

*The Labyrinth
Literary Magazine
2011*

With special thanks to:
Professor John Beckman
LCDR Bushnell, USN
Diane Green

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Pitt Poetry Prize 2011

The A. Stuart Pitt Poetry prize, awarded in conjunction with the Academy of American Poets, is open to all midshipmen and judged by a panel of English professors. With numerous contestants, it is a true show of creativity and talent to be selected for this prestigious prize.

La Mitad

Quito, sold as “la mitad del mundo,”
 uses our dollar. Steaks cost four
 bucks. Waiters open water bottles at our
 table. Our room has A/C, HBO,
 and a phone. Outside, we can buy tattoos,
 ice cream and Movistar cell phones in stores
 with no doors and blue tarp roofs. We ignore
 how all the men wear pants and not ponchos.
 The police wear assault rifles. The rich
 glue glass shards on top of high stucco walls.
 For money, men breathe fire and stunted, black
 clad Indian women pull at our britches.
 We spend on art—now all of our home's walls
 will show frail, shadow-men crying blood tracks.

Caleb Wright '11

**Curiouser and Curiouser:
Or, Following the White Flash of a Tale
(With borrowings from Lewis Carroll)**

My instructions: “be encouraging or laudatory.” My copy of Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland: sepia around the edges, my mother’s handwriting inside. “New York, 1968.” And this is how a story begins, with an imperative, with a character, with an object we can hold in our hands.

Alice’s story can’t start without the White Rabbit, a flash of fur and a pocket watch swinging from a chain, which the girl must follow. Alice shows us what it means to be a writer. We chase the animal dressed as an English gentleman. We tumble down the rabbit-hole of the narrative because it is open and mysterious and takes us a long way from home.

“DRINK ME,” commands the bottle. “EAT ME,” the small cake orders, in letters shaped out of red currants. The writer is obedient. She drinks and eats, just to learn what will happen next. Sometimes she shrinks, in order to see the world as huge. A thimble is her bathtub, a cotton ball her cushion. Sometimes she grows to the height of a giant, and everything seems little now, the adults no longer so loud, the night not quite as dark as it used to be. We call this point of view.

“Curiouser and curiouser,” the writer exclaims each time she steps into an unfamiliar room. At the heart of it all: curiosity. Will my tongue feel fuzzy when I drink the purple juice? What does falling in love smell like? What is the sound of snow? The writer asks questions. She hopes the answer will wear polka-dots and a monocle. She hopes the answer will give her a stomachache. We call this the writer’s imagination.

“London is the capital of Paris,” she decides, “and Paris is the capital of Rome.” The proclamation is true, if her pen believes it and if the words taste good. The writer says, “Oh dear, what nonsense I’m talking!” But she’s not upset. Nonsense is delicious, like squares of candy flavored with rose water. Words are made for inventing. Word are a suitcase—a portmanteau—that the writer takes with her on holiday. Lithe and slimy become

the country of “Slithey.” When fuming marries furious, they move the city of “Fumious.” Words are a wonder. Words are a land where interesting things occur.

The writer makes friends with odd people. Some of them dress like bankers but sing with birds. Some of them carry walking sticks but are kind underneath their frilled costumes. The point is conversation. Some of them speak with accents. We call this local color.

What were my instructions? Where did I put my book? And this is how a story finds a way to stop, when it has lost sight of the smiling cat. Croquet mallets lie in a pile on the palace green. A teacup is chipped. Someone has dropped a deck of playing cards.

The writer feels a yawn beginning in her mouth. Maybe she will take a little nap on the riverbank. How warm it is, how green. But, wait. What’s that white puff of tail that just streaked by? Maybe she should follow it.

Jehanne Dubrow



Redheads, Laura Starck '12, Colored Pencil

LA to Las Vegas: A Sketch

*“And what is the use of a book,”
thought Alice,
“without pictures or conversation?”*

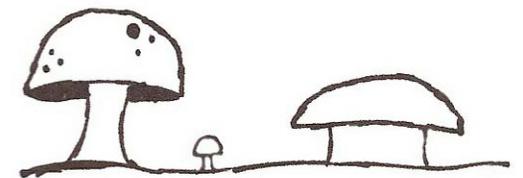


Alice
Caroline Vu '12
Digital Photograph

If you happen to drive from Los Angeles to Las Vegas, you will find various desert oddities keep the eye nominally amused driving north to Las Vegas from Los Angeles. “The World’s Largest Thermometer” in Baker and the scattered abandoned buildings in the desert kept him childishly occupied as he went up Interstate 15. After passing the Nevada border and leaving California, small gambling communities like Primm and Jean line the highway to Las Vegas. From a distance, they seemed like miniature towns of what one would imagine Las Vegas in the 1940s to be like – a few close casinos in a desert wasteland – while they really are hors d’œuvres, whetting the appetite of gamblers driving north from Southern California, keeping them hungry for the city.

The mountains forming the southern border of the valley at first just seem like another mountain corridor until the brown and barren crags of the desert suddenly give way and open, petals to a gigantic fleur du mal, to reveal the Las Vegas Valley. It is not uncommon for attention to drift dangerously off the road and on to the green and gleaming specter that lay before it. Las Vegas lies openly on its desert bed and silently watches hapless travelers, offering itself to them fully, for a price.

Driving deeper into the city and closer to Las Vegas Boulevard, you will find the throbbing neon jugular of the city. You will also undoubtedly also see a billboard saying something to the effect of “Jesus Saves, Church of Christ Salvation Ministries off Exit 25.” Press onward. Evangelists and amateur moralists deride the place, calling it “Sin City.” Some of these Christian soldiers are even forward deployed there to admonish visitors and residents and to remind them of that fact. Their rhetoric, which



inadvertently makes Las Vegas more appealing, is also deceptive. They call Las Vegas “Sin City” not just to call it a den of degradation, but more so to conceal the fact that sin is everywhere. Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Duluth and Salem, Massachusetts may be called “Sin City” just as easily, but none of them could carry the name quite the way Las Vegas does. So many Las Vegas residents, unconsciously aware of the moralist deception, take “Sin City” as a badge of pride. Atlantic City and Reno may have first breathed life into the “Sin City” mentality, but Las Vegas perfected it and made it an art.

So, Las Vegas seems to scream from its desert solitude and call tourists to its neon majesty. Some moral propagandists say that this is a tempting siren’s song, and that Las Vegas is drawing poor sailors in to their spiritual and financial doom. This is yet another deception, because while Las Vegas does advertise itself, it does not need to. Advertising tries to convince the consumer that he needs something he doesn’t. Las Vegas needs only to announce its presence. The far off dream of care free existence and expression will always stimulate the senses of man and woman, common or otherwise.

Civilization demands many things of its subjects. It calls for sacrifice in its name, and for what? Las Vegas does not need to pull tourists in, because the forces of civilization (or as others might call it, the idea of civility gone mad) will always push them to its warm and open arms. The trip to Las Vegas is a kind of personal Hajj, for deep inside, the hearts of woman and man will always point to Vegas. On any given casino floor, one will never find a clock – one of those looming electromechanical taskmasters which mete out the day in infinitesimal chunks. Instead, there is gambling, alcohol, scantily clad women, and, for female gamblers, the promise of some male enticements (also available) somewhere else. The only thing to remind the gambler of his worldly obligation is the feeling of his empty pocket, but even then I’ve never heard one completely curse the experience.

John Tanalega ‘11

Running in Winter

Pushing forward through the dark,
Fleeing faster than the speed of thought,
Moving from circle of light to circle of light.
The crunch of icy snow beneath rubber soles and
The drum of foot on pavement speaks to no one and to the world.
A small blur in the coming dark.
Skin reddens as it greets the night air.
Heart pounds against flimsy cotton.
Warm blood pulses through strong limbs.
Only breath exits lips unaccustomed to stillness.
A mind finally free of the world.

Peace.

Erica Leinmiller ‘13

Yamanohito (The Mountain’s Man)

rugged & rocky & ripped
wide open, smelling
fresh & fertile & free
like breath, tasting
earthy and equal and ethereal
as love, feeling
mighty & masculine & moving
to me, sounding
tranquil & trusting & true that
a man in the mountains
is a mountain of a man.

Kara Yingling ‘12

Rutland Road Hill

The road bends to the left approaching the hill. This section is just a false flat—a warm up before the real hill. The white line near my wheels is only inches away from a drainage ditch. I hear an approaching car behind, but I don't need to look back to see it. I know it will be about three seconds before it passes by the pitch of the hum. Zach calls "Car back." I use this as an excuse look back to scan the faces of my teammates, Andy and Zach; they're not hurting at all. Their faces are red, but only from the cold. The road's slope is still gradual here. My draft still does them a lot of good so as I drain my legs, my teammates sit comfortably waiting for the road to pitch up. I look at my heart rate monitor—165, 166. Climbing steadily, but still pretty low. It doesn't make sense to go too hard here.

A minute later we're near the base of the climb. The telephone company has recently clear-cut the trees surrounding the high-tension power-lines, so the hill ahead is bare until the first steep portion. I hear myself breathing. It's labored, but I'm trying to hide it. I can't let my teammates know that I'm working as hard as I am. My helmet straps whistle in the air; we're still going twenty-five-miles an hour on the false flat.

The road pitches up, and the whistling stops. Silence, save the heavy breath of three cyclists climbing a hill and the oscillating swish of wheels cutting through the cold air. My legs begin to burn, but I'm not concerned yet. I want to look back and see if my teammates are hurting like I am, but I can't. Looking back shows weakness. Which reminds me to stifle my heavy breathing again.

I hear the chafing of lycra behind me and to the left. Someone is passing me. I don't need to look to know. I tell my legs to put out more power, anticipating the surge I'll need to regain the passer's wheel. My legs burn more in protest. I glance down at my heart rate monitor—175. Still not terribly high. Plenty more in the tank. The road gets steep here. On an easy day, I stand climbing this hill just to keep the cranks turning in the easiest gear. I shift up to a harder gear. The derailleur drops the chain a cog and clicks into place. It ticks

a bit with each turn of the pedals. I suppose I haven't tuned the derailleur correctly. It should be silent. It seems strange that this should concern me now, but it does.

I see the neon pink and green of the passing rider on my left. It's Zach. He's past me now. I surge in response, concentrating on the wheel. Don't lose that wheel. He accelerates. I accelerate. My legs are on fire, begging to slow down. I glance down—182. It can't get too much higher. The road flattens now for twenty yards. I expect Zach to slow down a bit, but instead I hear the click of his derailleur. Shifting up to a harder gear. I follow suit, trying not to question whether I can turn it. The road pitches up again. It's like a staircase. Zach shifts again to a harder gear. I grimace and begrudgingly do the same, enslaved to his rear wheel. I can't match him much longer.

The world collapses around me. All I can see is the wheel in front of me. There is nothing in my periphery. My only thought is to continue to turn the cranks. I can't let that wheel get any farther away. In a race, we refer to this as the pain tunnel, but this isn't a race, technically. My eyes see less of my surroundings. Everything blurs but that damned wheel. I look down again—187. The road flattens. A sense of relief encompasses me. Zach doesn't slow though. It's another false flat. Technically we're still climbing, and my legs are screaming for mercy. I can't take this anymore. I glance backwards to see if Andy is still behind me, still tolerating the pain. He's fifty yards back. Cracked.

I've long since quit stifling my breathing. I'm gasping for oxygen. The air is dry and cold; my mouth is stale. Lactic acid and the accompanying burn has saturated my legs.

"This is the top, Zach," I cry between gasps. I know it's not. There's still another 100 yards of slight uphill, but it was either say this, or drop his wheel.

"There's still more though," he says turning to smile at me. How can he smile? Mercifully though, he sits up and slows down. We both know that I've conceded. I may as well have been dropped off his wheel. It's the same effect. I've lost. We stop completely. I listen his breath over mine. He's trying to hide his gasping like I am, but his face is red with exertion. It's only a training ride; at least I beat Andy, I try to tell myself.

