

Imaginary Gardens
Arlington Catholic's Art and Literary Magazine

The Spring 2019 edition includes work by:

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“The Trouble with Poetry”

by Sophie Pratt

The trouble with poetry, I realized
While looking out the frosted window,
Silently watching a bird picking at berries on a bush,
It's feet pressing softly in the snow.

The trouble with poetry is
the struggle to put pen to paper,
The flood of ideas and thoughts flooding my mind,
Similar to the pile of broken poems
Piling up near the trash can

Creating a shadow over my paper as I try to write.
The feeling of embarrassment
That my work is something to be a shamed of-
That it is never good enough.

Then there's the bird.
His careful movements as he picks out
Each berry,

Studying them as I am studying him.
Do you think he is embarrassed?
The bird continues oblivious to the fact
That I am pushing all my attention on to his little body and work.

I have always liked birds,
Their carelessness when they fly in front of your car
Is dangerous, but admirable-they don't think, they do.
Birds would be amazing poets.

You would think so too,
Because you know how to fly,
And I am still in my nest.

“The Rise of Education”

by Samantha Klein

These are the harsh hands
That foster our boredom and condemn our creativity,
The preceptors who believe art to be delusional
And math to be superior,
And that character is confined only to books.

Our minds have been geared
To believe in the corrupt system
To never question it
To always obey the rules
Because there are indirect consequences.

But all actions are based on selfishness
Where we have little thought for other humans,
Where we grow to mind our business
And where it is unusual to help the less fortunate—
What a radical statement that is.

Morality is lost in the air
Like the wind’s mindless worries,
Caught up in the parallels of the Earth/

I wonder: what’s next?
The future holds a place for you and me,
It will unlock doors of the universe
And eventually we’ll end up where we belong.

But learning is so critical,
There is constant pressure by officials,
People who rarely even know what they officiate.

In a world that desires perfection,
My hope is that we utilize our curiosity
And use education as a tool for discovery.

“The Long Way”

by Olivia Copeland

2:45 is the bus.

It smells like the ghost of
paint, a lingering washroom,
and a wrinkled tissue.

3:30 is the train.

It smells like business casual, a cup of
iced coffee, and a breath of
fresh, unfamiliar air.

3:55 is the train.

It smells like a stuffy head-cold,
musty, and ripping cloth.

4:30 is the bus.

And I don't care what it smells like
because it sure isn't good,
but I'm almost home, anyway.

“Lovebirds”

by Ned O'Keefe

As I write in my baby blue plaid pajamas,

I constantly revise this vortex of mine.

Looking for the perfect story with more than 2 people.

Instantly a perfect couple springs to my mind!

A Romeo and Juliet.

With disapproving parents and friends.

They can be lovebirds like two brown hens standing in the rain with each other during a spring storm.

Suddenly it's summer and they're eating off a velvety table cloth and find cicadas in their food.

In the autumn they close their cozy summer cottage as the bright red leaves fall on their steps.

Finally a white blanket covers the red leaves, leaving the lovebirds alone without the disapproving family and friends in the winter wonderland with no cicadas.

“The Handheld Mirror”

by Nia Pires

When I look through you I see a bold future
I see a young woman who will become something wonderful
Something great, powerful, and successful
She will surpass every goal built on the stand of her shoulders
And do everything and anything she has ever set her mind to.

Focused to build off her youth
She steers her gears by the glance of the mirror
Winking through the reflection of her future,
enforcing her goals and pushing her to her accomplishments
From the shattering glass to the delicate reflector
She challenges her struggles to spark the nearby future.

Her challenges led to a worthwhile destination
Her destination led to a never ending growth
In which her growth led to patience, but patience led to waiting
It all sounded confusing to her,
But she fought for her life and smashed . . . that . . . mirror.

Blocking out the non supporters
She still managed to push, no matter who she had on her side
Because at the end of the day it was just her. . . and the handheld mirror
The same handheld mirror that enlightened the presence of the echoed
future.



Photo by:
Kirsten Roddenberry
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“Progress”

by Sage Chircu

Are we moving forwards or backwards?
It seems only natural to claim that we are creatures of progress,
But how can we say this with such certainty when--
upon closer examination--
a step forward reveals itself
as a push backward on the ground.

When we feign bravery and run towards something,
are we merely trying to run away?

Not that it makes much difference anyhow,
in a world like this
where no matter how hard we try to stay back,
we're always pushed ahead
some way or another.

“The Printing Press”

By Iva Dujmic

The printing press lies,
In the corner of a dimly lit room,
Its weary wood creaking with each
Mechanical click,
The kind that irks the still mind,
But amuses diverted thoughts.

What do these splattered symbols feel,
As the dull tune breathes novel creations?

Are they fearful of their black and white futures?
Or do they, like us, simply
Grow distracted of such resonances
Which create for them companions,
Standing side by side in abundant solidarity,
Separated only by the occasional
Comma, period, or hyphen.

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“Wool Caps”

by Alianna Sampson

I watch them race
with a hot coffee in hand
from the heated cafe window

Two boys.
One small and ungainly.
The other looked as though someone had stretched him.
For he was the sickly thin form of lanky.
Quite the pair they make.

I allow my judgemental gaze to shift,
locking eyes with a face of paper.
The magazine's smirk is laced with poison.
Expectations created to pierce the fragile heart.

I find myself relieved—
for these odd boys in wool caps and muddy boots,
know not of hate and envy
that we devour with hungry eyes
and heavy hearts.
So I open my laptop
and write my plastic article.
Wondering when the boys
will have a soul of stone like me.



Photo by: Sage
Chircu

“Growing Up”

by Sean Kay

This is the town I grew up in,
The 2-dimensional carpet of a town.

I would run through the streets,
racing cars, around turns and
Through buildings with my brother.

We passed banks and schools,
Churches and train tracks.

Everyday we would do this,
Until my brother grew up and I with him,
Secretly longing to go back and race cars in my hometown.

“Friends”

By Justin Loughlin

Friends
And such was my company,
not the best I'd agree.
But they're always there for me
having friends such as these,
surprised I don't pay a fee

They make sure I'm okay.
Inquire about my day
Influencing what I say
Dismissing my dismay

I love my friends to death.
For if my life were to rest
I know they'd do their best
Even in this world of mess
To carry on my crest.

“Maman”

by Mia McWethy

I realized something

As you and I were dancing around the kitchen island one day,
Listening to Chaka Khan's smooth waves of voiced symphony,
Chopping onions for a routine taco Tuesday.

When I was a little girl,

You told me there was a little man that lived behind the couch.

His home made of dust bunnies,

He could only continue to live with us if I never stopped loving.

With bright, wide eyes, I believed your every word.

After school each day, there I sat

perched up on my bottle cap knees, peeking over the edge of the green
satin couch you had once nursed me on.

Time went by and the rose blossoms of my heart

Flourished in the glow of its one love, the sun.

You raised me with fiery confidence– the lioness and her cub.

Your fragile hands continued to sculpt me

As I continued to age.

There must've come a time when that love morphed into resentment

And words exchanged became minimal but hostile,

Cold, gusts of skin-splitting wind

The adolescent mind is ignorant of its selfishness,

Naive to the sword of its tongue.

But here we are.

I, preparing to leave the nest

And you, preparing to mend the reopened wounds that I had once
inflicted.

To the woman that carried me in her cocoon,

Guiding me through the metamorphosis of that funny thing called child-
hood,

I have found myself internally weeping in a puddle frightening realization

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That I don't ever want to be without you.
I look over my shoulder, only to find you swinging a towel over your head
while shimmying your shoulders to the melodies of
Snoop Dogg and Dr. Dre.
It is impossible not to love you.

