCal's position for the players to receive more national points because other sections give out more than we do. They want to equalize the playing field for our section's players because the best players come from NorCal, Texas, and Florida. Even though we have the best players, we are not given as many national points as SoCal or Midwest sections. By their efforts, they are doing well to weed out the corruption for the benefit of the players. I commend them for going against the money because they see the need to help.

It slyly deceives the outside by enveloping all of bad aspects and shielding it from the general public.

Tennis has many aspects which have earned the respect of the outsiders of the sport. It slyly deceives the outside by enveloping all of bad aspects and shielding it from the general public. In the darkness, these aspects are never brought to light until an outsider becomes an insider. After getting into the sport, insiders are trapped from enlightening the outside because their advice can't get through the thick, opaque crust of undiscussed topics. They are stuck in the pitch black void of lies. In writing this essay, I tried to break the mold to expose the darkness within. But time and time again, the knowledge of the insiders will be clouded by tennis' false representation. While tennis is regarded as the gentleman's sport, it struggles to take its golden crust and use it to fill its hollow center. Once its center is filled by the golden morality that it portrays, tennis will become the perfect ball played on the court called life.



Cutting the Surface

Peter Grimmett '19
Photograph

A Crimson Lily

Thien Tran '19

WINNER, PROSE

Livius stepped across the threshold into a mysterious new world, worn wood groaning beneath his weight. A soothing fragrance--jasmine tea--permeated the atmosphere as a quiet bell announced his arrival. Two splendid ruby eyes stared, shifting at the sudden burst of air. He took another step, then two, then three, before...

"Welcome, sir, to Ashmedai's Trading Club" rang out behind him. He turned around to see an imposing figure wrapped in a midnight suit. A slight incline of the mystery man's head and a tip of his top hat revealed only the simple smile of a white mask that stole his breath away.

"What do you desire, my dear customer?"

We offer anything and everything, so long as you are willing to pay the price." His words reverberated throughout the eerily quiet interior. Livius thumbed at his tie as he struggled to stutter out a response. He knew what he desired. He could see her perfect image within his mind's eye, but could he pay? What did he have to offer?

***"What do you desire, my dear customer?
We offer anything and everything, so long as
you are willing to pay the price."***

* * *

Lillie had always been by his side. The two of them had been inseparable during their younger years, but recent years had seen them drifting further and further apart. Livius had climbed up the rungs of society, pulling himself from a recent college graduate into a company managerial position. He had always longed for a life of greatness, of repute and prestige--of five-course meals and thousand dollar wines, of sports car collections and luxury brand clothes. And as he grew ever closer to his dreams, his concern for his image only continued to grow.

His lover, Lillie, was the opposite. She was content with a simple life away from the headache and drudgery of corporate work, prestige, and fastidious primping. In comparison to his sky-high ambitions, she was down to earth.

Livius gazed lovingly down at her, tracing her features with gentle eyes. She was enraptured by the quaint volume in her hands, her body laying listlessly on the sofa, her head resting in his lap. He stroked her hair as his mind drifted to the mysterious man's offers. If only she could be a bit more conscious of her appearance, a bit more fashion-oriented. There was a company dinner coming up, and Livius certainly couldn't show up alone.

Lillie was beautiful, and Livius knew it, but a dab of makeup and a tasteful outfit couldn't hurt. Conversation would surely center around more sophisticated activities as well. Perhaps he could get her interested in art and self-improvement like himself. He'd have to lie about her job at the gas station. Maybe he could convince her to find a different one?

The days of high school high tops and college tracksuits were over. They might have been perfectly fine in high school, but the two had advanced up the social ladder since then. High society wasn't so forgiving, and he couldn't pass up the opportunity to outdo his coworkers, not when they would most definitely jump at the chance to do the same to him.

It was decided. They would be the perfect couple. She could be perfect again, just like the past. Livius would show her to the world.

* * *

Unease slowly nibbled away at him with each step he took towards Ashmedai's Trading Club. It was overshadowed, however by the knowledge of imminent satisfaction, as his fantasies would soon become reality, as Lillie would truly become his. He shook his umbrella out once he reached the awning outside the store, taking a moment to collect himself before entering. The door creaked as it opened, a quiet ting resounding from the bell above, and again the scent of jasmine invaded his nose. His desire inflamed.

"Welcome back, my dear customer! It looks like you have decided. Good, good, I'm glad," the mysterious masked man commented delightedly from his seat. He paid no mind to the silent maid efficiently removing the plates before him, his full attention directed on Livius.

“How much do I have to pay?” Livius nervously wrung the umbrella in his hands.

“It’s always better for the customer to request something first. I may know what you want, but you know what you wish, no?” the masked man asked, “so what is it you desire, my friend?”

“I want my girlfriend to be perfect, to fit the life I now have. For her to live up to the standards of high society, so that I can show her to the world. It’s what she needs to be,” Livius outburst. “Yes, that’s what I want.”

“How perfect? Increasing her interest in certain fields only costs a week of life, and I *must* say, as a relatively young man, it seems worth it. But perfection is a game only God can play, Livius. Only a game God could play.” The masked man quietly continued, “So which fields of interest, which loves, cares, and beliefs would you like?”

“Fashion, make-up, and art are the first things that come to my mind. That should add up to three weeks of my life, right?”

“Yep!” His voice was laced with amusement, seemingly as constant as the smile on his *face*. “Aaaand it’s done. I hope you enjoy the new image. Come back should anything new interest you.”

Livius retreated out the doorway, briskly brushing past the other pedestrians to catch a taxi. He needed to know if it was real. He wanted his perfect love. He wanted his Lillie.

* * *

She wasn’t home.

He frantically searched the rooms, throwing open door after door, checking behind shower curtains, under beds, everywhere. He called for her incessantly until his cries became croaks, throat hoarse from overuse. He sunk to the floor as his knees gave out, sweat coating his skin and lead settling in his stomach.

She was nowhere to be found.

Livius scrambled up at the sound of a velvety voice calling from the living room. Lillie was back, and sprawled out in front of her were bags upon bags

of gifts. “Ahh, did you spend some money today? I see you wanted to try something new. Do you like this color of eyeshadow? I think it works well with the red dress I got you last week” Livius breathlessly inquired.

An immense weight lifted off Livius’s shoulders as he wrapped her in a tight hug. His wish had worked. He had done it. A relieved laugh fell from his lips, and he spun her around in joy. “You’re absolutely perfect, Lillie. After all, what good is money if we can’t spend it.”

At his words, Lillie tilted her head back and lovingly gazed at him. He peered over her shoulder. “I see you also grabbed some painting supplies. I’m sure you’ll pick it up in no time. Maybe we could even show off some of your work to people we know.”

Livius smiled absently. His desire had come to life.

* * *

Sunlight cascaded through the open windows, blanketing Livius’s broad back as he grinned. Diana would be seeing a finished product, about a week’s worth of work. Livius exuded pride; the painting was a testament to their relationship and all the emotions intertwined.

“Lillie improved a lot in two weeks. I was surprised when you came in asking for every type of brush and professional canvases when you two were just beginners, but I stand very corrected,” Diana sighed in resignation. “So did you bring this in just to show off, or do you want me to frame it?”

“We want it framed, but we don’t have the professional tools for it. I knew you did, so here I am.”

“Here you are. Am I ever gonna see the virtuoso? I really want to meet Lillie, maybe even learn something from her. Think she’s interested in maybe teaching a lesson in the studio?”

“Nah, so when can I pick this up?”

“Hmm. Give me about a week. I have some other things lined up, and I want to do this job right. The painting is very... unique. Want some more paints?”

“Yeah, I’ll take some. Thanks again. I guess I’ll be seeing you at the showcase next Tuesday?”

“Course.”

Diana turned around to begin tidying up the workspace, when she heard the door open again.

“Forget something, Livius?”

“Sorry, I’m not Livius.”

Diana turned around, finding a different man staring at the painting that was just brought in. “Sorry about that. How can I help you?”

“Was this Livius the one who painted this?”

“That?” Diana questioned as she shook her head. “No, his girlfriend did. Interesting, isn’t it?”

* * *

A simple circular light shined down upon the painting, but the focus was directed elsewhere. By the painting’s side stood a smaller picture, one shining with equal beauty, capturing the attention of every man and guarded by the silent sentinel Livius.

“Hello, sir. I really appreciate this painting and was wondering if I could meet the painter. I assume this picture is her?”

“Yes...”

“Would it be possible for me to host her at my local country club to, how should I put this, promote her work, maybe even commission a work from her myself?”

“Hi, if I could just interrupt. I was overhearing we could possibly meet the artist in person. I would love to also have the opportunity to meet such a beautiful and talented woman.”

“I’m sorry. She is not available to meet any of you. She’s... busy. If you would like to request anything, you can work through me.”

“Ahh, that’s disappointing. Well, if you could hand her my number, I would love it if she could contact me.”

“Same here, thanks.”

* * *

Livius bent over himself, bracing his arms on his knees, panting before the masked man, once more desiring something new. As soon as a new breath arrived, words tumbled from his mouth, “Please... make her only mine... please!”

“Ahhh, the worry has finally set in. I suppose you’ve realized the downsides of having a perfect partner--too much competition,” the man mused idly. His chuckles hinted at his faint amusement. “And so, what are you willing to pay?”

“Can you give me a price?”

“How much is she worth to you?”

“Ten years!”

“Oh? How low, but lucky for you, it’ll only cost a month.”

“Okay, am I done?”

“You are indeed. Enjoy.”

And off Livius went sprinting back to the taxi. He needed to make sure.

Lillie was his, and she would be forever and ever.

* * *

Chocolate brown curls framed her bewitching face and cascaded down her slender shoulders. Golden links suspended a luminous diamond above her breast. A strapless blood red dress hugged her delicate frame, her slender legs accentuated by simple crimson heels. Her adoring gaze was trained solely and unwaveringly on him. This was his chance to show her to the world. Livius swooped Lillie up in a princess carry and marched proudly into the dinner hall.

All eyes were trained on them. Livius drunk in the awe that rose upon their onlookers’ faces. He observed with satisfaction how men’s eyes widened in lustful desire and women turned away in vain jealousy, a sign of submission to the beauty laying limply in his arms. The attendant was far too stunned to properly react as Livius arrived before the reception table. Quickly scanning the seating chart, Livius found his table and began to carry his love towards it. He was

determined to never let Lillie's feet touch the ground. The world was undeserving of her grace. He gently set her in the seat before noticing that her hair was out of place.

The attendant watched in horror as she saw the scalp slide off revealing a maggotted skull.

"Ahh, your hair is slightly messed up. Let me comb it real quick." He seized a comb from his pocket and earnestly set about mending her appearance. Onlookers turned in disgust as more hair and skin peeled away, leaving maggots, flies, and critters scurrying for cover. "Would you like anything to eat?" Livius slowly brought a fork of roast duck to her deteriorating jaw, cracking it from its place as he so caringly fed her. His eyes glazed over in love, desire, and passion. His world was Lillie, and her world was him. An adoring smile spread across his face.

He jolted as a hand grabbed his wrist and slapped it away with unseeing eyes and uncommon ease. The moment a hand approached Lillie, however, an unknown beast was released. "WHAT ARE YOU DOING! DO NOT TOUCH HER! SHE IS MINE!"

"SIR! Please hand over the dead body." Security vests lined the four burly men in front of him.

"SHE'S NOT DEAD! SHE'S MINE! YOU JUST WANT HER! YOU CAN'T!"

"SHE'S NOT DEAD! SHE CAN'T BE! I DIDN'T KILL HER! I Didn't Kill Her! I didn't kill her... she's not dead." His yells tapered into whispers. "See? See how beautiful she is, she's perfect. She's mine." Livius slowly caressed her cheek.

"SIR! Please back away from the body and surrender yourself. SIR! I'm warning you."

"NO! NO! NO! No! No! No! Nononononononono... NO!" Livius grabbed the candle and hurled it at the guards. He ripped the table cloth away, plates, wine glasses, and flower vases shattering upon the floor. Wine bled into the carpet and stained the lilies a deep crimson red. Vermillion flames surrounded the lonely couple as security

backed away.

"Shh, shh, it's okay, love. I won't let them take you. I love you, and you love me. Right, love? Yes, yes, I know, love. I know you're scared, but I'm here for you." Livius cradled her in his arms. "Everything will be fine as long as we're together, just you and me, always."

* * *

"Where were you, Lillie?" Livius's face was a blank mask.

"I told you I was going out to visit family."

"Sssure, family. Family buys you designer dresses and stuff, huh." He plastered a fake smile on. "You won't let me care for you because you found another man. Nice dress, but the white doesn't fit you, Lillie. I love you, but I guess--," he inhaled sharply before continuing, "I guess you don't love me."

"Livius, what are you talking about?"

"Goodbye, Lillie." Shock spread over Lillie's features, slowly morphing into resigned sorrow, as Livius embraced her, six-inch blade in hand. The vibrant red soaked into the pure white dress as the knife was slowly removed from her heart. Lillie slumped into the living room couch, staring absently into her love's eyes. "You're mine, right? You can only love me, Lillie, because I will always love you." Livius's frown warped into a maniacal smile. "Come, let's spend the rest of the day watching T.V. You can rest your head in my lap. I'm sure the both of us need to relax."

* * *

Diana sat in awe as the full moon quietly descended through the clear windows and the starry sky. The painting was... fascinating. A woman clad in a crimson-stained dress, posing splendidly among a garden of bright yellow Hyacinth, a rainbow of Carnations, and sweet Lilies. Her face, however, was a black hole, a void of color and emotion, a swirl that sucked away at reality and the world surrounding it.



The Queen's Staircase

Connor King '20

Photograph

HONORABLE MENTION, PHOTOGRAPHY

Disillusionment of Ten O'Clock*

Josh Dolin '19

Maybe it is not this town
In its normalcy
That is of no interest
But you in your lack of creativity
Have put into existence a boring world
After all, have you seen their basements?
Secrets abound in the unremarkable
The truth is spread for all to see
In those proud green rings

*Response to the Wallace Stevens poem of the same title

So Little Matters

Tobias German '19

So little matters
About

One short
Poem

That tries to
Do

Nothing more than
Exist



Self Portrait

Parker Sima '19
Mixed media

The Wakeup

Tobias German '19

“Article Sixteen comes into effect today, announced the President. Paradise’s Fountain followers around the country rejoice as all caffeine is now banned from being sold, produced, transported, or consumed within the United American Confederation. Police are collecting all caffeinated beverages and pouring them down into the sewers, shutting down coffee houses, by force if necessary, and taking soda and energy drinks off the shelves.

The President, an elder in the Paradise’s Fountain faith, claims that by ridding the nation of caffeine, people will try to maintain healthier lifestyles and ultimately increase productivity within the nation, increasing our GDP and prosperity within the country, bringing us back into a golden age. Only time will tell if this happens to be the case. In other news...”