Villanelle

Would you have the guts to dare,
To love a person—but keep them free?
No one wants to share...

So would you say: “Choose either...or...”
And drive them in the corner?
Would you have the guts to dare

To compromise their freedom
for your selfishness? I realize that
No one wants to share...

Stop and think what you create--
Misery and unforgiving emptiness...
Would you have the guts to dare

To do this to the one you love?
I know, I know...
You do not want to share.

Stop, and think, think deeper
Before loving and being loved:
“Would you have the guts to dare
Be the one who wants to share?”

Kateryna Kovalenko '11

Party time-out Swing

Life's a party with a God-chosen theme.
So here's the proposition with a moderate swing.
Back and forth on the tree swing outside.
It's dark out, with the stars out.
Slightly chilly. Perfect crisp air.
And I'm out here alone – with You.
I do not feel in danger, I just feel consumed.
But your hug is all around me
And makes the corners of my mouth swing upwards;
sending my thoughts up.
Listen it's not silent. Even the stars whisper to You.

What I whisper now, as I swing in the night
is for Your strength in the downs
and for courage when I fly
to grab the stars
and carry them to your side.

Sarah Burns '11

Creation

Lay your head upon the
Stage and you will hear
The lead imbining lines,
Drowning his sorrows in fiction,
The understudy making
Love to his script,
The director overstressed.

But also mind,
Amidst the silent hustle
Of eyes and minds and pens,
The whirring saw
The hammer keeping time.
Feel them jar and shake you,

Because, these too
Are creation.

May the audience
Call it good.

John Tanalega '11

Insults, though apologized for
Still abide within me.
They don't realize what their words tore;
How they lowered themselves so easily.
We as people are quick to judge,
Ignorant of the pain we inflict
We cause many to hold a grudge.
Against our tongue we should be strict.
God forbid evil thoughts each day,
Which are on a rampage in our minds.
People around are pushed away
Facing problems and emotions of all kinds.
Let us be quick to hold our tongue,
Conscious to not hurt others
The people who by our flames are stung
Might often be our brothers.

Jacqueline Darcy '12



Flames of the Tongue

This I Believe: Overcoming Obstacles

I remember when my father told me I had to leave school and start helping the family. I was 9 years old and living in the great beaches of Acapulco, Mexico. I loved school, and cried because I didn't want to go work in the tomato fields like I did every summer. As angry and upset as I was, I promised myself I'd go back to school. Not the poor, elementary school I was going to. Not the one with the too few desks and hardly any pencils to go around. No. A good school. High school in the United States. And then maybe even college. It turned out that I didn't go to the tomato fields, but out in the streets to sell gum for two pesos apiece. I always thought this was a positive, since I was earning the family more than I would have in the fields. My bare feet hurt and I was afraid to be out by myself, but I made the best of it. Sometimes my dad would let me keep a peso or two and eventually I saved enough to buy myself a used spiral notebook. The pages were written on and some were torn out. This journal became my very first book and step towards an education that I was eager to start.

When I felt brave enough, I'd ask tourists "du yus pik spanish?" and when I'd receive friendly "Si" answers, I'd ask them for a simple English phrase. This was how I began to learn the English language. I'd write my phrases down and studied them for hours. Soon I was reading decent English and writing it as well. One man in particular was so impressed with my notebook that he said he'd buy my entire gum box if I read him all my English phrases. I ran home, feeling truly happy and accomplished for the first time in my life, with almost \$10 American dollars clutched in my hands.

When my father found out about my new hobby, he became so furious that he forbade me to talk to people other than to sell gum. He tore my notebook; I felt as if he had torn my lungs out. I didn't talk to him for weeks and I refused to listen to him. But I didn't need my notebook anymore, I already knew how to read, write and speak English. I still talked to tourists and tried to learn as much as I could. I wasn't going to let myself be bullied away from my dreams.

At 14, not only had I sold gum, but I had already worked in the fields, sold fish at the market with my mom, bussed tables in a local tourist restaurant, washed cars, and shined shoes. Around this time, some of my family was talking about migrating to the United States. I knew that it was my opportunity to leave the life I was living behind. My mother was eager to start a new life because she was just as tired of our lifestyle as I was. My father was less reluctant; he believed that because he had already been to the States and was unsuccessful in holding down a job, the story would repeat itself. Eventually, the three of us and my youngest sister came to the United States. And so my education began in an underfunded, public high school in a small town in Texas.

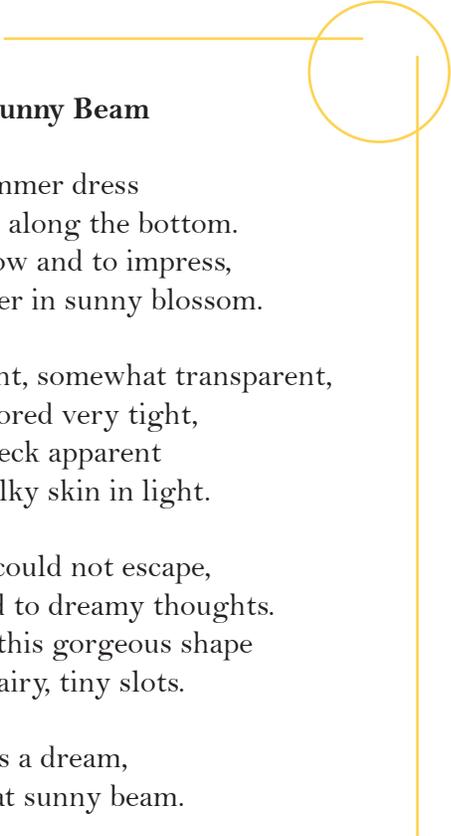
I didn't think that starting high school would be a challenge, but it was. I was behind on 5 years of education and didn't know enough English to get by. I took classes and even went in on Saturday mornings to catch up. By the end of my junior year I was taking AP classes and working at McDonald's to help out the family. I also ran cross country despite my busy schedule. Around this time I also started looking at colleges. I hid my flyers and applications from my father because I knew that I wouldn't have his approval. He was all about the family and expected me to find a full time job after graduation. All my college ideas were shot down as soon as he felt I was coming up with a new one. But I applied anyway and got into my dream school: the United States Naval Academy.

How I managed to get through my early and teenage years of my life, I will never know. I look back now and realize how many childhood memories I don't have because I was forced to work like an adult to help provide for my family. But that's okay because I believe that the experiences I had, from selling gum in the streets to sometimes not eating because we didn't have food for the day, have helped me persevere and work towards my goals and dreams. Even the people that said I would be nothing have helped mold who I am today. Throughout my life, I have tripped multiple times but have managed to get up and try harder through my perseverance and refusal to give up at the first attempt. I always knew I was meant for greater things than

settling for living in the streets of Mexico. I knew that if I tried hard I would go on to achieve great things.

My acceptance to the Naval Academy has been a blessing to me in so many ways; I know that when I become a commissioned officer and go off to do great things, I will benefit myself and my family because I will continue to help them in every way that I can. My life experiences have helped me overcome the troublesome obstacles that the Naval Academy has put in my life. But because I am able to jump those hurdles, I know I will be a hardworking leader and will never be afraid to fail. This is what I will forever believe in: myself.

Diana E. Barrera '12



Sunny Beam

I saw a yellow summer dress
With puffy ruffles along the bottom.
It was made to wow and to impress,
Like a pretty flower in sunny blossom.

The cloth was light, somewhat transparent,
The waistline tailored very tight,
A slit below the neck apparent
Could show the silky skin in light.

My captured eye could not escape,
My mind confined to dreamy thoughts.
But soon enough this gorgeous shape
Escaped through airy, tiny slots.

Awake I lay; it was a dream,
I'll never wear that sunny beam.

Kateryna Kovalenko '11



The Morning Dance

The cold bitterly snaps at the face
And now the night sky glows
Alone, shivering gazing into space
Majestically. On cue, it snows
The frost dances on skin,
An array of white lingers on
Silently waiting for it to begin,
For the rising of the dawn

Jacqueline Darcy '12

Submissions

I submit these poems as
A father sends his child
Off to school the first time. I
May have raised him, given
Thought and time and
Lines to make him strong,
But when I see him
Walking away, and he is
At a range too far away
For me to call by voice
Or run to help and tend
To a skinned knee
A bruised arm, a broken
Verse –

My mind's eye can see
The bullies in the school-
Yard, my imagination's
Ear can hear the critical
Nun's yardstick tapping
On the desks.

I want to stop him, I
Want to bring him
Home again where I
Can keep him
Safe. I want to
Keep the poem to
Myself, or at least
To tell the reader
"Be gentle, his faults
Are not his own
But mine."

But such would be
Protectiveness exceeding
Cruelty. If I shelter him
Too much, he will
Never learn to be
Himself, and if
I keep my poems
To myself, they
Will never grow
But die
When I do.

John Tanalega '11

Buffalo Hunt

1890, on the reservation, some
Lakota prepare for the buffalo
Hunt. They stand around a fence
To watch, while three or four
Are on horseback outside
The gate, repeating
Rifles in hand.

Inside the corral, two lonesome
Buffalo meander, one troubled,
Not content with his little
Bit of prairie; the other, younger,
Is blissful and content.

A group of bluecoats, dismounted
Cavalry troopers, stand and
Watch curiously, having heard
Of this ritual before.

The signal given, a young
Boy who's never seen the
Hunt swings open the gate
Much wider than his eyes.
The chase begins. The
Buffalo serenely leave the
Fence. Two rifle shots. The
Buffalo fall dead three
Feet outside the gate.

The youngest of the hunters
Has the kill! He raises arm and
Rifle amid whoops and
Jubilation from the Lakota
Crowd. His brethren cheer him
On.

Smiling, he dismounts and
Beaming proudly looks upon
His father and sees a
Cold and craggy cliff
Face staring back.
Father turns away.
"Wasn't it great, like it was
In your days?" asks the son,
Perplexed. Father walks away.

The troopers laugh at the
Queerness of the spectacle.
They mount again to patrol the
Prairie and keep the Lakota
On the reservation.

John Tanalega '11

The Mad Hatter's Tea Party



Mad Hatter Tea Party
Carolyne Vu '12
Digital Photograph

Burberry Blueberries

An ocean of blue, a sea of delight.
Seeing these little round fruits forces
My mouth to desire, nay, crave a bite
Of cascading antioxidants.
One isn't enough though, that's hardly a morsel.
As my teeth crush the pearl, the rush
Of the juice only leaves me craving more.
I ache for that gush of cool liquid
That triggers my tongue and curls my lips towards the sky.
It's ecstasy, really, or even an addiction.
Like my mother with her Burberry purses.
We can't drop our tastes, hers in fashion,
Mine in blueberries.