“Bread and Olive Oil”

by Iva Dujmic

On the worn wooden table,
I gently lay the tray
Filled with fresh bread and garlic swimming
In its golden pool of olive oil,
The way you always liked it, I remembered,
As I watched it hover below my tired gaze.

I sat down across from you,
Gazing as your curved, wrinkled fingers
Grasped the bread and gingerly dipped it into
The rich pool over and over.

And on this day, I wonder if
You'll let me say goodbye yet again
As I watch the fine wrinkles on your face
Deepen with each passing year and the whiteness
Of your hair grow as pale and dull as an uninspired canvas.

So as long as the waves meet their rocky shores,
And you sit alone in the kitchen with no tray,
I hope you know that I am still remembering
The bread, the olive oil: That epic sight
Of a remote and beloved home.



Photo by: Han Mach

“Red Is Love”

by Michelle Buccieri

Red is love.

Red is a sign of anger
When you fail a test that you’ve studied for
When you are grounded by your parents

Red is Valentine’s Day
A day for hearts
A day for chocolate and candies
A day for love

Red is bright and full of meaning
The first color in a rainbow
One of the three colors in America’s flag
Stop signs and red lights

Red is associated with your heart
The most vital organ
The organ that gives you the ability to love
The reason there is passion and connection
The understanding to be compassionate and caring
It’s there so you can survive
The reason you are living
To make a difference in the world

Red is embarrassment
Humiliation, shyness, self consciousness
When you fall in front of a huge crowd
Talking to your whole class in the front of the room
Or when someone makes you so angry your face turns as red as a tomato

Red is blood
Gallons inside one body
Donating to give to others
When you fall and scrape your knee because you weren’t paying attention

Red is an intense feeling of affection
Fondness, Warmth, Intimacy
What grows people closer
What makes people feel true happiness
What drives people

Red is love.

“Eternal Flame”

by Lindsay Coffey and Andra Preda

My love ignites the smallest spark into a treacherous fire,
Suffocating the most minuscule whisper of a sound.
The flames of her anger engulf my silence, growing higher.
When I finally spit out a word, she hurls it back around,

Deepening every gash and darkening every bruise.
She curses that night with her anger and inability to be wrong.
No matter how sincere my apologies are, I always lose.
Not only are the fights deadly, but infinitely long.

I hate the days that follow our screaming matches,
The dullness, scarcity of words and lack of life.
I strive to avoid those fatal, nightly clashes
Because, even after all the conflict, she is still my wife,

And I have loved her every moment since the day she took my name.
I am willing to withstand everything from her eternal flame.



Photo by:
Caroline Kenney

“The Time”

by Katherine Mannion

Other than the time I told you I hated you,
everything should be obvious.

How my ocean blue eyes grow three sizes
everytime you walk in the room.
Or when I fumble my words
when I start talking to you.

Or the time that you told me you liked my poem
and I became speechless,
because someone that you admire
admiring you is an unexplainable feeling.

Now that I think about it,
include the time that I said I hated you,

because I hated you
for not being the person I loved,
in that moment.

And I missed you.



Photo by:
Liana Winans

“I’m Sorry”

by Sage Chircu

I’m sorry about the way everything turned out,
You have to understand I didn’t mean for things to be this way...
I’m sorry I believed your tired smiles and your half-hearted jokes just
because, selfishly,
I didn’t want to admit that you were changing...
That you were slipping away from me...
That one day you would leave for good
And never come back to bless me with your infectious grins.
I’m sorry that sorry doesn’t cut it,
(How can we expect a simple 5-letter word
To make up for things that can’t even be put into words?)
But sorry is all I know how to say--
It’s all I can give you.
And I’m sorry that you’ll never even see this apology anyhow...
I’m sorry,
It’s too late to make up for anything now,
But I’ll still go on saying “sorry” because I don’t know how else to make
things seem right.

That 5-letter word gives me a false sense of security
That makes it just a bit easier for me to move on.
I’m sorry my motives for apologizing are so selfish,
But if you’re gone, who else could I possibly care about,
Other than myself?

People move on when they start thinking of themselves,
And I’m sorry that one day,
As I look at your picture in one of my photo albums
With my grandchildren gathered around me, craning to see all the
washed-out pictures,
I won’t even remember your name anymore...
Because sometimes it’s better to move on
Than to be controlled by an obligation to utter that 5-letter word.
When I’m older and wiser,
I won’t even be sorry anymore...
But until then,
I’m still sorry.

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“The Flying Notebook”

by Maddie Cox

But tonight it flies around me in circles
Sailing through a column of moonlight,
Then beating its paper wings even more.

Once swooping down so low
As to ripple the surface of a lake
In a dream in which I happen to be drowning.

Drowning in the words I could have said
To you when you left.
All of the “buts”,
“What ifs”,
“I could”,
And “wait.”

They reach my neck and I gasp for air to fill my lungs
As I stretch my arm out towards the moon,
Reaching for my notebook to save me
Before it's too late.

“Silence”

by Ryan Browne

The silence of the moon
deafens me this morning
as it sets in the west,
its brilliant rays a pale and slender white,
unlike the obtrusive yellow beams
that discover me
no matter where I hide during the day.
These moon rays caress me
and I love them and
the quiet stillness they bring
Not silence because silence is deafening,
but stillness, because it is the calm
before the day.

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“Poetic Silence”

By Caroline Whitney

“The silence before I wrote a word,”

Before my journey began,
When I was too little to write,
And poetry poured out of my mouth in baby babbles.

Before I met you,
And before you showed me the soft sunsets that shine day and night.
Before you turned my soul into a dark abyss,
And turned my loving poetry into cold, bitter language,
That only the lonely and deaf open their ears to.

But all of this was before I fell in love,
Not with myself, as that is a never-ending struggle,
Not with you,
But with this art.

The silence ended when I picked up my pen
And poured my mind onto pages that no longer sit unused.

Because poetry doesn't exist in silence,
Yet it creates it with every breath-taking stanza,
That forces a hush over the crowd,
For silence is a result of genius.

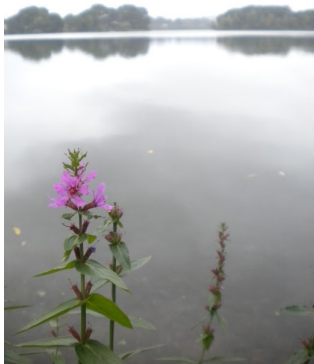


Photo by:
Liana Winans

“Untitled”

by Kylee Reekie

The heads of roses begin to droop,
they can sense it.
The dark feeling whirling about.

The thick fog
that's sent everyone into a haze
of blame and asking why.

The roses feel it.
The pressure to stay tall and blooming,
to be a source of smiles and comfort.

But that's a lot to carry,
they're just flowers, you know.

“Fall”

by Liana Winans

My skin tingles with the crisp, cool air
The gusts of wind whistle through my hair
I breathe in deep, then let it go
I'm walking in leaves, which soon will be snow

I peer at pumpkins, rows and rows
Which one will I choose? Nobody knows
I smell the delicious scent of pie
Now up in this tree, high in the sky

What's this feeling, not quite clear?
Oh, it is that time of year
I'm having a ball-
Woo-hoo... it's FALL!!

“Untitled”

by Ann Venditti

When I planned this out,
I was wearing your favorite shirt, and your favorite shorts,
and I was stable feeding off your poison.

Whenever I shot at a new beginning,
the velvety promises of a smooth liar buzzed inside my right ear,
like a cicada pleading to be acknowledged.