Harry Francis turned off the dusty television and got ready for school. He got up from a saggy, decrepit crouch that ached for care and made his way to a tiny kitchen that was barely able to contain a stove, sink, and small countertop. He pulled out a bowl from the small selection his family had and filled it with the cheapest cereal his mother could find at the grocery store, looking out the window to find his neighborhood has been covered in a powdery, white snow.

He heard about Article Thirteen a couple days beforehand, the local police already came down three days before and confiscated all the coffee and soda in the house. He longed for a hot cup of coffee to counteract the icy chill of that ran through the house and aid in waking himself up for the day.

Harry put on his coat, slapped on an old pair of boots, and threw on his backpack. Once outside, he found his friend Charles waiting for him. Usually, the two would drive to school together since Charles’s family was much wealthier than the average family in the Whitney, Nebraska and could afford multiple cars, but his car was nowhere in sight.

“What did you do? Park down the block?”

“No, Dad sold the car so he could buy a place to start up a diner. Great location, just a block away from school. You should come and check it out after school.”

Charles was visibly shivering out in the cold as being away from a heater in such weather was not a normal occurrence for him. Harry, however, didn’t mind the frosty bite the snow gave as it melted into the seams of his boots, soaking his thin socks, causing his feet to go numb. It was nothing new to him.

The two walked in awkward silence as they crept towards their underfunded and understaffed high school. There was not a whole lot of life around them as they continued down their path. No cars came down the road to stir the glistening white emitting from the streets, no bicycles silently cruised

He got up from a saggy, decrepit crouch that ached for care and made his way to a tiny kitchen that was barely able to contain a stove, sink, and small countertop.

by to make it to their destination as fast as possible and out of the cold, and no people walked down the sidewalks to do their day to day tasks. There was not a soul other than the two of them.

The silence became unbearable for Charles and caused him to bring out a small portable radio from his backpack and tune into the state-run news.

“...as protesters continue to rally against Article Thirteen. Martial law has been declared in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Seattle, New York City, Denver, Atlanta, and the DC area. Everyone is advised to stay in your homes and not to partake in the protests. Doing so may lead to injury or...”

“You know, about that diner my dad bought, it has a pretty large basement and he already has a storage unit for all the supplies for the diner. It’s just going to remain empty. We could set it up for whatever we want. Put some furniture in there, invite a couple people over, maybe put a small kitchen in. Make it our little clubhouse. Who knows... maybe put a coffee maker and a cash register down there too.”

Charles likes to feel like he is alive. Other than the usual adrenaline junkie stuff like snowboarding and skydiving, he’s committed some petty robberies just for the thrill of it but was never caught by the local police. Even if he was, his parents have more

than enough to bail him out. Harry knew, however, that Charles would have no problem bringing that philosophy into a business. Especially one that sells contraband.

“Forget it, man. I don’t know where you’d get any coffee in the first place, but I know you’re just going to tell the wrong people and the feds will get right on us.”

“That’s where you’re wrong this time, Harry. Think about it, everyone wants this stuff. Everyone. I don’t have to tell any shady people or anyone that might rat us out because all I have to do is tell people that really want it, then the rest will come our way.”

“And you think none of those people will tell anyone that would get us in trouble?”

“Why would they? If we are out of business, then they can’t get any more coffee. Trust me on this one, everyone wants their little caffeine rush to help kick-start their morning, we are just the providers of that.”

People began to appear on the streets ahead of them as they made it to school. Students and teachers alike were conversing in front of the big glass double doors that allowed entry into the brick building that all high schoolers in the small midwestern town found themselves at. All of them looked exhausted, no energy in any of them, the teachers particularly so.

“Look, all I have to do is mention it to the teachers and once they come, they’ll tell their friends, and those friends will tell their friends. This will work, man.”

“It sounds like you want us to go to jail and unlike you, I’m not rich and can’t bail myself out.”

“Come on, think about it over the day and then come back to me once you feel like you have really put your mind to it.”

The two of them walked up the couple of steps before the double doors, looked at each other as to confirm Harry would think about it, and then parted to get to their classes. Throughout the day, Harry noticed how worn out everyone seemed with just a few days without their caffeine fix. He didn’t like to

see people struggling so much in the morning, he wished he could ease their problems, and the thought of running an underground caffeine speakeasy intrigued him. He thought about Charles’s proposal, weighed the pros, helping out his community by providing them with a product to help get their days going, and cons, the possibility of getting caught and ending up in a prison cell for possession and intention to sell illegal substances. Finally, he decided that he would take him up on the offer.

Harry met up with Charles after school and the two walked down the block to the diner. The snow has melted enough that the roads were safe enough for vehicles to drive up and down them without chains or the worry of black ice. The slush still clung to trees in the thick evergreen forest behind the school, making them a drippy mess, and in the dirt, causing large puddles of mud in the middle of the grass that surrounded the roads.

Once they got to the diner, Harry found it was a tan block with windows only on one side of the building. The lighting inside was minimal, but enough to get by regulations. There were few laminated sheet metal tables placed in the middle of the room, a long counter made up of stainless steel that turned at the end towards the kitchen, and a couple bright red booths at the side of the place. They greeted Charles’s father, the new staff, and then proceeded down to the basement through a door at the back of the diner.

The basement was a hollowed out cube directly under the building. Gray cement walls on all sides made the room feel industrial while the two unprotected light bulbs hanging from the ceiling were the only things to light the room. There was a counter similar to the one above them that curved into a wall but had plenty of space to fit cupboards behind it and still let the people manning the station have enough room to work. It was in dire need of color, or at least the illusion of color, to be at all appealing.

The boys had Charles’s dad drive the large semi-truck rental, originally being used for bringing culinary equipment to the diner, to a nearby furniture store. They bought a couple tan couches and black recliners, two large maroon colored rugs, two tables, and dresser; all with the credit card. Charles’s dad gave to them.

“It sounds like you want us to go to jail and unlike you, I’m not rich and can’t bail myself out.”

The drive back was in silence, almost as silent as the walk to school was earlier that morning. Again, Charles couldn't stand it and turned on the radio.

"...has been put on high alert as of today. As more and more criminals are smuggling coffee beans into the country from all borders, local police and border patrol holding cells have been filled to their maximum capacities during this huge wave of crime.

The President has given a public warning that anyone caught in possession of coffee or other forms of caffeine will be fined at least \$20,000 and given a five-year prison sentence.

As the crackdown on caffeine continues, protests have turned into violent riots. There are reports that gangs in large cities are trying to open speakeasy-like establishments to sell coffee at exorbitant prices. The national guard and federal agents alike are hunting down anyone who opens up these institutions and..."

Charles's father looks at us for a second with an uncomfortable look on his face.

"You boys better be safe with this whole thing. I don't mind you doing it as long as you guys don't attract too much attention. It sounds like most of my suppliers for you guys may be in trouble already."

"Don't worry dad, I swear on my life that nothing will go wrong."

Harry was not surprised Charles's father was the one that put the idea in Charles's head in the first place. He always tried to suck the money out of anyone he could and in any way he can.

They made only one stop, Charles's house, before setting up their speakeasy. They picked up three coffee makers and all the coffee beans in the house, a total of sixteen pounds.

Harry woke up the next morning in his tiny house and did his usual routine of watching ten minutes of the news before getting ready and leaving for school. He walked alone that morning, Charles decided to stay behind at the speakeasy, or as he calls it, "The Wakeup."

The day was much clearer. Not a cloud in the sky

and all the snow from the day before had melted away, leaving no evidence of it ever being there other than the soggy earth it left behind. Birds could be heard chirping their morning songs and the neighborhood cat pranced about before jumping into a backyard. The world felt alive. All except for the expressions on the faces of the people Harry passed in the halls of school.

They were worn out and fatigued. There was no will to get up and start their day. Harry noticed that everyone was extremely irritable throughout the day, especially the teachers, and no one had the time or patience to deal with anyone else.

At the end of the day, he approached his English teacher, who looked particularly drained after a night of grading three classes worth of essays and putting up with her students bullshit.

"Hey Ms. C, how you feeling?"

"Well if I'm being completely honest, not that great. Ever since that caffeine ban, these late nights have been killing me. Not to mention your other, more 'special,' classmates that love giving me a hard time."

"Actually, that's something I wanted to talk about with you. I heard of this place called The Wakeup and it looks like you could use what they are serving."

There was a pause, then a smile and a silent nod of acknowledgment. Harry started to walk out of the room and head to the diner.

"Don't feel like you need to keep it a secret."

The first day, it was just Harry's English teacher. The next it was a couple other teachers, the day after that there were a few students as well, and pretty soon most people in town came along for a cup of coffee, or three, before going out to work. Both Harry and Charles dropped out of school so they could work full time, which neither of them minded since they were selling well over a couple hundred cups a day.

It seemed like everything was perfect. They had a steady supply of coffee beans from an unknown supplier paid for by Charles's father, people were always coming in and buying a cup of coffee if not

There are reports that gangs in large cities are trying to open speakeasy-like establishments to sell coffee at exorbitant prices.

multiple, even the local police and people from the next town over came in for a drink every now and then. People were happier, able to wake up in the morning, and much more productive than without their daily cup of java. Everything was working out beautifully. Until another new guy came around.

Harry did the same morning routine, saw nothing interesting on the news, and went to work. Dark clouds looked over his head as he walked towards the diner, rain sprinkling to the ground before becoming a torrential downpour. The bitter cold caused the rain to slowly go from water droplets to hailstones. Harry rushed into The Wakeup and saw Charles was already inside preparing for the day while listening to the radio.

“...in the northwestern part of Nebraska. Federal agents have been sent in to find the exact location of these institutions and arrest anyone involved with them. If you have information as to where any of these institutions may be, tell authorities within your area immediately for a reward.”

“Sounds like they are starting to get on to us, Charlie.”

“Possibly. Dad just hired some guys to help us out with the larger crowds coming in.”

Charles pointed to two young men cleaning the floors. They looked like they just graduated high school and never worked a day in their lives. Harry figured they just wanted to steal a bit of the coffee for themselves.

Charles reached under the counter and pulled out a long, pump action shotgun.

“I got this once I started hearing those reports that they are sending people out to find our place.”

Harry was stunned. He had never seen a real weapon in his life and never did he think he would have one near him for his workplace. Harry quickly acknowledged that Charles understood the gravity of the situation if the FBI comes in to arrest everyone, but clearly is taking it in the wrong direction.

“How did you even get that? Guns have been illegal for almost twenty-five years now.”

“Those suppliers that get us the coffee had an

extra one so I bought it off of them. It’s not like we’ll be waving it around anyway, it only comes out when someone is threatening our lives.”

“The only people that would try to get us would either be the cops trying to shut us down or gangs trying to get rid of competition, neither of which are going to do so! Even if they do find us, we stick our hands up and surrender!”

The bitter cold caused the rain to slowly go from water droplets to hailstones.

Harry noticed one of the new guys glancing over at them. Charles put the gun back under the counter and smiled. Harry knew that Charles knew he wouldn’t approve, but he also knew that Charles would never let this go without a fight. They make too much money for Charles to just give it up. At least that is what he made Harry believe.

People began to pour in for the day. The two new workers got behind the counter and manned the registers while Harry and Charles worked the coffee makers. A couple new faces here and there, as there has been for every day they have been open. After taking a sip of his coffee, however, one of the new faces came up to Harry.

“Hey man, there something wrong with this stuff here. Tastes... off. Can you get me the owner?”

“I’m sure I can help you with whatever you need, sir. I can get you another cup.”

“No, I just want to mention it to the person in charge that the beans here might be no good, you know?”

“I’ll be sure to mention it to him.”

The man put on a quick frown, then walked away. Not ten minutes later, Harry saw Charles in the same conversation with another new face.

“I’m the owner, what’s the problem, ma’am?”

“There is just something weird with the coffee. Do you mind coming over here and looking at it for me?”

Charles, naive as ever, walked out from behind the counter and began inspecting the coffee. The woman dropped the coffee, threw Charles down to his knees, pulled out a handgun, and started barking orders.

“Everyone on the ground now! You are all under arrest!”

A team of state police wearing plate carriers and armed with rifles came barreling into the room through the small entrance. Everyone in the place was shocked. No one moved, everyone just stared for a second. Then, out of the corner of Harry’s eye, he saw one of the new guys reach under the counter.

He didn’t have time to say anything. The world seemed to go in slow motion as Harry ducked behind the counter and the new guy pulled out the shotgun and fired at the woman standing over Charles. She fell hard to the ground, lifeless, as Charles scrambled back behind the counter with Harry.

People screamed and began running towards the police who were crowding the exit. The police began tasing and beating those who tried to escape while others returned fire at the man with the shotgun as he was racking another shell into the chamber.

“Harry! With me!”

Charles pulled back the mat behind the counter and revealed a metal trap door. Charles opened it up and jumped down. Harry quickly followed in. Once both were inside, Charles grabbed a huge industrial lock and locked up the door, making sure no one would follow them out.

Under the trap door was a tunnel just small enough to crawl through. There was extremely little light, barely a glow coming from around a corner far, far away. The dirt walls felt wet and clay-like, making the entire tunnel feel as if it was freshly dug.

The two boys crawled for what seemed like an eternity, neither speaking as both were in shock as to what they just saw. The damp walls covered the boys’ clothes, hands, and fingernails in a thin layer of dirt and mud. Harry didn’t even think of how a tunnel has been dug under the building without his knowledge. All he could think of was to just keep moving forward, to get away from The Wakeup and away from danger.

They made it to the end of the tunnel, which connected to the sewers. They were able to stand up and move more freely but it reeked of such foulness

that they could barely breathe it in without it leaving a horrid taste in their mouth. A greenish tint could be seen in the water along with other disgusting chunks of debris floating through it. The gray cement walls were reminiscent of those in their speakeasy, reminding both of them to move a little faster, especially now that they could walk.

The walk was long and their nerves finally began to come back to them. Harry couldn’t believe how fast the entire raid went down. There was still one question bothering him, though.

“When was a tunnel built? I never heard any digging or anything. Not even piles of dirt.”

“That means the guys dad helped me hire did a really good job. We told them only to dig between two and four in the morning and be as quiet as possible. I have no idea where the dirt went but it’s not like it matters right now. Just be glad that I thought of making an escape route for us.”

It still bothered Harry to know that Charles planned for the worst. He believed that his impulsivity and naiveness would have prevented him from thinking anymore than a day or two ahead and there was nothing that indicated a police raid was coming anytime soon other than the few news reports.

They followed the sewers out to a rusted over drainage pipe that spilled into a small pond and found themselves in the middle of the forest behind their school. There was a brand new black SUV waiting for them on a dirt path next to the pond, Charles’s father in the driver seat.

“Get the hell in! We need to go now!”

Neither of them thought to figure out how Charles’s father was able to get out of the immediate area without being stopped by police, but they could hear sirens moving towards them and the beating of helicopter blades overhead, telling them that there was not a whole lot of time to think about anything.

They hopped into the car and the man stepped on the pedal as if it were a nasty bug and they sped off. To where, neither boy knew, but it was for sure not going to be anywhere close to Whitney, Nebraska.