Gus Hernandez '11

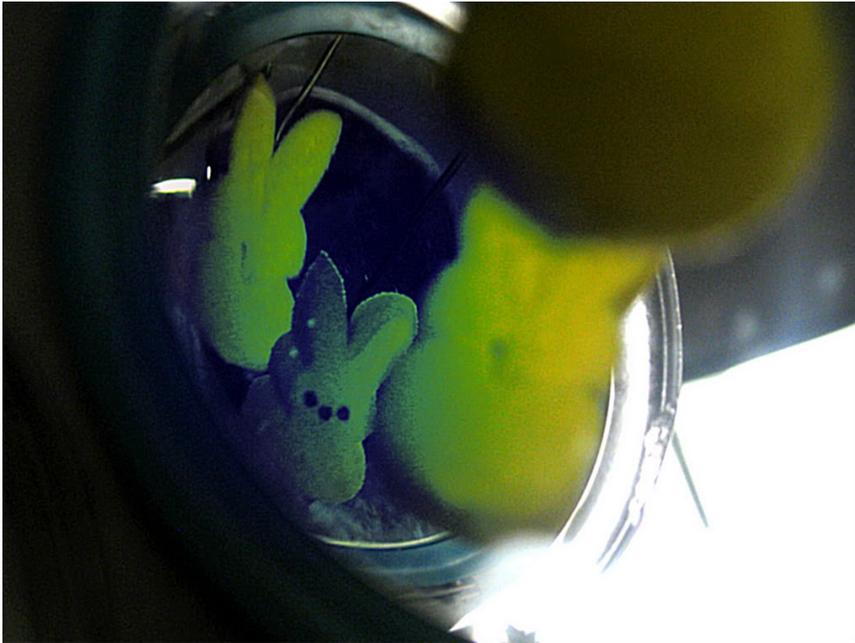


UnBEARable
Jess Shapiro '12
Colored Pencil

Conversation with a Cicada

“Hello, large strange bug!”
He seemed not to move at all –
I wondered,
“Are you alive, or just an empty shell?”
“Funny,” the bug replied.
“I was going to ask you the same question.”

Jessica Shapiro '12



Tumbling Down the Rabbit Hole
Krisandra Hardy '12
Digital Photography



The Humanities on Electrical Engineering.

Double E, Hated Doubly
A loathing ode composed to thee.
I write because I am group three.
Double E, oh Double E.

I work, I pray, It's all in vain.
FM AM to drive insane
the strongest men. It is all pain.
It always seems to hurt my brain.

Still, History remains for me.
Aged dusty tomes, sweet mystery.
I read, to write, and drink coffee.
The price of education free.

If ever I should see the day
When Double E would go away
Twould make me glad and I would say
“Thank you god, I'm done in May.”

Double E, oh Double E
Eternal source of Agony
I pray one day I may break free
From Motherf***ing Double E

Matthew Connors '12

K is for Potassium

The texture, the taste, and the timing of ingestion;
Its complexions vary from region to region.
Imported treats from miles away--
Arriving in the United States as a delicacy that God created.
Under the sun it sits with the expectation of ripening...
It is this process of degradation in which a human cannot contend.
Nature's winged creatures propel over this exotic fruit;
Swarming about like ants flooding into their colonies
before an April shower.
Days, weeks, and months elapse.
Brown holes have punctured the body of this fruit.
Potassium...could there be any nutrients after enduring the
abuse of ravenous insects?
Rest peacefully my dearest Banana.

Devin Lewis

A Mermaid

Many miles she swims alone,
Ever under the cold blue waters,
Racing with curious, happy dolphins.
Many miles she swims alone,
After the trails of silent fish,
Into the unknown danger,
Daring to become one of us...

Kateryna Kovalenko '11

L1O1V4E1

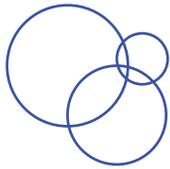
Avoid the word.
Act around it but never speak it.
Your eyes say it. Your body shows it,
But what is it?

Just four little letters.
With a possible triple word score
If you play it right,
you just might win.

Sarah Burns '11



Jay and Skye
Kristin Otterson '10
Charcoal



To My Corframs

Like the light in a lover's eye,
They just shine, shine, shine.
I will love them 'til I die
for they are mine and only mine.

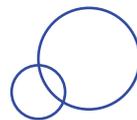
With me for all parades,
There to suffer on my soles,
You know I'd never trade
those corframs for a sack of gold.

Though others fall around me,
Tired victims of the heat,
Worden holds no prison key
While I've got corframs on my feet.

Their support unparalleled
and their sheen beyond compare,
they reflect like mirrors held
to find the land's most fair.

No MID is whole without his corframs,
to keep him standing tall,
While we march for Uncle Sam.
Corframs see us through it all.

Erin Bacon '14



February 6, 2011

Dear Midshipman X, Y, Z ... ∞

I am one of you. You are one of you. Together we are a brigade, quite a slew. I'd even argue a motley crew. You are an individual but also a member of a squad. I am an individual but perhaps a platoon commander fraud. You may have a job and live far away from the company you see, but hopefully you are helping us in your own capacity.

I LOVE the movie Alice in Wonderland. I read the book a while back and also the one, what is it called... Through the Looking Glass? If you did not, no worries, it is quite ok, I'll tell you what I took from it in my own way. Much like a different Chaplain say's to us every day, "If you so desire...and in no way are you required...let us pray."

Life is a choice. WE choose where we go. In this respect we are a whole lot like Alice you know. As plebes they shrink us then stretch us a lot. It's like we've been stuffed all together in this giant tea pot. I'm starting to scream from the pressure of this steam. I may be crazy but this world is getting too HOT! I'm ready - lets go- pour me out. Were you really scared of the Bandersnatch snout? You should not be, you know what to do, just remember to ask yourself WHO ARE YOU? Don't worry if people think you're nuts all the best people are. I promise if you always do what is right you will become a star. Don't go too far ahead. Don't fall too far behind. Our dreams may be trying to tell us all the same thing and there are many like it but this one is mine.

You will get confused, frustrated, verklempt, and bemused. I warn you don't get discouraged now you know what to do. Have a drink smoke some hookah, get lost in the woods if you must just remember time is ticking and the WHOLE WORLD is looking to us. "All who wander are not lost" we've heard from those who came before. Life can be as simple as this key opening a tiny door.

However, not if you only think of you and your “GLOBE of a head” - please don’t make someone else’s rack perfectly and never sleep in your bed. We need to be dramatic or else life as we know it could take a turn for ‘ol red. You may very much like to hat such queen, but is it real fulfillment when you look closely at that dream? Recall who it is you’re working for. Why would you settle for such the ground-est of ground floors? What does a raven have to do with a writing desk? EVERYTHING...ugh-stop looking at my chest.

Armed with my pen and my pad on this supposedly meaningless desk, I step off my platform to fly over this world, it’s a mess. I’ll squawk and I’ll crow but the people below will most likely ignore this convoluted yet simple warning I implore. They’ll just say “Why are YOU in the Navy, oh you need to be a model!” Why thank you kind sir but I think she can do more with a throttle. She appreciates the reminder. If you can’t stand next to that woman boy then get behind her.

Haha! That’s what she said? Ya’ll are so predictable. I really like that you’re confident, yet like my watch you must-tick-to-go. It’s not a bad thing to know you’re bad-ass at what you do but remember sometimes your eye is the only glass you look through. 4/C ____ said today BANG BANG BANG “Squad attention to ME, What goes in dry comes out wet and leave a warm feeling? It’s a bag of tea! Hehehe!!!”

We ARE all mad here.

Someone said recently I hate girls (sport) all they do is they scream! I said, so. What works for them may not work for your team. P.S. side note- never attack people who dream. If I were to give a grade to the world right now it would be an F for fail. We might as well go back to the ages of sail. This, boys and girls, is surly adjusting the means to fit the wrong ends. Honestly are we the root of all evil, you know I kind of hoped we’d be friends. Come on you should know this, you’re all engineers. There’s a solution a formula some constants, the equation, OPEN YOUR EARS! Then again, what do I know I

have a vagina, I really do think diversity is an old wooden ship. Let’s like, sail it to China! I am me, you are you , let’s keep it that way only get CLOSER to we.

Note: NOTHING has n=100%

*ah efficiency

In art as in science there are asymptotes. They tell us why it is funny at the butt of our jokes. If we all come to reach one point we will stop. Think in three or more dimensions and we might not. You say – “who are you to speak for all the women in the world?” Well I’m not, but I know they would do the same for me if only they could march with their flags so unfurled.

My mistakes are directions from somewhere I know not. If you’ve done it before then you probably ought to take a course change, tack Her back round. Some things may be lost but there is still EVERYTHING to be found! I will miss you when I wake up. No thanks, I don’t need your tea cup. Take that mysterious blue bottle and drink. To borrow Richard Feynman’s great question,

What Do You Care What Other People Think?

Very Respectfully,

MIDN MBG XYZ

1/C UNITED STATES NAVY

The Calm Before

Why do I lay here and stare,
At the pitted white tiles that comprise my dorm room ceiling,
When I know that if I just open the blinds,
I could see the bright stars in the night sky surrounding?
Too often I habitually contain,
The best parts about me in the recesses of my brain,
To be released only on nights such as these,
When the juiciest of thoughts flow as steady as the rain.

Matthew O. Lindeman ‘12

The Queen's Croquet Match



The Queen, Caroline Vu '12, Digital Photograph

Sick Again

My body is a battleground.
Inside of me
Viral legions are fighting for control,
Slowly but surely taking over.
My inner defenses fight valiantly,
But outside of me
My assistance is pitiful.
I can escape to a fever dream
Or chug the carton of Tropicana
Chilling in the refrigerator.
I know I will win in the end
And be better soon enough.
Yet time crawls
When your vision swirls in puke
At the bottom of a trashcan.

Adam Calloway '11



Thirsty Third
Anonymous
Pen and marker



Barbed Wire Fence
Erica Leinmiller '13
Charcoal

Faded Colors

Once hoisted high,
Let loose to fly,
Now packed tightly away,
Ensigns flown
For the English throne
Behind smudged glass decay.
Pierced by shot,
Now they rot,
Ignored by all who pass.
Once witness to battle,
Now only to prattle,
They fade behind the glass.

Carlos R. Rosende '11

Untitled

I haven't always been the good little soldier that I am today.
Uncle Sam would cringe if I showed him the pictures of me in my
Flowing skirts and tie-dye shirts and flowers in my hair.
He'd ground me if he ever found out that I was the Homecoming
queen or that I got caught
Making out with Johnny D in a fogged-out car in the school
parking lot.
The old me would just tell him to "fuck off", but he'd wash my
mouth out with soap and
Send me to bed without dinner.
And God forbid anyone ever tell him that I used to smoke pot at
parties and that I didn't
Make my bed every morning;
He'd tell me I was out of control and would ship me off to Military
school.
And so here I am, a good little soldier with shiny shoes, making
Uncle Sam proud.

Kristen Tella '12



I'm on a Boat
Polly Kisin '14
Digital Photograph

Untitled

My love, my life, for you I cry
Tonight on angel's wings you soar.
Light swept beauty in heaven's sky
And I shall love you evermore.

Forsaken, broken is my heart,
Fallen teardrops stain the floor.
All life's joy, forgotten, departs,
For I shall love you evermore.

Ceaseless sorrow for what I did.
Bloodstained hands that killed a whore.
Your broken body now lies dead,
Yet I shall love you evermore.

Nathan Cockerill '14

Oh Jerusalem!

Opal gem amidst Martian desert lands.
The selfish wants of men threaten your ancient walls again.
Their greed reshapes your divine landscape at their own hand.
Who shall occupy you this day?
Who shall call you home away?
If not to save, then what else to say?
If your bricks and stone could but utter the desires
Of a jealous God, zealous kings would transpire,
And heed their threatening passions, save for the wiser.
May the almighty protect you from the inevitable punishment
Of man's selfish heart, that intrinsically torments him
To long for lust near the ends of the earth. Until then,
Forever remain primal, Oh Jerusalem!

Matthew O. Lindeman '12



Untitled
Kristin Otterson '11
Digital Photograph

The Favor

Cigarette smoke curled, twisting into torrents and eddies as it met the turbulent night air. The burning ember of the cigarette slowly consumed the enclosed tobacco and surrounding paper. The smoke escaping from the tip rose in a tight coherent stream, then swirled and dispersed.

The old man found it a fitting and convenient metaphor for human life: smooth and simple at the beginning, then twisted and distorted once exposed to the storm of reality. He took another drag and let the smoke seep out of his nose.

Meanwhile, the rain continued to fall. A distant flash of lightning briefly illuminated his surroundings and thunder followed several seconds later with a deep rumbling as if foreshadowing the grisly purpose for which he was here.

