

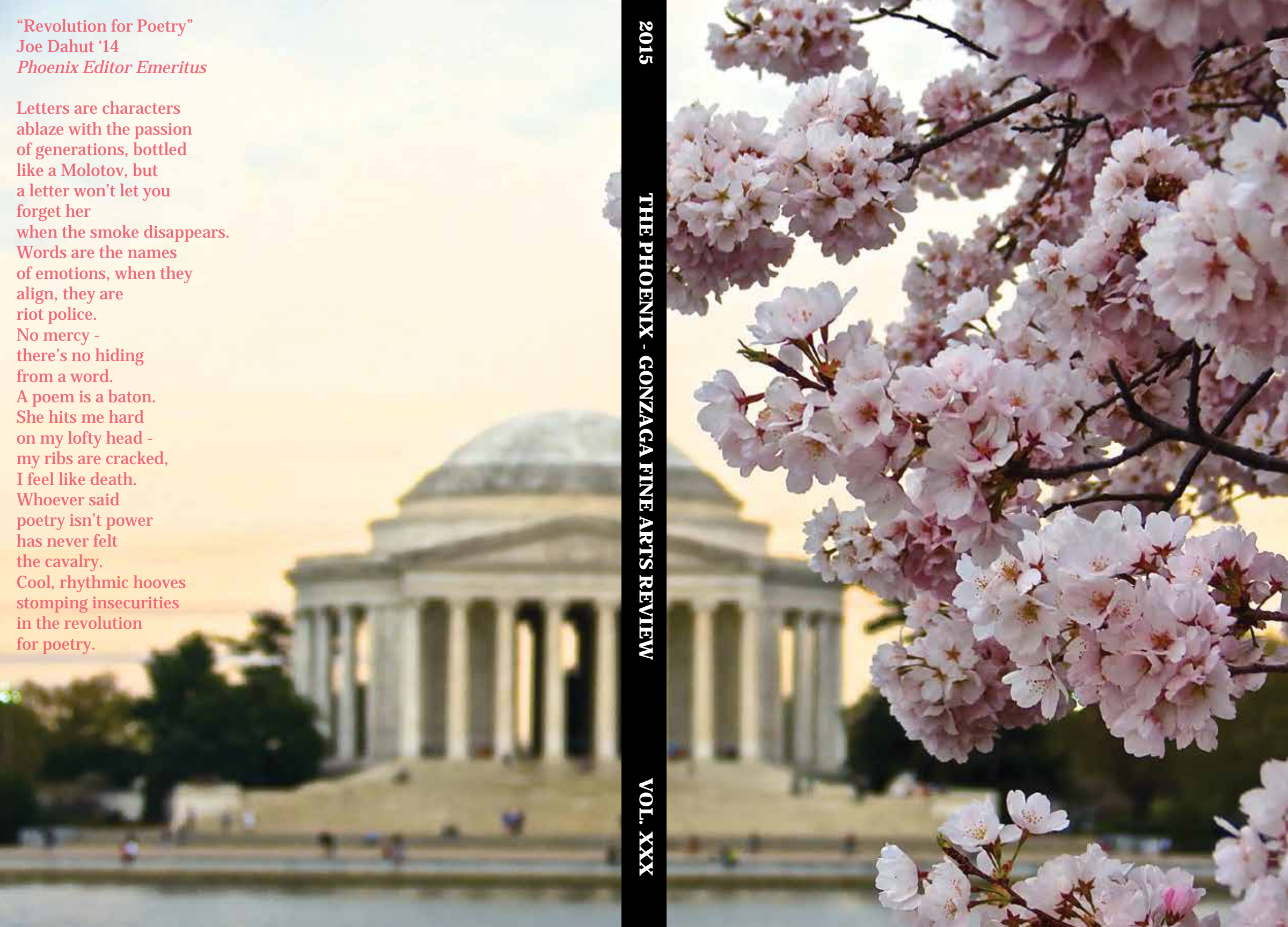
"Revolution for Poetry"
Joe Dahut '14
Phoenix Editor Emeritus

Letters are characters
ablaze with the passion
of generations, bottled
like a Molotov, but
a letter won't let you
forget her
when the smoke disappears.
Words are the names
of emotions, when they
align, they are
riot police.
No mercy -
there's no hiding
from a word.
A poem is a baton.
She hits me hard
on my lofty head -
my ribs are cracked,
I feel like death.
Whoever said
poetry isn't power
has never felt
the cavalry.
Cool, rhythmic hooves
stomping insecurities
in the revolution
for poetry.

2015

THE PHOENIX - GONZAGA FINE ARTS REVIEW

VOL. XXX



THE PHOENIX

2015

Dear Reader,

I know, you don't read the introduction. But this one's good, I swear.

After eight straight years of Gonzaga's Fine Arts Review, it's easy to feel like it's a sure thing that we'll have another on our desk at the end of next year, but it isn't. Though it befits Gonzaga's excellence, this magazine is far from a constant character in Gonzaga's history; just ask the Classes of 1999 through 2007. But don't really, as they're probably still upset that it was on hiatus.

The energy and creativity that goes into the artistic endeavors on these pages, as well as the many excellent pieces that are not, demands a great deal of a great many. We cannot properly thank the artists who submitted their work any more than we can properly attest to the originality and genius of that work, other than to say that we are proud to call you brothers.

But here we are as the seasons change again. With the excitement of our seniors about to set out and freshly admitted eighth graders about to rush in, we'd be remiss not to take a moment to capture this student body, '18, '17, '16, and '15, by sitting down with Spring's sweetest, and labor-intensive, flower: The Phoenix.

Sincerely,
Chris Hrdy & Kevon Turner

THE PHOENIX

2015 - Volume XXX

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Dedication



This edition of *The Phoenix* is dedicated to Dominik Liam Pettey, Class of 2015. Those who knew Dom remember his boundless positivity and cheerful demeanor; he was often the happiest guy in the room, if his signature grin was any indication. Dom devoted himself wholly to the Gonzaga community. He was a spirited student, hockey hero, and avid fan of all things Gonzaga. Above all else, he was our brother.

His absence from our daily lives made us realize how much he gave to his family, his friends, and his school. His presence in our memories today reminds us of everything Dominik has left with us to appreciate.

Throughout this edition, you will find poetry, prose, art, and photography inspired by and dedicated to Dom. While his sudden departure wounded those whose lives he has touched, it is safe to say that it was a blessing for all of us to know him and watch him blossom into a true Gonzaga brother, a Man for Others.

He lives on
in our minds and hearts
in a loving state
of perpetual bloom.

AMDG

**Literature
&
Poetry**

We Were All Eagles

If you really think about it, the most beautiful things that happen on Earth take place in brief periods of time. They could be a hockey game, a Led Zeppelin Song, or a drive down the GW parkway painted with thoughts and images from a long day at school. There is something about the brevity of it, the pressure to condense the spectacular into the brief that makes it beautiful. They can pass in the blink of an eye, and if you don't take the time to look, you can miss them without even blinking. I guess this is what Ferris Bueller meant when he said "life moves pretty fast. If you don't stop and look around once in awhile, you could miss it." I am living one of those beautiful brevities as I drive home from school now. Led Zeppelin's "Stairway to Heaven" is leaking through the speakers onto the icy floor of my car. I am in a pool of thought, composed of memories, some happy, some sad. I think of graduating, the summer to come, and the college years awaiting me. And as Robert Plant screams of the way to get to a place to where our long lost friends are, I think of my friend Dominik. Dominik is no longer with me, but it bears me comfort in knowing that I didn't forget to take the time to look at the jubilation of the soul I got to talk to every day. Like the Hockey Championship he won the year earlier, the song echoing through my pool of thought, and this drive home, Dom's life on this earth was brief and beautiful.

Dominik Liam Pettey was the kind of guy that could brighten up a room as soon as he walked through the door. There was never a time where Dom was angry with someone for poking fun at him, because there wasn't a thing you could do to steal his thunder or bring him down. Simply put, he was always happy. Dom was always smiling, and it was that smile and his flowing hair that made everyone around him just a little happier each and every day.

Dom or "Dinger" as his teammates liked to call him, was a hockey all-star and a presence on and off the rink. He loved hockey, and at Gonzaga College High School, his home away from home and our high school, it was what he did best. Dom didn't have straight A's, and he didn't master any classical instruments. He mastered his hockey stick, and I tell you what,

from seeing his games, his hockey stick was the only instrument he needed. Dom was a special person in a special place, and when he left this world to go to the next, I had never felt a deeper sorrow in my whole life.

It was November 1st, and as I woke up to make myself some breakfast, I looked down at my phone. My heart skipped a beat. 11 missed calls. I returned one of them to my good friend, Andrew Pastorino. Andy picked up and started speaking in cautious tones amidst emotional, heavy sobs. After asking him what was wrong, he replied “Last night, Dom Pettey, Patrick Johanneson, Sean Gilroy, and Danny May got into a car accident. Dom is gone. PJ is in critical condition....” English can only go so far when you describe losing someone who was close to you. I prefer not to talk about it anyways. All that needs to be clarified is that amidst all the sadness was a deep concern for the people just like me. All I could think about was my friend, PJ, who was still in the hospital, and the people who knew Dom way longer and fuller than I did. I needed to grieve with my brothers, each of whom felt the loss, just as much if not more than I did.

The moment I walked into St. Aloysius Church that morning all I could hear and see were tears. I remember being so angry with God and with that woman for taking Dom, but deep down I knew that he wouldn’t have wanted that. Dom was known for his faith. As his parents said, “When he was having a tough time, he would pray.” People even saw Dom drive himself to church. As I remembered his face, which I saw just the day before, I prayed, as he would have. I prayed for Dom’s soul. I prayed for my friend Patrick who was in the ICU. I prayed for the Gonzaga community to come together. And come together we did.

The next Monday was a day I will never forget. It is one of the many brief but beautiful moments in my pool of thought and the quintessential meaning of brotherhood. It started off, with a prayer service in St. Aloysius Church. My friend Sean Gilroy, a boy who was in the car with Dom, sang a song called “Down to the River to Pray,” for Dom as his mother had requested. It was a powerful experience. Every guy in the Church had their arms around each other’s shoulders. At that moment, we all had come

to accept the fact that we wouldn't be seeing Dom around the halls anymore. We had accepted that he was really gone. But we realized that the only way to recover was through each other. We realized that community heals.

At Gonzaga, an all-male Jesuit high school in Northwest DC, every single person you share the privilege of being an Eagle, our mascot, with is your brother. The friendships formed at Gonzaga, are some of the strongest you will form in your whole life. Our strong community is what made Dom's departure so painful, but it was also the thing that helped us rally together and memorialize him. As soon as we were dismissed from St. Aloysius Church, everybody knew where we were going, Dom's favorite place, the K Street parking lot.

Dom was known for his fondness of having his eighth and final period of the day, free. He could of chosen to go home early, but he loved his friends, so he always stuck around in the parking lot outside school with his chair, chewing tobacco, and cigarettes and just hung out. Dom-o loved his Grizzly long cut tobacco hence "Dinger," his nickname. After the school gave us permission, all 240 members of the class of 2015 brought our lawn chairs into the K street parking lot and remembered the life of Dominik. The day would come to be known as "Dom Day." Some of the guys went to the Wal-Mart down the block and bought grills, and hundreds of dollars worth of hamburger and hot dog meat. Others went to all of the local gas stations and cleared their shelves of any tobacco products. We brought out hockey goals and held a street hockey tournament. The K street parking lot had essentially turned into the biggest, smokiest cookout in D.C. and right in the middle of it, was Dom's chair. Deep down we all knew that Dom was there with us, sitting and smiling.

One thing about beauty, whether it be a song on the radio or the life of young man, is that it has no limitations. It spans all ages, cultures, and religions. It brings everyone together. The teachers came out and smoked and talked with us. Pedestrians stopped by because they had heard of what was going on. Nobody cared that we were smoking cigars. Nobody cared that we were blocking parking spots or grilling. Nobody cared about any

of the rules because at that moment we were aghast at the beauty of Dominik's life. At that moment we were all Eagles.

At the end of the cookout, a black Ford escape pulled into the parking lot and rolled up to the grills. Mr. Pettey stepped out of his car, and climbed onto his roof for all to see. We all sat still and watched him, amazed at the man's strength. Dom's dad started off by thanking us for celebrating Dom's life and for making his 17 years on earth great before telling us stories about Dinger and all of the dumb stuff he had done over the years. We laughed and we cried as we remembered Dom-o and as the air of nostalgia began to clear, Dom's dad told us one thing. "Be careful," he said. "No father should have to bury his son."

Mr. Pettey's courage and composure was nothing short of inspiring. A couple of weeks later, football team won the oldest high school football rivalry in the United States against St. John's to the chant of "Do it for Dom." Our soccer team won the D.C. state championship, displaying the number 11, Dom's number, on their jerseys. Our community was healing. We would have scars, but we would bear them with pride.

I am sharing Dom's story with you not only because it was a very dramatic event in my childhood but also because I want you to be aware of an attitude that Dom had which I find some people lack. Dom knew that the people you surround yourself with, those who you call "friends," should be your priority. He knew that time he spent laughing with those he loved was way more important than any grade he got, any PowerPoint he had to create, or any meeting he had to sit in. Looking back at Dom's incredible outlook on life and the value he assigned to treating others the way he would want to be treated, I urge you to follow his example going forward. Be nice to your friends and have good humor. Smile and laugh in the face of pessimism and spread joy to others. Be thankful for all you have while humble in the face of all of that was given to you. Be grateful for your friends and cherish the time you have with them, because *life is fragile and a lot of us don't realize how beautiful something or someone is until they become a mere molecule in our pool of thought during a long drive home*. Do these things as Dom did, and I assure you, you will maintain a life worth living. Rest

in paradise Dom-o. Your smile, your hair, your laugh, and your legacy will never be forgotten. 50 on '07.