The two boys crawled for what seemed like an eternity.



Self Portrait

Oscar Econome '19
Oil on canvas

Rooftops

Garrett Emmons '19

As night fell the men climbed the rooftops
of their houses and sat on folding lawn chairs.

They sucked on unlit cigars and sipped
watery whiskey and laughed. They
stared at the night and went silent.

They got up and danced. Arms swung.
Bare feet slapped against the
slanted shingles.

They finished their bottles and hurled them out
into the blackness. They shot at them from
their hips with invisible pistols, smashing them
into sparkling dust.

They stepped toward the edges and their
fingertips felt for the imagined wild.

But as day broke their sons' cries flew up
from the windows and the men climbed
back down from the rooftops.

From the Ashes

Ben Simpson '19

Silver mists of the morning give way to the sun
Lit up in golden shafts like the very fingers of god
Pileated woodpeckers ram their sharp beaks into skyscraper trees
Their crimson crowns flash and blur
The noises lulled
Into a murmur by the carpet of needles and moss
The forest whispers
And home is immediately with you
The trees have deepened furrows and grown beards of moss
A fallen tree as wide as a bus
It's many rings proclaiming it's great history
What extinct creatures had called its branches home?
Your favorite tree would be just up ahead
As head high ferns part
Entering the clearing where it had laid its gnarled roots eons ago

A burned husk of bark towers
Covered in rich dark moss
and neon green growth
the rotten bug eaten trees innards litter the area and cluttered the creek.
The trees Herculeanean strength once made all who saw it gawk
Now it is a rotting shell
a part of the dirt
a maggots meal
How?
The creak of bark resistant to fire
roots solid in the ground.
Age could not have killed this tree.
Chance.
Lightning in a storm
or a sharp wind that would only reach the tallest trees
Around the clearing are the startings of new life
poking out of the ground
Where they would spread seeds over this charred monument
And become the foundation of a new generation.

The sun passes its zenith and comes back down to earth
Crystalline tears fall
Accompanied by a smile to curve your lips
The bright orange of fallen leaves aflame with a heavenly glow
The sun slowly descending to the horizon
Where it would put the day to rest in the ashes
Only for the morning
Who's rosy golden glow will ignite the world in dazzling new flames
To rise up again.



The Other Side

Matthias Milton '19

Oil on canvas

HONORABLE MENTION, ART

Fall

Tobias German '19

You are kind of like an autumn's cold night
coming out after a scalding hot day;
giving me only a cut, slash, and bite,
then leaving me to just wither away.
Beautiful leaves of red, green, and gold
cover the Earth and added to her allure,
but as night fell and the heat left, only mold
from those torched leaves was all that would endure.
What wicked being brought you into my life?
What purpose was meant to come out of you,
bringing about a fair amount of strife
yet leaving me with this odd feeling through?
Despite all your flaw and impurity,
I yet still have room in my heart for thee.

The Death of a Man

Hayden Kaufman '19

Despite evil's victory,
The nefarious deeds of betrayal,
I seem to think it lovely:
Me hiding behind a veil.

No one thinks it odd
When I retreat to cry alone.
No one thinks it odd
If I am slightly prone
To running away and hiding
From the feelings always residing
In this heart, slowly turning to stone.

Last night I witnessed a ghost.
She approached, glowing pale.
I hoped at the most
To flee her vaporous trail.

But my body turned around,
I had thought against my will.
I realized I was bound;
Rooted by this curse,
Surely this can't be real.

I stared into her eyes,
Full of fear, like mine.
She brandished a knife
I once saw up North,
And carved out my heart;
She crushed it on the Earth.

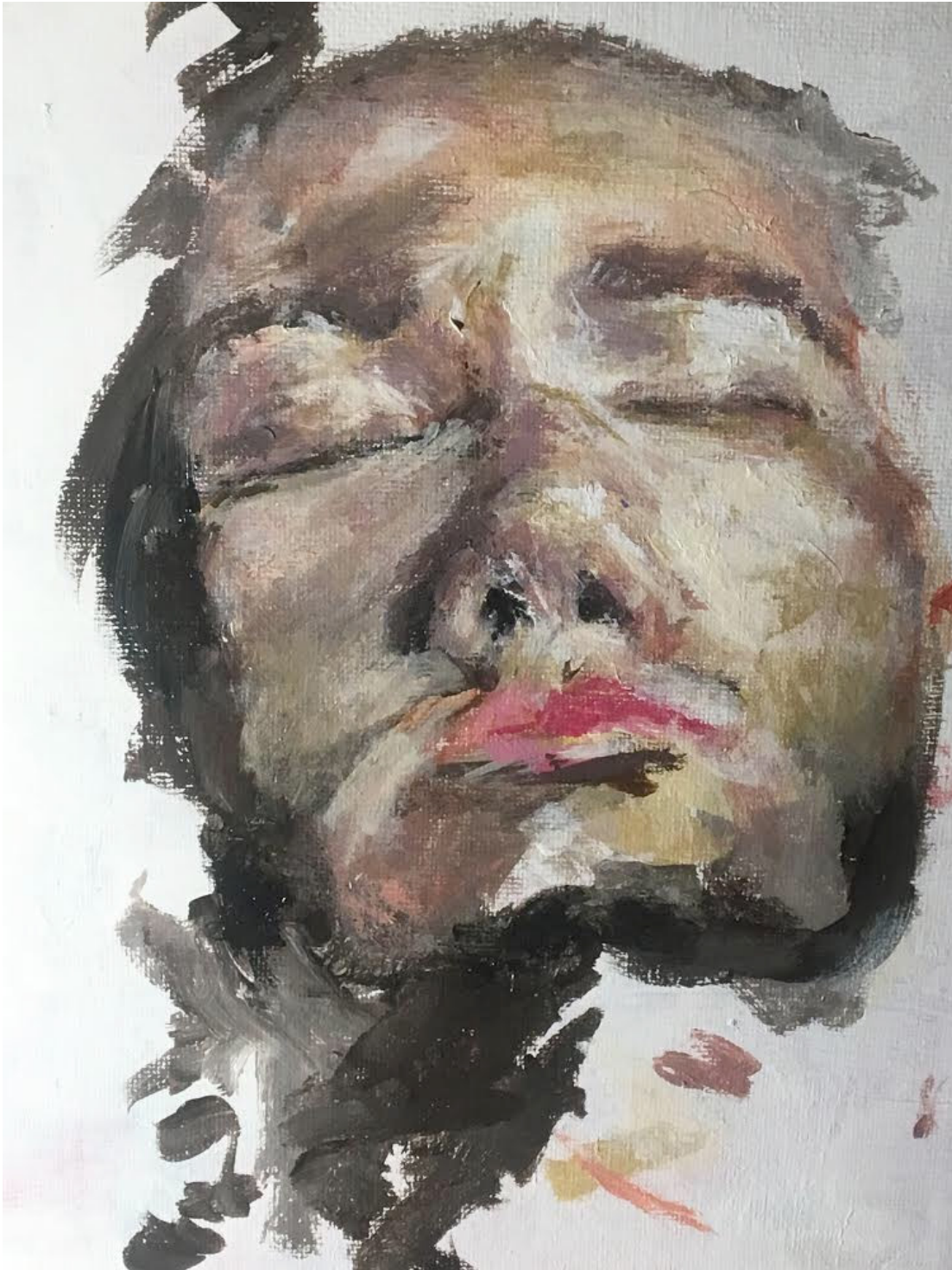
A man unlike me would try,
To look for light,
To look for life,
Knowing he'd die,
What else would he hope to find?

I instead stood still.
 She had blue eyes.
I couldn't move.
 She wore a dress.
My knees trembled.

 It was red.
Bleeding out onto concrete,
Unsure of why I did not retreat
As I attempted to find my feet.
 She bent down.
I try to stand,
Grasping at sand:
My heart in hand.
 She vanished from sight.

I grasped my healthy chest,
Imagination got my best,
As my shoes slipped on the street,
and I returned home, truly beat.

As I stare into the mirror,
I quickly notice a change,
My eyes are staring back blue,
and I think others can see them too.



Monument of Flesh

Oscar Econome '19

Oil on canvas

WINNER, ART

spring

Charles Whitcomb '19

train track death, unloved, lover,
unopened beer,
backpack suicide, all of your
friends are drowning - in infinity,
freezing

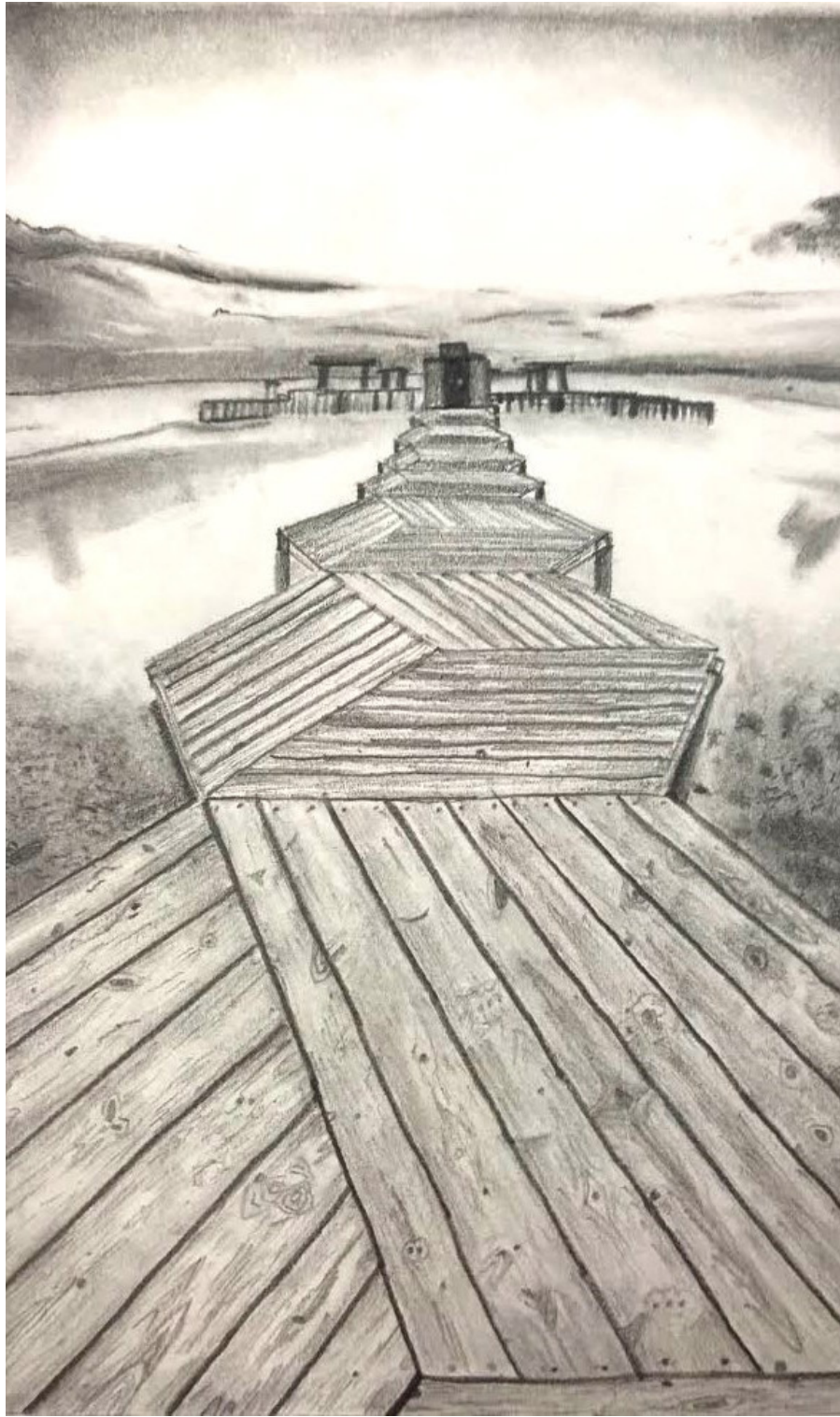
identical voices, but distant
grace and sirens sounding, flashing,
you'd never know, i can't
afford a flight back again. i'm
too old to sleep on my parents'
floor like when i was young &
the monster lived in the closet,
before he just moved on,
to bigger, better things

baking bread, effortless tone,
water-walking,
foam sucked you to the sea

evening cut short, three months
alone, so lonely in the night, my
mouth is dry and i'm too scared
to drive on empty

distant glow to blinding light,
secure in fractured sky, tiny
oceans, dripping on frozen skin

divided speech, just talk to me
until i am warm enough
to fall asleep



Boardwalk Reflections

Dean Babb '20
Pencil on paper

Blue

Alfred Yu '21

Desmond remembered how they met, in a secluded cafe right on the corner of G Street, surrounded by tall birch trees that huddled together like little ducklings cuddling for warmth. She had ordered a plain hot coffee, while he had wanted a vanilla bean frappuccino. She introduced herself. Her name was Mabel, a simple name that Desmond relished. When he told her his name was Desmond, she had laughed.

“Oh, it’s nothing. It just seems like Desmond would be a name that I would give to a pet dog or something.”

Desmond didn’t know how to react, was she complimenting him or insulting him? But he played it off. They kept on meeting, until one day, they finally got married. Desmond left his comfortable metropolitan life in the city to live with Mabel, renting a simple apartment.

Years passed, and both found jobs at different businesses.

Mabel would come home, her hands full with fried chicken. She would begin wolfing down on the food, and Desmond would scold her, “You should eat healthy. Food like that isn’t good for you.”

“Oh it doesn’t matter,” she muttered, her mouth now full with chicken, “It saves time for cooking, and it’s cheap.”

Desmond would sigh, picking up a plastic fork to eat his overpriced salad.

She often told Desmond about how much she loved the ocean. Its sparkle. Its smell. Its perfect blue. Desmond did not care much, but listened anyways.

She often told Desmond about how she wanted to travel to Hawaii. Apparently a friend had rambled endlessly about the place, and Mabel also became smitten by it. She told him about the white sand beaches, how they could just let their feet sink in, and how relaxing the chilly breeze was. Desmond was now interested.

They had sat on a maroon couch, finishing a movie that Desmond recently owned called *Fragile*.

Mabel pouted, “That was it? That’s no ending!”

Desmond responded, “Honey, not all movies need to have perfect endings. You see,” he leaned forward, waving his hands as if to emphasize a point, “the best movies always have ‘unfinished’ endings, to keep you thinking.”

She merely nodded, but Desmond could tell that she didn’t agree with his opinion.

One day, she suddenly said, “I want to go to Hawaii.”

Desmond stared back, half-amused, half-bewildered, “Why so sudden?”

She shrugged, and Desmond smiled, “Alright then, let’s start saving.”

Desmond’s hand reached over for a jar, and he slipped in a quarter.

The same jar was now empty.

She wanted a child too, “Imagine how much fun it would be! Raising your own child.”