The apartment complex was the perfect backdrop for this dreary scene. Years of neglect in this poor neighborhood had wreaked serious havoc on the structure. Dilapidated window frames and gritty screens covered its façade, most of which was slowly dissolving back into the earth. The brick flaked off in worn areas and streaks of paint from graffiti, both fresh and old, ran down the sides. It is a wonder the building was not condemned.

“Here you go Frank. Coffee. Black.”

“Thanks,” the old man took the cup without turning.

“Boy it sure is a shitty night,” the younger man remarked.

“Fitting.”

“Yeah....” Frank frequently found the younger man’s endeavor at conversation and small talk to be tiresome but he didn’t begrudge him that, he was young. He would learn soon enough.

For his part, Detective Noah Peterson greatly disliked the older Detective. He was careful not to use the word ‘hate,’ as he found the implications distasteful to his ideals. But the old man was simply impossible to get along with! Always quiet, brooding, and most disturbingly, dark. Still, he had over twenty years of experience as a detective and Noah felt inclined to grant him a great deal of leeway. Besides, Frank had been around a long, long

time. He probably had seen and done some pretty terrible things. “Maybe I’ll be like that one day.” He shuddered at the thought and tried to focus on the reason they were here. “We’d better head inside; I think they’re ready for us.”

Frank took another drag on his cigarette and flicked it out into the street where it extinguished with a quiet hiss. Without saying a word he turned and headed toward the building. Noah shook his head and followed suit.

Climbing the rickety staircase up to the third floor, a bustle of activity and low murmurs met the two men. Technicians and street cops hurried about and performed their duties securing and documenting the crime scene.

Frank brushed past the group of people, lifted the crime scene tape, and entered the apartment. Inside, a woman busied herself with snapping photos and writing observations down on her clipboard.

“Hi Rebecca,” Noah chirped happily, receiving an annoyed glance from Frank.

“Ah, Detectives, nice of you to join me.” Brushing her sarcasm aside, Frank replied gruffly, “Well?”

“23 year old female, stabbed from behind right through the heart, time of death appears to be approximately 24 hours ago, give or take a few.”

“Name?” Noah inquired.

“Umm....” She rustled through her clipboard of papers and answered, “A Rachel Jamson. One of her neighbors discovered her a couple hours ago.”

The young woman lay in a crumpled position; face down on the dirty floor in a massive pool of sticky, drying blood. Noah could see the profile of her face and knew that she had once been quite attractive. The woman was wearing a very sexy two piece lingerie set which flaunted her physical attractiveness.

“What do we know about her?” Frank asked, snapping the younger man from his reverie.

“Well we know from the other tenants that she was definitely a prostitute, apparently she works a corner a few blocks from here.

We found large amounts of heroine and methamphetamines on the premises as well as track marks clearly indicating that she was a regular user. We suspect toxicology to come back with several different drugs in her system.” Noah plainly saw the effects the drug use wrought on her body,

“Shame,” he said quietly. Frank made no comment.

Hesitantly, Noah propositioned a theory, “So what? A john comes back to this girl’s place, does the deed and then kills her to get out of paying?”

“That’s what I thought initially,” Rebecca explained, “but there’s really no evidence to support that. We found no traces of seminal fluid on or around her, no condom, no vaginal trauma, no evidence of any kind that would indicate this woman had sex before she died. No murder weapon either.”

“Tell me about her wound,” Frank commanded.

“Ah that’s the most interesting part; it appears to have been inflicted by a long, thin, serrated blade. But even more interesting is the placement. The knife entered through the back, slid between the ribs and went right through her heart. There are no signs of struggle and no defensive wounds, which makes sense because with a wound so traumatic she was dead before she hit the floor. The thing is, the wound was expertly placed. I doubt it even nicked the ribs on the way in; very, very clean. Whoever did this knew exactly what they were doing.”

“Doesn’t sound like the kind of thing your average low-life trick or junkie could pull off,” Noah observed.

“Certainly not,” Rebecca agreed, “No, this was no crime of passion. This was quick, perfunctory, surgical, and definitely planned in advance.”

“That will be all Rebecca,” Frank said cutting her off. She opened her mouth in attempted protest but decided against arguing with the stubborn old detective and quietly exited the room.

Frank gazed at the body for several moments quietly sipping his coffee, saying nothing.

“I still can’t believe how brutal and cruel people are,” Noah blurted out finally, desperate to break the silence.

“Brutal? Trust me, this is far from the worst way to go, and definitely better than what her life would have been; a drugged up whore who would have over dosed one day and died in a pool of her own vomit. No, this was merciful...” Noah could only stare slack jawed and amazed that anyone could be so cold. “C’mon, we’ll come back tomorrow and canvas the neighbors and take statements.” With that said, he turned and left the room. Noah clenched his jaw and hurried to follow.

Back outside in the rain he confronted the veteran who was already lighting another cigarette. “You can’t honestly tell me you think that girl is better off as a corpse?!”

“And why not? It was just a matter of time until she became a shriveled up druggie, leading a life of misery and sickness. She had no future except pain and suffering. At least now she can avoid that fate.”

“Everyone makes mistakes, but that doesn’t mean they can’t be saved! Or that we should give up on them!”

“Numbers don’t lie; she’s one of thousands just like her all across the country. Most don’t get ‘saved,’” he practically spit the last word out.

“I pity your lack of faith in people,” was all Noah could say before turning to leave. He drove through the rain toward the heart of the city.

Frank only smiled. Naive kids. One day he’d learn, just like Frank had. The smoke from his cigarette curled up into the air. Impetuously, he flung it into the night; sometimes it was better to put out the flame before it met the turbulent world.

Frank knew Noah couldn’t understand that now. Sadly, he doubted the girl would have even realized the favor he had done for her.

Michael Charlton ‘11

Oh yeah...autumn

Crisp air bites upon unsuspecting skin
that has grown nicely accustomed to sweat.
The dim weakened sun seems early to set
as the days grow short and ever more thin.
The world seems to change again, to begin
searching for those times it tends to forget,
times when the cold air wasn't something unmet,
when the comfort of warmth was found within.
The frigid memory of a snowflake
reminds the soft skin of cold air's harsh sting,
comforting the skin gently at long last.
The cold air causes the skin no more aches,
instead familiarity it brings,
recalling crisp cool autumns from the past.

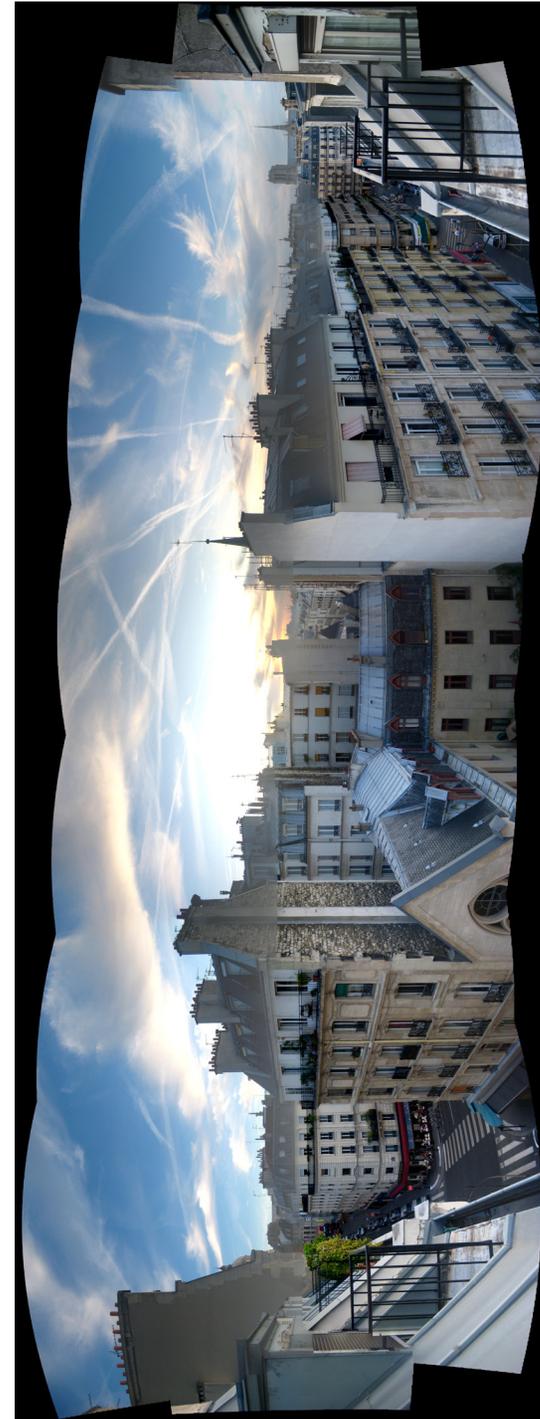
Johnathan Longo '11

The Escape to and From Prison

Desperate to escape, he makes off at night,
And toes his anxious way up creaky stairs.
He mutters an insane chant with each flight.
Past doormice, cobwebs; echoes call in pairs,
"Up more and more" the lanky prisoner gasps,
Not thinking of the time 'til when he stops.
Unlatching countless aged and rusty hasps,
While dodging slowly dripping dank, foul drops.
Toward the surface high above his cell,
The bearded bone does stagger with high hopes...
'Til through the trapdoor deep inside a well
His weak decrepit shaky body gropes.

At last! The soulful music of a dove...
A dark, foreboding, slimy mile above.

Katherine Rentz '11



Paris
Samuel Sipe '14
Digital Photography

The Caterpillar

On Your Lips

Look lovely lady, love lingers lightly on your lips
parted passionately, professing perfection of the soul
silent, secret, slavish sighs winking through emerald eyes
finally forsaking forgiveness and forgetting all the rest,
regarding religion as no more than he who returns
that smile and wears that soul on his lips
that you dare to kiss.

John Minahan '12



Alice
Alex Gentry '13
Pencil

It would be so nice

if something would make sense

for a change.

English Major

She'll never touch a book with a pen.
She claims they're sacred,
And I understand. They're art.
You wouldn't edit Dali's lines, despite their strangeness.
So why slash lines between the lines of Dostoyevsky's complex
prose?

But I write in books,
For sacredness to me lies not in print but in ideas,
In thoughts which I must capture with the tip of my pen
And hold in the cells of my mind.

Jack Gannon '13

Coincidence

The topography of
my face
Is the Great Plains.
The immense flood, wild fire
Wind worn, eroded beach cliff
Subject to nature's whim
the constant buffeting
Intensity, devastation.
A metamorphic stone
Your face
the Appalachians, Kilimanjaro
Kneaded dough.
My fingers clumsily
try
to read your features,
your Braille
Your tough terrain
On belay the cracks,
jaggedness
Between the lines
The danger of
Stepping off the edge
Plunging deep into your
Molten core
Your magnetism
My inexperience
The sure,
swift end
Flail, struggle, swim, grasp
Freak accident
coincidence
Act of God
Quicksand.
Losing my footing
no preparation for
Something like
You.

Melissa Kil '12



How to look at the Grand Canyon through the opinion of Professor B
(Series)

Kristin Otterson '11

Pen and Ink, Watercolor



Abram Cassidy

I haven't talked to Abram Cassidy in almost two years, but he used to be one of my best friends. We'd hang out almost every day in a little room behind his house called "the Green Room," where I'd smoke cigarettes and Abe would smoke weed and we'd talk about the girls from school. The girls at school always thought that Abe was attractive, though I could never figure out why. His arms weren't big, and he wasn't very well-groomed. He didn't wear fashionable clothes. Most had been scrounged from garage sales. And he didn't listen to modern music. Nor did he dance, other than a lazy side-to-side head bob while he had headphones in. He stood a little taller than me, maybe 6'2", with long brown hair and a big, ready smile. Looking back, I think that what the girls were really attracted to was his seemingly indomitable sense of individuality, and his unshakeable confidence. No law seemed to be able to contain Abe. Unfortunately, the girls all left Abe after high school, when they realized he wasn't going anywhere. I left him, too, though I can't say I'm any better for it.