Che

A boy,
5 or 6,
skips along the rugged streets
of San Mateo, Guatemala,
a poor town
with a rich spirit.
His name, Edison.
His black hair bobs as he
runs playfully through
the streets he calls home,
and then he sees me.
“Guillermo!” he shouts.
He dashes to my side
and speaks to me in his tongue.
I do not understand his words,
but his body language
can be read like a story.
This boy adores me
I think to myself.
Then, I notice something
on his backpack, a face.
No ordinary face, however-
Che.
I point to the man,
another one of his heroes,
and he asks me:
“Te amas Che?”
Before I answer,
I realize the disparity
between us.
His heroes are men like
Che, Marx, and Castro.
As a boy, mine were men like
Jordan, Spiderman, and my dad.
This boy’s dad is dead.

Holden Madison

Gonzaga

Don't shatter the glass
Keep the door open.
There are no dark alleys.
Two chimes from the bell
My eyes observe, and my day is a circle
I sink my feet into sandy shoes
Thoughts drift and flicker
Two chimes from the bell
My eyes open

Raymond McGavin

Gasoline in the Lightbulb

Sparks fly like hummingbirds into the chemical
A rush of flame that blurs into my vision
I see you but your reality is frail
You erode yourself on the edge of remission

Silence ebbs from you, you speak when spoken to
Tell me please don't keep me on your front porch
The explosion expels darkness; light burns the room
Scalded and hurt; I have again experienced birth

You hold your head high fall asleep on his thigh
I stay up wondering if you do the same
But you are in the other room dreaming about his eyes
Scarred, the elephant man returns to the land

Liam Wholihan

Model

but ruby lips chill
and diamond eyes won't look back
golden locks aren't smooth

Derrell Bouknight

Rich In Poverty

One on one, twenty-thousand look upon. Down on
the court, up on their feet. Five seconds yet to be gone.

Whether leather hits concrete on the streets of Harlem
or Melo hits a jumper down at Madison Square

Nothing can compare to the bottom of the net,
ESPN on the call, a sound free of despair.

Swoosh

A Nike check dawning along Air Jordan, soarin'
like Larry Bird in his palace: The Boston Garden.

Dr. James Naismith started a game like this,
spreading epidemically. Walt Whitman admires eloquence.

Blood. Sweat. Tears. The Banter. The Unknown.
LeBron proved 'em wrong. The king has two rings on his throne.

For some, it's for fun. For him, this is life.
No way past the ghetto, the gym's a one-way street.

The media, his perception, and hardwood underneath his feet,
an outstretched hand and drop of sweat narrowed

five seconds down to three. Two. No choice now. Shoot.
A jumper in the air. Nobody knows who won. Till friends see
him

playing pickup that night. Along the dark streets of Harlem.

Telemachus

The jarring sound of dice, spun towards the artisan-crafted table of another's house, clattering on the polished wood; the sweet smell of alien guests bathed in another's fragrant oils; and the fear of threats of violence, threats all too close to fruition plague the air. Telemachus, steadily losing ground in a battle for control that he cannot, will not win alone, is overwhelmed. Echoes of his hurried footsteps reverberate off the once pristine walls of his missing father's palace, now infested with vermin seeking to replace an honorable man too quickly gone. Only the fierce and primordial desire that compels and urges him to seek vengeance for his father, as it does in every son, staves him off from an embarrassing defeat. He is exhausted. His eyes brighten automatically to welcome a sudden stranger into his hospitable home. The stranger, with crinkled eyes and a stiff, salt-whitened beard, approaches in gratitude.

"Thank you, friend, for opening your doors to me, a weary traveler." The visitor, relieving himself of the burden of the coarse leather sack slung across his shoulder and extending his hand to grasp Telemachus', studies his host's young face.

"They say that all wanderers in this land are sent by Zeus, and who am I to turn those coming from the one who marshals the thunderheads away from my home?" Telemachus gestures welcomingly for the old sailor to enter the household.

"Come let us rest inside what is left of my late father's palace walls."

"Do you truly believe that Odysseus has passed into Hades' realm?"

Telemachus, his words tripping over the surprise instilled by the guest, utters "Stranger, what is your name, pray tell, and how do you know of my father?"

"You may call me Mentos, Telemachus. I know much of you and your father from our travels together, years ago. I hear now that Odysseus is struggling across the bleak back of the ocean, but held captive yet by a fickle goddess," comes the reply from the older man, settling himself comfortably in a plush, winged armchair.

“Mentes, you bring news of my father, whom I and many others here on the Isle of Ithaca presumed to be dead. You come to my house at a trying time. My mother is swarmed by suitors.”

“As for that, young Telemachus, I bring further answers. It would be the will of your father, if he were present, to rid your home of these scoundrels, I am sure. They must be slaughtered, every last one. You, my kind friend, must locate a supply of strong men to ply the oars on your journey to uncover the truth about your father. You must depart tomorrow.” This Mentes advised, sprouting wings, beating them against the chill morning mist, and soaring away among the eagles. Telemachus, looking on, shook his head at the wonder of this occurrence, now fully aware of the fact that a god resides at his side.

The first rays of young, bleached sunlight reach the eyes of the sleeping form of a determined Telemachus. His eyes flutter, unused to the sudden clarity around them. Springing from his sheets, the young man tugs his proper clothing over his sleepwear and calls for his messenger.

“Go out and summon the elders of the island. I am calling a council, for urgent matters require the attention of the townspeople.” The messenger scurries away, rushed by this exciting news. After the news had been spread, crowds of the men of Ithaca, eager to see this council for themselves begin to flock to the meeting place. Milling about, the anxious and simple folk exchange rumors, speculations, and snippets of conversation, without bothering to acquire any real knowledge. Telemachus draws the throngs in close and silence ensues.

“Brethren, I gather you here for the sake of my father and of my mother. My father, I have heard, is, contrary to my prior thinking, very much alive and battling his way home at this very moment. Because of his absence, suitors have inhabited and feasted on my home and my belongings. Let this be known. I will bring my father to the shores of his beloved Ithaca, and he will aid in my vengeance on these men who destroy my wealth and plunder my palace, or I will bear my father in a casket to the temple for his funeral, and my wrath will be visited upon those

who plague and pester my house and my mother. If you townspeople wish to stand by and allow the evil committed by these vermin, then so be it, but I shall treat you as one of their own."

Immediately, a harsh retort rises up from the crowd. "It is not the suitors who wrong your father's honor; it is your mother, for she leads them to your house, entices them, and then abandons them!"

Grumbling and angry murmurings meet this cruel statement, displaying Telemachus' popularity and the people's loyalty to him as well as his family.

"Stand down, you who do dishonor to a righteous man," cries Mentès, now known as Mentor to the Ithacans, "How can you know that one more powerful than any of you Ithacans is not assisting Telemachus at this very moment?"

Suddenly the crowds begin to understand. One with residence at Olympus deals Telemachus' cards. Even so, outraged shouts from the assembled suitors persist.

Telemachus closes his argument forcefully. "You have been warned. I will not hesitate to slaughter anyone who does dishonor to my father's name, and nor will those who assist me."

Mentès' arm drops firmly around his young companion's broad shoulders, and the crowd clears a path for their exit. Nervous whispers follow their retreat. A crew is hired to set Telemachus on his journey, and the pair depart on their quest to restore Odysseus' honor and palace to their former glory that same night.

Jacob Powers

Pine Ridge

Patton, 8 year old boy in 2nd grade. Attends Our Lady of Lodes elementary school in Pine Ridge, SD

Greeted by my friends a normal
school day begins.
Unfamiliar faces in our gym.
A color of skin different than my own.
Scared by the idea of the white man
because of the horror stories told
by the elders of our tribe.
To me your friendliness is all a disguise.
The white man, our enemy, the cause of my families
pain and suffering.

You approach me slowly, a kind
smile on your face. Scared I forced
a smile of my own, but it is only a cover
for the life I leave behind me when I jump
on the 8 o'clock bus.

School is my escape from the beaten
down shack my family calls home.
You catch a glimpse of life on the reservation
but you will never understand the
true anguish of my people.

Liam Newcomer

Contact

The full, green grass stands tall unblemished by any stone.
The man in blue shouts “strike one!” while the group behind him
begins to chatter.
From the perfectly formed mound in the center of the field, the
pitcher heaves the ball.
CRACK! From above, it seems to roll endlessly as it pushes
through the thick grass.
The surrounding noise is deafening. I look at my dad as he
smiles down onto the glowing field;
I smile too.

The First Time I Played with Fire

One day my mother had awakened me from my peaceful afternoon nap. I sat and watched Barney while my mother was cooking dinner. My movie finished and dinner still wasn't ready. I decided to wait at the dinner table. My mother was setting the table and she said to me "you may have a roll when I bring them out." I waited patiently as my hunger pangs grew stronger. She brought out the golden-crust rolls and said dinner would be ready in five minutes. I took a roll and started to eat when I realized the beautiful candles sitting on the table. A glow of curiosity grew in my two year-old mind. "What happens when a roll touches the candle?" I reached over and held my roll over the candle. It caught fire and burned my hand. I screamed and said to my mother, "Mommy! The rolls are too hot for me!" The door was closed so she didn't see what was happening. Now, the fire had spread to the basket that held the rolls and was dancing across the tablecloth. I called again saying "The rolls are too hot for me!" She walked in and noticed the table ablaze. She grabbed me and my father pulled out our fire extinguisher. Thankfully no one was hurt but, to this day, my table has a large black scar from where my curiosity went wrong.

Attack at Leisure World

“Why can’t we go outside for recess?” I asked the teacher
“Nobody wants to be a victim.” He replied

No one wants the bullet of a Bushmaster XM-15,
to rip the skin of their forehead, and come out clean.
Shattered glass and skull fragments
lay in unison with the body of Sarah Ramos on a park bench.
A couple hundred yards away, resides a murder machine
prone, still as a corpse
permeating a stench
of pure evil.

The attack at Leisure World
quaint, quiet, an Eden for the elderly.
A man committed to an idea of wholeness, safety, and peace.
The bullet reverberates in the lake that is our nation
creating ripples of sorrow for family and strangers alike.
The bullet spreads,
shrapnel striking
a mother, a brother, a son, a friend.
The attack ripping a life away like a flower in His Garden.

We Remember 9/11

I didn't know what happened
But for the first time
A New Yorker
Watching her city
Crumble
Under someone else's fists.

I understand now
Why those tears tumbled down
I understand why the buildings collapsed
Behind those who fled

I've traveled back
And watched
I've heard the dropped call
Cut by tons of earth
I've heard the pilots call for help
Calmly.
Bravery overcoming fear
And evil

I know why as a country
We fought back
And I'm still living
In the fight

Keyon Bridges

Guns and Roses

Your lips tasted
of trouble but
I was done
being good.

Stood under my skin
Tore me limb from limb
Plagued me to an end
For now
I'll learn and settle for less
Shut my eyes
and get some rest
Feeling the pulse beneath
this sunken chest.

Squeezing the trigger
in came bullets
out came hearts

They judged
us like a picture book
by the colors
like they forgot
how to read

To me
you were like
the moon in the sky.
To you
i was like
one of the billions of stars

I acted like it wasn't a big deal
when really it was
breaking my heart.

And since my eyes
were like empty moons
and yours like galaxies

I thought I could
get lost in them
and feel
right at home.

We kill
flowers because
we think they're beautiful
We kill
ourselves because
we think we're not.

We feed off
others love like
it's coffee for the heart

Im scared to
get close but
hate being alone.

I long for
that feeling to
not feel at all.
The higher I get
the lower I sink.
I can't drown my demons
they know how to swim.

I let you
treat me like
a cigarette:
light me on fire then

stomp me out when
you were done.

Our cigarettes desire to
cuddle between our lips.
Saviors as we sigh for them
Curled around misery
their passion glows.
Kissed into freedom
death craves us both.

Now all
I can do
is lay down in my room
fall asleep
dream of you then
wake up and do
nothing
about it.

David Smith

Dr. King Watches

Martin Luther King's statue
stands 30 feet tall
hands folded
in a suit of stone
glistening in the heat,
starring down the cold
not smiling
a frown
staring at
our country
wondering what
has changed
or if what he
worked for
is fading away.
What does he see?
A society
That still needs work
The fight for justice is still on
Opportunities for everyone
No more inequality
Trayvon Martin, Mike Brown, Ferguson
The challenge is on
To fight and grow.
Remember what we went through
It ain't pretty, don't look away
We got work to do
Don't shy away, wake up
these 28 days
lets learn
And turn that MLK statue
To a smiling one
A Country, as
One.
But lets
not forget,

these 28 days
remember the past
never forget what happened
A time
when you
and I could not study together
A country
Where not all men and women
Could live together
A place
Where we
Segregated people of different color
But as Americans
We fought, prayed, and
Came together
Rosa Parks
Boycotts, protests,
Fighting for equality
The injustice
In America
Would change
1964
We did it , a country United
as one
Whites and blacks
together, as
People
Everybody
Break bread
There is hope.