I remember the fall night,
when the first lies were promised,
the air was crisp but not enough to fracture the sentences.

Each letter forced me to walk one step farther
into your web,
like a vortex swirling with false dreams.

But now in the dead of winter,
as I look over what I once wrote,
I am wearing my favorite shirt, and my favorite jeans,
and now I understand that your grip on me was too tight,
and I take my pens and add a new point of view,
my own.

My friends gathered from the center,
and entered my corners,
each speaking of individual,
their voices mingling into one crowd,
bringing in their own changes to my planned poem.

Our conclusion is, that being fooled by your syllables,
is like being touched by frost bite,
and this harsh wind is finally enough to break your lips apart.

All that we leave for you,
are a few brown hens,
standing alone,
in a rainstorm.

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“Faith”

by Will Mance

Some do not have anything
others have too much
Yet for some, they have some faith

Whether it is in a person,
a God,
or some inanimate object,

Faith is always there.
When at a soup kitchen,
you do not see people denouncing society

For letting them down.
You see cheaply made clothes
with American flags

You see veterans
unable to sustain themselves,
and they faithfully follow those who have failed them,

who are literally feeding them scraps compared
to the lavish specialties these feeders eat daily.
And yet, somehow, they are proud of country,
even though country has nothing to give back.



Photo by:
Maddie
VanWinkle

“Hunger”

by Ryan Browne

Today I didn't eat
what is the most important meal of the day.
I was too rushed to get to the public bus
that only comes once every half-hour
so that I could be in my private school on time
where I may or may not pay attention
to the things that clearly have no impact on my future.
Oh well.

I'll just grab something in the cafeteria.
I can spare the dollar-fifty it takes to get a muffin
because last week I found six quarters
(There were seven but I left the last one in it's corner.
Who needs an extra twenty-five cents anyways?)
And as I chomp contentedly on my brand-new, fresh, delicious, choco-
late-chip muffin
something in the back of my mind itches,
as only ideas of social justice do;
What about the others?
The ones to whom my muffin would mean an extra month of life
and to whom my education would mean an escape from the rut of their
life
and to whom my bus would be a ticket to freedom.
And to whom the most important meal of the day
would be the only thing they eat today.
So I take the last bite,
and walk around the corner
where I found my quarters
And pick up the last one.
A second later, and it's in my pocket.
God knows I might need it tomorrow.

“Childhood in a Waiting Room Chair”

By Hannah Cox

I read today that foster care only goes so far.
That when a child grows up
In a cyclone of hundred mile winds,
Winds that toss and turn them from one home to another,
The storm throws them out to fend for themselves,
As their heads are still spinning
And their legs can barely hold them up.
A foster child lives a lonely life,
Yet at 21 it turns into an impossible one
When they're given 300 dollars, a trash bag of clothes,
And a shove into the bitterness of adult life.
No connections from the past,
and no clear path towards the future.

And I imagine a hopeful child in the back corner of a hospital waiting room,
Barely noticeable in the synthetic overhead hospital lighting.
She sits patiently, anxiously.
She waits—
Not for a sick loved one to approach like many others,
But for any one of the doctors, nurses, or patients
To come claim her as their new child.

She watches as the lawyer with a broken leg
Returns to his wife and son.
She can't pry her pathetic gaze from the couple
Carrying their baby out of the hospital.
What a lucky kid—
His parents had already done more for him
Than hers have ever done for her.
Finally she looks around at the other people waiting.
They are waiting for unknown answers,
Whether their loved ones will be okay,
Yet her answer, she has realized,
May be more obvious and inevitably lonely than she thought.

She has waited her whole life for an angel to come forth
through those double doors and carry her away,
Yet instead she must find solace in this waiting room
Awaiting the savior that may never come.
The older she gets the less she looks up
when someone walks out the doors into the room where she sits,
For no one wants an old foster kid,
They'll surely be a burden
with their traumatized eyes and protective emotional barriers.
Soon our poor, patient protagonist
Will be kicked to the curb
And everything she had hoped for will be whittled down
Until all she is left with is "\$300 for her clothing allowance
and a trash bag of belongings."

"Carry"

by Maddie Cox

I want to carry you
And for you to carry me
The way voices are said to carry over water.

Over the thousands of fish swimming just below the surface.
Over the whale flipping its tail.
Over the dolphin pod swimming gracefully.
Over all of the vibrant coral

All the way to you.
Only for it to say
Three simple words.



Photo by:
Kirsten
Roddenberry

“Inanimate Object”

by Alianna Sampson

Dear Paper,

I would say long time no see,
But I suppose that would be a lie.
Perhaps it was fate that brought us together.
The guiding hand of a being we shall never understand.
Today I am gentle.
Loopy cursive leaves a tattoo upon your calm visage.
But some days I am angry.
I try to erase our past and through my blinding rage,
Leave a small tear in you.
Grey marks stain as a reminder of what I cannot repair.
Then there are the days where muse guides the hand of another.
I dance with the thrill of a new idea and you become a canvas of thoughts.
Time has passed.
You have long yellowed with age and I have gone dull.
But now I rest beside you and dream,
Of when we were simply part of the same tree.

Your Truly,
Pencil

“Swings”

By Petra Dujmic

“Heaven to Earth” is what we used to say,
as our swings fluttered the summer’s breeze,
when the sun’s rays sparkled our juice,
and dribbled down weathered trees.

I remember thinking how brave I was,
when you told me “let go of the chains!”,
and I flew from the swing over sinking sand
and landed on open plains.

And you were there too, when autumn came,
while pumpkins trailed up to our door,
bringing your costume and large pillowcase
so we could ask to sleepover on the floor.

Christmas came without adieu
and we went to celebrations in school,
twirling our dolls dressed in red and green,
while ripping the raffles for yule.

And when the frigid mornings breathed
onto our hands covered with mittens and wool,
we ran through the streets and into the park
with our smiles frozen but full.

Even now, I can laugh when I think of that
time my mom had ordered a cake,
and it slipped off the plate and into your hands
licking frosting, beginning to shake.

You had always said you could make us laugh,
by saying the simplest of words,
and that you could help us climb up any tree,
and watch the passage of birds.

But I especially loved those moments when
we sat on the elementary school's lawn,
and talked about the current events
with those that were vivid but gone.

And so I hope if you read this one autumn's day
with the golden sun streaking your worth,
you will feel just as I have felt,
swinging from Heaven and back to
Earth.

“The Things I Carry”

by Julia Hourihan

I carry my backpack
Filled with pens, pencils, notebooks, binders, and folders.
Inside those notebooks, binders, and folders,
I carry my work:
Essays, journals, lab reports, chapter outlines.
My pencil case overflows
With hair elastics for bad hair days,
Chapstick for the cold weather,
A bracelet for extra elegance,
Pencils for when inspiration strikes,
And colored pens for each class.

I carry organization.
It is my control panel, my safety net, my backbone.
I carry a bag -
Not a purse, just a bag -
Filled with my emergency makeup kit, my white wallet, some ticket stubs,
my vanilla hand cream, and my polka dot umbrella.

I also carry ambition.
What I will be and what I will accomplish.
Who I will be and who I will inspire.
Where I will go and where I will leave.
When I will rise above and when I will fall below.
How I will overcome and how I will conquer.
What, Who, Where, When and How -
I carry questions.

To go with my questions,
I carry punctuation.
I carry a period for when I need a break.
I carry a dash for when I need a breath, but have lots more to say.
I carry an exclamation point because sometimes, things need a little more excitement.
I carry a question mark, because, like I said,
I carry questions.