A person's teenage years have always seemed to me a time when you begin to find out who you are and what you want to do with your life – who you want to become. But while most people have some ambition or goal in life, Abe had none – he had no need to become, he was content simply to be. And we all just accepted that. We all lent him money when he needed it, or a beer, or a cigarette.

He was entirely unpredictable. One day he would show up to school well-dressed, clean - presentable. The next day his hair would be disheveled, he'd be wearing yellow sunglasses and an old t-shirt from the 70's that used to belong to his dad. He also smoked more weed than almost anyone I've ever met, and he certainly smoked more of other people's weed than anyone I've ever met. Not that he stole anything; he wasn't a liar or a thief. He just had a certain charm about him; Abe could work his way into any crowd. You almost felt happy to hook Abe up with a cigarette, even your last one.

I think the one person Abe didn't like was his mom, be-

cause she was really the only person that expected anything out of Abe. She'd stomp on his cigarette packs when she found them, and tell him that smoking was bad for him. So, we named cigarettes after her. We used phrases like "let's go smoke a Joan," in defiance of the woman. Looking back, it seems incredibly mean, especially considering the fact that, really, she was just trying to keep her son out of trouble.

Eventually, Abe's mom became bitter towards us, though, and tried keeping him on a tighter and tighter chain, not allowing him to go out with us or have any fun. But Abe could be kept still quite easily. It was getting him to move that was difficult. Abe didn't ever seem to care about doing anything like homework. It wasn't that he didn't enjoy doing things. It was just that he enjoyed even more doing nothing. And, thanks to us, he could always get by.

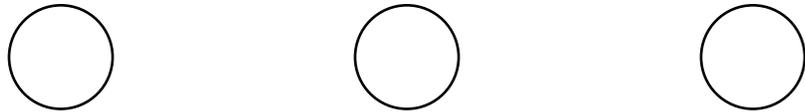
Abe once slept for almost 16 hours. He would routinely stay in his bed the entire day listening to the Grateful Dead and Phish, sprawled on the futon in his room, blankets and pillows half covering his body, still fully clothed from the night before. The floor of his room was covered in so much junk that the only way he could get to his bed in the first place was to maneuver through it in some fashion that resembled the game of hopscotch, hopping from place to place through the heap.

Occasionally, however, we would go to Abe's basement, where his drum kit sat on a flattened cardboard box, looking well past its prime. Some of the metal stands had been replaced over the years with old drumsticks, duct taped into place. Patches littered all the drum heads, despite the fact that a case of new drum heads lay tucked away in a corner of the room, collecting dust. Perhaps the drum heads held some sentimental value for Abe. More likely he just didn't want to go through the process of unscrewing the lugs on the rim and removing it to put a new head on. So, he just threw duct tape on it, and went about playing.

He would sit down on the small, worn-out stool left behind at a garbage dump, and he'd grab two battered drumsticks from the ground where he'd left them the last time he'd played. And then Abe would play. Despite having never been taught to

play, and rarely practicing, he would play. Abe may have been a bum for about 90% of his waking life, but in those moments when he sat behind that kit, he was a god. His hands would carve a beat out of the silence like Michelangelo carving a sculpture from a block of marble, the flowing rhythms almost visibly smooth. If there was ever a time in my years with Abe that I'd ever wished he would gain some ambition, it was when he played the drums. We could sit there for hours and listen to him play along to his favorite classic rock songs. Moby Dick by Led Zeppelin, or Misty Mountain Hop, or Time by Pink Floyd. Other times he would just play to no music at all. He'd play and play and play. And then suddenly he'd get bored and go back upstairs, leaving the drum kit to collect another layer of dust until the next time he decided to play. No one usually stayed around long after Abe finished; you just never felt there was a reason to stay anymore. I'd usually leave, then, say my goodbyes and light up a cigarette for the walk home, while he hopscotched his way to his bed.

Max Millick '12



Ruminations

Career poets tire of writing,
 And stiff, red leaves fall from the trees.
 A mother sometimes leaves her baby
 To a foster's foreign embrace,
 And doctor's become sick of the sick;
 But the ashes always become the dust.

Sometimes the rain settles the desert dust,
 And muses use children for prophetic writing.
 Even the lame thank God they're not sick,
 And pink blossoms fill the cherry trees.
 Sometimes a wife misses her husband's embrace
 But he will come home and soon kiss his baby.

Two people fall in lust and have a baby,
 And the picture frames are covered in dust.
 Elderly couples die in one another's embrace
 And their lives are immortalized in writing.
 The love carvings on an old oak tree
 Are too deep and have made the wood sick.

The commercials exploit the poor and the sick,
 And the newly weds cannot have a baby.
 Children grow out of climbing neighborhood trees,
 And your excuse for your tears is the dust.
 Bards never needed to put their songs in writing,
 And the jester never expected a woman's embrace.

The amputee remembers his phantom embrace,
 And the alleys are filled with the vile and the sick.
 Sometimes a man's job is to proofread the sad writing
 On the small tombstone of a two day old baby.
 The distraught mother cannot stop sweeping dust,
 And the father cuts the swing from the oak tree.

Silly Eve asked Adam to partake from the tree,
 And they found nakedness in each other's embrace.
 They were banished from the garden and into the dust,
 And so sealed the fate of the healthy and the sick.
 That's why, my mom says, it is painful to have a baby;
 It says so in the Bible, you can read it in writing.

Why would such a tree exist, you ask, is it some sick
 Joke? Just lay in my small embrace, baby—
 The books are covered in dust, but we keep writing.

Biancia Bell '11

Create

Inspiration's a dodgy fellow-
Hiding for days, weeks, months.

Then in a long warm shower
Or lying in bed,

He suddenly reappears,
Ignites a barrage of firecrackers
And the floodgates burst open.

Ideas and images and words swelling
A wave gathering
Oh no! Hold on!

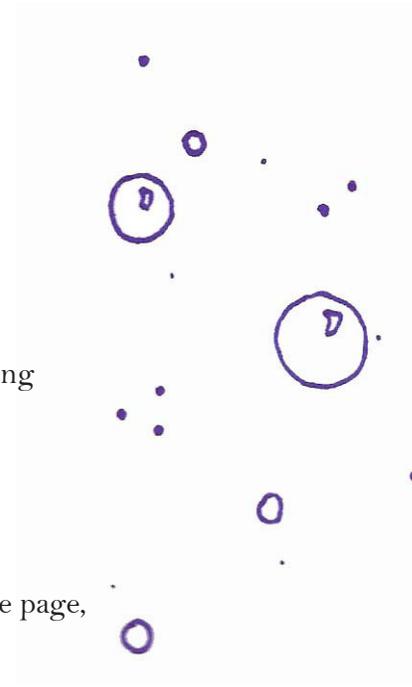
I rush to a pad.

Words pour from my head onto the page,
An avalanche of ink,
A fire hose from my pen.

I am flailing,
Grabbing and grasping,
Reaching to contain full armfuls of thoughts on the
page—

Ink splashes
Some falls to the floor:
Lost, left behind.
Churned in the surf to become a casualty to the sea.

I continue on,
Riding the wave.



A sea of garbled thoughts,
A mirror to the sudden chaos of my mind,
A mad dash made visible...

Later: A steady mind.

I sit and read
Reflecting, sifting, refining.
Thinking, learning-
Loving the magic

I condense and sharpen the ideas,
Molding the words into a work of my own.

For me,
For others,
To share,
To connect.

Colin Nevins '12



A Midwest Wedding

I'm not a good person – not really, anyway. It seems strange for me to look back on this point now that I understand. You see, for the longest time I was under the impression that I was a fantastic person, even a phenomenal one. But such a deeply false perception could only be maintained for so long. I suppose it was inevitable that I should eventually realize my own shortcomings. Yes, I suppose it was even necessary. Still, it was a far fall from my own misconceived grace. I guess ignorance really is bliss – No. That is cliché. It is actually much more than that: ignorance is purpose. Ignorance is the only thing that can possibly drive us to do any good, no matter how hypocritical that good is. My story isn't too long, and if you'll indulge me, I think I'd like to tell it now.

My name is unimportant to the story, and so I shall omit it. Just know that it is as ambiguous and hypocritical as I am. I go to the United States Naval Academy, a wonderfully horrible institution, full of the most ridiculous and stupid intelligent people – people filled with strange and unreasonable desires for self-sacrifice in service of their country in order to get ahead. I have met some of my greatest friends there, true friends, whose kindness I will never forget. I think they might be better people than me. They don't seem to make any false claims of goodness; they just are good.

Anyway, that really has nothing to do with my story, except that I was one of those people who thought they could change the world. I was an idiot. I came to find this out while on leave. I left on a Wednesday night from Annapolis to go back to my brother's wedding in Minnesota. On a side note, I love the Midwest for its beautiful simplicity and its wonderfully simple people. My brother's wedding was likewise beautiful – perfect, just like his relationship with his wife. Their relationship is perfect because it is imperfect. In all their silly arguments and funny fights I can see genuine love. Funny, isn't it, how sometimes the truest things are revealed in the strangest ways?

Oh, but I've gotten sidetracked again. I'm sorry. The point is, that's what I was looking for: genuineness – genuine love,

genuine life, genuine purpose, genuine whatever. I had a date for my brother's wedding who I was in love with – though my love for her was far from true. I didn't realize that until it was too late, until I had already realized everything else. I had thought I might like to marry her. I thought I would marry her right after school. We would be the next great military couple, I would be well respected in my community, I would tithed 10% of my income, and I would maybe die heroically at an older age, perhaps in sacrifice for my children. Finally, I would go to heaven. I'm not so sure anymore.

She left the reception after an hour and a half. It turns out she was dating someone else at college. Besides, she didn't even want to dance. So I got drunk instead, really drunk. I don't remember, but apparently I started dancing then without her. And in one evening my purpose, my drive, my wonderfully solid understanding of my own virtue vanished. Virtuous people don't grope the maid-of-honor. Virtuous people don't lose control...

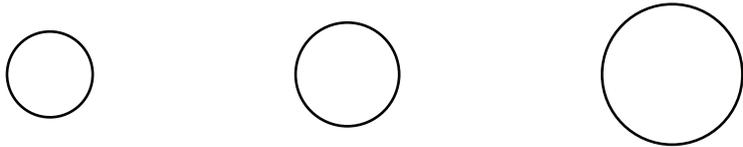
A great military leader should be virtuous; he should be honorable as well. I am neither of these things. He shouldn't be a pervert. Apparently I am one of these. As I lay in my bed in a drunken haze, racking my mind for absent memories, trying to make sense of the irrevocability of last night, I was made bare. I was naked before myself for the first time. For one brief moment I saw what I imagine God sees every time he looks at me. Never have I been so ashamed and so unable to find cover. Maybe if I had been virtuous or honorable or even courageous I might have vowed then and there to change. Instead, I just sat there drunk, sad, and pissed-off – pissed because people were pretending to be happy while I no longer could.

To the rest of the world I was still innocent. I was 19 years old, a virgin, and I had the admiration and respect of everyone – everyone except the bridesmaid and me. I didn't feel innocent. I felt dirty. I felt like a character in a James Joyce story. I had come to an epiphany at a time where I was incapable of achieving any sort of resolution. While the authors and the poets might have time to pause and reflect, I had only Sunday to recover from my hangover. There could be no cathartic poetry, only

rehydration and self-purging. If only I could purge my sins the way I purge my stomach, if only I could cleanse my conscience with a post drinking-day shower, shave, and teeth brushing. I came to the Academy to serve a higher cause. Where did it go?

Alcohol. Alcohol must be the answer. I found my problems in alcohol, so I should find in it my solution as well. Perhaps it shall make me more docile this time. Here's to answers...and good health.