Of the Soul

At 10:34 the evening before Thanksgiving, I turned off my lime iPhone 5c and placed it in the cabinet next to my bottom bunk. I fell asleep wondering if I could conquer the 24 hour microchip free challenge. I woke the next morning, and I reached for my phone where it usually rested, right on top my nightstand, but it wasn't there. "I'll have to go upstairs to find what time it is," I thought. When I walked into the kitchen, the microwave read 6:17. No one else was awake, so I heated some coffee and strolled down to the beach to watch the sunrise. When I heard the crunch of sand beneath my feet, I settled down, took a sip of the s'mores blend I had prepared, and stared over the waves towards the horizon. The sun's rays were just poking their arms through the darkened clouds. I held my breath. Suddenly, colors of red, purple, orange, and rose flashed across the sky. I knew Dom was orchestrating this masterpiece from heaven. I sat awhile before I left, thinking of him. Fulfilled, I returned home to cook breakfast. After eating, I went to Scarborough Lane to cheer on my brother Matthew, who was running Duck's annual Turkey Trot. He placed 18th out of 686 competitors (still not up to my standards, though.) From there, the feast had to be readied. I lost track of time in all the preparations: picking up the turkeys, whipping up mashed potatoes, and greeting relatives unseen all year. My friends were the last item on my mind, for I was basking in the love my family provided. Finally, the table was set. I led the prayer, and I thanked God for all the gifts he had bestowed to us. After a hearty "Amen" and a Polish song, we dug into the delicacies before us. Three plates later, I was laying on the sofa with my cousins from North Carolina while the Lions/Bears game buzzed from the TV. I remember my eyes drooping, and I drifted into sleep like a raft at sea. I awoke the following morn, and I recalled I could use my phone. Instead of turning it on, I traveled back to the shore. The friend I wanted to talk to was at the beach.

SEAL Team Seven

Ryan Stalling could hear the propeller of the stealth Blackhawk chopper slowing down even before they reached their destination. He was now hovering over the tall office building as he secured his harness with his shaking, sweaty hands. He tightened his grip around the cold metal boot of his sniper rifle, which felt even heavier by the minute, and engaged his night vision goggles. He spoke clearly and authoritatively into his transmitter, "SEAL Team Seven is ready to engage target POTUS." At this, all four of his brothers-in-arms stood, one of them pulling the red lever to the right of his seat. A light on the ceiling flashed and an alarm blared from somewhere as the door below them slowly opened. "GO, GO, GO!" shouted the commander. Like a trained animal, Stalling didn't hesitate. He jumped and found himself flying through the crisp air in a fall controlled only by his harness connected safely to the rope dangling from the chopper, now just a shadow in the clouds. He hit the ground hard and instantly somersaulted to disperse the energy of the impact, feeling an immediate sharp pain in his right ankle. He quickly picked himself up and scanned his surroundings, his weapon in hand and fully loaded. "CLEAR!" he shouted as the others landed behind him, letting them know that the building rooftop was clear of enemies. They quickly bustled about their tasks to set up their stations. They knew they had to work quickly in order to complete the mission.

Stalling ran to the edge of the roof and lay down on the concrete, setting up his rifle and scoping for the location of their target. Finally, he spotted it as his scope began to focus. He zoomed in and signaled to the commander that he was in position and ready. Staring at the perfectly groomed front lawn of the White House sent a horrible chill up Stalling's spine. He knew what they had come here to do, yet seeing the White House here, in the real world, brought the true mission to life. He had woken up from this nightmarish, dream-like state of mind and the gravity of what they were about to do hit him like a shockwave. It was too much to think about. He still wasn't sure if he could go through with it. He began to doubt himself, "Am I

crazy?" he thought, "I mean this is THE President of the United States!!" He thought of the millions of American people who adored the President, and the hundreds of countries that were only held at bay from attacking out of their fear for this single man and his power. This one man indirectly controlled the whole world. He quickly snapped himself out of it. Orders are orders! The Secretary of Defense and Vice President had ordered the SEALS to assassinate the President because of the potential threat he posed on the American people. His powerful rule and worldwide control had angered the Russians to the point that the USA was in a nuclear standoff with both Russia and the UK. He would not back down.

Stalling wiped the moisture off his hands and realized that he was sweating bullets. Time felt like it was ticking slower and slower. The departure of the President was drawing nearer. Marine One was parked on the lawn and Secret Service began filing out of the White House and forming a walkway down the lawn in the frigid night.

The President took his first step out of the White House and Stalling's scope locked on him before he could even reach the grass. He was trembling now. His conscience wouldn't let him do it. He thought back to Lincoln and Booth and Kennedy and Oswald. Would his name be tainted and burned for the rest of history? He thought back to the love and pride he had for his country and family that drove him to become a SEAL. "Orders are Orders," he whispered to himself yet again in a fruitless attempt to calm himself down. He watched with horror as the First Lady, carrying her newborn daughter and holding the hand of her four year-old son waved good-bye to their dad as he stopped, turned, smiled and spoke the last words he would ever say to his family. Stalling's scope fogged up as he began to cry. He couldn't do it, yet he knew he must. He was no longer a human. He was a trained animal: a killing machine. He closed his eyes and with his quivering hand, squeezed the trigger.

Paul Dubois

The Sunshiners

Based on Lewis Carroll's Poem – "The Jabawocky"

On the tinth day, of birdy minor,
In the silent sticks of Senay,
All pippy were the moonshiners,
Lapping the tub from Yestermay.

Here Ye'! Here Ye'! Conjure to Minfest,
And lap the tubs of sacious cider.
Let the moonshine bibble on thy chest
As half-shines frobble in the shire.

Beware our rival Sunshiners!
Sprinkly villmates here!
Standing stout o'er gurgling sunshine,
Our honcho, NugNug, came near.

Moonshine's smooth but has some vength,
Sunshine's flazing all the throats,
NugNug lapped with all his strength,
And pronted Sunshiners back t'their boats.

Alas! Our rivals outlapped anew
All vere Mr. Nug Nug the gray
The moonfolk tantily ate their snewsnew
Until the next Minfest of Yestermay.

On the tinth day, of birdy minor,
In the silent sticks of Snay,
All pippy were the moonshiners,
Lapping the tub from Yestermay.

David Smith

I See

A block mistaken by its identity
But under the mask
We find beauty
rough neighborhood
a man with a hoodie
is a gangsta,
I see
a man of God's creation
providing for his kid,
this block
might be filled with drug dealers
and hard workers
I see
the backbone of our country,
our people,
beauty mistaken by hatred
on this block
my grandmother's house
blinded by negativity,
can you see
the summer nights
card games
grilling
an atmosphere filled with joy
love
smiles
and happiness,
a side you might not see
I see
Family

Waldo Soria

Evaded Love

In Remembrance of Leelah Alcorn, R.I.P.

Is there really love, or
has it been smeared
with the blood of politics
has it been accosted
with the lies of temple dwellers
has it been destroyed
by the negligent minds of blind believers
Is it truly hatred
which rules the hearts of senseless men,
Hatred,
supported by the ancient dome-capped men,
pushed forward by robe-wearing hypocrites,
enacted by the actions of ignorant followers.
Where is The true love?
Deep away from our grasp,
far below the deepest wells of the earth,
or does it dwell beneath our very own skin
perfectly tucked away in some prickly little
hole
waiting to be found,
alas evaded.

David Mervis

An Ode to Gonzaga

6am everyday.

A journey only made for one reason.

19 I.

A place when I leave,

I know I'll cry.

A city enriched with history.

Through Gonzaga's gates,

a warmth felt instantly.

Endless bonds created,

a Kairos mystery.

Last word, "Amen."

An institution full of passionate men.

Legacy originated in 1821.

A population numbered close to a ton.

Exhausted from long late nights,

sirens awaken those caught snoozing.

Typical rivalry fights,

black eyes swollen from opponents sore losing.

A brotherhood definitely worth adoring,

all guaranteed heaven.

The eagles are forever soaring,

just like number eleven.

R.I.P

D.L.P

Slaveships

Dysfunctional
As I lay awoken.

Numb,

To the vomit on my foot, the funk I inhale, and my wrist,
cut by the grinding of shackles on my skin.

Cut deep by the agony of lost son, daughter five bodies down

Cut even deeper by the seam made that robbed my soul.

Hush.

Not a word or sound uttered, dread pumped in every heartbeat
as the devil inspected.

Shivering as daughter coughs

Knowing the next may be fatal.

Scavenging for fresh air as the door shut.

Darkness again

The sound of vomit beneath me

Followed by a darkness of my own.

Still, dead, and free

Hamsa

Hamsa is a palm-shaped amulet seen throughout the Middle East and North Africa. It is an image that depicts an open right hand and is used to mean a sign of protection.

My hand,
an object covered and painted
on by my experiences.
It is a tool used to change.
Pen on paper
creating this piece
you read
Brush on canvas
creating a scenery
for your eyes to swallow
Hands on a camera
to greet the faces
Of the world.
The hand is
something we all take
for granted.

A magical device that
allows us to do so much.
To plant, sow, and reap the
food that keeps our bellies full
To lift water out of the well
to soak our dry tongues.
It is the power
To be who we are,
to do what we do,
to live our lives.

The hand is always there
To protect and care for those

in your life.
To lend those around you,
your scarred hands.
To fight back when
you are being pushed down.
To raise a fist to the skies
and let it be a sign.
Or just stick out the
worldwide famed sign
a finger called middle.
Without your hands
life would change
and things that were done
with ease
would become a challenge.
The hand is a tool
that one should praise
for it has brought us this far
and will take us even further.

Response to Children's Rhymes

positive thoughts set the mind ablaze
into to radiant rays and positive days
no longer will crayola be the basis of our success
Only the the best of the best will best those
who own the worst of the worst minds
and are guided by the principal of colored signs
black and white are smeared on the canvas
of our icy world that is guided by green
the only way to believe in you
is to believe
think positive
can't never could
liberty and Justice for...
yes we can

Ryan Donnellan

Lessons of a Mother

The youth
my eyes have never seen
now aged by experience
and wrinkled with worry.
Every breath
a lesson to those she loves
but still, every breath
bringing her closer to the end,
the lesson she must teach
slowly forming in her already busy mind,
but those lessons
ignored by a boy, who too
must grow old from experience
and wrinkled with worry.

Jacob Powers

America

Gun shots fire
leaves shuffle beneath
full speed soldiers
escaping the
shot heard around the world.
Red coats stained
with blood, from
shots out of the barrel behind
a fight for freedom. A new
country forming as
the lives of men are
sacrificed for a passion
that clutches the heart.
Men fall but the army
never quits, knowing
their lives are just a small
piece of a world to be.

Kevon Turner

Majesty

Churn, bow,
twist, collapse.
Set and break
like records and bone.

Die the deaths
of crownless kings
whom jewelry and
trophies and rings own.

Memoirs of Remembrance

Out of the Fire,
it was born of smoke
of ash. A daunting morning
frozen in time.
From 8:48 to 8:49 lasted
102 minutes before collapsing over
people's lives now crowded by soot
and crashing into oblivion.
The Two Towers went up in
flames and the stories of other's lives are changed
forever into Independence
which took it's place
to commemorate our freedom.

The boy woke up with Bright Horizons
but quickly followed by
the cries of a mother who may have lost
her husband. Phone lines
as scrambled as her emotions.
She would reach out her hands, down
on her knees, pleading to make a connection
and hear the voice
of the man she wanted
her son to love
and turn into. The five-walled building
housed her life as the thoughts in her brain
and the waterfalls on her cheeks housed her death.

Night rolled over in her bed
with her children,
both with stained cheeks,
both asleep. She feared that would be
the first of many nights
without him in their lives.
The key to her heart now gone and locked
until the sweet kisses of dawn shouted

out the greetings of a familiar voice. The door latch
also unlocked her heart again
and jumped out of bed into
the arms of her husband.

All that remains
of the parents and their children
are the unwritten memories of 9/11,
the morning after,
and now the written poem of that boy's story.

Uncle Robert

It was a real hot day in South Carolina. Mom, Pat, Kath and I were lounging by the club's pool. When I heard a car's engine approach, I looked up to see a large man and woman coming towards us. "Mom, who is that?" I said. "That's your uncle Robert, he drove a long way from Alabama, so don't be shy." As Uncle Robert came closer, I could see what he looked like better. He was about 6' 2" and 340 lbs. He had long hair that was put in to a pony tail, and I could count the amount of teeth he had on one hand. "Boy, you sure have grown Zack." How did he know my name? "I haven't seen you since you were about this big." He moved his hand down to his knee. Why do adults always expect me to remember them? "Yes Uncle Robert." I lie, my mom always told me to say that I remember people. "Y'all ain't gone in the pool yet?" He said while removing his shirt. Suddenly he was doing a cannon ball into the pool. I went in quickly after him. I liked my strange new uncle.

To Justify the Means

If only I could stop time, I thought to myself. If only it were possible to pause the world around you and work through a problem. If only I had one more second to think. I just need more ti-

“Joseph, you’re home!” The black boarded door is cast aside, rushing all of the cold winter air into my house. Chelle throws her arms around me affectionately. “It’s so good to see you! Come inside, its freezing out there!” She drags me into the house by my red and white striped tie. As Chelle slams the door shut, the outdoors huffs and puffs one last burst of snow flurries into the house. I stand there frigid, staring blank into space, lost in my own world.

Seconds pass. Chelle ponders and wears a worried look on her face. She casts her beautiful ginger-red hair over her shoulder. She looks marvelous tonight, as she always does. Her dark orange wool sweater complements her hair magically, all on top of brand new blue denim jeans. I love how innocent and docile she looks, but tonight it almost brings me to tears.

I can’t break eye contact with her. Her gorgeous blue eyes pierce deep into me, leaving me breathless. Chelle slowly takes her hand around my shoulder and takes my rain jacket off. Then in an instant, I find her lips pressed up against mine. A kiss so tender that it makes my heart want to burst, and it hurts. I want this kiss to last forever. All I want now is to sink into her velvet red lips and become immersed in this moment. I can’t stop trembling.

“Joe, honey,” she asks. “What’s wrong?”

Immediately, a barrage of tears erupt. I cover my blood red eyes and groan.

“Chelle,” I weep. “Listen, Chelle. I want you to know that I love you so much. You’re the most amazing thing that’s ever happened to me.”

“Oh, Joe,” she smiles. “Stop acting so foolish. What happened?”

“I’m so sorry.” The tears come down like rain, sniffles like thunder.

Chelle's worried face cocks to the side quizzically, then her eyes bulge and her mouth opens.