My body carries my brain, my eyes, my lips, my shoulders, my arms, my legs, and my feet.

My brain carries my thoughts -

Thoughts on love and war, good and evil, right and wrong.

These thoughts are very heavy.

Sometimes I have to let them free,

Just so I have less to carry.

My eyes, they see what others carry:

Hope, curiosity, promise, and familiarity.

My lips are probably the most important because they carry my words.

Everything I will ever want to say

Must sprout up my throat,

Tickle along my tongue,

And surpass the restricting gate of my teeth to finally leave my lips.

My shoulders carry my worries:

My past, my present, and my future.

They carry my pain, my secrets, and my triumphs.

My arms, they do all the physical carrying,

While my legs, they carry me.

My feet, they carry everywhere I've been

And everywhere I'm going

Like back to my seat as I finish this poem.



Photo by: Kirsten Roddenberry

“What About the Hens?”

by Rena Ruggiero

We are all lost in our own vortex of thought,
the three of us,
spinning and spinning in our realities,
as the brown hens are stuck standing in the rain-

the inescapable storm of early fall.
Or is it summer?
Maybe it's spring?
While revising I couldn't decide.

While I stand in the middle of my two friends,
comforted by my velvety red pajamas,
my mind suddenly shifts to cicadas-
those bright insects with their long transparent wings.

What is their favorite season?
Do they mind the cold rains and winds of fall?
Or would they prefer the blazing sun of a harsh summer day?
Maybe they don't have a preference.

But I think those brown hens
who won't ever escape the rain of early fall,
would prefer to be standing snugly
in the warmth of the spring sun.

**The following is a collection of French poems and their English translations;
the poems come from the Honors French 4 class.**

“Le Tournesol”

by Moesha Dubuche

le tournesol
tout le monde vient la voir
une vue grandiose
grande et puissante
sa tête est haute
suivre les rayons
la lumière rebondit sur ses pétales
sa tête respire la nuit
quand tout le monde est parti
le tournesol peut dormir

“The Sunflower”

the sunflower
everyone comes to see her
a grandiose sight
large and powerful
her head is high
in order to follow the rays
the light bounces off her petals
her head breathes at night
when everyone has left
the sunflower can sleep

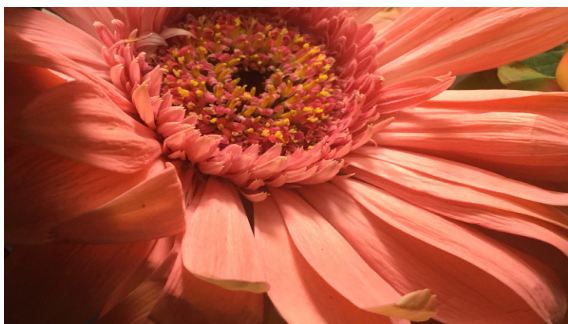


Photo by:
Kirsten Roddenberry

“Hommage à la nature”

by Ann Venditti

Dans ma ville, il y a un grand rocher
Avec mes amis, je vais chaque été
Notre propre grand rocher.
Quand nous le montons,
L'air est frais, c'est intéressant,
Que le petit montagne de pierre est important.
Nous craignons que le rocher disparaisse.
Le soleil va se coucher sous le rocher,
Mais, qu'est-ce qui s'est passé quand nous n'étions pas là?
Est-ce que le soleil s'est couché sous le petit montagne?
Est-ce que l'air a été frais au sommet de le petit montagne?
Notre propre grand rocher,
Tu es nulle part,
Mais tu es partout en même temps.

“An Ode to Nature”

In my city, there is a big boulder.
With my friends, I go there each summer,
Our own big boulder.
When we climb it,
The air is fresh; it's interesting
That this little mountain of rock is important.
We fear that the boulder will disappear.
The sun is going to set beneath the boulder,
But, what happened when we weren't there?
Did the sun set under the little mountain?
Is the air fresh at the summit of the little mountain?
Our own big boulder,
You are nowhere,
But you are everywhere at once.

“Les Montagnes en hiver”

by Andrew Wilcox

En hiver, la saison froide,
quand la neige tombe,
quand les animaux hibernent,
les Montagnes restent éveillés,
les Montagnes restent raffermis.

En été, les Montagnes sont vertes,
les animaux prospèrent,
les plantes prospèrent,
après l'été,
ils vont tous dormir.

Mais, pendant le changement,
les Montagnes voient,
les Montagnes sont,
la neige couvre les Montagnes,
et après, le vert règne.

“The Mountains in Winter”

In winter, the cold season,
When the snow falls,
When the animals hibernates,
The Mountains stay awake,
The Mountains stay closed in.

In summer, the Mountains are green,
The animals thrive,
The plants thrive.
After the summer,
They all go to sleep.

But, during the changing,
The Mountains see,
The Mountains are,
The snow covers the Mountains,
And after, the green reigns.
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“Une Promenade Dans La Nature”

by Kayla Victoria

Je me réveille le matin et me tourne pour voir les abeilles occupées dans
leurs ruches
Je me prépare à marcher devant ma porte et à voir
un beau papillon va rose jaune
Je marche dans ma rue et regarde dans le ciel
un aigle avec son nid pour leur apprendre à voler
Je passe par une rivière et je suis assis sur un rocher
un castor construisant un barrage pour la protection
me regarde et je le regarde
Je rentre à la maison quand le soleil se couche et penser au travail effectué
par la nature
et le miracle de la vie

“A Walk in Nature”

I wake up in the morning and turn to see the bees busy in their hives
I start to walk through my door and see
A beautiful butterfly go--yellow-pink in hue
I walk down my street and look to the sky
An eagle in its nest, teaching how to fly
I pass a river and I am seated on a rock
A beaver constructing a dam for protection
Watches me and I watch it.
I return home when the sun sets et I think of the work done by nature
And the miracle of life

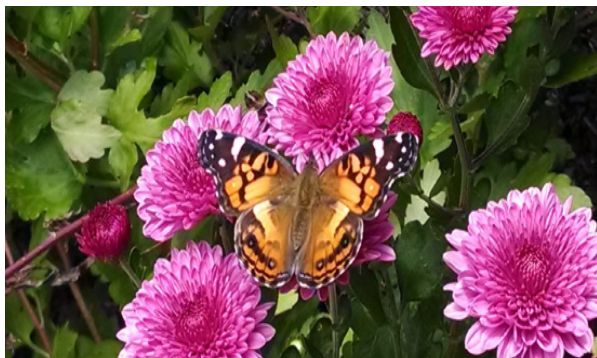


Photo by:
Alianna
Sampson

The following is a collection of prose pieces titled “We live on...”

“My City”

by Alyssa Franczack

We live on Lincoln Road, in a messy, charcoal-colored, three bedroom house, perched on a hill. In the morning, the rattling sounds of our renovations radiate throughout the house, echoing off the walls like a toddler banging pots and pans. The stagnant air, thick with sawdust and debri, clings to the furniture and floors. Aromas of paint and the workers’ cologne waft through the first floor. I usually close myself in my room and wait for the day my beautiful kitchen is complete.

Across from our soon-to-be lovely home, is Crocker Road, leading to Maggie’s house. There, we have sleepovers or draw in the basement while our dogs play. We cuddle up in the cozy living room with our friends, and watch a movie while vying for Teddy’s attention. When we were younger, the dark oak floors would creak as we ran around the house, full of energy. Even though we never get around to it, we always come up with the idea to make place-n-bake cookies in the kitchen.