“A child? I’m not too sure . . .”

“If it’s a boy, we can name him Justin. If it’s a girl, we can name her Justine. Isn’t that just great?”

“Um . . . sure,” he said, half-jokingly, half because he actually didn’t know what to say. Secretly, he didn’t want a child. He had thought of the commitment to be too taxing, but he never told Mabel.

She wanted them to use the bedroom on the upper floor, painted with a very specific shade of blue, iris, she had said.

The bedroom was painted with that beautiful iris. The Sun beamed into it, providing an enchanting effect with its rays. But there had been no Justin or Justine.

They had an empty bookshelf as well, where Desmond had claimed at the spot for his fantasy novel series. But there had been no novels. Desmond had lost interest. Instead, he focused on the idea of

Secretly, he didn't want a child. He had thought of the commitment to be too taxing, but he never told Mabel.

publishing a novel about a couple, similar to him and Mabel.

“And once I successfully publish this book, it will be right there on the bookshelf,” he said confidently.

“And what will the book be called?” Mabel asked.

“Hmm . . .” he closed his eyes, thinking for a good five minutes, “Maybe . . . The Roses of Love? Wait, that’s too cliché. Maybe . . . The Beauty of the Ocean? No, I feel like I’ve heard that before. Oh! I’ve got it, Blue.”

“Blue?” she said, “Oh that’s such a simple title.”

Desmond smiled, “Simplicity isn’t necessarily a bad thing.”

Mabel planted her fist beneath her chin, “I know. I like it. Blue,” she repeated the title to herself several times out loud.

Desmond had settled himself onto the desk several times, creating an outline. The outline never saw completion. Desmond never liked the characters he created. He always wanted to write stories about the big subjects. Each time a movie came out, he felt inspired by it, but whatever came out hopelessly seemed like an exact copy of the script. Desmond gave up, leaving an unfinished blue on their bookshelf.

But one day Desmond was sick.

Dreadfully sick, they went to the emergency room, where the doctor bound Desmond to a bed, and ordered surgery on him immediately. It was all a blur for Desmond, but the only thing he remembered was Mabel sobbing, begging the doctors to save him.

“I’m still scared,” Mabel said, after the surgery, “That you’ll leave before me. I can’t imagine how much that would hurt.”

The look in her eyes stretched his heart, and Desmond croaked, “I won’t Mabel. Never.”

He reached for her hand, and she placed it into his, grasping them tightly.

They had finally saved up enough for a vacation. Mabel was ecstatic. She couldn’t stop humming

during their business class flight from Sacramento to Hawaii: Alaskan Airlines, 11:30 a.m.

They lived in a simple hotel, a shoddy inn with the name, “Beach Inn.” Mabel’s spirits had not been deterred though.

They went to the nearest beach on Tuesday. Mabel loved the ocean. She loved soaking in it, riding the great cerulean waves. Desmond enjoyed sitting back, taking in the heat of the sun instead.

“Desmond!” she had said, “Come on, get a surfboard!”

“I’m fine where I am, thank you,” he said, in a fairly adamant tone.

“Suit yourself,” she shrugged.

Over the days they dined at restaurants, sticking as close to a cheap budget as they could. Some days, they would visit resorts and five star hotels, marvelling at the luxury and comfort their guests lived in.

Desmond raised a glass of water under their striped umbrella, “Some day, we’ll stay a few nights here.”

“Some day,” Mabel repeated.

Mabel would go down to the beach, and bask into the waves on a daily basis. Desmond would, instead turn on his television to watch his favorite show, The Mediocre Tales.

“Watching that show again?” Mabel had said.

“Of course.”

“I really don’t get it. What’s so interesting about it?”

“Want to watch? Then you can see for yourself.”

“Nah, I’d much rather go outside.”

The last day, they decided to eat dinner at a fancy steakhouse. Mabel smiled, “Our suffering’s over with. This is a sign that we’re getting lucky. Next time we come here we’ll be at one of those fancy hotels we saw the other day.”

Desmond chuckled, “I sure wouldn’t mind that..”

Desmond never liked the characters he created. He always wanted to write stories about the big subjects.

Five days had passed quickly, and Mabel put on a pouty expression the day they were going to leave Hawaii. Desmond remembered the vacation fondly, and he remembered how he sighed, “Well, that’s our trip to Hawaii. You can cross that off your bucket list.”

Mabel had been packing up her clothes. Desmond expected her to frown, but she smiled instead, “It’s time to start saving for the next one.”

When they slept, Desmond could hear Mabel take exaggerated breaths with her nostrils, as though she were trying to simulate the sound of waves reaching out to the sand.

They had went shopping together. Desmond stayed near the shopping cart, and Mabel was looking around for whatever she would be interested in. A man walked by and waved towards Desmond, presenting a friendly smile, “Hello.”

Desmond pretended to ignore him, but Mabel caught him and kicked Desmond’s shin. Desmond gasped and then said, “Er . . . hello!”

The man looked back, throwing a confused gaze at the two.

Mabel sighed, “C’mon. You’ve got to learn to be more friendly!”

Desmond muttered, “Okay, okay. But that kick was undeserved!”

“Whatever,” Mabel rolled her eyes, and then she showed Desmond a teal purse, “Look what I found though!”

Desmond nodded, “Yeah, looks great.”

“Doesn’t it? I could really use a new purse . . .”

One night, Desmond was out with a few of his friends. He was staring outside the window when one of his friends remarked, “You know Desmond, you’ve really changed the past years.”

Desmond stared at him, his eyes twinkling with amusement, “Really, have I?”

“Yeah, it’s not really like you to be social like this.

Organizing hangouts and stuff you know?”

“Odd. I feel like nothing’s changed.”

Only two months later, Mabel had fallen sick. Desmond didn’t know what to do.

He had stayed by her side at the doctor’s. He placed his hand on hers, holding back tears, “You’re going to make it through this.”

Mabel hadn’t responded, her eyes sagged now, and her face lost the vivaciousness it had previously. Finally, she opened her mouth, and a croak came out,

“Desmond . . . take care of yourself, when I’m gone.”

“Yes. Yes.”

It was like a dream. He

considered it as some cruel vision he saw, maybe it was because of what Mabel said about him dying before she did.

When Desmond walked home, his entire body was shaking. He didn’t want to remember that day. But reality hit him like a cold splash of water when he saw the empty spot next to his bed. Desmond got up, and stood outside, looking up at the stars and their twinkles of red and blue. Suddenly, a star shot by, leaving behind a sapphire trail that tore through the dark blanket of the sky. Desmond ran after it, yelling out, “I wish . . . I wish that Mabel would come back!”

He panted, and kept up his sprint, “Do you hear me? I wish that Mabel would come back!”

But she never did.

Ten months passed, and he wondered what he could do for what would have been her forty-seventh birthday. He positioned his fingers on a keyboard, racing against them, finishing what he had promised.

Now, he placed a bouquet of cobalt hydrangeas before her grave. He sat down, and with his hands, gently placed a book to the left of the gravestone. A story entitled Blue.

Maybe she would have liked it.

It was a perfect blue, after all.

When they slept, Desmond could hear Mabel take exaggerated breaths with her nostrils, as though she were trying to simulate the sound of waves reaching out to the sand.

Reality hit him like a cold splash of water.

the beach

Charles Whitcomb '19

WINNER, POETRY

mother's day, as
the crimson rose decay, smile,
sleeping soundly

your thoughts become your
feelings become your actions.
become your thoughts. become
your feelings. become your actions.
and you're staring at me with eyes
like rubies, lifeless, cold and i'm
staring back, finding every excuse
there is to buy my mother flowers.

daffodils falling to your sides,
the boiled rain rise through your room,
coughing cherry glue into your palm

like smoke through the air, every time we breathe,
it's ice in the night and my thoughts are flooded
with still shots and videos of your car on the beach

in your ceaseless presence, a brighter hue
somehow so much whiter on the wall, but the
colors shine through so much more too.

i just want to leave, i want to go where the
streetlights burn out by the minute and
the ocean never stops washing in and out,
the sand bleached from the light and
laying on a beach towel, with the seagulls overhead,
my head on the ground, staring close-eyed at the sun.

as a child, i was so afraid of the sea,
ankles wet from the waves crashing upon the beach,
getting out of the car, speaking of the warmth of the breeze,
under my breath, i knew it meant nothing to me



Pfeiffer's Eye

Soren Peterson '20
Photograph

at the end of the continent

Oscar Econome '19

●
Gleaming curves in the
distance; the fabric
rising upon rough glass.
Sheen, softly reflecting dimes;
drips of white suspended
over a deep sea.
Silhouettes of giants laying,
in the sand, wearing coats of mist.

then rolling into itself,
dragging back from
its long reach. I stand easily,
and the wide exhale dominates.
Adjacent, faded orange upon giants'
peaks, far away.

The mouth gapes, lapping up my leg.
my hand, the liquid,
a lover's grasp; air fills the body.
●



Mt. Hood

Matthias Milton '19
Oil on canvas

A Cold Breath

Max Christian '19

HONORABLE MENTION, PROSE

I

“Hi, Ms. Wilson! You need help with your bags?” She rolled the hefty green suitcase with humming wheels down the concrete ramp. Her black hair swayed back and forth as she shook her head.

“No, thanks. Please, call me Sonya.” She extended her right hand toward the young Native American man as her left rested on the guard rail.

“Nice to meet you. I’m Keaton. You can put your stuff in the backseat.” His bright white teeth flashed through a crooked smile. Their hands met and shook casually. He opened the door to his sky blue pickup truck as Sonya shrugged off her leather messenger bag and stowed it along with her luggage. “I hope you packed warm clothes because it’ll get real snowy up there.” She took the passenger seat as Keaton started the car.

“You don’t need to worry about me. I probably won’t be outside much anyways.”

Leaving the city, the pair quietly listened to the radio.

“How long do you think you’ll stay for?” Keaton’s soft voice broke the ice between them when the music cut out. The silence stimulated conversation.

“I think three weeks is a good amount of time for me to finish if I write every day.” She felt at ease with him, even as they drove further into the wilderness.

“What’re you writing?” he inquired

“I’ve been trying to write a thesis paper for my law degree at Gonzaga, but I always have such a hard time buckling down and making actual progress. My roommate says I should get ‘just away from any distractions.’” She air quoted her friend, Jackie. “She recommended this cabin idea, and I thought maybe I should give it a try.” Sonya frequently punctuated her phrases with hand gestures.

“That’s quite some time to be by yourself. You

should probably stock up on groceries before getting too comfortable. There’s a little town called Elkhorn with a nice grocery store at the bottom of the mountain that’s about ten miles from the cabin.” He inflected hospitality in his voice and body language.

“I’ll head down once I’m unpacked.” The two drove up the mountain. It was draped in a thick fog which made the passing trees look gradually more hazy as they progressed. The one way road was the only sign of civilization she could see until they were halfway to the summit. Looking out the car window, her eyes followed a guard rail that separated the pavement from a sheer cliff overlooking the small town of Elkhorn. The few dozen buildings were surrounded by a vast ocean of trees which bordered the horizon. “If you don’t mind me asking, how often do people rent out this cabin?”

It was draped in a thick fog which made the passing trees look gradually more hazy as they progressed.

“Not often. Single bedrooms aren’t that popular with most renters. The winter season tends to be the busiest though. There’s one guy who’s been renting the place out for the past three Decembers. He was the last person to stay there.”

“Well I’m glad I was able to book it on such short notice.”

They exchanged smiles and took in the sights for the next few minutes until Keaton spoke again.

“I don’t want to worry you, but I’d make sure to keep your food in the cabin at all times. The sheriff called this morning and said there have been multiple accounts of residents finding Elk carcasses in the area. If you’d like to feel a little safer, there’s a .44 Magnum revolver in the glove box. You can keep it while you’re here if you’re worried about bears.” His eyes left the road and met hers.

“No thanks. Like I said, I probably won’t be outside much.” She figured she would be fine as long as she didn’t have to see any bloody animals. However the fact that there had been a loaded gun in front of her for the past couple hours without her knowing made Sonya a bit uncomfortable.

The truck slowed as it turned a corner, revealing a grassy clearing and a small wooden cabin with a blue roof that matched the truck. A smokeless chimney protruded from the lightly painted shingles. Adjacent

to the porch sat a ten feet tall, weathered totem pole carved from dark wood and peppered with faded paint. Parked in front of the cabin was a burgundy colored motorcycle which probably was a bright crimson when it was new. Keaton exited the truck as she took her bags from the backseat. The air was colder than Sonya thought so she was eager to get inside.

“Here is the key to the cabin, this is for the truck, and this is my cell number.” Keaton smiled warmly and handed her the keys before scribbling numbers and tearing a piece of paper out of a notepad. “My wife and I live at the top of the mountain so if you need anything you can give us a call.”

“Thanks.” Sonya smiled back.

“I’ll be back in three weeks to collect the money from your stay. If you need more time up here to finish your paper we can arrange an extended stay next time I see you.” They stood on the porch, their misty breath puffing as they spoke. “Also feel free to take the truck into town if you need to, just don’t let it distract you from your work.”

“Okay. I’ll try not to burn the place down while you’re gone.” They shared a laugh as she unlocked the door to her new workplace.

“Good luck on your paper, Sonya. See ya soon!” Keaton waved, flipping the kickstand up with his boot and mounting the bike. Warm air from inside surrounded Sonya while she stood in the doorway and watched him ride off.

“Bye!” As the engine’s rumbling faded into the wilderness, she shut the door and took in the minimalist decor. To her right stood a tall lamp with a red shade and a dangling chain which she pulled to further illuminate the naturally lit room. Past the lamp was a kitchen where an old microwave loomed above a retro, teal stove sandwiched between the pantry and refrigerator. On the adjoining wall, an old fashioned kitchen sink below a small window paired nicely with a silverware cabinet packed with colorful ceramic plates and cups. Next to the sink

was a landline telephone from the early 2000s.

A large window to Sonya’s left shone sunlight onto the large couch and coffee table that took up most of the room. She put down her luggage next to the unlit fireplace and sat on the red cushions. With eyes transfixed on the totem pole on the other side of the window, Sonya unzipped her jacket and removed it. She stood up with sherpa-lined denim slung over her shoulder and checked the kitchen for running water which the sink was fortunately equipped with and examined the hall between the living room and kitchen. Two closed doors with wooden knobs faced each other and short saloon doors enclosed an otherwise open bathroom in the hallway. At the end of the corridor stood the same lamp from the living room and another window. Before checking either doorknobs, Sonya unlatched and opened the window, letting the wilderness exhale a cold breath into the house. The left door led into her bedroom. The wooden bed frame matched the nightstand and wardrobe while the colorful pillows and blankets tied into the window’s drapes. All the empty drawers reminded her that she needed to unpack.

After twenty minutes of unfolding and hanging her clothes, setting up her toiletries in the bathroom and shower, and preparing a workspace for her laptop and notebook in the living room, she remembered the other door in the hallway. In her attempt to turn the knob, Sonya found that the door was locked. Next to the wooden knob was a silver keyhole. She fruitlessly checked and double checked the house key on the lock.