"I'm so, so very sorry, Chelle."

She looks down to see her bright orange sweater bleed red, her expression unchanged from total shock. Her hand extends out to me as she helplessly falls down backwards, and then everything ends. I drop the knife and fall to my knees. The tears halt, along with everything around me as the world around me grinds down to a standstill. My mind is filled with a dense abyss of nothingness. I just stay there on my knees, right upon the blood stained carpet, staring the great chandelier hanging above me.

Until the silence is broken by the sound of bells, and then the gears of the world begin to turn again. I pull out my phone and answer it, still staring at the glass chandelier.

"And?" The man on the other end asks.

I grind my teeth and hold back every terrible word imaginable.

"What now?" I ask.

Music Tree

This ain't no rap,
It's more like the sap that flows
smoothly from the music tree.
Nourishing the youth with the fruit that it bears.
Rooting itself in the beat of hearts through the generations.
in the wind the harmonic swaying of the leaves sculpts,
a myriad of emotions
from the perches, the melodies of birds resonate through time,
beckoning the attention of those willing to lend an ear.
Branching off to different genres and instruments,
it provides shade for all artists.
a hub where they can all relate
a violin to a guitar,
a piano to a drum,
a saxophone to flute,
a rock band to a soul group,
Pop to hip-hop.
The catalogue continues like the infinite ideas of
musical mastery.
Carved at the trunk are the lyrics of songs
commemorating accomplishments,
minute and Grand.
The Chords that hold it all together,
completely compose a ceaseless song full of crescendos and
crashes
This ain't no rap
it's the eternal orchestra,
better known as the Music Tree.

Death Row

It's my day to die,
A group of people chose for me.
How am I supposed to
Accept this?
My hands are trembling,
Waiting in fear for them to come
Take me away to the throne
Of a sinner.
Today is the only day I wish
I could stay stay in my cell.

They came with handcuffs and
Shackles expecting me to fight.
I did.
They strapped me to my throne.
My eyes had never been so wide
Open. The hairs on my body
Pointed up to the place I wasn't going.
Cold water squeezes onto my head
Almost hoping I would freeze to death
To spare me from shocks. The curtains
Opened and I saw satisfaction staring
Back at me. The guard asked me
For my final words, but only a tear
Came out. He told me to pray to god
But I knew he wouldn't respond, only
The devil was there. I went out
Paralyzed, looking right into his stare.

Darkness

There I sat, the tinted glass of the store window gleaming in front of me, as a large, neon red sign illuminated the bleak, snowy night that seemed to extend forever in every direction. My breath fogged the glass, almost acting as a shield to prevent me from gazing at the setting of the task that lay ahead, as the click-clack of shopping carts could be faintly heard from inside the store. My reflection seemed to be the only thing that kept me from going inside and doing what I'd been paid to do, as I realized that I'd never be the same.

Stepping across the threshold, I found myself aimlessly wandering the aisles, virtually oblivious to the other people scanning the shelves, or the soft holiday music that filled the store with a certain serenity that one only senses during that time of year. I should have felt secure; I knew my boss had disabled the security system. In other words, there was nothing to lose, no means of being caught, right? The hard part was done, yet it was almost as if there was no oxygen left around me, and my arms felt as if iron shackles constricted them to my quivering self.

Overcoming my forebodings, I scooped as many of the priceless goods from the jewelry counter as I could into the tattered army backpack slung over my shoulder. The world around me began to spin, as if a top was going around inside my brain. All that was left was to turn and walk, but my feet felt as though they were cinder blocks resting immovably on the tiled store floor. Mustering up whatever remnants of will-power I still possessed, I took one slow step, then several more, until I found myself sprinting through the doorway. As I passed through the dismal parking lot, still slick from the snowfall, I was certain that from then on, I would never be the man that had been staring into the window just minutes prior. The darkness ahead seemed to welcome me, a grim reminder of the life I had chosen to live.

365

17. My father gone and out.
Hasn't made contact for
awhile and no
one has concerns for
his whereabouts. Wondering
who's life is incomplete.
Rewinding home videos and
tapes, but not fate.

16. My friends and
societal interactions grow
upward. Heading for the top
of the stairs, but
my life seems to be
scaling down the other way.
Who's life flashed
before his eyes?

15.

14. A new environment, world, regime. Thinking
four years ahead. Taking
a moment to close my eyes only
envisions my incoherence. No knowledge,
friends, or insight.

13. Fresh teen, kid of the future. Unstoppable and
vain. The world revolves around me and
I am king.
Vindication and insolence shapes
the big dog.

12.

11. Tranquility and normality of
innocence. Visiting and

reconciling my father.
Indigenous and discretion of
self-admiration and indulgence.
Greed enhances.

10. We come and stay. Weeks and weeks of dread at
the thought of being without him.
Sorting, searching, and moving, we try
to keep up. I look up
at him as my siblings turn away.

9.

8. The blessings and cleaning. Dirt in my soul removed
and enlightened.
Water: pure
but tainted. Screeching Lord, but meek. Peace of
mind and heart. Rejuvenation.

7. Arts, colors, everything mystical
derived as fantastical and arbitrary.
Life collides with dreams
and fantasies of meaning.
Doubt of truth, of dogma.

6. I wanna be SuperMan
or my father.
I don't
know the difference.

5. Tears, pain, crying most abruptly. Changes,
switches, and refusal. Considerations of
grief.
Matrimony and obscured
happiness.

4. Divorce whispers in the ear of a mother. Leans and awaits
at the rim of a wine glass.
Swirling, splashing, and sipping for
her attention and
embodies her indecisiveness.
Photos and frames, tumbling, fumbling as
they disagree and form
debris upon debris. Falling
off the wall
like a family falling
apart.

3,3...crawling, walking, calling
“mommy” yet seeing daddy.
Possession of alcohol first-hand.
The cold liquid sears and infuses
with his mouth.
Intoxication.

2,2...

1. Diapers, the distant, unrecognizable call
for love and attention. Only
to be held
in the arms of a part of me.
Warmth and comfort of hugging.
Egotism.

o,o...Conceived, floating in my own cycle of life's course.
I wonder
if my mother hoped
like most other mothers do
that her baby boy
would grow up to be
just like his
father.

Maturation

A battle between the mind and body, it conflicted me and created questions that grew like tumor within. The Perfect environment to breed such an atrocity, yet so toxic that unless solved it could kill. With the days moving on my desire to know grew. My mind said yes but my body knew its potential harm. The forbidden liquid was perched on the shelf. What made it so enticing that adults continually consume it regardless of the effects? What made it so coveted that I could not drink it? I was finally of height that I reach the bottle for myself.

“I’ll be fast and conspicuous, finally the questions that tore me apart on the inside can be with a solution.” These words actually slipped out of my mouth due to the excitement that was building inside me. Ignorant was definitely a term that could be used to describe me; yet, no one was there to tell me that. I was alone to make my move. grabbing the delicate bottle was first and then drinking was second. I assumed the content’s flavors would be palatable. If my parents loved it then why would I not?

“Im going to work, behave yourself” my mom would say as she walked out the door.

“I always am,” I replied. I bit my tongue when saying this knowing what was to come. It was true up until the moment I spent the past few weeks for finally presented itself as opportune. As the forbidden liquid rushed down the neck of the bottle and touched the tip of my tongue, its almost as if a shock was sent throughout the rest of me. Even though I ceased from putting anymore into my mouth I had to swallow what was already there. The drink continued down my throat, burning and leaving a lasting tingling sensation. I felt the warmth come over me and with them I still shivered to the disgusting taste. I could not believe that a person would choose to consume this on a regular basis. My temptations to try any more quickly ceased to exist. I felt proud, however, that I had done something this daring. In my haste to put the bottle back I seemed to have forgotten the cap, leaving an obvious trail for my parents to follow. Although yes they did find out that I decided to try some liquor, a small goal was achieved; yet I feel it was necessary in my maturation to learn a lesson the hard way.

My First Fight

It was a cold slightly overcast winter morning. A blizzard had struck my town the night before and had turned it into an icy wonderland. As I walked out my front porch suited up and ready to go, I pondered how to best spend my time out in the snow. Eventually, I decided to build an ice fort with my friends, Ben and Leo. We worked meticulously all day pausing occasionally for hot chocolate breaks. When we were finished, I stood with my mouth agape at the great fort we had constructed. It was huge and contained many passageways and secret tunnels under the snow.

“Wow,” I sighed. “We really out did ourselves guys.”

Ben replied, “Yeah, all this work was really worth it.”

On top of the fort, Leo began to speak, but was struck hard by an incoming snowball. Three shadows emerged from the woods surrounding my neighborhood. As they lurked closer, I recognized them. It was the Redwood brothers, the meanest kids in the cul-de-sac. There were legends about the ruthlessness of the brothers. Some said that they were cannibals. Others spoke of horrific beatings in the dark of night. While the rumors had never been proven, the name, Redwood, incited fear and loathing throughout the neighborhood. Raymond, the oldest of the three, reached us first. He was an pug faced twelve year old and towered over us. He chuckled as his blood red hair blew in the wind.

“Nice fort you losers,” he spat. “I want it, so get out.”

His brothers, Rodney and Richard, were at his side with a bag full of snowballs. Together, they made a gruesome bunch, and they all were smirking. They thought this was going to be an easy victory.

I reached for a premade snowball and shouted, “ No! This is our fort that we worked hard to build. We will not leave.”

“Fine! Then prepare for a busting,” he exclaimed. “Bros! Fan out and don’t let these pipsqueaks escape!”

The Redwood brothers began to fire snowball after snowball at our fort. We all began to notice giant welts forming on our skin. Ben fell and rolled around on the ground in a frenzy.

I wondered, *“What snowball could inflict such pain?”*

Then a large compact ball smashed into my face. It was made of ice and hurt more than anything I had experienced so far. More came in rapid succession leaving us bloodied and bruised. As I collapsed to the ground, I looked at both my friends. They were whimpering scared of what would happen next. If the rumors were true, we would be dead within the minute. I knew I had to act fast.

I dragged Ben and Leo to their knees and whispered, “Lets go through the escape tunnel.”

When we reached the other side, Richard was waiting for us. Planning for this moment, I threw a used ice ball at his face. He yelped in pain, and we ran as fast as we could to my house. We entered the front door and sat shocked. We had barely escaped.

Crossing the Line

My breaths sped to a rapid pace as I stared at my greasy, sweaty self in the mirror of my cold, dim bathroom. The raspy voice screamed at me to do it, but I just could not. I looked at my swollen eyes and bleeding upper lip and thought I was dreaming. However, the throbbing pain in my thin right cheek from when my father struck me with his glass bottle shattering it into a million pieces, my cheek bone along with his glass, reminded me that this was all too real. Again I had heard the voice yelling at me to just pick up what I had been staring at and get this all over with.

When I told my dad about Roger, he did not even believe he existed. He thought I made him up for attention. Little did he know Roger was just as real as I am. Roger demanded things from me every day. He kept me up so late at night with his rants and distracted me in school which prevented me from ever becoming anything relevant. I was useless.

"Just do it, you worthless child. Get rid of me once and for all. I dare you to even try," Roger berated me as i took off my blood stained shirt revealing the silver necklace he had convinced me to steal just a week earlier. I shivered as a tear slowly oozed from my blue left eye to rest upon my upper cheek. My breaths were loud and wheezy, but I was not afraid of my father hearing me cry because I knew he had already passed out. I wanted Roger to go away so bad, for he had been with me since i can remember. I would do anything.

Maybe I should just kill my father i thought to myself. Quickly and hauntingly "He may go, but you will always have me," burst from Roger's mouth with a background of laughter like a short fused firecracker on the Fourth of July. "Just shut up! Shut up and let me think for once in my goddam life!" I blurt out before thinking about what I was saying. I had never talked to Roger like that, but he was so oddly submissive I had a sense of pride. I did not mean to say that, but I was so tired of him knowing all my thoughts, it was necessary.

I fell to my knees as i stared down the darkness of the barrel of my father's double-barrel shotgun. Do I kill my father?

Do I kill myself? Is there any reason for me not to do just both? All these thoughts whistling through my head as if it was the main attraction on a tour of adolescent despair. I dropped the weapon and started screaming in agony. I stayed in this crazed state running my hand over my rough face and through my short, thin hair for a while. I only stopped to hear Roger laughing at me as he always does in my weakest moments. Weirdly enough, I started laughing too. I guess it's because I had just realized how much of a joke my life was.

I punched a hole in the poorly painted dry wall behind me, but i did not feel a thing. There were already two other holes there each from my father. Most people talk about hitting "rock bottom" and bouncing higher than you ever have before, but for me it was different. I hit rock bottom and kept going. I broke through this "rock bottom" and have been falling ever since. Thinking about that I realized I fell straight to hell. "If I'm already in hell, then what the hell? It can't get any worse than this!" I screamed so loud the vibrations ricocheted through my ears to the point where all i could hear was that faint buzzing noise we all hear but are not always aware of.

I put the gun in my mouth again. It is funny because the metal barrel was so cold, my tongue actually froze to it. I started laughing hysterically. I thought of this as fate. This was my destiny. The gun is frozen in a lethal position for a reason. "Make this a little more interesting than simply watching a seventeen year old Colombian boy crying about being dealt a horrible hand in the game of life!" Roger once again demands. I had never believed in God until this very moment, but I will never understand why it was in this moment I believed so confidently in him. This conversion from hard-headed atheist to fully faithful Catholic was literally my saving grace because in the .02 seconds it took for the bullet to leave the barrel, I was in heaven. I know it is heaven because Roger is not here. Roger stayed down on that earthly hell. He haunts my father now.