Adjacent to my house is a street that will take you into Medford square, where you’ll pass historic-looking storefronts and a CVS, as well as my favorite diner- Colleen’s. Colleens’ retro-style is the first thing you notice when you walk in the door. The neon and chrome detailing gives it a unique style that sets it apart from other ice cream parlors, at least in my opinion. I grew up within the slightly-torn booths and sometimes sticky tables. I would go there to celebrate drama performances or just to cool off on hot summer days. Even in the winter, I go for a warm, stretchy grilled cheese and a root beer float. The best feeling in the world is stepping out into the crisp, cool night air with a full stomach and and a smile.

“We Live On...”

by Kristina Lombardo

We live on Lowell Street in a cozy, two-family house. My sister lives on the bottom floor, my parents and I on the top. The rooms are small and remind me of a dollhouse, with more furniture than open space and small things like candles and picture frames placed neatly on shelves and end tables. When you walk in, you can tell it's not just a couple living in the house. I have books, paper, and miscellaneous junk scattered across the house.

If you walk outside, you'll see our yard, well-kept by my dad. My dad has a garden at the end of the driveway as well, where we grow vegetables in the summer. Right next door, a house is being built and has been since August. Across from it is a small convenience store that no one really goes in, but is always open regardless. Aged trees besmear the sidewalks of the streets, reaching desperately from the ground and disturbing the gravel trying to hold it down. The force of the restless roots cracks the pavement and leaves bumps on the path, tripping inattentive walkers.

When you turn the corner, then turn the second corner, you're on Moody Street. It's ridden with traffic like toy cars in a child's playset, close together as though hurriedly placed by a mother moving her child's toys out of the way. The lack of order on the road makes crossing the street almost impossible without losing your foot in the process. I would go on frequent walks up and down the street and became close acquaintances with the man who owns a comic store at the far end of the street. At times, I miss the bitter cold brushing against my face like sheer cotton fabric, tucking my hair behind my ear and making the color rise in my cheeks and nose as I would walk there. He was always there with a smile on his face as I would buy a book. I don't read comics anymore, but I wonder how he's doing.

“We Live On...”

by Sydney Birmingham

We live on Melvin Road in Arlington Massachusetts, in a warm clean two story house that sits on top of a hill in the suburbs. In the early morning, I would wake up to the sound of construction on the road littered with potholes or my dog shouting at a poor soul that had the nerve to walk by our house. By daybreak I was either in school getting the education I needed or at home babysitting my little sister getting independence from being in control. From my bed I would hear the hair dryer blow loudly as my mother tried to tame her hair before heading into the awful traffic she goes through everyday to get her to work.

At the end of our street there was a tiny house with the most magnificent garden you could have ever laid eyes on. The garden grew the following fruits, vegetables, and flowers consistently every year that blossomed around the tall amazing orange tree. The garden was cared for by a little old man who was more than happy to allow those walking by his garden to take a closer look if they wished. People have walked by the secret garden without taking a second glance while others visit it weekly.

Farther down the street was an elementary school. The windows were tainted with finger paint and the bricks on the building were beginning to chip away with old age. There is a sign engraved with gold lettering of the school's name planted into the ground slowly sinking more and more into the dirt as each day passes from children playing with or on it. The forest behind the playground gave the school closure and gave the children imagination.



Photo by:
Kirsten
Roddenberry

“We Live On...”

by Cassandra Baessler

We live on Hillcrest Rd. Waltham, Massachusetts. Our house is a two-floor craftsman style house with a two car garage and a small backyard. It's on a little dead-end street off of Pine Vale Rd. and is on a steep hill that in the winter when cars go up to turn around after they went the wrong way, they quickly discover their poor choice because of all the black ice. The inside of my house is not exactly what people would picture as a cozy house, but my bedroom is the warmest room in the house. With plenty of furniture all around the room, tons of blankets on my bed, and heaps of pictures from young to old with my friends. The part that sets it apart as the coziest room is the view from outside. Right outside the window is a huge tree that in autumn creates the prettiest mixture of yellows, oranges, and red leaves throughout the tree. But when the leaves eventually crinkle up and fall and the first frost comes around the tree is beautifully shown with a light layer of snow covering the branches like what you see in a Christmas morning.

Down the hill from my street is the local park. Every half day Wednesday after school my friends and I would walk over to the park and play a game of knock out or horse at the basketball court or just hang out at the bleachers in the green area. Even though the park was in rough shape, with the court all cracked, the hoops nets missing, and the playground rusted everywhere from the monkey bars to the handles to go down the slides, it held all of my memories from when I was a toddler coming with my grandparents to a middle schooler going with my friends. It is now under renovation and though it is now not going to be an eyesore it will not have the same love as the old one had.

Down a couple blocks is Pizzi's Farm. Running over through the parking lot up to the small, four window stand being shown an endless amount of flavors and toppings as a young child this seemed like the best thing in the world. Pizzi's is own for being the best ice cream stand in town from having the old classics like chocolate and mint chocolate chip to having creative flavors like monkey business and cookie monster. The most memorable part of Pizzi's is the big, rusted tracker that stayed right in the middle of the grass. Children eager to finish their ice cream would take turn climbing the tracker with their insightful parents making sure they do not fall up that they do not ruin the fun either.

**The following is a collection of imitations of the poem
Theme for English B by Langston Hughes.**

“Imitation of English B”

by Kathryn VanWinkle

Go home and write
A page tonight.
And let that page come out of you-
Then, it will be true.

Could it be that simple?
I am a girl from the meaningless Medford
An anti-social bibliophile and caffeine addict.
I work at a pool surveying my patrons
And cleaning the locker rooms
I sink into the pages of books
But melt into the melody of music[a]
I'm someone and no one
To understand me is as futile as knowing the void
I am the ø- the empty set
In cards, your fool
I am the fool but it's more about what I can become

I believe in the idea that people want to change and evolve
That all believe love is love
But that's not the point;
Philosophy
Oblivion
Death
All poetry must come to an end like life and like knowing
Like this assignment

This assignment is supposed to be about me
What I do and what I believe in,
What's important to me
This assignment is important to me
To perceive me is to read this assignment
Everything is meaningless till you see it from another then through your-
self

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“Theme for English 2”

by Anonymous

The instructor said,
Go home and write
a page tonight.
And let that page come out of you—
Then, it will be true.

As if it was such an effortless task.
Which makes her wonder:
is she the only one who struggles to open up?
A sixteen-year-old girl,
who should be giddy with her new privilege,
instead hiding the fresh wounds
just barely being held shut by a few stitches.
She is struggling to heal.

To re-open these wounds and
let this page flow out of her
means allowing the pain to return.
Peeling off the band-aid,
wiping off the makeup
(which had been covering the bruise),
reveals that the cut goes deep.
The line between her own identity and it has blurred.

Yet, she is like most.
She spends her Friday nights with her friends,
sleeps in on Saturday,
and has become a pro at cramming in
studying late on Sunday.
All the while, she is pretending
that it doesn't hurt,
which truly, should be an Oscar winning performance.

By writing what it is true,
she has pulled back the curtain,
like the Great Oz giving up his act.
She wishes she could go back to the way it was,
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when transitions between her parent's houses did not cross her mind.
Wounds were only from falling on the playground,
they healed in a few days.
For now, she has decided to cover up in goss,
perfect her act with a smile,
and carry on.

This is my poem for Honors English II.