“There should be a key around here somewhere.” Sonya muttered under her breath. Her curiosity drove her to check inside every drawer and under every piece of furniture in the cabin, but all she found was dust. For a minute Sonya pondered calling Keaton to ask what was behind the door, but her train of thought was interrupted by a growl from her stomach. She needed to put on a coat and head into town for groceries.

The quiet, twenty minute drive into town caused her mind to wander back to the locked door. *Maybe I could check the outside of the cabin for more windows when I get back.* She pondered while passing the sheriff’s office. After parking alongside the other two cars in the parking lot, she greeted the cashier and

If you’d like to feel a little safer, there’s a .44 Magnum revolver in the glove box.

began filling her cart with everything she knew how to cook. The sun started setting over the treetops during her dive back up the mountain. She unloaded her groceries in the dim, orange light.

Four windows, one on each wall. She thought to herself after locking the truck. Upon circumventing the cabin, she noticed the window in the hallway was open. *Crap! It's gonna be freezing inside.* After finding no new windows on the outside, she rushed back in and closed the one in the hallway. She shivered as cold air blew down her neck while shrugging off her coat. Once the fireplace was lit, she made dinner and worked while eating. At around midnight her head grew heavy and her eyes were tired of the laptop's bright blue light.

Struggling to stay awake, Sonya focused on the totem pole outside the window. The dishes were still on the coffee table. Once she returned from washing them, she saw two glowing yellow dots replacing the Eagle's eyes on the totem pole. Shocked, she rubbed her own eyes only to find that the dots were gone after opening them.

"I need sleep." She said aloud, dragging her wool blanket into the bedroom. As she trudged down the hall, her hand magnetized to the locked doorknob. While she gave it one last, unsuccessful jiggle, her palm felt a tiny prick. Removing the small splinter with her teeth, she knelt to examine the wood. She found a D shape freshly carved into the doorknob. She thought that it almost looked like a hunting bow. *Was this here before?*

II

Coming upon three weeks of her unstimulating routine proved to be very effective in her writing and ability to focus. Every meal was eaten over her keyboard. If she was not writing she was either cooking or sleeping. As she worked, snow began to cover the mountain and the weather culminated into what was becoming a blizzard.

One morning, Sonya made her favorite chocolatey cereal and sauntered into the living room. A bright red splash stained the corner of the opaque, icy window. Because of the heavy snow, she had not seen clearly out that window in days. Sonya felt a

compulsion to put down her cereal, grab her thick green coat and see what was outside. The sight of the mutilated elk carcass laying in the snow caused her to gag uncontrollably. The scarlet red shapes stood out vibrantly against the white canvas. Cherry splatters surrounded the body and even painted a small portion of the porch. She was leaning on the doorframe, shivering and still wincing at the spilled entrails when she noticed the animal's decapitated head resting atop the newly stained totem pole. Drops of dried blood ran down the faded yellow and green paint and seeped into the wood.

After quickly punching 911 into the phone in the kitchen, she waited anxiously for the sheriff to pick up.

"Goodmorning, what's your emergency?" He asked as if he had just yawned before answering the phone.

"Hi I'm Sonya Wilson. I'm reporting a ripped up elk carcass in front of my porch."

***The sight of
the mutilated elk
carcass laying
in the snow
caused her to gag
uncontrollably.***

"You're the fifth person in the past month! Like I said to the others, I wouldn't recommend spending an extended amount of time outside. Not like you'd want to in this weather anyway. I can come up the mountain and clean up the mess for you, but it's not safe to drive in this blizzard right now. Especially along those steep cliffs."

"How long do blizzards like this usually last around here?" She was extremely uncomfortable working with a such a grotesque scene outside her front door. "I'm sure you'll see me no later than tomorrow night. Until then call me if there's anything else I can do to help."

"Goodbye."

"See you soon!" It would not be soon enough. What worried her was that she didn't know what had killed it. Sonya went back outside in the hopes to see small bear tracks knowing that she would be much more unsettled if she saw boot prints. When she went back outside wrapped again in her long coat, she noticed a piece of green cloth in the snow behind the remains. After examining closer she saw that it was a shredded camouflage overshirt with one breast pocket. Flushed with fear and confusion, Sonya found a key in the buttoned pocket. Carved into the wooden

base of the key was a simplistic arrow symbol. In that moment, her suppressed memory of the carved doorknob re-entered her mind. Back inside the cabin, she rushed to the door and tried the lock. Anxious excitement filled her body as she turned the doorknob and revealed the room. Hung on the wall to her right was a huge bear trap, a double barreled shotgun and a large elk head. To her left sat a journal atop a wooden desk between two ten-foot tall bookshelves. Sonya eagerly sat at the desk and opened to the first page.

Upon examination, she determined the journal severed three purposes. The first page was titled

“Origin.” The middle section of the journal had been used to document “Sightings/Encounters.” The last dozen pages were filled with chilling untitled sketches of

an abnormally tall, malnourished figure with long skeletal fingers, a closed wide mouth and perfectly round eyes. The final page depicted it hunched over in a doorway next to a tall lamp. *What the hell?*

The middle section showed dates from December of the previous three years and recounted events of a man tracking and trying to kill “the beast.” Every new entry shook her spirit. The silence soon became so uncomfortable that she needed to read the first page aloud.

Origin... After visiting the Ojibwa Indian reservation and consulting multiple tribal elders, I believe that an accurate explanation has been made for my accounts of the unusual sightings I have witnessed while staying in this cabin. According to my sources, hundreds of years ago there was a group of nomads called the Algonquin tribe that followed the migration of a large herd of elk all around the Pacific Northwest. The herd was their sole food source. They thrived for many years until one harsh winter when the tribe lost track of the herd. For weeks they went without food until some members of the tribe resorted to cannibalism for survival. The shamen told the members of the tribe that their murder and consumption of human beings greatly displeased the Great Spirit and they must

have faith in Him to bring the herd back to them. It is said that as punishment for their lack of faith and the destruction of their own humanity through cannibalism, the Great Spirit created a beast that was meant to represent humans if they were meant to hunt and eat each other. The man eating creature killed and ate every surviving member of the tribe after they had all been driven insane by fear and starvation. The Ojibwa tribe calls this malevolent spirit ‘the Wendigo’ and it is said to still lurk these forests in search of warm blood.

With a shotgun and a slab of meat in her freezing hands and a heavy metal trap strapped to her back, she ventured out into the blizzard.

Sonya knew something had to be done to keep herself from going crazy. This was just a legend and this hunter must be insane. Half of her wanted to curl up in a ball and not move until the sheriff shows

up, but the other half knew she would never feel safe again until she did something about her situation. She decided she needed to at least attempt to prevent herself from being attacked by whatever killed the elk. Whatever this thing was, Sonya knew it liked to eat elk so she figured she should plant some meat in the beartrap and set it a good distance away from the cabin. With a shotgun and a slab of meat in her freezing hands and a heavy metal trap strapped to her back, she ventured out into the blizzard. After finding a decent place for the trap, she set it, put the elk meat inside, and hurried back into the cabin. She could not just fester like this. It was barely lunchtime. She must distract herself. She was so close to finishing her work. After spending the rest of the day writing in the hunter’s study, she finally finished her thesis paper late that night.

First she found a finger, then a bloody hand, then an arm.

When the night passed, she woke up compelled to go out and check her trap. She thought maybe a warm shower would clear her mind but it just built up her nervous anticipation. Opening her front door, Sonya found that the snow had gotten so high that the elk body was covered up and the totem pole was her height. She stared at the frozen head as she trudged through the powdery cold. Trying to remember where she placed the trap, she looked out over the barrel of the shotgun and noticed a black snowmobile almost completely covered in snow.

Approaching it, Sonya noticed a red circle that had seeped up to the surface. Kneeling with shotgun in hand, she dusted the snow away to search for what was beneath. First she found a finger, then a bloody hand, then an arm. When completely dug out, Keaton's torn up red body rested in the snow. His foot had been caught in the trap and his torso was shredded. She remembered it had been three weeks. He was coming to get her. Before she had any second thoughts, Sonya ran through the piercing cold as the blowing snowfall stung her face. Upon reaching the cabin, she immediately began frantically packing her suitcase. In a scrambling rush, she had accidentally left the door open.

I need to get the hell out of here, she told herself. Melted slush accumulated on the floor in the hallway. She just needed her laptop. Leaving the suitcase in the hall, she entered the study with shotgun at the ready. Approaching the open laptop, she folded it and put it in her messenger bag. While doing so, she felt a cold exhale on the back of her neck. Her body shook yet she was unable to move. Every second of frozen time felt like an hour. With the gun clutched in hand, Sonya slowly spun around to find a nightmare looming over her. Its mouth hung open, letting cold blood dribble down onto its gray, hairless body. The yellow eyes looked down at her as if it was wondering how she would taste. Before it could make a move she blasted the beast twice in the chest. It looked dead, but she backed slowly into the hallway with the messenger bag over her shoulder, threw the empty weapon on the carpet, and ran out the door carrying the huge green suitcase.

She started the old truck and sped away from the cabin. The road was slick and the snow formed piles on the asphalt. All she cared about was getting far away from that place as soon as possible. The blizzard was as harsh as it had ever been, but what caused her to swerve was an elk jumping out and colliding with the hood of the truck. She blew through the guard rail and skid off the sheer cliff. What kept her from plummeting was the metal rail which caught on the truck's bumper. Sonya's head hit the steering wheel, immediately knocking her unconscious.

She woke up with blood in her hair, gazing through the windshield at the tree tops below. The

sun had just set and the blizzard was over. With an insatiable concussion, Sonya's body was held against gravity by her seatbelt. It caused her chest and shoulder to ache, so she carried her weight by pushing on the steering wheel, easing the pain from the diagonal belt. A cold breath blew down her spine. There were sounds of movement from the backseat. Glowing yellow eyes shone in the rear view mirror, staring at her in the darkness. Panic flushed through her body. There was no escaping her own terror. A memory stood out in her mind when she formed a plan. Removing her right hand from the wheel, she reached toward the dashboard. It reared up to make a move as she opened the glove compartment, revealing Keaton's loaded .44 Magnum. Sonya grabbed it and turned to aim back into the darkness, but she pulled the trigger too early and shattered the windshield with a boom and crash that echoed in the night. As

Her body shook yet she was unable to move. Every second of frozen time felt like an hour.

she did this, the beast pounced at her, but tumbled through the open windshield. It made no sound while plummeting into the abyss below, banished back to the darkness where it came from.

"Hey! Is anybody in there?" A familiar voice pierced the silence.

"I'm down here! In the driver's seat." She called back. It was the sheriff.

"There's a wench in my truck, I can pull you up." Once the truck was on solid ground, she shivered uncontrollably while opening the car door. Sonya enveloped herself in his wool blanket.

Warmth.



Sumidero Canyon

Gustavo Villamil '19

HONORABLE MENTION, PHOTOGRAPHY

Conquest

Joshua Gonong '19

*In the floating islands of Orizon,
In the land of Aemali
A lone tiefling waits in her hut.*

Wraps spin and cover the red tinted skin in a shaded hut as distant rumbling hits her ears. Her fists tighten and dagger-like teeth tear away at the base of the cloth roll before she throws it to the side. She flexes her fingers and observes herself in a dirty mirror, or at least the many shards that remain. The broken reflection's solid golden eyes stares back at the devil-like soldier and she turns back to a rack of weapons.

She spins and swipes her tail, causing the rack to fall. The clanging and ringing of metal resonates in her ears, yet the roar in the distance remains, even growing louder as the noise in the hut dies. At her feet, a maul with a leather bound shaft, a long sword with intricate designs of dancing fire, and a narrow spear with a finely pointed tip lay at her feet. Nodding her head in approval, she slings the long weapons and sheathes the sword. It is Agressa's word.

Adjusting the cloths she called clothes, she opens the flaps to her tent and is met with the thunderous echoes of the army in front of her. The tiefling tightens her fists and takes the first steps on a trek towards her fate.

Creatures of many races line the sides of the path and up on the cliffs of the valley, chanting and cheering for the devilish humanoid. They watch her with prideful smiles as the noise increases at the sight of her.

"Mui Gon!"

Gold eyes look towards the shout and the infernal soldier find a group of calm looking, though loud, elves raising and waving their longbows and crossbows into the air. She bangs her fist against her chest and bows her head slightly. This only makes the elvish rangers cheer louder.

"My Commandrum!"

A dwarf has an arm wrapped around another of his kin as he waves a metal plated stump enthusiastically. A small smile creeps across her face. Two fists pound her chest and a loud groan escapes her, and the two dwarves howl with laughter.

The tiefling feels her feet shift underneath her as the crunch of gravel reaches her ears and the deep and low pounding of drums makes the bards playing them known. Stairs ascend up to a broken temple, the walls and pillars long broken and vines and roots crawl all over the structure. Those closest to the temple strike their swords against shields, their cheers and roars louder than those near the lowland. Generals that she had served under and served by join in the controlled chaos. She only nods her head towards the mix of dragonborn and half orcs and even a halfling, the last one smiling at her before turning his attention upward towards the waiting alter.

She flexes her fingers and observes herself in a dirty mirror, or at least the many shards that remain.

The tiefling's eyes follow up and there awaits another dragonborn, although more ancient and wrinkled than the ones cheering down below. She takes a knee and bows her head and horns towards him.

"High Priest Tarhun," she says towards old one in a hushed tone.

"General Kali," replies the servant of Agressa with a low and grumbled tone, though with good intentions. "Are you ready?"

Only a nod from Kali signals the start. She drops her three weapons and clerics pull the objects to the side.

Silver scaled claws emerge from falling robes as two powerful hands silence the crowds. A nearby bard's instrument's glow a bright yellow and wisps of arcane magic cover the dragonborn's hand and throat.

"Foreign armies of Aemali! Rise!" echoes his voice to the gathering of soldiers. Birds and other animals flee the scene but the warriors remain still.

"Swords ready! Spears pointed! Bows drawn!" the masses respond back. Kali mutters the reply as she has been trained to do so.

Tarhun's chest heaves slightly as he coughs into

his fist. His arms lower back to his side as he looks out to silencing crowd.

“We gather in this sacred land to bid our sister farewell... as our leader and goddess Agressa has called General Kali Decarabia to serve as her paladin!”

The crowd roars again as Tarhun turns towards Kali and gestures her forth. The general nods and presents herself before the entire army. She can barely hear her own thoughts when a surge of shouting and cheers reach her. Different tongues and dialects from different directions. All for a devil looking and almost always shunned tiefling. Not today though. Her ears pick up the rattling of chain links and the dragging of metal.

Tarhun places a hand on her shoulder as guides her back to the floor and on her knees. He raises his other hand to silence the crowd once more before looking up to the sky.

“Do you swear to douse the flame of hope in your enemies? To achieve victory until they are forever shattered?”