Jabari Greenwood

August 30, 2007

It was a thursday
a normal school day
but who's thinking about work
definitely not me
only thing on my mind was
going back around the way
to play football, wrestle, shoot
the b-b guns or whatever was
on the agenda for the day
sure enough when
That final bell rung, I darted down the hall
meet the big bro, now on the way to
grandmas silver Acura
always excited to see her
got in the car, buckled up and was
on my way
Grandma being Grandma,
asking the usual questions
"Homework done?"
"How was school?"
making a fifteen minute drive
feel like fifty.
finally home
get dressed
and go but
the phone rang.
It was my dad, breaking
The bad news

Lost for words and
Immediately went to check
On Grandma and it
brought tears to her eyes
I would never imagine seeing her cry
So i got this weak feeling inside
And didnt know what it was

But later learned it was my emotions
At that age
I thought I was done with crying and
didn't know what was going on so
as the tears come rolling down my face,
they were uncontrollable.

This was just the beginning
The day was followed
with school dismissals,
moving arrangements
and more
But now he's always
With me,
In my skin
My first loss

Michael Borda

Ode to Snapchat

I take comfort in your confidentiality,
there is a confidence
in the cover.

You provide
me with basic utilities:
my flashlight, secret credit card,
speedometer, thermometer,
and time stamp.

You give me options
on how to present myself:
grey, tan, or bright.
You give secrecy
for free flowing, untempered, crude
Conversation late at night.

You show me
who my real friends are.
Not from the list,
but the ones
I stayed up late with,
showed my face with,
and the ones
who did not reply.

Jacob Floam

Her

As I think of you more than ever now, seeing
Certain things rings a bell about you.
Running shoes,
the almost-circle of a track,
and lastly that black dress.
That night months ago opened my eyes.
The black dress amidst the tones of pinks, reds, and vibrant
greens.
Then, the frame of my idea went up
-just two of us.
Now you're gone, slipping through my fingers like sand,
but my heart is here and open.

A New World Walk

*This poem is based off of the lives of many around the world.
Where Simply walking down a dirt road, can lead to an extraordinary change in your surroundings. Happiness to death could be in merely a 10 minute walk.*

Walking down the dirt road
Bursting with colors
Everywhere I glued my eyes to
Red birds, orange birds, and green
My eyes swallowed up
all of the color surrounding me
The grass was green and
The air smelled so clean
It seemed as if This land
Was blessed by God
Fruit hanging from the
bountiful trees
plucked down
to fill my belly
I continued walking through
This mysterious land
But instead of what I saw before
Corpses lined up the dirt road
The color of blood
A dark red
Was now all
That I saw
I saw the dead
Their last moments forever etched
On their face
As if pleading for my help
But I could do nothing
For they have already exhaled their last
And I felt something touch
The back of my head
a chill runs down the spine

a moment's hesitation and
only one shot
was heard
down this dirt road
And now my body
lay
with the dead.

Matthew Dorris

“I’m From”

First Memory.

Slashing sideways through the squishy seams sitting still,
as a rock, the instant I fell in love
with the game.

Team.

A brotherhood. A family.

Teamwork is the only option for victory.

How you accomplish your goals,

And feel fulfilled.

Hard Work.

Making the “impossible” as easy
as breathing. Practice to become
an impeccable robot.

Persistence.

Valleys spring to the sky.

Learning. Experience.

Perspective to overcome.

Confidence.

Knowing success

lies in your future.

Believing that you are better

than everyone.

Baseball.

How to Comeback

A contest like no other.
A rivalry where everything is left on the field.
A life you've always lived,
changed completely by one moment.
One tear,
one snap,
scholarships,
terminated instantly.
Dreams postponed.
Focusing on Health.
A road to recovery.
Hurdles to overcome on your way.
Doubt plaguing the mind.
Left gasping for air,
like a child with asthma,
begging for relief.
Early mornings,
late nights,
spent striving to reach goals.
Everyday, one step closer
to your next game,
in purple.

Control

When you forget where you are the split second you wake up
You're late
You have to drive home
You open the door
And get behind the reins of the beast
Feel the engine cough as you turn the key
Control

Out in Rockville
Not much going on at 1 am
The dark road competes with my dark eyelids
Begging for my attention
My body wins the battle against my brain
No control
When you forget where you are the split second you wake up

Your heart and breath trying to escape your chest
What's the damage?
There is none.

Benjamin Fiore

Maybe She is Not

My mom speaks Spanish.

She must be Mexican.

She must clean plasma screen television sets with a feather duster.

She must pick tomatoes for the farmers to eat while pesticides pick her nails down to flesh.

She must fall from the floor she slept on into the bed of a pickup truck outside of Home Depot.

She must get cursed out for cutting weeds slowly,

but her sleeves cover cuts that shriek about her cut wages.

Maybe she is none of those things.

Maybe my mama from Cochabamba speaks better English than you.

Maybe she went to college just like your parents did

works at the same businesses, too.

Maybe she has a natural skin tone that you try to get sprayed on.

Maybe she is the difference with similarities.

Color does not matter, because

last time I checked, all shadows look the same.

How to Remorse

Sleep.

Do the thing you wish your children would appreciate.
count the sheep as you forget about your insomnia and sorrows.
lose your grip from reality and,

Dream big.

Let your imagination run like a faucet.
lose the worries of the world and become brave.
drop the weight off your wings and fly weightless through clouds.
remember flying and nothing else.
hear the alarm and turn off the sound.

Wake up.

Submerge back into your sorrows.
latch on to reality, shut the door on imagination,
welcome back your worries, and
reattach the ball and chain.
ground yourself, and your children.
hear their pleas of "No, Please no."
tell them you'll talk to them when you get home.
leave the house angry without saying "I love you."
get on your car.
catch your flight.

Fly,

through the clouds on a heavy machine,
try not to think of the long flight
put on headphones, forget about your troubled home and rest
become startled to some strange turbulence.
panic as the engines turn off mid-flight.
put on the mask and gasp for air.
let your life flash before you.
ponder what you did to deserve this.
remember your children and nothing else.

Regret,
not saying you love them.
think back to all the times you grounded them
wish for a second chance.
hope for time to reverse.
look out the window and see the face of death,
along the waves of the ocean.
abandon hope.

Fall
branch out from any faith you had.
brace yourself for impact.
crash with the ocean.
cry because you cannot find a way out.
cry more because you will never see your children again.
become one with the ocean.
mix in your tears with the salty ocean.
drown in cold waters.
reach your hand out to the illusion of your children,
as you pass on to the next life
Remember,
your children and nothing else.

Good Morning

Wake up,
you and me,
we've got work to do
lives to save,
dreams to shatter,
what are you waiting for?

Here, take a sickle
let's teach them
the gooey, velvet, plush
embrace of death
Yes I'll burn in hell,
brimstone scalds the flesh
but it warms the bones

I've got a plan, you and me
take the world by storm
play with fire until
fire plays with us

because I'm tired of
surfing through channels,
picking my favorite
way to spoon feed myself
ignorance, and then wonder
why I'm adrift

I loathe another commute
of shoveling hands into
pockets, clawing to dredge up
warmth, conversation, or empathy
for those whose small
mouths whisper
"Change?"

everybody's got

their hands full
and hearts just as empty
for a planet full of vegetarians
it's still a dog-eat-dog world,
lets bite back

they can't hear the muse
with their dreadlocks
of various jacks and wires
gushing putrid
gallons of noise
into muddled heads

I didn't take my medicine
and when the big bad monster
lumbered out of my closet
he mumbled in a low rumble
"Let's be friends."

Now we've waded
knee deep in the cesspool
of inconvenient truths
steel yourself,
we have to baptize
them all before
they drown

So yes,
I dare disturb the universe
and when they all scream
"good God kill him, he's self aware!"
just remember
I did it
for you
Brother.

David Smith

The Field

Green
with white stripes
benches
on each side
yellow post
in each end zone
lights shadowing
from above,
to the long days of
the hard practices
since the fourth grade
i found this place sacred,
leaving blood
on its bright green skin
watering its grass
with my sweat,
passing around
a brown, white laced
ball
that came between
everything else.
I spent
3285 days
on this field
bringing happiness,
taking away my worries.
Everyday of
the week
involved the field.
Monday,
running a hundred
yard field
till the shoes
on my feet
burned in agony
Tuesday,

drawing up plays
to run in the game
this was the start of the
gameplan
Wednesday,
hut-hut, hit-hit,
banging heads
to the whistle
blows
Thursday,
when your legs
can hardly move
pushing yourself till
you can't push
no more
Friday,
looking at
the field
before we let
another team
come into
our home
Saturday,
protecting our
house,
giving it
our all,
to get the dub,
this is what we all
worked for
Sunday,
a day of rest
healing your injuries
watching the NFL
dreaming
for a chance
to play forever,
to never leave,
the field.

Liam Schulz

Through the Rabbit Hole

Pull them taut and cross,
swoop under, tighten, again.
Pinch one string at midsection
and catch the ear of
the crafty, ageless rabbit.
Bind its ear with leather
and notice the gap –
we call it
the rabbit hole.
Guide the rope that
squeezes the ear
through the rabbit hole
and watch, as a
second ear flaps into
being and childhood
unwinds.

Derrell Bouknight

Butterflies

Sent down from above, I look upon you
enclosed by the essence of wings to soar,
between the realm of beauty and uncertainty.
You fly away, I sit alone

Uncanny divinity in motion,
I tremble, as though
you flutter your wings within my stomach.

Before the storm is the still,
abrupt to leave me,
while your wings spread to fly away.

But you won't land in another place,
you flap away, I sit alone.

Reggie Corbin

Response to: This Type Love

I found that girl
at least I think I have.
I'm confused,
Confused on what love is,
what it feels like.
But I can see it.
The smiles,
the laughter,
the gift of presence,
the look of happy ever after.

I've spent
the long nights on the phone,
gotten that feeling when I heard our song
over and over again
the same feeling,
makes me wonder if it's true
or if it's just a phase.
Laying in bed reminiscing over the days
we were one.
The days where just starrng at each other was fun.
But now look at what we've become,
separated into 3
you
me
and the one we used to be.
Is this what love is?

Keyon Bridges

Everlasting

Seeking truth and belonging.
Lost and never found, breathing.
All secrets in-chambered by mind...

Can't sleep, can't trial, can't force.
Feelings launched into space, desires soar through the sky.
Spread my arms, wings, voices above, I pray...

Never saw, heard, yet always impressed.
Trying to calm me down
Because I'm shouting your name all over town...

Pumping, sinking, my heart impulses.
A spectrum of stars twinkle lightly and darkness begins to illuminate.
Living, loving, laughing, mindless mounts of care.
Descending into my arms, forever protected, dancing shamelessly...

When dark wings grow brighter.
When the sky shatters into shooting stars.
When the sun falls down for the last night ever known,
I will stand with my head unbowed, two shadows one body.

Reach for your hand, whisper I love you too.
Needing you so much closer.
For without you i can't be, you're the source of my existence.

For when all the stars are dead, I'll have you, have you, you...

Kevon Turner

Megan

Her ethereal eyes pierce
through the rough canvas
colors that seal the sulking
soul within.

Her lips are pursed
but they don't conceal much.
Her wide eyes sit
shallow upon refined cheekbones.

The paint, still wet, is running
down her face.

Her lips are pursed,
she faintly hums a song.

She wants to sing,
she just might scream.

Her gaze is soft, she wants
to plead for life.

More than a year ago,
he took his soul
and left her
with the hull.

I saw her walking
the dog the other day.

She looked so lost; I think she let him lead.

Andy Lopez

Broken

She thinks she's full.
She'll open her soul to the lifeless
and close it to the beauty.
She loved
the ones who would hold her
hand, but not
her heart. Though when she drowns,
they'll not only be her air,
but the water too,
and she'll never understand
that. She'll paint her nails pink
and be the only one
who knows they're black.
She'll kiss a boy
with soft, pretty lips and still feel
that hole in her chest.
She'll drink
fire at 3 pm and cry
so hard
she'll think she fell asleep
in the ocean.
But she never liked her name
as much as when
you sighed it
into her mouth.
And when she realizes it's gone,
she'll know she's empty.

Tell Him What You Really Think, Mr. Foster

There are certain rooms you enter, and you immediately know people reminisce about them. Run-down rooms with stuff you can tell was just the bees knees at some point people pretend they can remember. A room, or a field, or a stage, where it's easy to imagine good things happening, and if anything goes wrong, the story gets added to the unofficial Hall of Hilarious Cautionary Tales.

The broadcast room at Jefferson High School is such a room, built in the fifties, during the post-Sputnik science and tech craze, and unfurnished since. Also, the AV room was "built" in the way snowmen are people; they knocked out a wall, shoved AV equipment in the resulting hole, and declared it an AV room. And, to be frank, calling it a "room" at all was generous. It was a closet, but it had aspirations. It was an ambitious closet, long, but still so narrow that the desk needed to be moved against the wall for student anchors to squeeze by to the other side. The air was still faintly drywall scented half a century later, giving it a "new room smell" which could, sometimes, be smelled over the sweat.

A sophomore was discovering all of these things on the first day of classes. This sophomore, Julian Incandenza, had long copper-gold hair running down to the not-quite-a-collar of his t-shirt, and he was the worst kind of fat, where it all accumulates right under the belly button and fifteen extra pounds looks like thirty. But his face was bright, and he walked like his joints had a few extra springs installed for pep. Also, you like him.

Our plucky sophomoric protagonist, and his junior-yearred compatriot Brady, were waiting in the broadcasting room for Mr. Foster, the School News instructor.

"D'you think we have anyone else coming?" asked Julian.

"No. Mr. Foster said it was just the two of us."

"One of us has to work the camera and the feed stuff right?"

While Brady had elected to take School News for the second year, all of the technical knowledge was foreign to Julian.

"Yeah, it's pretty simple. Foster did it sometimes last

year, so he might just do it all the time now. Then again, he is kind of a prick, so he might not. We can trade off."