“Theme for English 2”

by Frank Yuan

The instructor said,
Go home and write a page tonight
And let that page come out of you- Then, it will be true.
I wonder if it's that simple?
I am sixteen, Chinese, born in kunming,
I go to school here, in Arlington, in United States.
I am the one of international students in my class.
The steps from the school lead to travel the highway, then I come to my
host family, which I live
for three years.
It's not easy to become completely independent for you or me at age six-
teen, my age. But I try
what i can do and overcome, I hear the sound of invitation from my par-
ents, teacher, and
friends, to support me.
Well, I like to eat, walk, play basketball, and be in love.
I like to learn, discover, tour, and be a photographer.
I like basketball players in NBA, KOBE, James, and Harden.
I guess speaking different language doesn't make me express my ideas dif-
ficult with people who
are not from the same country. So will my page be hard to read?
trusting me, it will not be hard.
But it will be a part of experience for you, instructor.
You are speaking English-
yet a part of me, as I am a part of you.
That's cultural fusion.
This is my page for English 2.
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The following is a collection of satirical “college brags” written by current seniors.

by Michaela Bialock

I work, I exercise, I cook, I inspire, and my house is immaculate. On the weekends, to give back, I run 5K's for charity. Years ago I received a Nobel Peace Prize, but forgot where I placed it. I have been known to produce extraordinary music using only my voice and a drum. I adopt all animals in suffering. I have made pasta in Italy, quesadillas in Mexico, and croissants in France. I have played Hamilton, I have saved countless lives, and I have met the Kardashians. But, I have not yet gone to college.

by Aidan Kay

I can run a mile in under four minutes, I am a deep-sea pearl diver. Once, using only my suave realtor skills, I once sold the emperor of Japan a gingerbread house, which he now lives in. I am two-time underwater basket weaving world champion, I discovered the alchemical formula for turning things into gold. When I'm bored, I run flying tests for test planes made by the military. I am passionate about my zen rock garden. On Fridays, I read and revise every article ever published in the Encyclopedia Britannica.

by Kathryn Libertini

I have beaten Michael Phelps in a race--and he has raced against a great blue shark. I am a fearless Sherpa, certified to assist climbers on Mount Everest and dodge avalanches. I once snuck into the Louvre, just to see the Mona Lisa at night, and saw that she was in fact smiling. I have played catch with Tom Brady, but we had to stop because his arm was tired. I don't have to pay attention when I drive. Some say that my bowl of cereal outranks Gordon Ramsay's beef Wellington. I try not to mention it. I once tweeted “Happy Birthday” to Barack Obama and he liked it. I can play the cello with one hand, and the piano blind.

by Sophie Pratt

I am a world-renowned author, a poet laureate, and a master in martial arts. People gasp in awe at my astonishing dance moves. I never fail. I am a daughter of two loving parents, and yet other parents lie and say that I am their child because I am that amazing. I was asked after my impeccable performances as Annie to play her forever, and told no one else is allowed to be or put on Annie unless I am present; I'm that good. I raise millions of dollars for charities and help different people around the world. My chocolate chip cookies will make you want to tell your grandmother her baked goods are trash. People love me.

by Andra Preda

I act on television, I cook for three five-star restaurants, I sing at the Tony's, I skydive every weekend, and the mortgage for my mansion has already been paid. On Monday nights, to unwind, I attend movie premieres with Chris Hemsworth. A few months ago, I discovered the story behind the disappearance of Roanoke and the real conspiracy to kill JFK, but the FBI swore me to secrecy. I have been known to throw Gatsby-like parties with only a bottle of soda and cheese pizza as main courses. I foster show dogs before they win their competitions. I have won the gold medal in Olympic swimming, the Nobel Peace Prize, and the Pulitzer Prize for my inspirational novel. I have played Alexander Hamilton, I have won fifty Supreme Court cases, and I have written a play with Shakespeare. But, I have not yet gone to college.

by Mari Ball

I charm snakes with my prodigious and superhuman flute-playing, I can ride elephants across perilous fields with unwavering bravery, and I create "Ten-Minute Soup" in three minutes. I can run for hours without a single break. I am a pro in unicycling, a master in poetry, and a senator in Guam.

The following is a collection of stories of “American Teen Life in 2018.”

by Hannah Cox

Walking further from shore, the sand, like our hearts, becomes strong.
We dive into the waves of teen rebellion. Waves that knock us down, preparing us for the depths of the ocean of adult life- ruthless and breathtaking. We will learn it requires a bigger boat than we entered with.

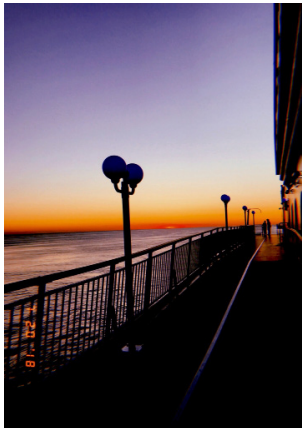
July 19, 2018



by Ned O’Keefe

The luminous blue sky is a mirror image of the thundering ocean, cut by the gleaming fires bleeding gold and scarlet, like my bowl of delicious rainbow sherbert ice cream. Suddenly with a blink of an eye, there will be a deep blue sky. I realize nothing good lasts forever.

July 20, 2018



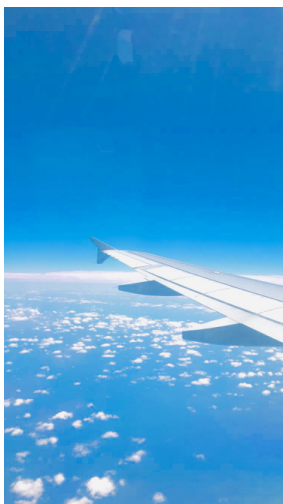
by Christian Gomez

Staring off into the horizon, in awe of the view, on a bright day in Montréal. These boundless surroundings remind us of our own lives, as we're still developing, still discovering our roles in life, still devising hopes and dreams to work towards. We must always look towards our bright futures.
July 6, 2018



by Michele Buccieri

Fight or flight? Looking down at the world farther up than ever imagined. Appreciating what life has to offer. Capturing nature's beauty. The deep depths are blue is never ending. Jetting from one place to another; magical. A place that grasps a hold of reality, and makes dreams come true.
April 16, 2018



“Life as a Swing: the two people covering the next big musical at A.R.T.”

by Sophie Pratt

Yeman Josiah Brown and Kelsey Orem are the two swings covering a new musical—a show featuring Alanis Morissette’s music and a book by Diablo Cody—that is set to open at the American Repertory Theater in Cambridge, Massachusetts. A swing, in the theater world, is a member of the company that is responsible with learning multiple roles in the show, chorus and dancing, and covers cast member, specifically understudies, by performing in their place. To summarize, swings arguably play the most important role in keeping a show running, even though they are sometimes seem, as Orem put it, as the “underdog position of musical theater.”

Brown and Orem are in the company of Jagged Little Pill, a musical that holds the same title of the Alanis Morissette album used as the score of the show. Jagged Little Pill opened at the American Repertory Theater on May 5th, but before that little was known about the plot; all that was known was that the show follows a family and covers many of the current issues and struggles in today’s society. In addition to Brown and Orem, the cast consists of Broadway alumni such as Elizabeth Stanley (On the Town, Company), Derek Klena (Anastasia, Wicked), and Lauren Patten (Fun Home).

Orem and Brown have been together for most of the journey of building this show from the ground up. The two went through the audition and callback process together, each hoping to land a role in this exciting new show, and hoping that they would be able to do it together. So, when it came to the first rehearsal they were excited to see that they would be on this crazy ride together. Orem and Brown are in charge of covering five different ensemble tracks, each roles with different choreography, blocking, entrances and exists, and so much more. So how do these two do it? They each have their own process, but they explained that documenting everything, whether through writing it down or videotaping, while also learning how to “hold on tightly, let go lightly” of the material they are given, has made it easier to digest all of the information. Not only that, but the opportunity to get up and move through the blocking and choreograph with the whole cast in rehearsals allows them to have the information in not only minds, but also their bodies. Brown and Orem have also had to deal with cuts, changes, and moves throughout the development of the show, and were expecting more as the

show continued through tech week, hence their words to live by “hold on tightly, let go lightly.”