“With my shield, I will defend her.” Her eyes stay closed as a chainmail shirt is lowered onto her, making it past the curled horns and long hair.

“Do you swear to rise with an iron fist? To take all with the power our goddess gifts you?”

“With my hand, I will carry out her will.” An amulet is tied around her neck. It shines in the sunlight, new and polished from the army’s forge.

“Do you swear to hold strength above all? So that one day that when someone more powerful rises up, you will overcome them to prove your worth and earn Agressa’s favor?”

“With my sword, I will conquer for her name.” The hilt of a blade is pressed into her palm and she instinctively closes it around the weapon.

“Will you become Agressa’s Paladin of Conquest?”

“To strike down, to break through, to one day join the heavenly host and to stand behind our goddess of War, Agressa!”

The dragonborn places his hands on her shoulder. “Then I deem you worthy of her glory and power!

Tarhun lifts Kali up from her genuflected position and the tiefling rises with him. She gaze turns to the sky, clouds parting slightly as a golden light shines from beyond.

“The new sword of our victorious goddess and commander Agressa, Kali Decarabia!”

Kali has to squint her eyes as the light she sees grows brighter. The crowd seems to not notice as they erupt in cheers and shouts and praise. Down the path she had followed, a wave of light rushes down towards her and shapes into a column that strikes her where she stands. She can feel it. Power coursing through her, magic filling her being with divine favor. She opens her eyes a little, squinting as she watches the crowds stare in awe.

Kali’s hand tightens around the sword and thrusts it up to the sky and the light swirls into the weapon. The sword glows briefly before settling down. The new paladin is met with massive cheers.

“Kali...”

Tarhun approaches behind her and places a claw on her shoulder again. This time he turns her to the crowd.

Kali’s ears pick up a deep chant that bounces off the walls of the temple and the valley. “...What are they saying?” She can barely hear it and even the words she picks up on aren’t from any Elvish, Dwarvish, or Infernal she’s heard in her life.

“An ancient prayer young one. A final blessing before you start your journey.”

“I see...”

Like the others in front of her she bows her head and kneels down in prayer. If one would ask her, she would say she saw the image of her deity pointing with her sword over the horizon. But to where Agressa is pointing, that’s for Kali to find out.

Her name is Kali Decarabia

A paladin serving under the ideals of war and conquest.

Only you can decide where she walks next, where she chooses to start her empire.

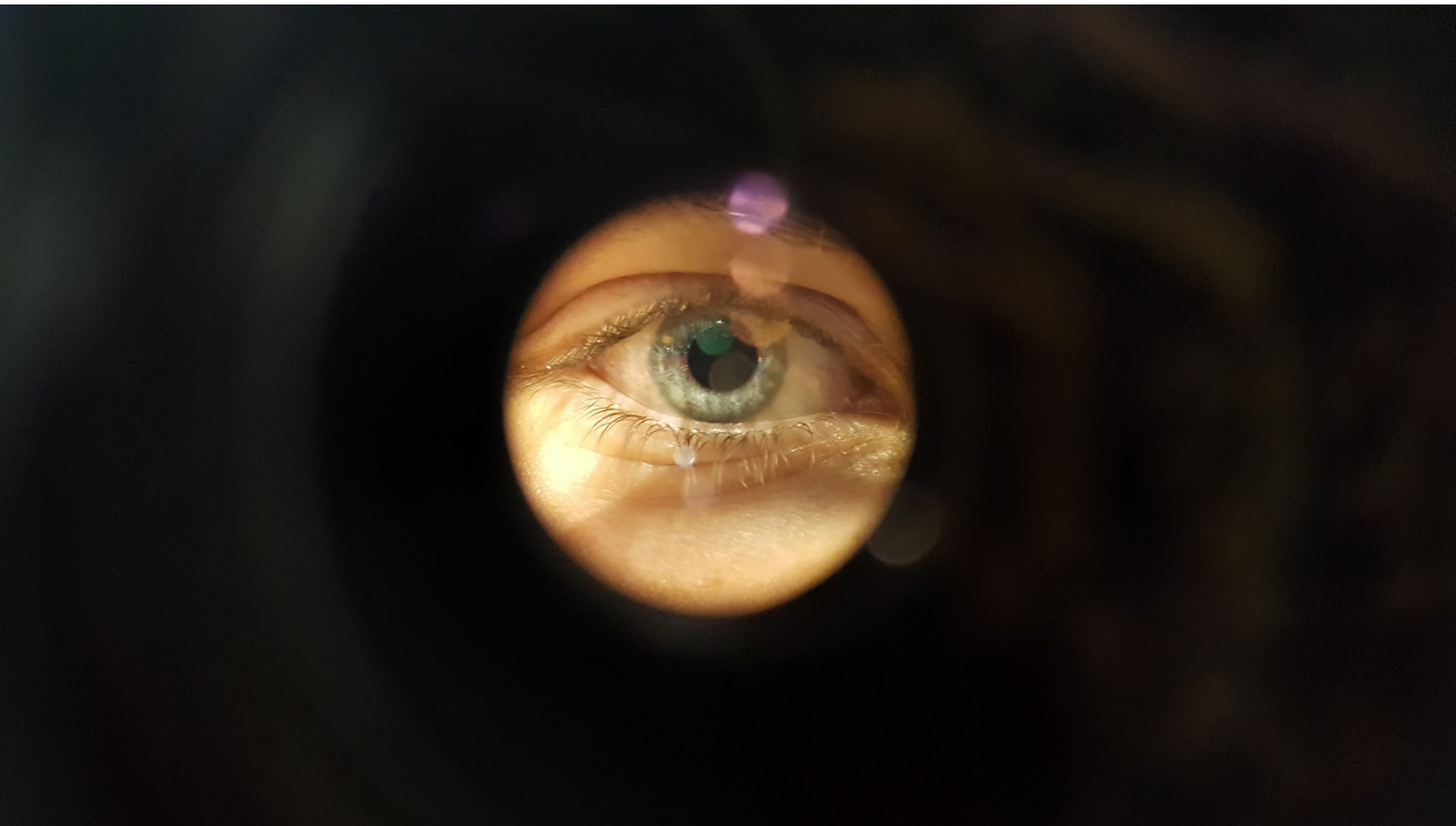
Whether alone or with others, one thing must be done.

Roll for initiative.

Narcissus

Josh Dolin '19

A woman alone in a booth
A look at her watch a look at the door
5 minutes takes all of her patience and some more
The minutes pass, and like that she pays for the lone drink
Under her breath he wasn't my type anyways
At home without care he stood
I can't help but like what I see
The mirror looks quite lovely
Years of hard work fades into beauty
With a wink and a nod
He says who couldn't love me?
Lost in his own eyes
He stood up Aphrodite



An Eye for Good Art

Adam Graham '19

Sploosh

Garrett Simpson '19

HONORABLE MENTION, PROSE

Jake wandered across the puddle ridden walkway, gazing at the vexing streetlamp reflections. His thoughts were awash in cruel reminders of his childhood failures, his dishonorable discharge last year, and now his failures at providing for his family. This month's factory job could have worked out for them... it would have worked out for them. If only that stupid empty vat hadn't clanged to the ground, if only he hadn't had an episode because of it...

With a solemn, barely audible sigh of defeat, Jake collapsed onto the bench. He watched the silver currents of the river dance under the bridge in the moonlight. They reflected the streetlamps as the puddles did, but they carried the lights in endless swirls and vortexes instead of as still images.

Jake's attention was pulled from the beckoning waters to a slowly approaching black jaguar on the bridge two hundred feet from him. The car rolled ever slower, coming to a halt in the middle. It's two aged headlights bathed the bridge pavement in pallid persimmon. A tall man emerged from the dark car. He glided with a grace unfitting his size, and yet he pulled the trunk door open with an immense upheaval of brute strength. He picked up something dark and limp, it might've been wearing a sweatshirt, perhaps red or rust, if there wasn't mud already.

The tall man cradled the body closely, almost lovingly, before sending it sailing over the railing. The body hit the water with a solid, resounding sploosh. With a satisfied nod, the tall man slack back into his jaguar, flipped a U-turn, and headed back into the black streets and alleyways whence he came.

Jake sat still as a mouse hiding from a house cat. He finally allowed his breath to leave his lungs again, and fill them with new oxygen. Jake didn't think the man had seen him, if he had he probably wouldn't be breathing now. But what if he had seen him and just not cared? Or what if he'd seen him and had marked him for a later execution?

He fumbled for his phone, then paused... Jake slowly lowered his phone, shock still evident on his face. He looked in the direction the jaguar had disappeared, but saw nothing but inky black. He looked back to where the body had hit the water, but there was only coiling moonlight.

Guilt aching his heart, Jake looked at the lonely world around him. He put his phone in his pocket, ran his hand through his blond hair, and headed home down the puddle-rife path to tell his wife he'd lost his job.

Jake's attention was pulled from the beckoning waters to a slowly approaching black jaguar on the bridge two hundred feet from him.

Shredding Misconceptions: What Heavy Metal Really Is

Eric Johannassen '20

My declaration hurts, just want to stab it
right now!/Congratulations you've found
yourself/Been preaching too many times to an
hysterical mind/So won't you f***ing behave
yourself

- Soilwork, "Stabbing the Drama"

"Why's it so angry all the time?" my dad asks me
as he listens to my Spotify playlist
with me on our morning commute.
"I don't know Dad, it's just how
the genre is. It's not always 'angry'".
Noise, riffraff, chaos. The typical words that come
to the mind of a typical person when they think of
metal. Common people fail to realize that the stylistic,
thematic, and lyrical attributes of metal have far more
purpose and artistry than meets the unaccustomed
ear. This ignorance, though not ill intended, irritates
fans like me. The metal fanbase is one that is decades
old and composed of a plethora of new and old
subgenres.

Manowar, Manowar, living on the road/
When we're in town speakers explode/We
don't attract wimps 'cause we're too loud/Just
true metal people that's Manowar's crowd/.../
We like it hard, we like it fast/We got the
biggest amps, man they blast/True metal
people want to rock not pose/Wearin' jeans
and leather, not cracker jack clothes

- Manowar, "Kings of Metal"

What makes "true metal people" in the first
place? Is it having "jeans and leather", tattoos, and
long hair that's the trademark of virtually all 80s era
rock and metal bands? Or maybe white makeup,
black eyeliner, and baggy, ill-fitting clothes that
characterize Goths? There's no doubt that many
bands cultivate these eccentric (though sometimes
overdone) appearances. However, time has proven
these decorations aren't indigenous to the whole
genre or each of its subgenres. This deviation of
appearance and style between genres arises mainly
from the different influences on its subgenres from

within and without. Examples of this include thrash
metal, nü metal, metalcore, and power metal. Thrash
metal's violent speed and lyrics translated into gory
stage performances. Nü metal and metalcore's fast
"breakdowns" and intense instrumentals and vocals,
as well as their street-clothes uniforms are inspired
by contemporary genres like post-grunge, post-punk,
and rap rock and their seemingly extemporaneous
rave performances. Power metal's symphonic and/or
melodic motifs and fantasy themes lead many groups
to don armor, tunics, or even superhero costumes
to further reinforce their music's "mythicality".

Additionally, metal fashions are across the board—
varying from the cliché hair, leather, and tattoos of

***Metal doesn't dictate
an archetypal lifestyle.***

Manowar, the gory and macabre
masks of Slipknot, the extremely
casual and somewhat comical garb
of Alestorm, and the laid-back
but confident post-punk-flavored

outfits that distinguish modern metalcore groups like
Memphis May Fire. Evidently, because metal doesn't
dictate all facets of a band's music or presentation,
being a metal fan merely requires one to enjoy the
complexities, instrumentation, and lyrical value of
fast-paced, loud, beat-driven hard rock-esque music
and express that enjoyment with fellow enthusiasts.
Metal doesn't dictate an archetypal lifestyle.

That's not to say that the metal fandom isn't
exclusive. One major pet peeve of mine (and many
others) are those neophytic surface dwellers who
declare themselves "headbangers" after only listening
to a couple Metallica or Bon Jovi hits. Being a true
metal fan requires that one, as Manowar aptly put it,
wants "to rock not pose"—if one is truly interested in
the music they dive into the genre, listening to more
than just the radio-friendly hits.

I remember a day/In a time faraway/When
we both were/in this together/When we still
had the flame/At the top of our game/We
were strong/Oh we were strong/It's in times
like these we need one another/Through the
storms side by side we shall ride/We ride
together/Now and forever

- Turisas, "We Ride Together"

Metal fans, no doubt, are somewhat dissimilar, but
they are united in a love for the same music genre. But
what, besides its speed and beat, is metal?

Heavy metal was born mostly out the late 60s and early 70s British hard rock scene. Groups like Led Zeppelin and Black Sabbath pioneered the early rhythmic and instrumental characteristics that would distinguish metal (just listen to “Moby Dick” and “War Pigs” sometime. The former has a crazy, hard-hitting drum solo and the latter has its signature rapid fire riffs.). With the sounds of the genre beginning to develop, next came the “attitude” or lyrical themes of metal in the late 70s. From my own listening, it seems like Judas Priest and Alice Cooper are two of the most significant groups to develop the familiar metal themes of societal rebellion and anarchy. Alice Cooper specifically became a paragon of metal style with their leather, makeup, and over-the-top showmanship (just watch the concert scene from Wayne’s World, where they perform “Feed My Frankenstein”—the giant skeleton on the smoke-covered stage is absolutely awesome). Thus began a tradition of stage performance that has characterized the whole genre to have decked-out musicians on a pyrotechnic-laden stage.

The 1980s was a red letter decade for metal. There was extreme stylistic diversification that resulted from greater exposure in countries both old and new, creating bands like Iron Maiden from Britain, Gamma Ray from Germany, Meshuggah from Sweden, and (yes, unfortunately) Metallica from America. Interestingly enough, metal wasn’t the only genre that underwent a revolution in the 80s. Hip-hop, once perceived as only an underground genre that just bordered on mere vinyl-scratching at parties, went mainstream in music and material culture. In a similar fashion, it also stylistically diversified, from jiggy to gangsta rap, and geographically spread, from its home cities of the East Coast all the way to L.A., the Caribbean, Africa, and even the U.K. Additionally, metal songs from the late 70s going into the 80s share lyrical themes with hip-hop songs from the 80s. Both tended to urge breaking with societal authorities (ranging from overarching systems to just one’s parents), be a source of motivation to their listeners, or promote the genre/artist itself. An example of the latter is found in De La Soul’s and Manowar’s music:

Proud, I’m proud of what I am/Poems I speak
are Plug Two type/Please oh please let Plug
Two be/Himself, not what you read or write/

Metal wasn’t the only genre that underwent a revolution in the 80s.