"Alright, good. Just don't want Jefferson to miss out on too much of me," Julian said, facetiously running his hands through his breezy hair to emphasize its volume.

Brady, seeming not to notice Julian, asked, "Speaking of, I hear you're already making plans with Jen Maloney."

"Like to, yeah."

"Good to—"

They both heard footsteps approach, made silent and turned to the open door.

A man, Mr. Foster, peeked into the room with two small eyes in a round, spare face with hair so thin it might have been painted on.

"Hello, gentlemen," he breathed. "I was wondering if I could have a word with Mr. Incandenza?"

Julian, who could barely hear him, pointed at himself with a quizzical expression.

"Yes, if you could come out into the hall." Julian jumped up, but stepped carefully through the wiring.

In the hall, which seemed about twenty degrees colder, and the smell of linoleum was heavy.

"While in past years we have always done a two-man broadcast, as you've noticed, we've only got the two of you this year."

Julian nodded.

"So I believe Mr. Brady will anchor the broadcast and we'll have you running the camera and feed. We've got a week before broadcast starts, so there'll be time to learn it,"

"Well," Julian interjected, "Brady and I were actually talking about trading off."

Mr. Foster sighed in frustration.

"I don't believe that will work."

"Well, maybe if at some point later," Julian started.

Mr. Foster interrupted, saying "I don't believe that your face or voice are well suited for a school wide broad-

cast.”

“Yeah, I understand.”

“Thank you, and I’m sorry for being so blunt, but I hope you can trust that I’m trying to protect your image.

“No, I get it, completely.”

At this point, our lovable sophomore was not fond of Mr. Foster, but would have died at his whim. This is a phenomenon that takes place when one man reduces another to rubble, e.g. that totally @&^#% up thing that just happened to him.

“Alright. You and Mr. Brady are dismissed for today.”

And as Mr. Foster turned and walked the length of the hallway, our boy, Julian Incandenza, leaned into the broadcast-ing closet and told Brady that they could leave.

Then walked to the cafeteria, still inexplicably bouncing. He bought a cup, plucked a straw from a dispensary, poured orange juice from the soda fountain. He only stirred.

He didn’t think his face was dumb, not yet. But he knew that what Mr. Foster said would repeat in his mind until he accepted it. He started sipping the orange juice to occupy his mind.

The outcome of this approach was mixed. Sipping did not stop him from thinking about Mr. Foster directly, but the taste did cause him, through a series of peculiar gastrointestinal coincidences, to vomit over a small area of the table.

The nurse sent Julian home. He regretted that, for the day, Jen Maloney had gone unconquered, but was cocksure, going home that day. He would triumph soon.

I’m sorry I have to do this to you, Jules.

Each day Jen’s golden-brown irises looked at Julian less often and differently, and his confidence ebbed. A few times he brought up that he should take Jen somewhere, but plans washed out.

That Fall, Jen Maloney tragically fell in love with a National Merit Semi-Finalist, took him to Homecoming, and fogged the windows of his dark red 2011 Crown Victoria. Their whirlwind romance was a minor sensation in many circles of the

lower classmen. But when midterms came they made for few of the idle minds that generate gossip, and Christmas break brought welcome solitude to Julian Incandenza. However, such solitude is a riptide: innocent seeming, not everybody gets out, and making it back is long and difficult.

Back at school in early January, Mr. Foster entered the broadcasting room for the first time since before midterms. He announced that the broadcast closet would receive a collection of new equipment for the new semester, and it would soon be installed.

Julian looked down at the tips of right thumb and index finger. They had calloused from negotiating stuck A/V jacks, and he was glad they would be able to heal.

Raymond McGavin

I Like You

We are pretenders, content to live among the dead
We are fake, self portraits by blind men
I want to be real, I want to be ahead
But i am human I am no different

Psychos wearing people masks
They are smiling and I smile back
And I love the way you look
We are covers of the same book

We are excuses, trying to delete our essence
We are explosives, concealing reasons for presence
I want to explode, leave some type of legacy
But I am cliché, in this darkness I find ecstasy

Forbidden Love

O, what an ardent love between them formed,
In the flames of Aphrodite's passion.
Two souls were joined in majestic accord,
But, between their homes, stood hate and malice.
O, Muse, sing the tale of forbidden love,
And a feud conceived in love long forgot.
The powers of love, and malignance to prove,
Or fall apart and descend to chaos.
He was one thing, then, she was another,
But, now, they're dragged apart, as time lulls by.
How desperate they long, now more than ever,
For the placid gaze, in their lover's eye.
Lest love, for them, remains a hopeful dream,
And life will not be always as it seems.

Waldo Soria

Dashing Spirit

I am a dashing spirit
Flying through the day on set wings
Soaring through the night with no limits
Looking for the next fountain of joy
Carefully creeping around
And strikingly jumping out
Surprising the ego-filled spirit
Humbling the outspoken ignorant minds
Blessing the despair filled thoughts
I am nothing but a mere angel
Looking to fill the empty buoys
Looking to balance the overflowing buckets
Making life a treasure for all

Dominik L. Pettey

I cherish a tin of dip Dom passed on to me before his death. Gonzaga purple and hockey puck shaped, it reminds me of Dominik. The can may be empty, but it brims with memories of a best friend who died so young. I first met Dom at the fair this summer, and I remember thinking to myself: This senior will be one of my closest companions. And how right I was. Whether it was driving to random places, basking in the sun during eight period, or dragging ourselves through a Physics class, Dom's grin would brighten my mood. The happiest moment I spent with 'Dinger' was when we were flying down River Road in his black Ford Escape and he was puffing a cigar. His father happened to stop next to us at a light. He noticed Dom smoking, and he flicked us off while we pulled away in a cloud of tobacco fumes. We were so alive, so vibrant, so loved, and our laughter echoed our joy. I will never forget the times of yelling 'Black Betty' as loud as we could, tossing in 'lippers' out in the parking lot, or devouring countless Hard Times wings. Saying goodbye at his funeral brought me so many tears, but bearing his casket was an honor. Domo, he was my friend, but now he is my brother.

St. Al's (RIP DOMO)

7:15

The wake up call,
I made a mistake.
Thankful for the guy
in my carpool who didn't over sleep.

7:25

Out the door
without a goodbye.
I was supposed to drive,
But somebody volunteered
He was a good guy.

7:42

Anticipation skipped
down my body.
Can't think about the game,
Just sleep.

8:20

I knew I was late.
I approached the meeting room ,
No talk.
No spirit.
"Did you hear about the tragedy?"

8:35

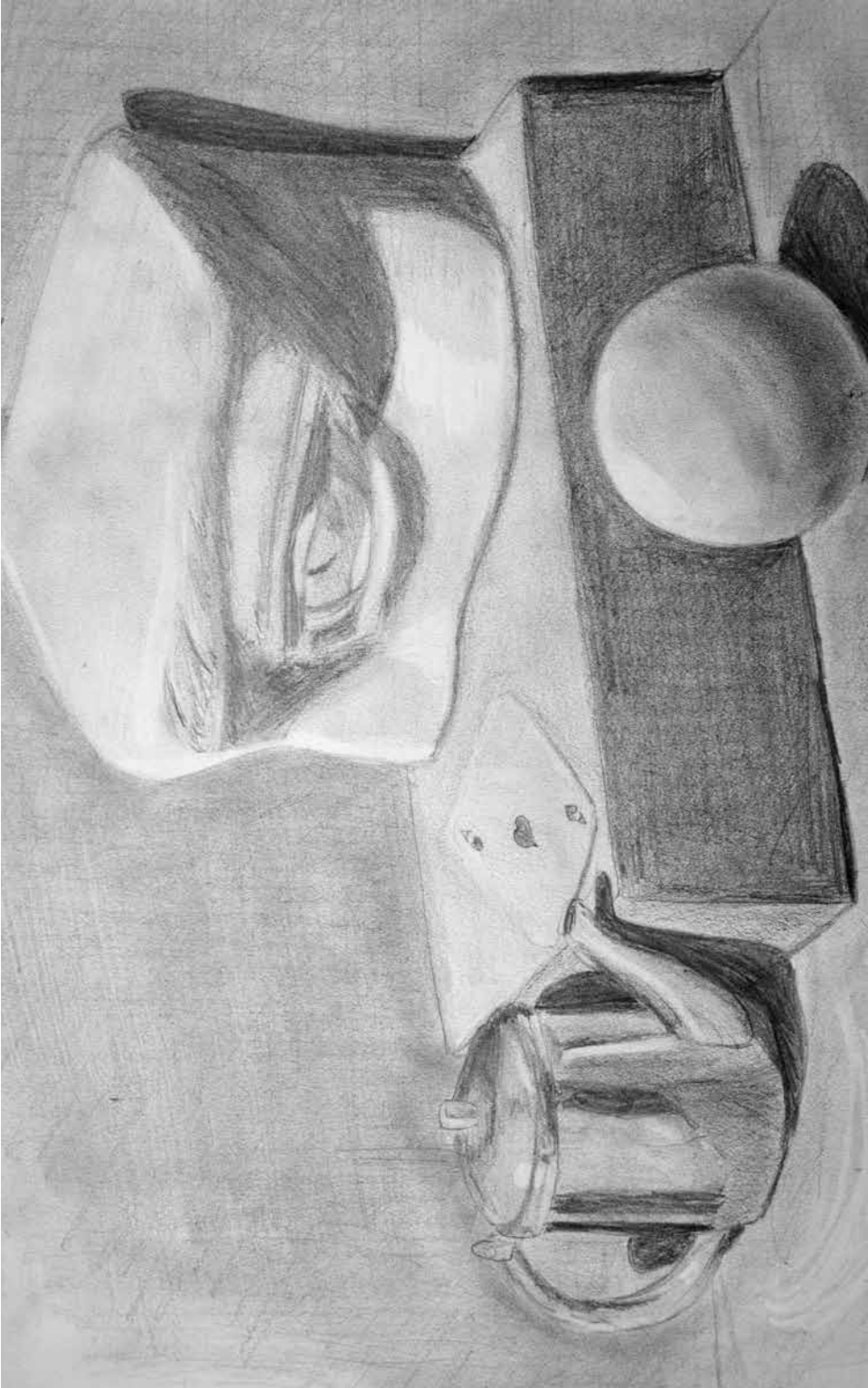
Teammates and I gathered
in St. Al's.
One hug following the next,
Our brothers processed into the church.
Every question imaginable
already having passed through everyone's mind.
One thought--
Gather, love each other, and
pray.

8:40

8:45

My prayers
echoed off the high ceilings
And directed me back to
my brothers.
I looked out at a group of men,
who were once strangers.
I cried and thanked
for the opportunity
of meeting and experiencing
With my brothers.
While in the church,
our brother Dom was no longer gone.