Similar to theater fans and Alanis Morissette fans alike, Brown and Orem are incredibly excited for the show and the ability to share it with an audience. They emphasized the importance of the Alanis Morissette music and lyrics, as well as the arrangement by Tom Kitt in relation to the show, both saying that “people are going to lose their minds,” when they see the show. Brown and Orem’s overwhelming enthusiasm and love for this show is clearly portrayed when they speak about it, and makes a person who hasn’t seen the show want to instantly buy a ticket. Jagged Little Pill is quickly making an impact with many of the shows already sold out, and Yeman Josiah Brown and Kelsey Orem are proving that being the “underdog,” sometimes makes the biggest impact.

“Hold On Tightly, Let Go Lightly”

by Andra Preda

The three words “Jagged Little Pill” may elicit different responses and emotions from those who hear them. Alanis Morissette fans will immediately recognize these words from the music icon’s album of the same name. Broadway aficionados and lovers of theater will automatically think of the title of a new musical. And yet the majority of people who hear these words will be left in utter confusion... what on earth is a Jagged Little Pill?

In fact, Jagged Little Pill refers both to Morissette’s album and a new, upcoming musical; the two are blended together in an artistic vision that tells the story of a family in modern-day society through the soundtrack of an award-winning album.

Last Tuesday, I was fortunate enough to speak with two of the talented cast members about the making of a new production. Yeman Brown and Kelsey Orem are the show’s two swings—perhaps the most integral positions that an actor can have in a production. A swing’s job is to learn the parts of several characters in the show, and to be prepared to go on stage at a moment’s notice. The job of a swing is often forgotten or overlooked, yet it is infinitely hard to prepare for this part; as part of the interview, Yeman and Kelsey shed some light upon the difficulty of learning five parts in the exact same time.

Both swings emphasized the quote “hold on tightly, let go lightly,” a catchy phrase they have been learning since the very beginning of the Imaginary Gardens

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rehearsal process. They spoke about the importance of being constantly alert and aware of the changes being made in the show, especially during tech week—the week leading up to the show’s first day of previews, which is scheduled to be May 5. It is imperative that the actors “hold on tightly” to the recommendations of directors and the new changes, but also that they “let go lightly” of scenes that are cut or songs that are altered. With a new show that is completely “built from the ground up,” it is likely that changes in the script will be made every single day of rehearsal to ensure the show’s success once it is finally ready for the world to see.

Despite these constant changes, the actors are more than thrilled to keep up with the quick pace of a new creation. Kelsey described the whole process of creating a show as “amazing and beautiful,” and stated that Jagged Little Pill truly “has its finger on the pulse” of today’s world. This image of a pulse stuck with me after the interview because it is reminiscent of a beating heart, which is, for me, the best way to describe a new musical. A musical is originally comprised of words and songs on a page, yet it is given life when the actors, set, lights, sound, and technical elements are added to the show; then, the words that were once an abstract idea in someone’s brain become a tangible reflection of our world. I am beyond excited to see this show at some point in the future, and I will be extremely mindful of the effort put in by all the actors, crew, and creative directors. As I learned from Yeman and Kelsey, Jagged Little Pill is so much more than just a musical; it is the product of months of hard work, creativity, and overflowing passion for the magic of theater. As audience members watch the show, may they, too, remember to “hold on tightly”—in this case, to the messages and the lessons conveyed about life in our modern, ever-changing society.

“Fear Story: The Ride”

by Julia Hourihan

I had babysat for the Grady twins before, but tonight was different. Something was just off. I know they like Halloween, but maybe they like Halloween a little too much. I should’ve guessed it sooner! Their room was all black: the walls, the carpet, the door, the furniture, the clothes - head-to-toe black! The only remnants of color were the splatters of red along the floor and the on the door knob. Wait, what? I tried my hardest to try to shrug it off, and not to think of the possibilities, but my thoughts consumed me. Vampires? Axe murders? Both?

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I tried my absolute hardest to try to swallow all thoughts of evil before my ultimate coming-of-age ride later tonight. Since Delbert Grady was going to be home after midnight and I only have my Junior Operator's License (JOL), I was forced to ride my bike instead of driving, and it was going to take all the courage I had to make that ride in the obscure darkness of the night. Snap out of it, Laurie! You have to stay calm!

Of course, once a thought is in your head and has devoured all other thoughts, you can't really let it go. All night, my mind was filled with horror. My name was Laurie! Laurie! You know, like Laurie from Halloween! How could I not worry! For all I knew, Michael Myers could be just outside the house waiting for me. Stop it, Laurie! I kept telling myself, but that gut-wrenching feeling of doom and disaster just wouldn't quit. All I could do was just try to focus on babysitting.

After I put the twins to bed in the Room of Nothing but Death, I began cleaning up their toys so Mr. Grady wouldn't complain about the mess. I picked up a facedown Raggedy Andy doll, but as I turned it around, I realized. It wasn't Raggedy Andy, It was Chucky! I blinked my eyes in disbelief, praying that it was just my tired eyes playing tricks. I turned it around again and, to my relief, it was just a regular Raggedy Andy doll and NOT a possessed Chucky doll, although I wouldn't be surprised if the Grady twins had one. I tried flipped through the channels, hoping to find a relaxing movie to calm my nerves, but all that was on was Texas Chainsaw Massacre, Night of the Living Dead, and Annabelle. I finally found a safe movie: High School Musical 3: Senior Year. Before I knew it, Mr. Grady was coming in the door and I was finally calm. I thought all was well, but as Delbert handed me my money, I noticed something was wrong with his hands. What was all that red stuff? Why are his hands so wet? Wait a second, was that BLOOD? OMG I have to get out of here right now! I quickly said "Thank You" and rushed out the door faster than a lightning strike. I got on my bike and pedaled as fast as I could. I finished the normally five minute bike ride in under a minute. I dropped my bike in the yard, and ran inside. My legs felt like Jello, but I couldn't stop running. When I got to my room, I turned on the lights and practically flew into bed and hid under the covers. As my heart beat finally went back to normal, I realized that I finally rode home after dark. I hadn't thought about the trees, or Pumpkinhead abducting me, or hearing Jason's chainsaw roaring from the trees. I rode home after dark! For a moment, I felt victorious for facing my fear. The only problem was that now, I had to worry about something else: Delbert Grady and his conspiring twin daughters. I was never going back there!

“Life Metaphor”

by Anonymous

The way that I handle the troubles in my life can be compared to the way that a large group of people would play a string of poker games; although the deck may be never certain, we have to keep in mind the emotions and desires that the players have, and the heart that the cards do not.

Explanation:

Poker is a classic family of gambling games, most members of it known for their use of poker chips and their five-card hands; a series of games which properly fit into said family is what I’m comparing to my life, along with any of those other lives that have come into contact with mine. I use this comparison because, like your average game of cards, life has quite a few random variables that are uncomfortably attached to way too many physical, mental, spiritual and social losses; of course, every human is a player and every decision is a bet.

I wanted to utilize this figure of speech to express the fact that I personally consider life to be a beast which cannot be fully handled, not just for myself but for all of us; sometimes, you have to take in every option to live that you’re given. Pertaining a level of skill with emotions and desires is nothing wrong, so I mentioned that in reference to the game theory and psychological warfare involved in a rough bout that was supposed to be chance and chance only.