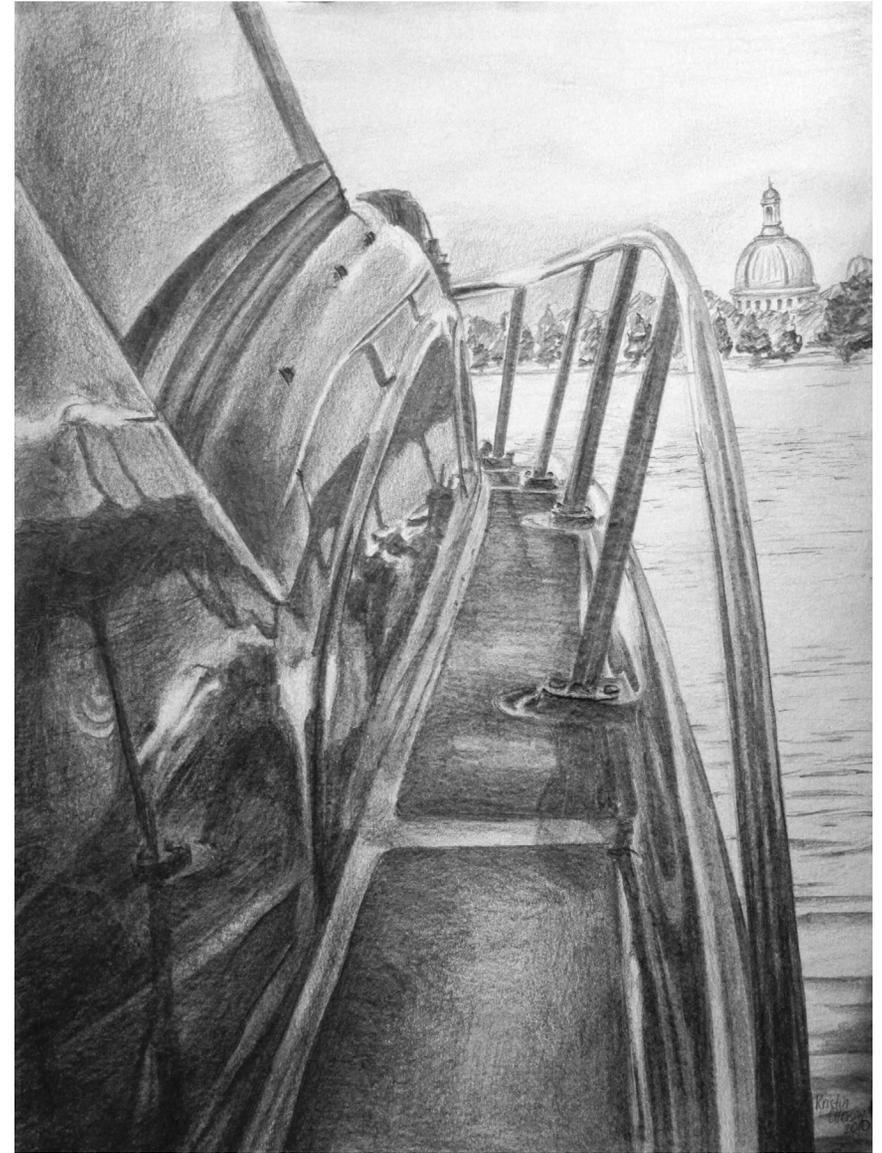
E. W. St. Claire '13



I Looked Out to Find

Many a time I looked out to find
A cold, dark abyss alone in her kind.
As the day dies, she plays her tune
Then gently she begins to dance with the moon.
Any and all are privy to see
That in her eyes he does move and breathe.
The two are forever locked in play,
Never to stop their drunken ballet;
They shimmer and shine 'til light's first ray,
Then start anew at the end of the day.
Only then are they truly free
To dance the dance only I can see.
Happy are they when they consume
Many a mind in many a room.
I am alone, though not by design;
For I, alone, looked out to find.

David Johnsen '12



Plebe Summer
Kristin Otterson '11
Graphite

Antennae and Eyelashes

A butterfly alights on her sill
and little girl is captivated by the light play
of sunlight through vivid leaf wings.
Small fingers leave smudges on the glass,
softly curious, timid as the visitor.
It is an unfamiliar relationship between
wings and eyelashes and pane.
Unblinking eyes take in black in bold
tiger-stripes, overdose of ink
on fragile, autumn-colored tissue.
These are things pink bows do not quite understand.
Doll-like arms stretch just a little more,
testing the limits of boundary,
longing so to feel, to pet, to keep.
Antennae twitch like foils in play,
a quick (unnoticed) imitation of desire.
Blue eyes cannot understand
how ink wants to be desired, wings long to be touched.

Krisandra Hardy '12

Cosmic Drift

Alone on water's edge I sit
resolutely in the sands, that shift
with tide and wind and cosmic drift
Just as the ocean always is, yet will
never ever be, engrossed in constant change
I remain as I am, yet as the waves each
break never as before, and the sand may
alter its designs, but always is
the shore, I may sit resolute, as
the grains slip through my hand
knowing I can never be, but I always am.

John Minahan '12

Doubter's Apocalypse

Bleary-eyed, undignified,
I run to where none should reside
Where victims lay still, side by side
Til heaven comes to part the tide
And Apollo takes his final ride.

Into the roaring, broken skies
The days will pass in fleeting lies
As I kiss lids of shifty eyes
And sing the bars of lullabies
To escalate my slow demise.

Countless moments will be replayed—
All concepts of redemption fade,
Revenge betrayed
Vengeance frayed
The last hope, coldly, stiffly laid.

So here I hovel at your feet,
A captive of your cold conceit
For it is but a sorrow sweet
That drills this steady, throbbing beat
And pulls the life from our defeat,
Leaving just the end to greet.

And so the days and years will die
Ignoring my sharp, desperate cry.
Our veins will struggle just to dry,
I hang my head and say goodbye.

Is this alive?

Elizabeth Milnes '11

The Cheshire Cat



Cat B&W
Jon Cameron '11
Digital Photograph

UChicago

A book of poems and words
Whispered lip to lip;
Ear to heart
Breast to chest
With only jeans separating.
Fingers find a pencil
Tucked behind an ear
Then a thought
Made silent by a gasp –
The quiet of evening.

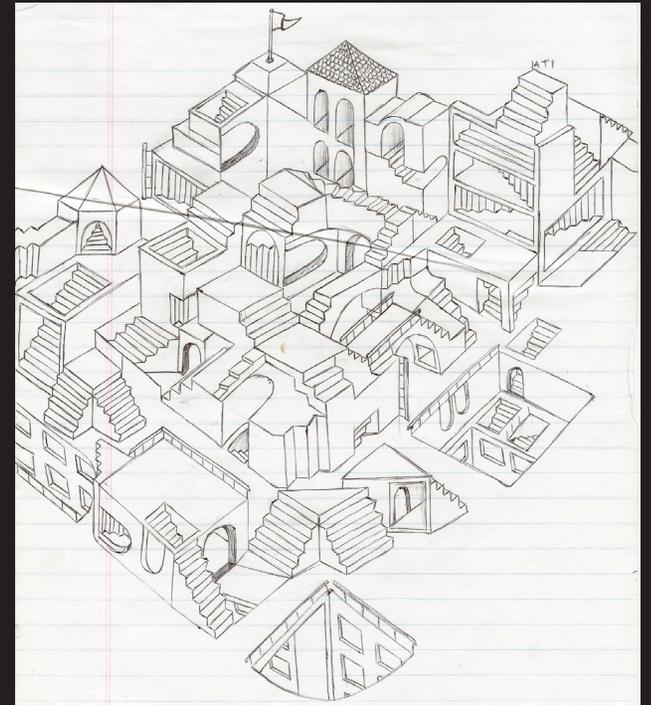
Erica Leinmiller '13

Pyro

White library walls, black computer screens
Asylum clean
Thirsty throat pleads and nature calls
But I will not move my forearms from the edge of this jagged desk
Until the homework is done

Clunky hum from a dated fan lulls me to sleep
In my dream the bright red fire alarm
Blares endlessly, flames lick hungrily
I stay to watch the computer burn
But the writing is gone and the grin melts off my face

Adam Calloway '11



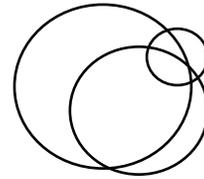
The Madness of RMOD
Cameron Iati '12
Pencil

Something to Do

Everyday Jon Toddy would wake up at 7:04 am, put on his work clothes, go downstairs to his kitchen, eat two bowls of Special K cereal, and watch 16 minutes of Fox News. After breakfast, he would put on his work shoes and head to work. He would walk four and a half blocks to work everyday and the same four and a half blocks back. At work, he would sit in his cubicle and type up 103 insurance claims. Throughout the day, he would have 4 cups of coffee—each laced with three packets of sugar and no milk. He was never late for work and he never took a break. On his desk, Jon had a computer, a coffee maker, stapler and a pen. There were no pictures, no notable paper weights, and there certainly was no mess or clutter.

Jon wasted no time at work. In a robotic-like manner, he would work through his claims. He would read through the insurance report, type up the claim, and move on to the next one chronologically. His fingers never seemed to tire even as they continuously typed away for hours. Jon never showed any emotion throughout the day or any sign of discomfort or displeasure. This lack of emotion was not to say that he was rude to the rest of his coworkers as he would always say “good morning” to those he passed on the way in and “good bye” to those he passed on the way out. When Jon first started at GNB insurance, he would arrive at eight in the morning and work until four in the afternoon. During his first few days at GNB insurance, Jon completed hundreds of reports. Afraid that the other employees at GNB would be discouraged by Jon’s work ethic and ability to work from the first minute to the last minute, Jon’s boss implemented a new company policy. This policy stated that after any employee in the claims department finished typing up 103 insurance claims in one day, they would be asked to take the rest of the day off.

With the new policy in effect, Jon would work until he finished his 103rd insurance claim. Once finished, he would log off of his computer, put his pen and stapler into his desk drawer, clean out his coffee machine, say goodbye to his boss and begin the four and a half block walk back to his two-story apartment. After his day at work, Jon would go home, take off his shoes, make



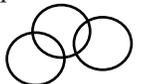
a peanut butter and jelly sandwich and open a bottle of wine. He would sit on his couch and watch TV until 9:38 pm. Before he would go to bed, he would walk 54 steps around his apartment, brush his teeth twice, drink a glass of orange juice and then slip into bed.

Jon lived a pretty meticulous life, a life that not many people would enjoy or choose to have, but he never seemed to mind and never looked for anything else to do until January 3, 2004.

Jon awoke in the middle of the night to a huge crash in the hallway outside his apartment. Jon, not being the curious type, thought nothing of it, rolled over and went back to bed. He awoke the next morning at 7:04 am, put on his work clothes, went downstairs to the kitchen, ate two bowls of Special K cereal, and watched 16 minutes of Fox News. After breakfast, he put on his work shoes and headed out the front door of his apartment. On this day, the 3rd of January, Jon was met with an unpleasant surprise—he was barricaded inside his apartment. He could hear the sound of three construction vehicles backing up outside of his apartment building.

In the middle of the night, the roof of his apartment building had collapsed into the hallway outside his door, leaving him with no way out until it was cleared. Jon, unsure of what to do, went to call his boss to tell him the news but was met with a dead dial tone.

“Great. What am I going to do now?” Jon thought as he sat down on his couch and began to untie his work shoes. “I guess I will just wait until it clears up and then head into work later.” An hour had passed and Jon had not moved from the couch; he just stared blankly out the window until he got the idea to watch the television to pass the time. He reached for the remote to his television set, pushed the power button but nothing happened.