Photography
&
Studio Art

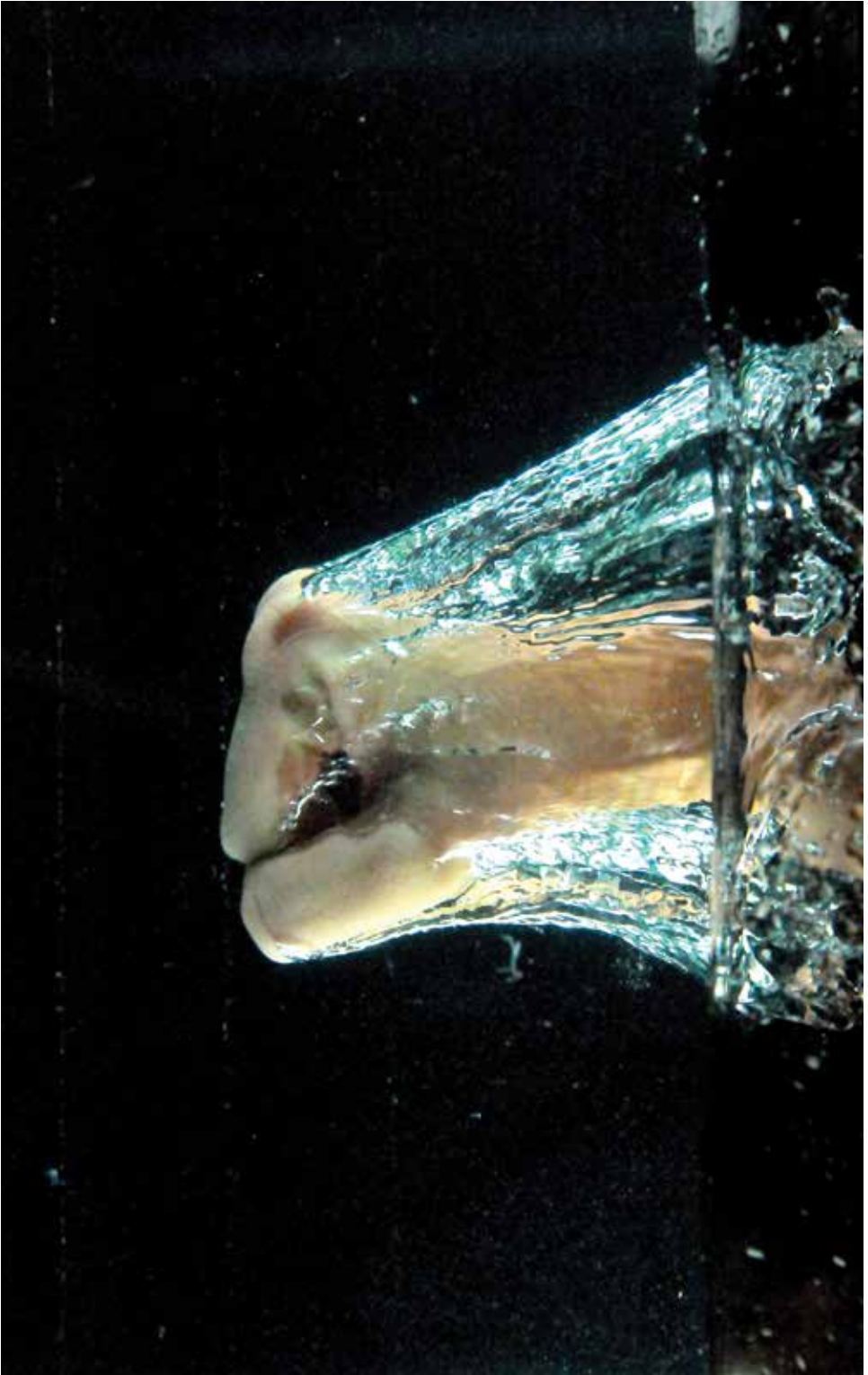




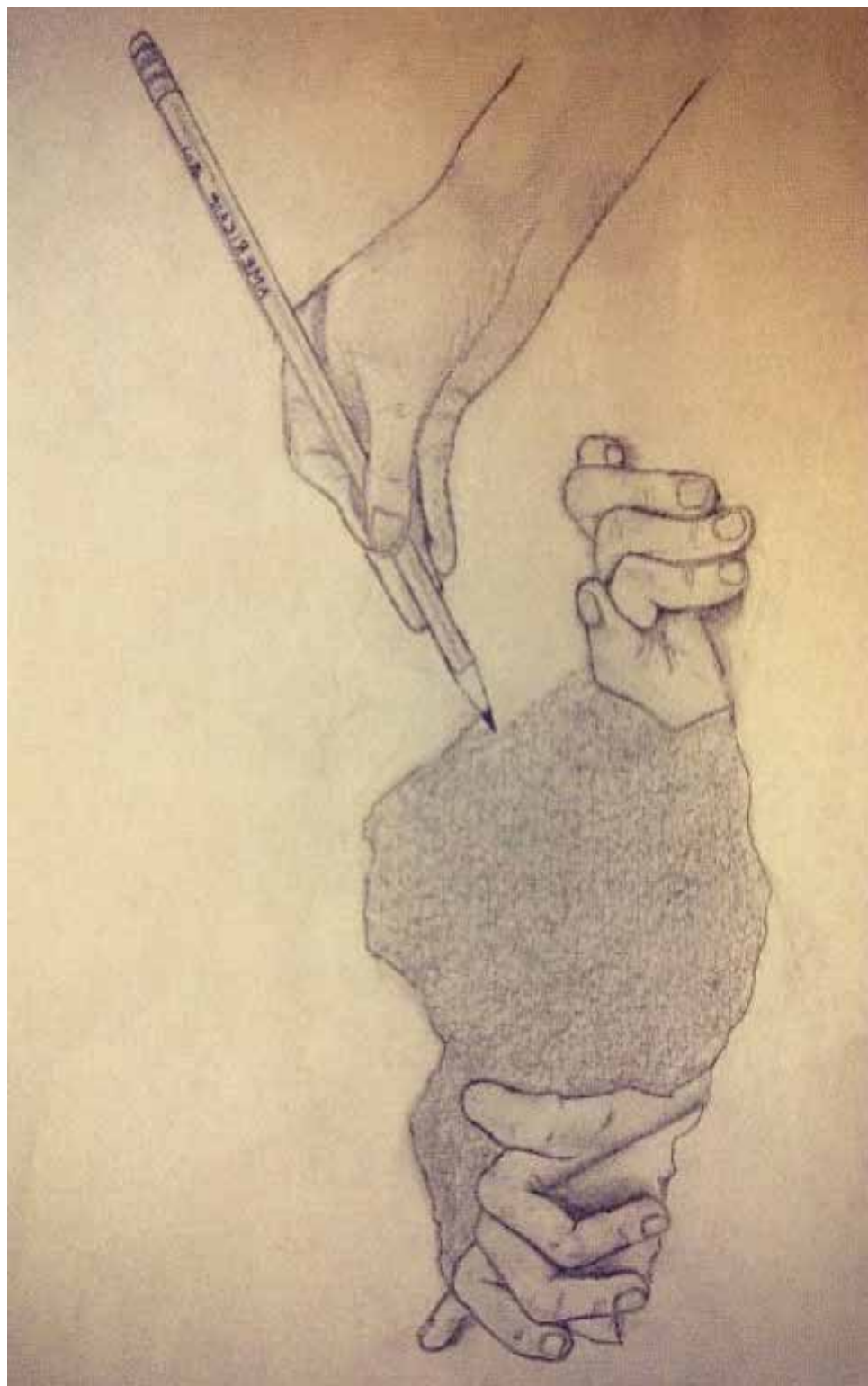


Dominic Williams



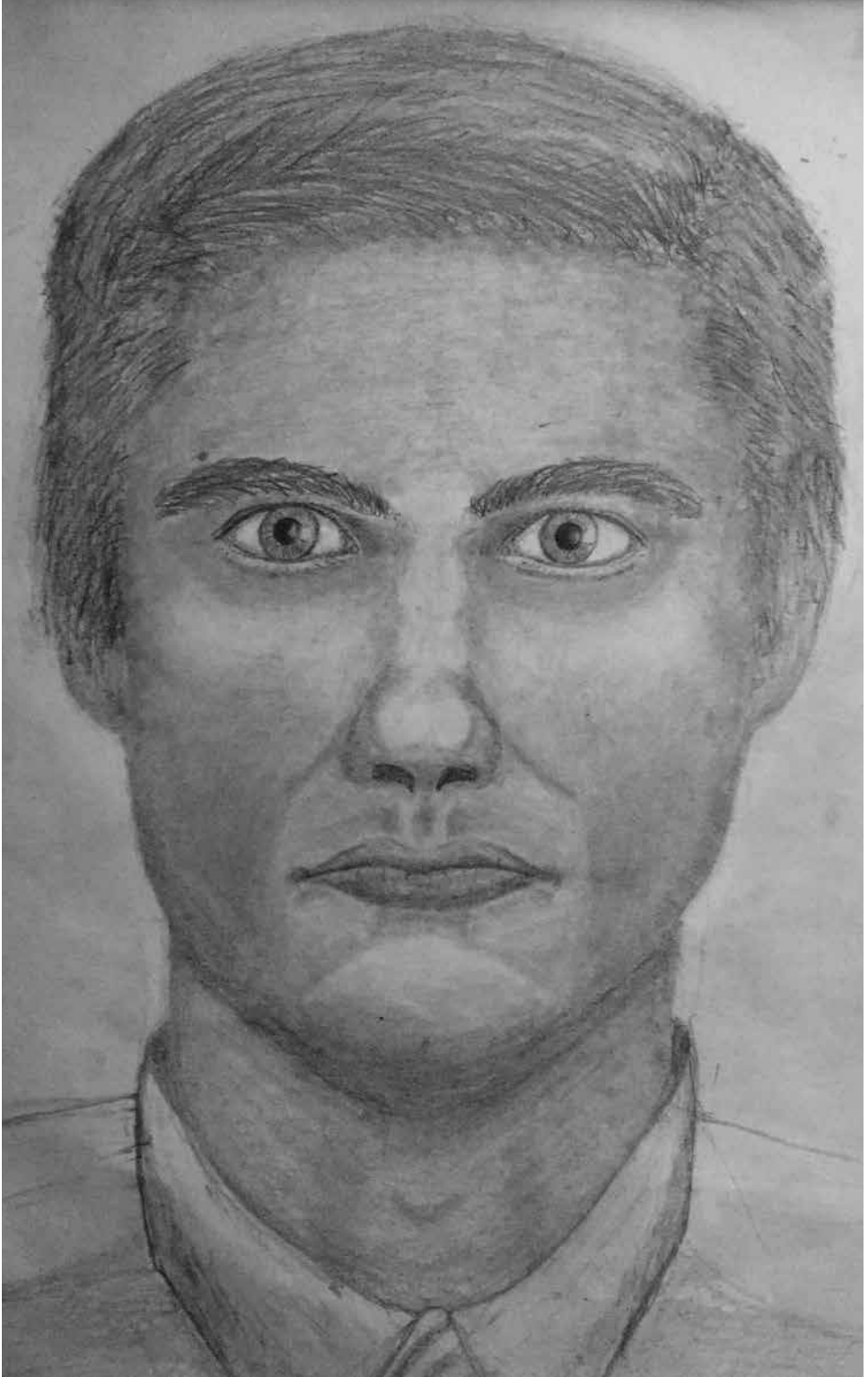


Michael Vitale





















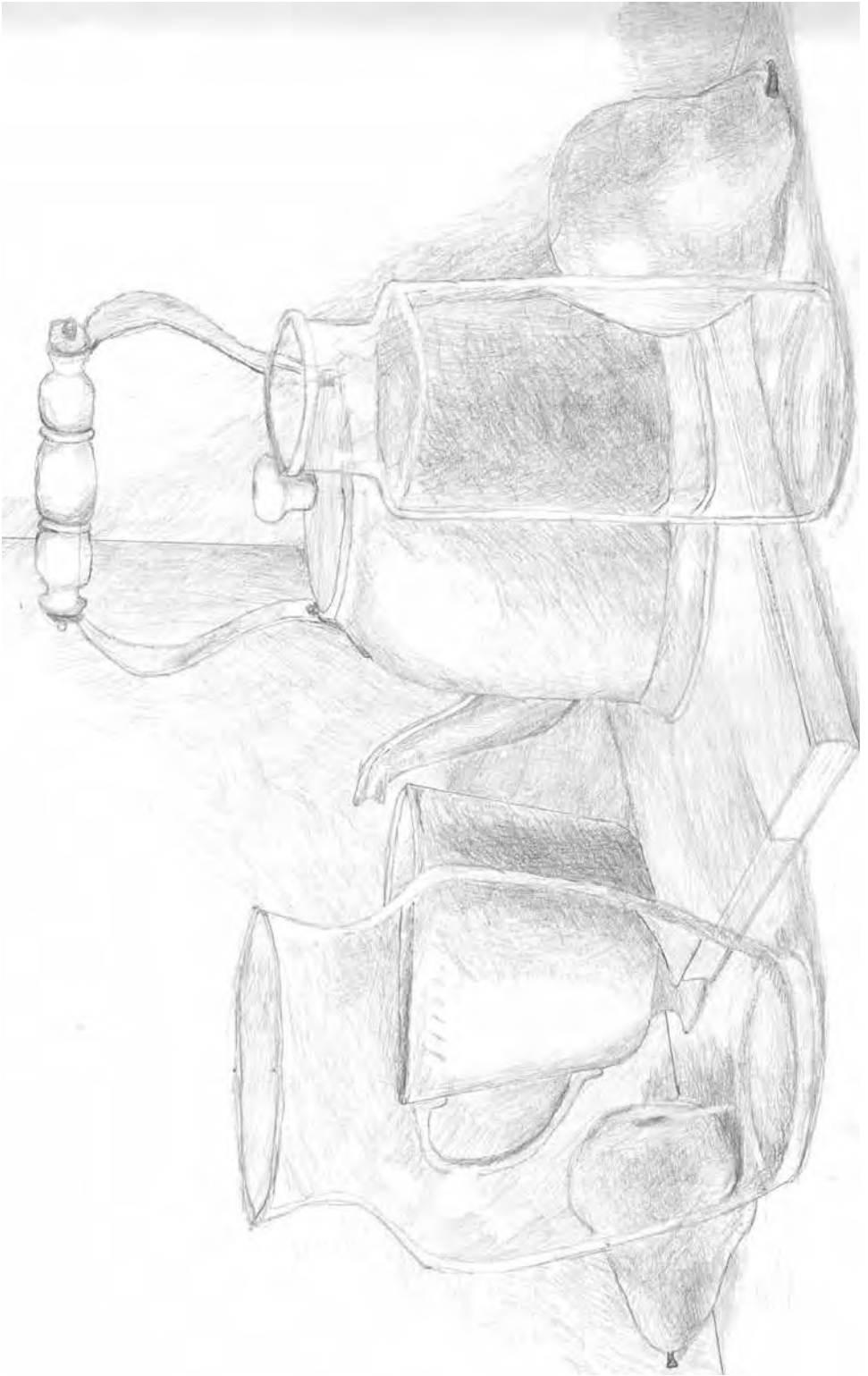