Write is wrong when hype is written/On the
Soul, De La that is/Style is surely our own
thing/Not the false disguise of show-biz/De
La Soul is from the soul/And in fact I can’t
deny/Strictly from the Dan called Stuckie/
And from me myself and I

- De La Soul, “Me Myself and I”

“Turn it down,” you say?/Well all I got to
say to you is/Time and time again I say, No!
(No!)/No, No, No, No, No!/Tell me not to
play/Well, all I got to say to you/When you
tell me not to play, I say, “No!”/No! No, No,
No, No, No!

- Twisted Sister, “I Wanna Rock”

No doubt this shared theme has to do with their obscure origins (which were compounded by Western and westernized societies one-track conformist cultures of the late 70s and 80s) and the undesirable commercialization and whitewashing that occurred as the two genres gained notoriety throughout the following decades. With this increased public awareness, metal and hip-hop alike were blamed for poisoning the minds of children, encouraging crime, degrading society, and so on, all the while ignoring the music itself. Metal and hip-hop serve a purpose that should always be addressed, whether it’s gripping, socially aware concept albums, anthem singles, or even just mundane money-making tracks.

My education in the artistry of metal music began less than 3 years ago, when I first got a Spotify account. I absolutely loved the ease with which I could play my favorite songs, often sharing them with my dad during our morning commute (to date, I have 96 hours and 33 minutes of music saved in my master playlist). Also, it’s been a great resource to discover new artists and explore genres. In addition to heavy metal, I’ve listened to genres like funk, ska-punk, experimental jazz, synthwave, and progressive rock. I decided to make a music playlist with some of the well known and overplayed hits: Metallica’s “Enter Sandman”, “For Whom the Bell Tolls”, and “Master of Puppets”, Black Sabbath’s “Paranoid”, “Iron Man”, and “War Pigs.” I felt like the lineup was lacking, so one day out of sheer curiosity, I decided to look up what I had thought to be the edgiest paradigm

of metal—Swedish death metal (might be hard to believe, but there’s metal way edgier than that—more on that later). I came across a “Best Of” playlist someone had made and randomly selected one of the first songs that had a cool sounding title:

I feel I’m done with this shell of mine/
Separated from the one I knew/I’ll kill every
minute on hold/While the ocean brings
me back to life/I’ve lived, I’ve breathed, I’ve
learned to be deceived/Sheltered for what
it’s worth, forced to make it work/I feel I’m
chosen to see what others haven’t seen/It’s not
a tragedy, it’s just reality but how it makes me
believe

- Soilwork, “Spectrum of Eternity”

Luckily for me, my introduction to death metal couldn’t have been with any better band than Soilwork. Recently, they’ve been considered to be a progressive death metal (A subgenre within a subgenre, it combines the guitar-distorting, and “dirty” growl vocals of death metal with progressive rock’s technical complexity and experimental time signatures and atonalities.) band, though their older albums distinguished them as a melodic death metal (another sub-sub-genre that collides power metal and death metal) band. Melodic death as a whole is considered a much more accessible genre than normal death metal because its power influences lead it to be much less distorted, more distinctly beat driven, and more “cleanly” vocalized (not growled). Soilwork was no exception. After listening to two or three more of their songs, I read up on them. Then, I began to get suggestions of different bands’ songs based on Spotify’s recommendation algorithm.

Finally, I decided to take the risk of introducing my newfound interest in metal to one of my parents. Now, usually any kid presenting to their straight-laced, caring parent such a “rebellious” and “violent” genre as something they not only have interacted with, but something they have an interest in would seem utterly foolhardy. Thus, when I first played Soilwork for my dad, I presented it with ostensible

irony. We both poked fun at the screeching, growling vocals. Eventually, I began to try to make him see it in a more positive light. “You know, despite all the shouting, you gotta admit that the music is pretty awesome,” I’d say, to which my dad responded “I don’t know how they can drum so fast. Do they have two drummers or one really energetic drummer?” I succeeded in gaining the approval of my dad for my new musical love, and now I felt free to explore more. By following Spotify recommendations, then wandering down a chain of related artists, I came across possibly one of the most extreme and inaccessible metal subgenres I’ve ever heard or will ever hear: black metal. This genre consists almost purely of growl and scream vocals and wordless sounds, heavy distortions on the guitars and basses, and usually dark, misanthropic, or even Satanic themes. Fortunately for my still-tentative metal ears,

I found a more agreeable black metal group in Antestor (Latin for “testifier”), a Christian black metal outfit (also known as white metal because of its spirituality). Their lyrics were almost incomprehensible at first, but after reading them once, I started to pick out the words:

Rites of death/Rites of undeath/We’re falling/
We’re falling down
I told you we’re into deep/Transfer life into
what’s dead/The act of humans playing
God
Redoing the acts of medieval/Witchcraft and
the worship of dead

- Antestor, “Rites of Death”

This extremely angry-sounding (and emotionally worded) subgenre demonstrated to me that the violent themes of metal made for a unique mode of expression. As with any Christianized “un-Christian” genre, like rock music once was, it’s often stirred up controversy within and without the genre. In one of the most stunning cases, when Antestor had just been signed to the traditionally Satanic label Cacophonous, it was only after they received the band’s album art and lyrics that they realized they had signed a Christian band. Afraid of offending their audience and compromising their beliefs, they censored words like Jesus and God from the album. It’s funny to

think that swearing isn't the only censorable thing to someone, similar to how many conservative Americans reacted to rock and roll, even in its early stages.

Other fascinating encounters of my dive into metal included power metal. This is a huge catch-all genre that is opposed to the chaos of standard death metal. Instead of growls and compositional experimentation, it uses "classicist" elements like melody, harmony, traditional time signatures, and even orchestral instruments like violins, violas, and trumpets. This is especially common for symphonic groups such as those led by the venerable Luca Turilli in his various solo side projects and in Rhapsody/Rhapsody of Fire. This genre has numerous groups that seek to distinguish themselves within this panoply by occupying or creating thematic niches. One such group is Sabaton, a Swedish band that has dedicated itself to basing virtually all of its songs on historic battles and military leaders (they made a whole album on the rise and fall of the Swedish empire, spanning the reigns of King Gustav Adolph to King Karl XII—pretty fascinating stuff). Another group is Alestorm, a leader in the so-called pirate metal subgenre. Most of their songs are entirely humorous. One song, "Wooden Leg", tells the tale of a man who lost one leg, then another, and finally his arms to a nondescript cannonball, a ball from a Spanish galleon, and a samurai, respectively. Another, "Alestorm" delineates the four key necessities of pirate life: rum, beer, quests, and mead. Many of their songs center around alcohol, which is fairly reasonable considering that the lead singer is a Scotsman. Stereotypes abound. The topic of alcohol in music like this was something I had to tackle, as I am not for wild carousing and drinking as a way of life. I've come to take it as a part of the whole pirate theme, not strictly a condoning or encouraging of alcoholism.

Considering all the subgenres of metal I've listened to, I see how metal can be perceived as exclusive and divided as a world full of nation-states. However, it, like many other fandoms, can be quite socially positive and supportive. Considering the topic of alcoholism, drinking and using other illicit substances are no doubt big problems for metal, as it is in other genres. However, metal old schoolers like Alice Cooper have made significant efforts to motivate fellow artists and fans to avoid drugs and alcohol and to seek help for their addictions or other

mental conditions. Another genre-wide problem for metal is gender representation. Heavy metal is no doubt a male-centered genre. Most of its founders were male, and the majority of modern groups are composed of male members and leads. Despite this, some of the most famous modern outfits—Halestorm, Nightwish, Evanescence, and Icon For Hire to name a few—have female lead singers who serve not as tokens or for pandering, but create a sound that's made unique by the female voice's naturally higher octave range and its inherent lyrical beauty, distinguishing these groups from the growling masculine masses.

"Find any new songs? Any of that pirate stuff, matey?" my dad asks in one of the shoddiest pirate accents I've ever heard as we head down the highway. "Actually, I discovered a new group," I reply as I load up Spotify and put on my metal playlist. I lean back in my seat, taking in artwork that few know. It's beauty at 180 bpm.



Portrait of Jared

David Dardis '20

Finger on Procreate app

Freshman Riddles

I stand beside a road named after a man who stole a blessing.
When I cast no shadow, I swing to make sound of prayer.
I surround myself with a beautiful green that makes my presence known.
With the three stones I stand on, I have stood without rest.
I guide all behind me and by my side to forward which is north.

-- William Lee '22

I am in the center of the home of the intelligentsia,
Full of the riches of knowledge,
Though never sought after,
Due to the challenges and swamping of the youth.
But nevertheless an oftentime crowded place.
I provide safety from the movements of unseen forces through the air,
Though I am not a supernatural place.
Youths repeatedly hurry here in hope for a quick deliverance from
Their educators, who scare with their unexpected deadlines.
And while many a lunch reside in me, never have they
Ingested their food there. My air is very different
From another one of my kind, but I am still a place
Used for the expansion of knowledge.

--August Blomquist '22

I'm found all around the globe,
In many different forms.
I can be found alluring in some cases,
But commiserable in the next.
My contents brandish a dull collection if perceived foreignly,
However, I wield great power at a closer glance.
I'm a student's friend if frequented,
Though my use has recurrently matured.
Nowadays I've been replaced
By a diminutive, astute being.
Though burned, bombed, and battered through time,
The core principle of my existence remains the same;
If one approaches me in need of serenity,
I will try my best to supply.

-- Jack Dyer '22



Yellow 004

David Dardis '20
Pen and pencil on paper

Presentable Liberty

Max Christian '19

The First Day

The sunlight shone into the cell and faintly pressed on my eyelids until I opened them. A weight of exhaustion filled my body as my brain pounded in my skull. Bringing a hand to my forehead, I tried fruitlessly to ease the ache between my temples. As the pain pulled into the background, I looked at what surrounded me. The grey, claustrophobic cell seemed to contain a twin bed with one white pillow and blanket, a cheap wooden nightstand stood in the corner of the room with two large drawers. Over it hung a simple mirror with no frame. The rest of the room was filled by a black clock just above the headboard of the bed, a short, black toilet, and a barred, horizontal window across from the bed about one foot tall and four feet wide.

How did I get here? I had no recollection of yesterday or any days before that. *Where am I?* I knew this was a prison cell, but not much else. *Who am I?* I must have had a name, but my memories were completely empty. My own body was all that was familiar.

Pulling the covers down, I wore a grey, well fitted, lightweight jumpsuit with black buttons running down the front that stopped at an untied, cotton, black belt which the belt loops held. My knees drew toward my chest and I wrapped my arms around them anxiously. The glaring sun hurt my eyes, so I hid them behind my sore legs. Once my eyes adjusted, I figured that I should look closer around the cell.

As I got out of bed, a chill ran down my back and spread quickly throughout my body. *I can't stop shivering.* The air smelled damp as if it had rained the night before. I was first drawn to the window. *Could anyone hear me if I called for help?* It was just below the ceiling which sat about nine feet above the floor. I jumped, my fingertips skimming the cold, black bars. If I had the energy I would have been able to grab them and pull myself up but my head would hit the ceiling before I could look down. From what

I saw I had a feeling I was not on the first floor. In my exhaustion I turned away from the window and slid my back down the wall, shutting my eyes as if it would somehow help conserve my energy.

"Help me!" An unrecognizable voice cried my first words. My throat was sore. *I'm so thirsty.* Was my scream worth it? I don't know. I'm not sure if that was a plea for somebody to let me out or a prayer.

Looking up, my sight magnetized to the barred cell door adjacent to the bed. *A way out?* I had just noticed it. A burst of hot energy filled my body as I shot to my feet and darted toward the black bars. My forearms caused the metal to rattle upon impact. I'm locked in! Although there clearly was no escape, that didn't stop me from slamming on the cold steel with every ounce of my physical strength until my weak body could take no more exertion.

A burst of hot energy filled my body as I shot to my feet and darted toward the black bars. My forearms caused the metal to rattle upon impact. I'm locked in!

My hands dropped slowly, grazing each bar as I fell to my knees. I needed to sit down again. My left arm pulled my body onto the bed. No hope. I sat hunched forward on the mattress as a terrifying thought derailed my train of thought. *Trapped.* This word clouded my eyes as tears rained into my hands.

Five grueling minutes passed before my eyes opened again. A splash of red appeared in my peripheral vision. I got up and approached it. To the right of the cell door was a crimson electrical socket. It as if something could be plugged into it, but there was no other electronic device in the cell. Looking past the cell door, an all white, tiled hallway with no doors was all I could see.

The mirror called my name. Looking into my own eyes and the wet streaks below them helped me think. I remembered my body, but not my voice. I remembered English, but not how I learned it. I remembered life, but not my own.

In the reflection, I saw an unusual black thread peeking out from my left sleeve. After rolling it up, I revealed a freshly stitched cut from the bottom of my palm to the midpoint between the elbow and wrist.

What's that noise? A faint flapping sound caused me to turn from the mirror and face the window. Between the vertical bars perched a small bird holding

a white envelope in its beak. Its gaze put me in a trance. *Am I hallucinating?* It was beautiful. Although I knew what it was, this moment seemed like the first time I had ever seen an animal. Watching it gracefully adjust its feathers, I carefully approached the gentle creature.

The eyes stared directly into mine. Once I was as close as it permitted, the beak opened, dropping the envelope at my feet, and it flew away into the infinite blue.

I picked up the envelope and tore it open. Inside rested a folded, typed letter.

Hello. I understand how confusing this all must be. I would like to apologize in advance for what you are about to read. You do not remember, but you are a prisoner currently serving a six month sentence. Exactly three months into your sentence, a deadly epidemic killed a vast majority of the earth's population. Due to either a lack of contact with those infected with the virus or a natural immunity, you are alive in this cell. Until it is safe to leave you will live here, free from disease. It is of extreme importance that you do not leave your cell. To alleviate the extreme grief and suicidal tendencies you had been expressing upon learning of the fate of your family, we administered an experimental drug on you which is designed to erase your entire memory. You may experience headaches and drowsiness. The best way to combat this is to stay hydrated and eat what we have stocked up for you. In your cabinet there is enough bottled water, beef jerky, dried mangos, and assorted nuts to last approximately two weeks. We will come and restock your supply in twelve to sixteen days. Have a pleasant day.

- Dr. Chambers

I awoke on the cold floor at dusk. With the paper still clutched in my hands, I must have fainted upon reading the letter. The second reading elicited tears that would glisten on my cheeks as I slept. *I want out.*

The Second Day

The late morning greeted me with an empty stomach, a heavy chest and a bright room. The clock's

red hands told me I had slept in until 11:05 a.m. The night was filled with vivid dreams that I forgot the second my eyes opened. The soft blanket covered my face as I slept through the glaring sunrise. A growl from my stomach reminded me that I had no recollection of my last meal. *I deserve a nice breakfast.* Before opening the bedside cabinet, I decided I needed to hide this letter. A third read would place me back into last night's emotions. I folded it into thirds and stowed it in the empty top drawer of the dresser. *You can stay there.*

The huge bottom drawer was completely stocked with everything from the letter. I downed an entire bottle of water and began to open a bag of dried mangos when I heard a familiar sound. The bird was here to see me again. Her beak carried a blue envelope.