The last bit of the sentence has two purposes; to allude to the complete and utter ruination that a man or woman’s life is capable of containing (similar to an unlucky hand) and a cunning reference to a phrase from Yu-Gi-Oh, a card-centric anime which does not properly illustrate how card games work.

The image I selected, again, plays along with the fact that life is like gambling, with as many benefits as there are downsides. It’s a casino machine, but the deeper meaning still stands.

“Opposites”

by Petra Dujmic

You may believe that identifying opposites in the functioning of the world is an obscure and difficult task, but as I stand here peering past the flattened, fiery leaves that frame the neighbor’s driveway, I can guarantee you that this is not so.

For the pinkish frigid cold that now bites at your chipping hands crammed into your thermal pockets is the very opposite of that buoyant, balmy summer that you once knew, and that deceptive moon that now glimmers down onto the reflection of your car’s window is the opposite of what you need to drive home safely.

Then, the prickling stream of speech from downstairs is the opposite of the silence you need to fall asleep, the nervous ticking of the clock the opposite of your will to relax, and the whispers of the wind the opposite of the tranquility you want, but haven’t quite earned.

See, the lead pencil on the cover of the plastic agenda and the yellowing book lying next to it sigh like I do, because you only acknowledge what they could be, and not what they are. They are the instruments of responsibility that weight you down, the rifling reminders of boredom that pierce you with dread, and the patient teacups waiting forever on the edges of their glass plate to be sipped, but remain disappointed—like I, because I know you are not the opposite of what you think you are. You are not what the sun is to the moon, but what the stars are to the moon, glowing in a distant galaxy with the potential of a planet, but never aspiring to glow any brighter than the black space that is your opposite.



Photo by Sage Chircu

“Identity”

by Ashley Appo

Ralph Emerson once said, “To be yourself in a world that is constantly changing, is the greatest accomplishment.” This leads me to ask, who are you? What makes you, you? What defines you as a person? We each have our own characteristics and traits that makes each of us unique. Whether it’s your athleticism, courage, or leadership skills, we all have something. So then why are we told that we need to change who we are for the benefit of others? That’s what I want to talk about today: Identity. In order to have your own identity in a world such as ours today, you have to understand the importance of who you are as a person. Those with a developed identity tend to stand out more than those who hide themselves within a crowd. It takes the right sense of acknowledging who you are, without compromising what you believe in and stand up for, for you to truly develop your identity. However, having too much of an identity can be harmful as well. The drive to protect your identity can become overwhelming or overbearing. If people can not think clearly about the choices they make or are too invested in one thought and how it will affect them in the future, then they will ultimately never truly have a sense of who they are or what they believe in. In today’s world it is important to maintain your identity because it helps establish and strengthen your self-esteem, it helps distinguish you from everyone else, and it helps you understand right from wrong.

Self esteem has to do with how you value yourself, otherwise known as your self-worth. It affects your behavior, mental state, and how you interact with those around you. While having a high self-esteem can encourage you to experience new things and live in satisfaction with your life, possessing a low self esteem can lead to things such as depression or falling short of reaching your full potential. Yet there is also a point where you have too much self esteem. At this point, you may regard yourself as entitled or conceited, and you are not able to learn how to grow from any hardships or failures you face. For all of us, the development of our self-worth starts as kids. From a young age, we were all taught about how important it is for us to be ourselves and have confidence in everything we do. However, internal and external factors played a role in how we view ourselves as we grew up. Since children are easily influenced by what they see in their surroundings, we act based on what we see. Things such as social media and older figures that we looked up to as children, might have damaged the growth of your identity today. While genetic factors

do play a role in how you view yourself, it is often your experiences that determine the your overall self-esteem. Everyone experiences life in their own way, and your self esteem rises and falls based on these experiences. Research shows that although it may vary, our self esteem grows up until the age of 60, and steadily declines in our olden age. Up until that point, we all go through criticism, uplifting encouragement, downfalls, and accomplishments that raise and lower our self-esteem. At the end of the day, we all have to learn how to take a lesson from each experience we go through, good or bad, to help strengthen our self-esteem. Thus, we are all taking a step in the right direction: defining ourselves based on who we really are and what we are capable of doing.

One of the biggest problems in today's world is that people forming their identities struggle with not accepting who they are or what they believe in. We are constantly influenced by social media outlets and influencers to do things like, buy or invest in items that will make us "prettier" or "smarter". Those of us with low self-esteem unfortunately buy into these theories of things that will ultimately make us "better." What people fail to realize is how the way we grew up, the way our personality developed, and the things we encountered along the way makes each of us unique in our own way. From your hair, to your face, to the way you laugh, smile, or cry, it is all a part of what makes you, you. Those very things and all other aspects of your life form your identity. By changing yourself to be something you are not, you are compromising who you who as a person. The fact that we each have our own personalities and skills are something that we should cherish, because it sets us apart from everyone else. Through being yourself, your identity makes each of one of you an individual.

Lastly, part of your identity has to do with knowing right from wrong. As kids, adults would constantly try to teach us about morals that they believed would help us in the future. Whether or not we followed their advice is up to us. Now, as we begin to learn more about society and develop our own opinions on what we see and have to decipher for ourselves what we think is right or wrong. This places a part in our identity as our moral decisions can lead us down a positive or negative path in life. If we choose what is morally right, then we are usually setting ourselves up to live an honest, healthy lifestyle. However, when we side with decisions that are morally wrong, feelings such as guilt and wicked thought begin to corrupt our senses. This can ultimately lead us on spirally path downwards that pushes us away from the good in life. Both of these aspects also play into not knowing right from wrong. As everyone has their own

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opinion on the events that take place in their day-to-day life, we are constantly encouraged to pick a side, regardless of our own thoughts on the matter or whether or not that was the right decision. It is not always about how others perceive certain aspects of life that matters. It is about what you believe in and what you think is the right choice at the end of the day, because it is your life. Your choices and actions will affect you the most, before anyone else. This is why our identity helps us to understand what to stand up for based on what we believe in.

Overall, your identity is made up of how you value yourself, your personality, and your moral beliefs. To lose any of these qualities would be hampering ourselves from reaching our full potential. If we all took a step back and focused more on who we each are as individuals, I think we would all see ourselves in a new light. One in which each of us is different, but in a good way. Instead of focusing on changing ourselves to model someone else, we should all think about what parts of us set us apart from everyone else. What things do you love about yourself that's different from everyone else? Those qualities are what make you unique and put together, form your own personal identity.



Photo by Sage Chircu

*A special thanks to Mr. Tallon, who named the literary magazine
"Imaginary Gardens" based on Marianne Moore's poem. Shown below
is an excerpt from Moore's "Poetry."*

"Poetry"

Marianne Moore, 1887 - 1972

"One must make a distinction
however: when dragged into prominence by half poets,
the result is not poetry,
nor till the autocrats among us can be
"literalists of
the imagination"—above
insolence and triviality and can present
for inspection, imaginary gardens with real toads in them,
shall we have
it. In the meantime, if you demand on the one hand, in defiance
of their opinion—
the raw material of poetry in
all its rawness, and
that which is on the other hand,
genuine, then you are interested in poetry."

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Thanks to: Mrs. Butt
Mrs. Lee-Ann Pepicelli-Murray
The English Department Teachers
All students who submitted their work

Imaginary Gardens is accepting art and writing submissions for our next issue. Please see your English teacher or any staff member listed above for details, or you may email your work to imaginarygardens@achs.net.