The Carpenter

Nervously sat the young carpenter at his table in his workshop, the large chunk of oak resting silently, waiting before him. Yet the carpenter could not see the oak, and he was afraid. He peered through the large chunk of oak, freshly cut and still coarse with bark, and saw instead a single figure living inside. The figure was that of a young man. The man in the oak had a stern yet soothing face with no lines in it. His eyes were dark. He was tall and lean with messy, dark brown hair. The carpenter surveyed the man some more until he finally noticed the man's hands. The hands drew the carpenter's gaze and kept it for what seemed an eternity to him. The carpenter saw slender yet strong fingers linked to bruised knuckles. Thick blue veins lay shallow under the skin, wrapping around the knuckles and down onto the backsides of the hands spreading out like the numerous branches of a tree. The palms were raw and torn, marked with numerous scars and fresh scratches that painted a most wonderful picture. The carpenter, afraid and not wanting to do so, continued to look at the hands. He began to see where the scars had come from and where new scars would one day form. He saw the same hands from many years ago, the hands of a child, building with his toys. The hands were different than those of the other children; they were careful and efficient, intelligent, and teeming with potential. They had a life of their own. The carpenter saw the hands years later on a boy of sixteen; they had begun to develop and were creating the most magnificent art the carpenter had ever seen. Then the carpenter saw the hands of the young oaken man once more, but this time he saw them in their most fitting process of creation. The hands were carving out figures from chunks of oak, mahogany, timber, and cedar. The oaken man was the master of the hands, but the hands were the true creators. The figures were unlike any the carpenter had ever seen; they seemed to surpass all forms of beauty until they were alive. The true life in the figures

was magnificent and the carpenter was afraid of such a beauty. The man in the oak wanted to leave his entrapment, to be free to allow his hands to serve their function in the world: creation.

The carpenter could see the longing in the man's eyes, his need to escape and create that which the hands had promised. He saw the man's face, free of imperfections, wrinkle and writhed with an unimaginable pain. He saw that same pain in those longing eyes. It was a deep pain that only the wrongfully imprisoned could understand, those who know above all else the desire for freedom. The carpenter saw the pain, the yearning for freedom. He could feel the man's pain, not in himself but actually emanating from the man and falling upon those nearby. The carpenter felt the pain around the oaken man and knew his yearning, but was scared.

He lunged at the chunk of oak, seizing it violently in his own hands. His strong and slender fingers slipped around the wood, the thick blue veins around his knuckles, which spread like branches through his hands, pulsed wildly underneath his skin, and the many scars and scratches that covered his palms began to tear on the roughness of the bark. Droplets of a deep red blood stained the wood. The carpenter threw the oak across the room, his heart pounding. The oak hit the wall with an unexceptional thud before falling to the ground, resting silently as the sawdust kicked up in the commotion began to settle around it. He stood in place for several moments, not moving, hardly even breathing. He walked to the door, turned out the lights and exited the workshop. He locked the door.

The carpenter never entered his workshop again. He lived a small and quiet life, alone in his house. He never looked at the workshop, nor did he spend his time thinking of the workshop. He pushed it entirely from his mind and made it absent from his life, forcing himself to forget what he had seen. Yet every so often the carpenter would wake up in his bed drenched in sweat, his heart pounding and his temples throbbing. It was always the same dream that woke him, the dream of a long room filled with towering wooden figures expertly carved. He could not bring himself to look at these carvings, even in the dream, yet he could

not escape the eyes of the figures. It seemed as if they were staring straight through him, seeing his skill, cognizant of his refusal to embrace that skill. He could feel the painful scorn of the figures, a constant smothering disappointment with him such as he had never felt nor would ever feel again. It was an inhumane disappointment, one that filled him with the sickening feeling of waste and worthlessness. The carpenter would always wake up just as he reached the largest and most beautiful carving at the end of the hallway, a tall looming carving so beautiful it teemed with life, passing its ultimate judgment upon the miserable carpenter and his sinful waste.

In his last moments of life, the carpenter thought of the dullness that existed in his world, a dullness he knew he had allowed to exist. The carpenter looked at his own hands; the scars, the blue veins, and the slender fingers. He imagined what the world could have been, and then he passed.

Johnathan Longo '11



Chessie
Krsitin Otterson '11
Acrylic on Canvas



Untitled
Samuel Sipe
Digital Photograph

Stockholm
Kristin Otterson '11
Acrylic on canvas



The Light

Everything went white before I completely blacked out. It's hard to explain; I guess it's what most people would describe as "finding the light," only I'm pretty sure God wasn't at the other end of the telephone line. I just remember white, like I had been staring at the sun until I made myself go blind—only, it didn't hurt. Then, blackness. I don't know how long I was in an unconscious state, or how I even got there – I can't remember that far back. I just remember a jumbling of words and screams. Now I'm awake and cold; I'm pretty sure I'm bleeding; I just don't know from where, but I can smell the blood. I've become acquainted with its pungent smell – especially when it has been sitting on a lifeless or dying body for hours. After that, it's no longer the smell of blood – no, then it's the looming smell of death.

I can't tell if I'm buried beneath something, or if I've fallen into a hole. In fact, I can't even tell what position I'm laying in, sitting in...whatever it is I'm doing I'm not aware of yet. My senses are all still coming to me. Right about when the excruciating pain in my left leg starts to kick in, I realize my eyes have been closed this entire time. I open them to nothing but destruction. About five meters away from me off to the right I see Will – he's lying on his face, his body is wrapped around itself. Not too far away from him is Alex; his body was thrown against a large triangular-shaped boulder. His body looks like he's been sitting there for a few hours, just staring down at the dirt, bored out of his mind. Damn, the helicopter looks like heaps of metal pieces that were just carelessly tossed on top of each other, except for the splatters of blood that are seen here and there on it. I realize I'm lying next to one of the blades – no, half of one. God, what happened? We were about to land...I know we were, I saw Jay leaning out of the helicopter as we hovered above the ground; but now I'm awake, and everyone's dead.

Leaned up against a sheet of metal and on top a bed of rocks, I turn my head to the left and see Bryan. I see Jay hobbling

to him, screaming his name. He doesn't even bother dropping any of his gear when he gets next to him, no, he just kneels and immediately starts engaging in CPR. It's the most violent attempt of trying to save someone's life that I've ever seen. I know it when I watch though that he's already gone – he's already gone. I feel the pain all over again in my leg. I look down and realize that's where the blood is leaking out of me; right above my thigh but before my hip bone. I see white again.

I've always wondered what happens to people when they die. Besides the obvious of course – they get buried or cremated; everyone goes to the funeral and cries. People show up and claim that they were "best friends" with you, followed with a description of a beautiful and heart-warming story of how you forever touched their life. It's all sentimental, really. But what about Heaven, or Hell; I always wondered if those places exist, or if we just evaporate into nothing leaving our bodies behind to rot in a wooden casket, covered with dirt and flowers, or our ashes to be left as food for the desperate fish. Seriously though, why is it so bright in this room?

That's when it hits me. I'm not in a room, or a hole, or the helicopter with the guys. I'm dead. I don't feel anything at all – happy, sad, complacent, lonely – nothing. I don't understand why I can't feel anything at all, pain or pleasure. My mind focuses on this for a while. I don't know how much time passes while I'm thinking about all of this, but my mind finally shifts to my family. Who's going to tell them, and when? Are they going to be okay? Why can't I feel anything, and who turned off the lights?

Gabriela Beasley '11

Sheets' Purpose

Patchwork tapestry of amber hue
Illuminating the outline of intermingled me and you.
Its cookie cutter reflection dancing across your skin;
Let me feel you once...some more...another...
Again and again.
Never shut the blinds, always let the light in,
Because to not see you shining before me would be a disastrous sin.
Gazing upward, I feel my longing heart begin to race.
If not for you, then this tormented life would seem utterly
 out of place.
Because you,
Right there,
Sitting above me with your long brown hair,
Is why I dream and dare,
To lie here and stare,
At your indescribable face,
That reminisces of such beauty and grace.
And subdues the malicious evil within me,
To stop,
Bow down,
And kneel before thee.
And concede to your haunting, angelic tone,
That nothing...
Not life,
Not love,
Not being,
Is worth doing alone.

Matthew O. Lindeman '12

Listen closely

The pencil whispers pretentiously in my ear, hissing in an air of
 entitlement.
A mind of its own it waltzes following the thin blue lanes,
An upright citizen it remains on the right side,
It can retract, erase, undo what it's done.
How easy it must be to eradicate what had existed only seconds
before, leaving only rubber crumbs in its wake, the only evidence
 of misstep.
If only it were that simple, that easy. How convenient it would be
 to go unnoticed, one of many identical utensils,
 indispensible, easily forgiven.
Why does everything I do have to be forever?
I am a runny fountain pen.
I can't undo, no matter how much I repent. The thick, oozing ink
trails me wherever I go.
The scarlet letters.
The irreversible.
I am the blunt, clumsy paint brush, the foreign tool of ancient
 times.
A reminder of half-thoughts, rough beginnings, and nightmares.

Melissa Kil '12

Mock Turtle



Alice
Krisandra Hardy '12
Pastel

Sun burnt

It's too late for lotion-
The blazing sun has already taken its victim
And left behind its signature mark of
Crispy skin, tender to the touch.
The un-kissed skin only blushed when first introduced to the
fiery fellow,
But as their relationship deepened, so did the color of her cheeks.
Too entranced by its warmth and light
To realize the cruel game she fell prisoner to.
Sadly in a few short hours she will realize
He left her with nothing but a painful reminder to shed.

Kathryn A. Yanez '11

Prostitute

If only, if only the bluebirds will sing
The ravens will caw, and bells will ring
On this day that I see but only in my head,
Wishing it would come, but waiting in dread.

If only, if only you would sing for me.
Holding me, hugging me, buying a ring
Flowers and sparkles would alight in the room
Knowing I'm dreaming, wishing it untrue.

If only, if only I wasn't sobbing
You're putting your pants on, done and throbbing
You're using me, and I know it but I pretend anyway
That you care like I do, that we have a home far away.

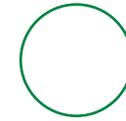
Amanda Buckley '11



Radio Towers
Jon Cameron '11
Digital Photograph

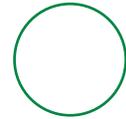


Sunrise on the Bay
Erica Leinmiller '13
Digital Photograph



The Unfortunate Demise of Mr. Sun

Wavering clouds swung baring
curving, swerving, rock-like edges
Which bit loud puffy holes
Through the soft, sanguine sunset sky,
Sowing towering white into the rapid
Range of reds and golds and purples.



They blanketed outlines of tamaracks and signs
With sharp words I never
Read, forcing the sun down
With growing speed as if attempting
To bruise crude men and mud
As the plowed earth softly glowed.



The clouds have halved the sun's support,
So he plummets helpless down, thrashing
Through the branches and crashing into
Sparkling slag, surprising the leather-
Hard ground, falling down
Only to be lost at last.

Jack Gannon '13



Abandonment at the Altar

The rain had poured all night and day,
And seeped into her veins.
It drenched her bed, and left the mold,
Of where he used to lay.
She tried to smooth only the sheets,
Without a drop of luck.
Instead her knees, buckled from weight,
Of hopeless prayers, and deserted vows.

The silence mocked the piano,
A white dress stained from black mascara tears,
And withered petals strewn across the church.
The virgin bride holds tight
In both hands, two rings instead of one.

Jessica Grupp '11

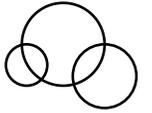
Disappointment

Delight not in dreams of future gain;
Fool's hopes think I the everyman's desire.
Intent and purpose couple not with strain.
Reality doth smother good will's fire.
Fate's hand seems to me like keen Italian grip
Quelling mortal pursuit with agile might.
Blessed few souls from fortune's cup may sip.
The rest: dung to abate his appetite.
We stand between that which we want and get,
More often forced to settle than to strive.
And though the scorned oft bitterness beget,
Perhaps that sleeper's dream may be revived.
In truth: Man's hell is at its base mind's hell.
What grace is sun's light if ne'er raindrops
fall?