Despite the contents of what she had given me on the first day, her presence lifted the corners of my mouth. *My first smile.* This time, I gently took the envelope directly from her beak. *She trusts me.* Our interaction dashed the clouds out of my brain. I waved to her as she flew home.

Munching on dried mangos, I read what was inside the envelope. It was handwritten in pencil on notebook paper.

Hi! It's Diego! I haven't written to you since I left for my big camping trip a couple months ago but I figured you might be pretty lonely. Everything that happened probably seems bad now, but you'll be out in a couple of months and we can catch up with a weekend trip to the lake. We can bring Lilly and the twins. I bet you miss 'em like hell but imagine how happy those little guys are gonna be to see their dad after six months. Ya know, I love all this nature and the RV and the peaceful seclusion of everything, but it's getting cold and you can only play solitaire so many times before it gets boring. I'll be back in the city tomorrow and I was thinking about paying you a visit. Here was my view yesterday morning. You can hang this up if you're really missing the lake.

See ya soon!

In Diego's photo, a beautiful sunrise shimmered

upon an unfamiliar lake as mountains framed the horizon. *What a beautiful world I'm not living in.* Rereading the letter, I assumed Diego must have been a close friend of mine. Because of his long, isolated camping trip, he hasn't been infected nor does he even know about the virus. I would have wanted to be able to convince him to stay out of whatever city this is. *There's no way to write back.*

I read one sentence over and over. *I was a father.* I was not angry with the virus that killed them. I was angry with myself for getting locked up instead of spending the last few months of my children's lives with them. The last time I saw them I probably was on the other side of bullet proof glass and wearing a jumpsuit, maybe the one I was wearing that day. I wanted to go back to a life I never lived. I wanted to change a past that seemed to never happen.

These thoughts exhausted me. They made me hate myself. I spent the latter half of the day marinating in them and trying to sleep. Just before dozing off at around 6:30 p.m. the bird returned, quickly dropping off a red envelope as I watched from my bed, and fluttering off into what I assumed was the autumn sky. I could not handle another wave of sadness. Putting it on my nightstand, I decided to read it first thing in the morning. *Goodnight, Hell. See you tomorrow.*

The Third Day

Sleep eluded me. Every thought just piled up on the last one. It felt like I was gaining weight in my aching head. I needed to read this red letter before my mind fabricated something worse than reality. The note was written in pen and the paper looked as if it was torn out of a diary. I began reading at 7:55 a.m.

I hope this reaches you well. I'm Charlotte. It's very nice to meet you! I own a bakery just across the street from the prison. I'm writing in the hopes that you are in that top floor cell all alone, just like me. If I'm being honest I'm not sure how much longer I can go on without talking to a soul. The loneliness has gotten more intense in these last weeks. I got so happy when I saw two birds fly up to your cell yesterday. I really wish you're in there and can write back to me. Seeing those birds gave me so much hope. I just don't want to set myself up for disappointment. I haven't seen or

heard from anybody since the epidemic began. It seems like the virus attacks spontaneously because there are bodies lying on the street and sitting in cars. I can see three from my window right now. I guess I've got some sort of immunity to the virus. The newspaper says one in every 100 people will be immune to it. It's hard to find the motivation to keep waking up when I feel like the last person on earth. I bet you feel the same way. It is a pretty evening tonight, but your window doesn't face the sunset. Trust me when I say that there still is beauty in this world. I love to remind myself of that by playing the piano in the music store across from my bakery when I get lonely. They have a nice, big grand piano on wheels. Tomorrow at sunrise I'll wheel it below your cell and play something for you if you're in there. Listen for me at around 8:00. Please write back if you can. Thank you for reading this.

Love, Charlotte

As I read the last line, I heard the most beautiful sound. Just outside the window, a gorgeous melody awakened the dawn. It made me feel alive. I am not alone. Listening to Charlotte play was the most memorable, happy moment in my life. Not one song was recognizable, but neither was anything else in life. For about thirty minutes, she played lush song after song, just to give joy to a stranger. I savored every note and chord until they were gone. As she left, the bird flew to my window again. Blue envelope.

Hi, I'm not sure if you know this, but there are bodies everywhere. The streets are littered with cars and corpses. My apartment building is empty. Newspapers talk about a highly contagious epidemic. This is horrible. Everyone's just dead. I bet you're not. If it's contagious, I figure you're alive in there. You haven't been in contact with anyone since this started. I'm coming to get you. I've visited you before. I know all the cells are locked electronically. I'd wager the only thing keeping you in there is a generator. That's where I'm headed. I'll be there by 7:00 tonight. Just hang in there, you'll be okay.

Seeya soon.

I had so many questions for him. Diego was the only person who could teach me who I was. Part of

me was scared to disobey Dr. Chambers, but I needed to get out. I couldn't live in this purgatory with nothing but my own thoughts. I wanted to get out and see Charlotte. *She needs me.* I was so lucky that Diego came into town today. Three days in the cell felt like an eternity of clock ticks. I just needed to wait a few more hours for him. The buzz of anticipation tingled throughout my body. I paced in tight circles and cracked my knuckles so I wouldn't explode with anxious excitement. I looked back at the socket in the wall. *What's it for?* The bird interrupted my inquiry with a red envelope--Charlotte!

Hey! It's me. Did you like the music? I hope you did. I saw another bird at your window this morning. You must be in there. You have to be so lonely in your little cell, but I understand if you don't want to talk to me. I'm not a stranger to the silence anymore. I really don't know how much longer I can go on without hearing from anyone. I'll be patient for you tonight. Maybe you'll send me something at dinner time. That would change my mind. I'll hold out for you. I'll be thinking of you.

Love, Charlotte

If only I could tell her that I cared about her. I care about her more than anything in my little world. I wanted the bird to take me to her. You are not alone, Charlotte.

All I could do was wait. Diego was coming as fast as he could but it could never be fast enough. Hurry the hell up. I stared up the clock. 6:50, 6:55, 7:59. That last minute took years. As the minute hand reached twelve, the cell door opened. Freedom! Red light flooded the hallway as the siren blared in my ears. It was terrifyingly glorious. I stepped out of the cell, finding only locked doors. There wasn't another cell in the hallway. I felt trapped again. At the end of the hallway was an unlocked maintenance locker filled with tools. I looked closer and found an electronic panel with two arrows. One aimed down, one up. I examined it further. On the back was a red plug. I picked it up and paced back to my cell. Think fast, think fast. Red plug. Red socket! It fit! I plugged it in and the cell door automatically closed. At the same time, The bird hastily dropped off another letter. White envelope.

He shouldn't have done that. Movement was

detected on the bottom floor and when we checked the cameras, he began smashing the generator to pieces. Luckily the building's security system activated and electrocuted him. He is dead. It is a direct order for you to stay in your cell. There's nothing for you out there. The world is gone. We are all you have. We need you. You need us.

-Dr. Chambers

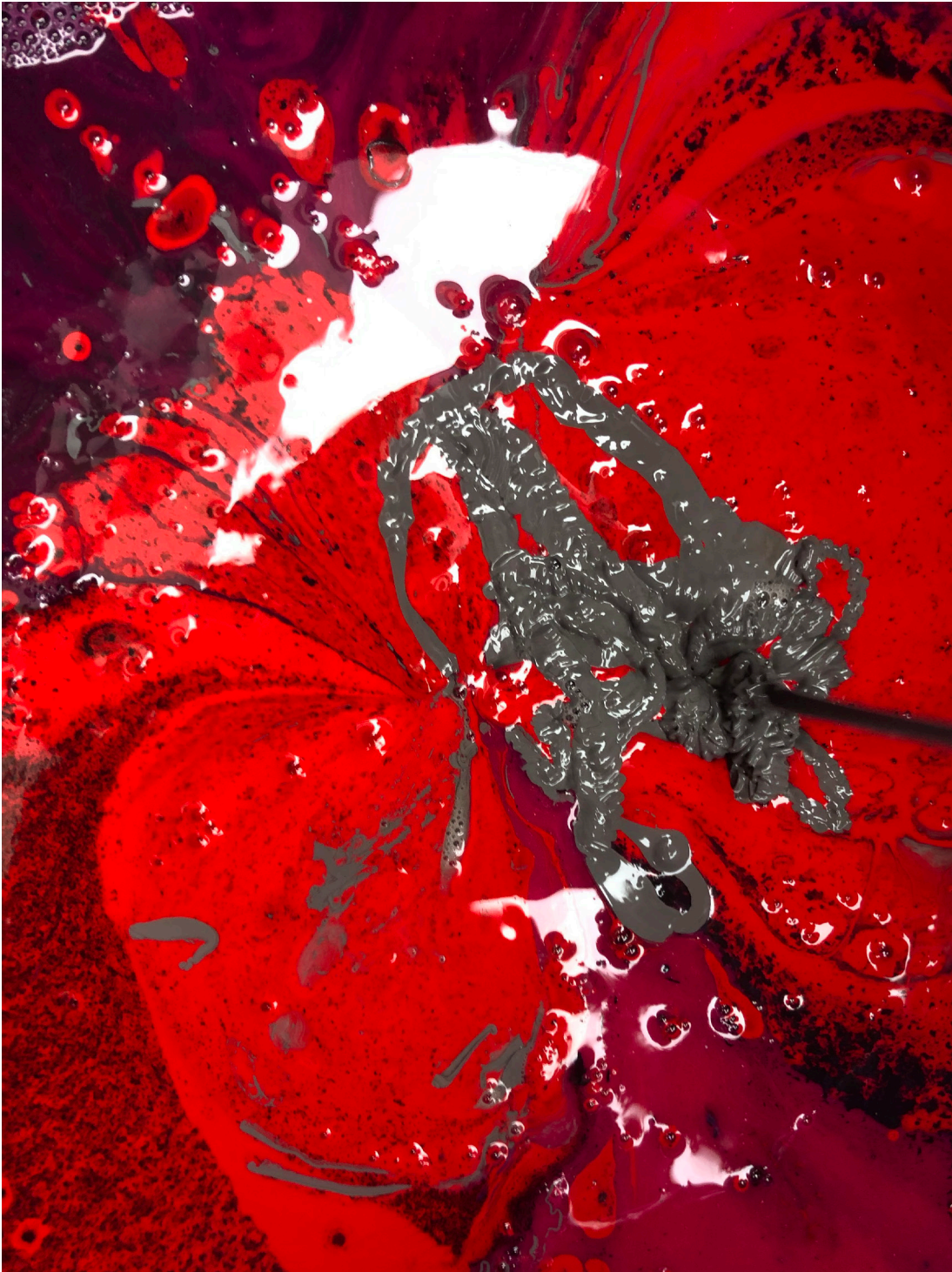
Diego is dead because of me. He gave his life to save mine. He wanted freedom for me. My liberation was his last act. I couldn't let that be in vain. A tear dribbled down my cheek as I pushed the down arrow. Machinery began its murmur. My balance weakened. Looking out the window, I could see that the cell was slowing dropping. I counted six floors before the door opened. I sprinted out of my cell. Freedom!

"Thank you, Diego." I said before opening the double doors of the prison. Across the street, a candle lit building donned the sign "Charlotte's Bakery". I burst through the doors to find a cute shop with dainty tables and chairs. Behind the counter was a wooden desk and a door. On the counter laid the most beautiful, freshly baked red velvet cake I could ever imagine. A note in Charlotte's handwriting and a black pen rested on the desk.

To my only friend. When you're reading this, I will be gone. I'm sorry if my shop is messy. I've decided to go to the back room to die if you don't want to see my corpse. I'm sorry I couldn't be more patient in waiting for you. But that doesn't matter now. What matters is you're free. Against all odds you've escaped your cell. I am proud of you for finding the freedom that I could not. Freedom is not a state of being, it is a state of mind. I'm aware that this doesn't seem like a great prize after escaping, but you're here. Welcome to the world. I baked you a cake. I'm not sure how fresh it will be when you get this, for all I know you never will, but I'd like you to enjoy it anyway. Thank you for being my hope. I wish you the best of luck.

Love, Charlotte

"Thank you, Charlotte."



Paint Splatter Mix

Elliot Pickering Pick '22
Photograph

A Transitioning Season

Chris Fisher '19

Life retreats, slowing its breathing
Death marches, bringing change it's seeming
A transitioning season.

The burning, orange sustainer
Chooses to hide its face
The cold, blue and grey blanket
Creeps in to take its place
A transitioning season.

Before it came,
We spent most of our days
Outside;
But now the stale, stinging wind and Lifeless, grey clouds
Warn us, so we stay
Inside.
A transitioning season.

The sweet smell of blooming and growing fades,
Along with laughter losing its warm embrace.
The still, steel like trees start to become fluid and sway,
Life was vivid, vibrant, thriving
Now it has changed to a dark shade of grey.



Jeff Buckley

Hunter Modlin '20
Apple pencil on Notability

HONORABLE MENTION, ART

The Craftsman

Adam Graham '19

HONORABLE MENTION, POETRY

The smell of gasoline and scorched wood is in the air.
Wood shavings and tools litter the ground.
Model planes, perfectly scale,
scattered around the room.

Going deeper into the shop,
the sounds of power tools
fill the warm air.

Diligently working he sits
in his chair undisturbed.
Getting closer,
the aromas of
Epoxy and melted plastic overwhelm my senses.

As I walk up behind him
he says
"Here son, let me show you how to do this"

Rubicon

Kevin Mitchell '19

She is the one single perfect snowflake
On the mountain, when the storm, ready to break
The wind still blowing and nothing in sight
She shines like the North Star on a clear night
Guiding my heart to the good in the world
That is its summit to the perfect world
And denoted the affection of the soul
A sense of confidence from her platform shoes
And her humor will never stop to amuse
Sometimes our future together scares me
But I know our time now is filled with glee.
So I proceed to gaze at her smile
As she drives us around for a mile,
Find a spot and stay there for awhile.

Look Afar White Ships

Lorenzo Garcia '19

Look afar white ships you can see.
There at harbor, waiting for me.
Wait though sad and lost I am now.
Love has gone, youth's grin now a frown.

Tell long tales of the lover's embrace.
Sweet Aphrodite entrances the face.
Men farm stronger than you or I.
Feast with her, fall at high nigh'.

Tell of court where ladies smile.
Dance with kings and jesters a while.
Sleep lulls them and feeds the fire.
Caught at daybreak, sent to the pyre.

Tell of taverns with the strumpets.
Yearning, beckon, call like trumpets.
Bulls do follow, eager to stay.
Lie and die, a pillow of hay.

Tell the man who mourns his love.
Died in bed, no child, no dove.
Death once stole his loves away.
Left to live, regret the day.

Move you now by story and rhyme.
Indeed, a journey for all of time.
Herpes, poets, pigs, and prophets,
Shadows, fantoms, false and fake.
 Never believe, 'tis not true,
 The lie of past times, that love is meant for you.

JESUIT
HIGH SCHOOL



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