Amber Jeter '12

Paper Hearts

When the leaves start to crackle and shrink;
The nights grow longer, the weather colder.
My heart beats faster; your breath makes me bolder.
Watching your sneakers, my sighs sink
Into the pile you've made, the sky turning pink.
The smell of the rain filling my nose, my head on your shoulder,
Tires across wet pavement, fires feeling older.
The reaching of stripped trees, our fingers locked seals our link.
Children with backpacks, untied shoes, shuffled to schools.
Watching them, remembering me, whispers on swings.
Finally able to find myself, locker 212, all new rules,
Exciting halls, me seeing you, lowering my eyes the bell rings.
Squeaks and shrieks, but time freezes for us, its fools.
Passed notes and pencil lead hearts leave us paper flings.



Amanda Buckley '11



Raystown Ray
Kara Yingling '12
Digital Photography

Secret

She took my hand as we went for a ride;
I scrambled my brain for words to utter,
She muttered— “You’re holding a secret inside.”

We drove across the countryside and beside
The Appalachians vast; my stomach pains grew deeper
As she held my hand when we went for a ride.

She bellowed, “Just tell me already!”—Denied.
I couldn’t tell her yet; she’d have to wait til’ later.
She groaned— “You’re holding a secret inside.”

The Sun and the horizon were set to collide
As we drove beyond the trees, cows, and the pasture.
She squeezed my hand as we went for a ride.

She looked over at me and continued to chide:
“If you tell me now then I’ll stop being a bother!”
She shouted— “You’re holding a secret inside!”

Smiling I said, “Truth is— I have no secret to hide, (I lied.)
So I don’t see why you’re in such a fluster!”
She clasped my hand as we went for our ride
And whispered— “I’m glad you’re not holding a secret inside.”

Doug Hsiao ‘12



Respite

In times when I was worn
And returned in the dead of night,
And through the threshold stumbled,
Burdened with worry, hidden from light,
The warmth of the glowing hearth,
Its silent flame burning low,
Distracted my attention
From the ghastly shadows it’d throw.
My cares I’d drop like heavy luggage,
My fears would all subside,
And from the trials of this midnight world,
In the fire I would hide.
Though soaked from rain my clothes would be
From my passage through the fray,
The heat from the fire, weak though it was,
Dried them right away.
In from the wind and bitter cold,
By the hearth, I’d take my seat,
And I was warmed in the fire’s light,
Though there never was much heat.

Now the world is in a tumult
And storms blow ever harder.
From any warmth as I once knew,
My path travels yet farther.
Though I will be carried all over the world
Meeting obstacles still higher,
I never again expect to find
Respite by the fire.

Carlos R. Rosende ‘11



Color Girl

Tired with time lays the buttercup dress
Trapped in glass, belonged to the Color Girl
And fit for an ancient Worden Princess.
Draped the mannequin and stitches unfurled

as sepia tone photos frame the scene,
Nostalgia's tableaux spotlights a lady:
Blonde hair, blue eyed, bona fide young Colleen
Debutante of the day, Miss O'Grady.

As her shimmering white pearls hang loosely,
Full dress blues die hard on strangling, choking
The men who don them, swearing profusely
At their luck and her looks (thought provoking).

Time has retired that gaze, ogle and stare.
Who these days has a longing look to spare?

Kara Yingling '12

Dozing Off

Eyes drip beneath my brain
roll about in glassy shoes
and run before the twelfth stroke.

Hands twitch.
Pen drops.
Curtain falls.

Night is pregnant with the day's unwritten words
that linger in dreams,
aborted by morning.

Elizabeth Milnes '11

Autumn's Silent Song

Harvest moon reflects the backcountry hills.
The night is silent but in a loud way.
Deaf is me; hushed is summer's jay,
Alone with my thoughts, the wind, and mild chills,
I hear the whirl of apple grinder's shrills,
The low mournful wail of a coon hound's bay,
In my memory. (to prevent decay),
I lock this song next to the whip-poor-will's.

As the hungry frost ripped through the valley,
Every memory that kept me (snug) warm:
The blush of pumpkins, the gleam of cider,
Was gone. Lost on a bleak desperate plea,
That reaps contempt and spurs a dreadful storm
To whisk away autumn's midnight writer.

Kara Yingling '12



Autumn
Erica Leinmiller '13
Digital Photograph

A Loss of Innocence

Paul Rogers sways back and forth slowly from a rope tied to the ceiling. And I stare at him, at the lifeless body, the mixture of curiosity and triumph sending tingles through my body, almost making me feel high. I bring the cigarette to my mouth again, and pause. Is my hand shaking? I look down at the pack of cigs in my lap. Thank god, I've still got thirteen left.

I think of what to write for the suicide note. The problem is I haven't talked to Paul in years. Did he hate his job? His wife? His kids? Did he even have kids? Fuck if I know. Better stay away from that, then. Jobs are usually safe. Everyone hates their job, right?

Paul's lifeless eyes stare at the ceiling. They always look up when they die, like a kid looking for the answer to a question. Remember Ms. Walker, Paul? Remember what she said to us in the third grade? There's no answers on the ceiling, Paul. I lean forward to get a closer look at him, my chair groaning as I shift my weight. Suddenly a loud noise breaks the silence in the room, and I snap to my feet and spin, cigarette flying from my hand as I reach down to my belt. Nothing there. I look down. There it is.

I bend over and pick up the Baretta M11 pistol and dust it off. This thing always falls out of my belt when I don't pay attention. Maybe one day I'll get a holster. Habitually, I check the receiver and ensure that a bullet is indeed still chambered. It is. Then I tuck the gun back into my belt. I turn to face Paul again. It really has been too long. We used to be inseparable as kids. But a lot has changed.

"Obviously," I say, and chuckle, but Paul doesn't think it's funny.

I reach down and grab the cigarettes off the floor, then pull one out and place it between my lips, savoring the smell of tobacco that wafts into my nostrils. I reach into my pocket to pull out my lighter. There's no breeze, but my hand rises instinctually to protect the vulnerable flame from destruction. I'm just about to inhale when something registers, barely at the edge of my consciousness, and I freeze. I look over at the small digital clock

on the cable box beneath the television. The time is right. And I swear I remember that sound distinctly. The sound I've just heard; the sound of a large diesel engine pulling away. A school bus.

Cursing, I carefully put the unlit cigarette back into the pack, and trade it for my Baretta. I walk to the door and wait. I can hear footsteps, the little pitter-patter of innocent booted feet sloshing through the puddles near the door. The door handle turns.

"Daddyyy!" the girl yells, running inside. I level the gun at her face as her older brother follows her. She looks to be about 6 or 7, him 11 or so. She takes one look at me, staring over the barrel of the gun, then she sees the gun, and starts to cry.

"Close the door," I say. The boy looks at his sister, then back at me.

"No." He crosses his arms. Brave boy.

"Okay," I say, and walk to the door myself. The boy turns to run.

Sometimes, I surprise even myself with how fast I can move in a pinch. In an instant I have hold of the kid's arm, and I throw him into the stairs, then slam the door shut and turn around. He's gone. I can hear him, though, running around upstairs. Maybe finding a hiding place. Maybe looking for daddy. I turn to the girl; she's still crying.

"Shut up," I say to her. She won't stop. "Shut up or I'll shoot you." She tries, but this isn't her choice anymore. Her body is in panic mode. I throw her in a closet and start walking upstairs.

At first I don't see the boy, but when I look down the hall I see that he's standing in a room in plain sight. He has something in his hand. A phone.

"Fuck you," I say to him. I raise the gun without thinking and fire, but he sees me and ducks behind the bed. Rage begins to boil inside me, replacing the calmness I'd felt killing the boy's father. The little prick, ruining my moment. I begin to walk toward the room when I pause for a moment to look at my gun. No. There are better ways to do this.

I put the gun in my belt and walk into the room. I can hear him shuffling about behind the bed. My hands are tingling with adrenaline. This is my favorite part. The rage is gone now; I feel nothing but the raw anticipation of the coming kill. I reach behind the bed and grab the little brat and throw him down. He's kicking and punching, but two solid blows to the face calm him down. Then my hands close around his throat, and tighten. He begins to resist again, but it won't last long. He starts to make that gurgling noise, and I can feel him slipping away. He's about to go...

"Don't," a voice behind me says. It's the little girl. She's standing in the doorway, eyes puffy and red, but still as death. My hands loosen.

"What?" I ask her.

"Don't kill him," she says.

"Why not?"

"He's my brother." Such simple logic.

"So? I killed my brother just an hour ago," I say simply.

She looks like she's about to cry again. Better get this over with. I look back at the boy. He's passed out, but still alive. Not for long. I start to tighten down on his neck again.

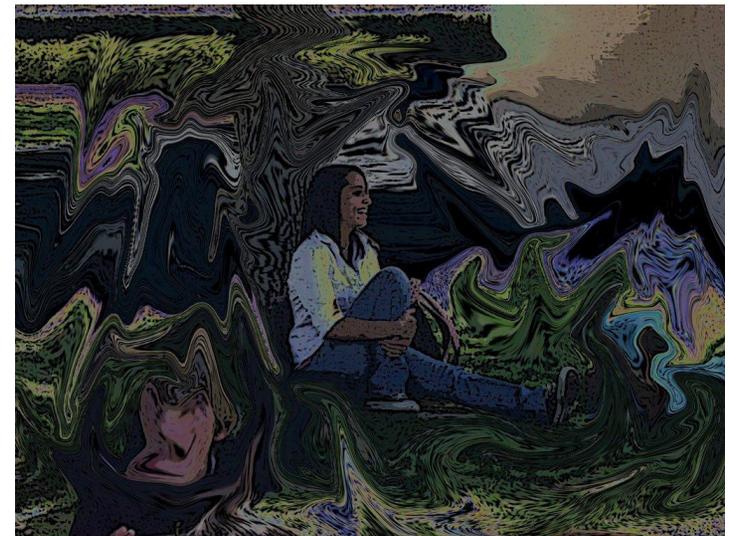
My body lurches forward at the same time two things register. The one is an earsplitting roar that hits me from every direction. The second is a short burst of the most excruciating pain, followed by a numbness that spreads through me. It's quicker than I thought. I can see the girl as I lay on the bed, blood and life pouring out of me. And the Baretta M11 clasped in her tiny hands.

Max Millick '12

American Dream

The dream you dreamed, America, is wrong, and this is why: you had in mind the prodigy, the sick, the old among the throng of ever growing minds and fists and jaws (which was a noble vision to be sure and speaks so highly of our politics), but then, my lovely home of hearts demure and bled, you left the rest misfortuned fit to wallow in their safe and steady homes – a thousand squares of feet for toilets, beds, and stacks of glossy-paged and dog-eared tomes that advertise the “cures” for emptiness – so while the poor receive our country's teat, we others die each day's monotony.

Krisandra Hardy '12



Shelby by Tree, Alix Membreno '14, Digital Photography



Presenting your Labyrinth Staff- We do work!

Left to Right: (Top) Laura Starck, John Williamson, Mike Diaz, Kathryn Yanez;
 (Middle) Nathan Cockerill, Alexandria Gentry, Krisandra Hardy, Erica Leinmiller;
 (Bottom) Max Millick



The Labyrinth's Fabulous Editors



Krisandra Hardy
 Editor in Chief



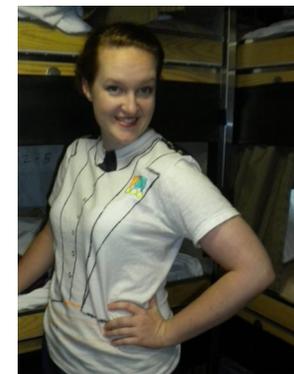
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