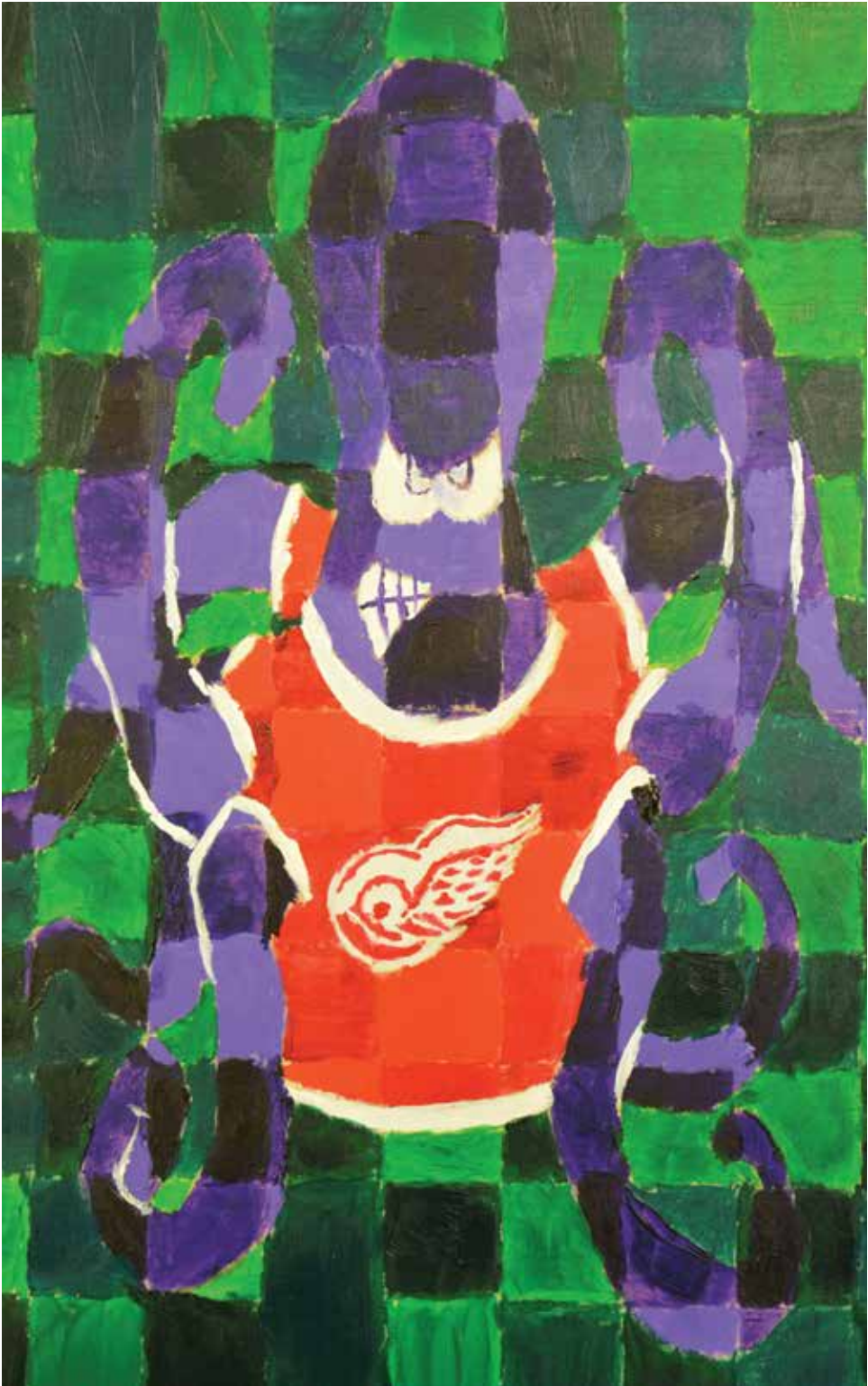






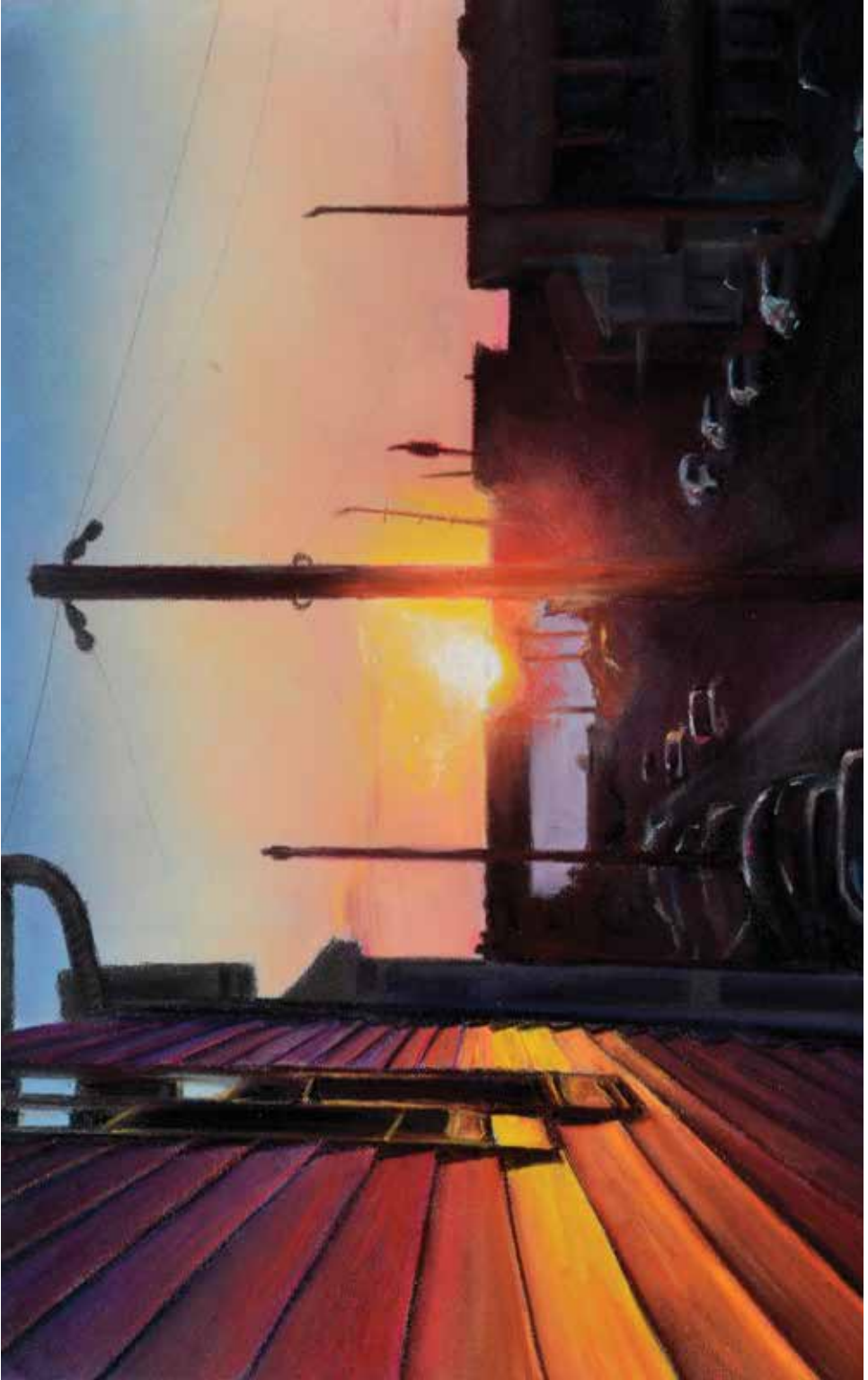












Matt Green



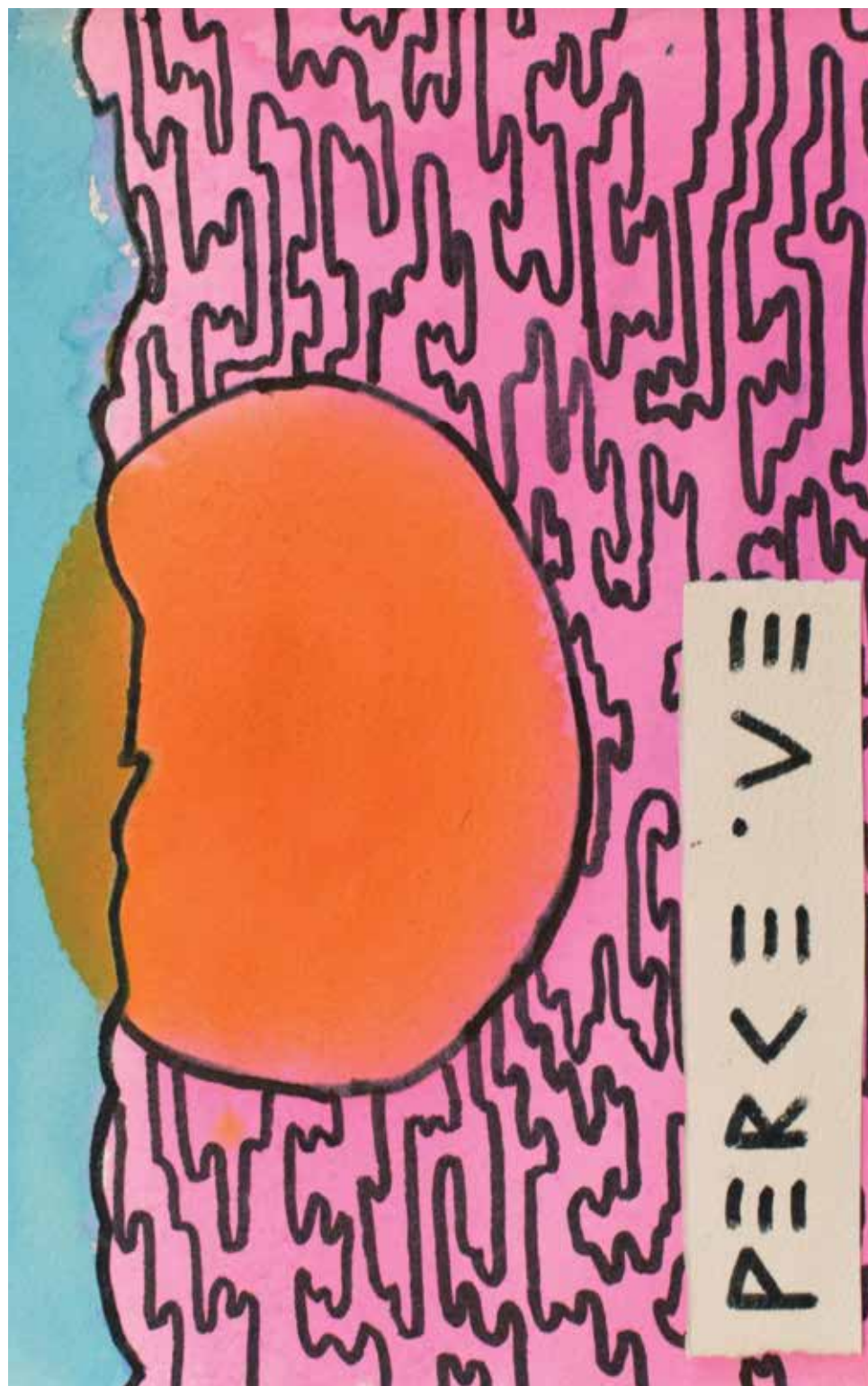


Landen Buckson













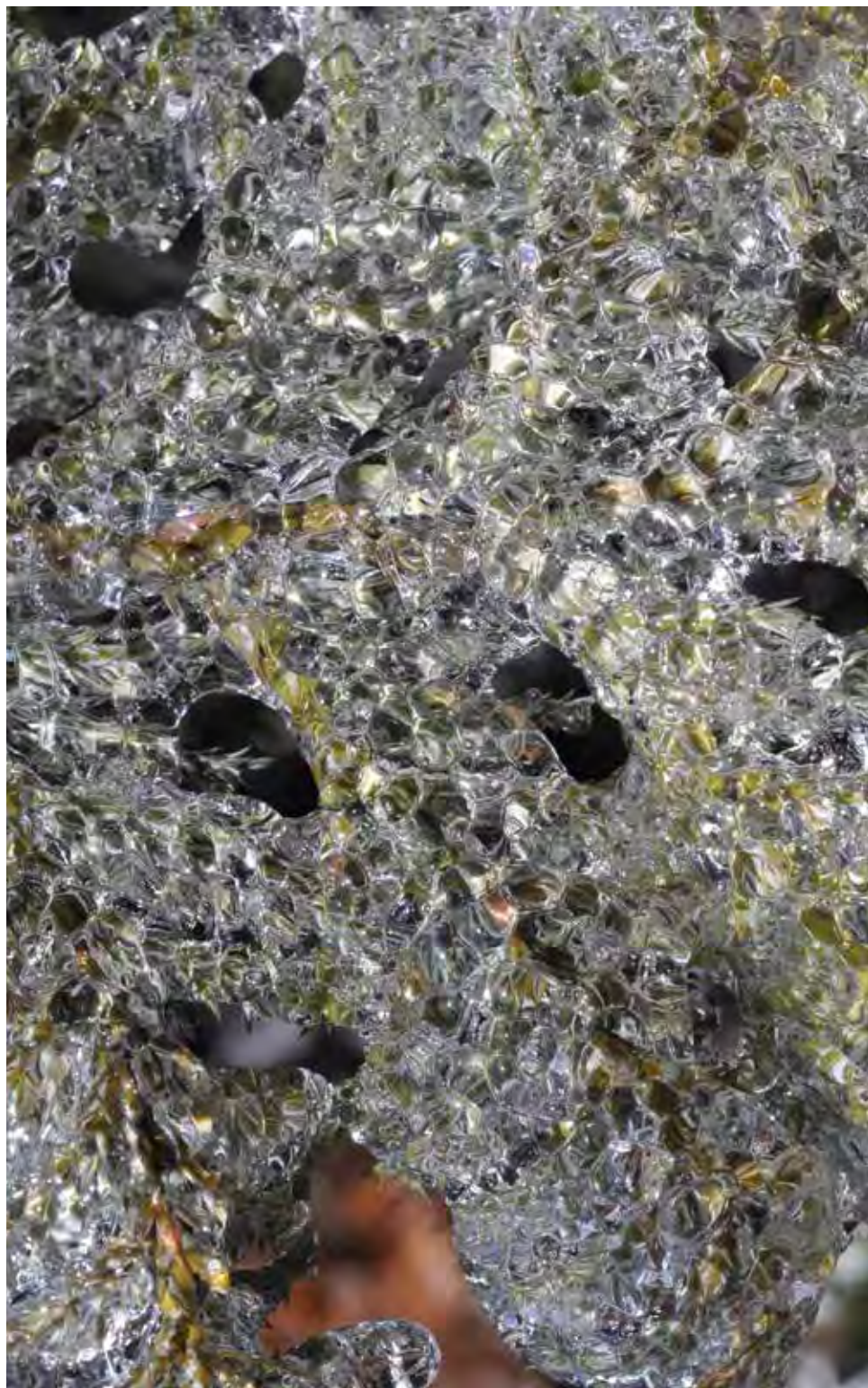
Michael Vitale













Maddox Boshart

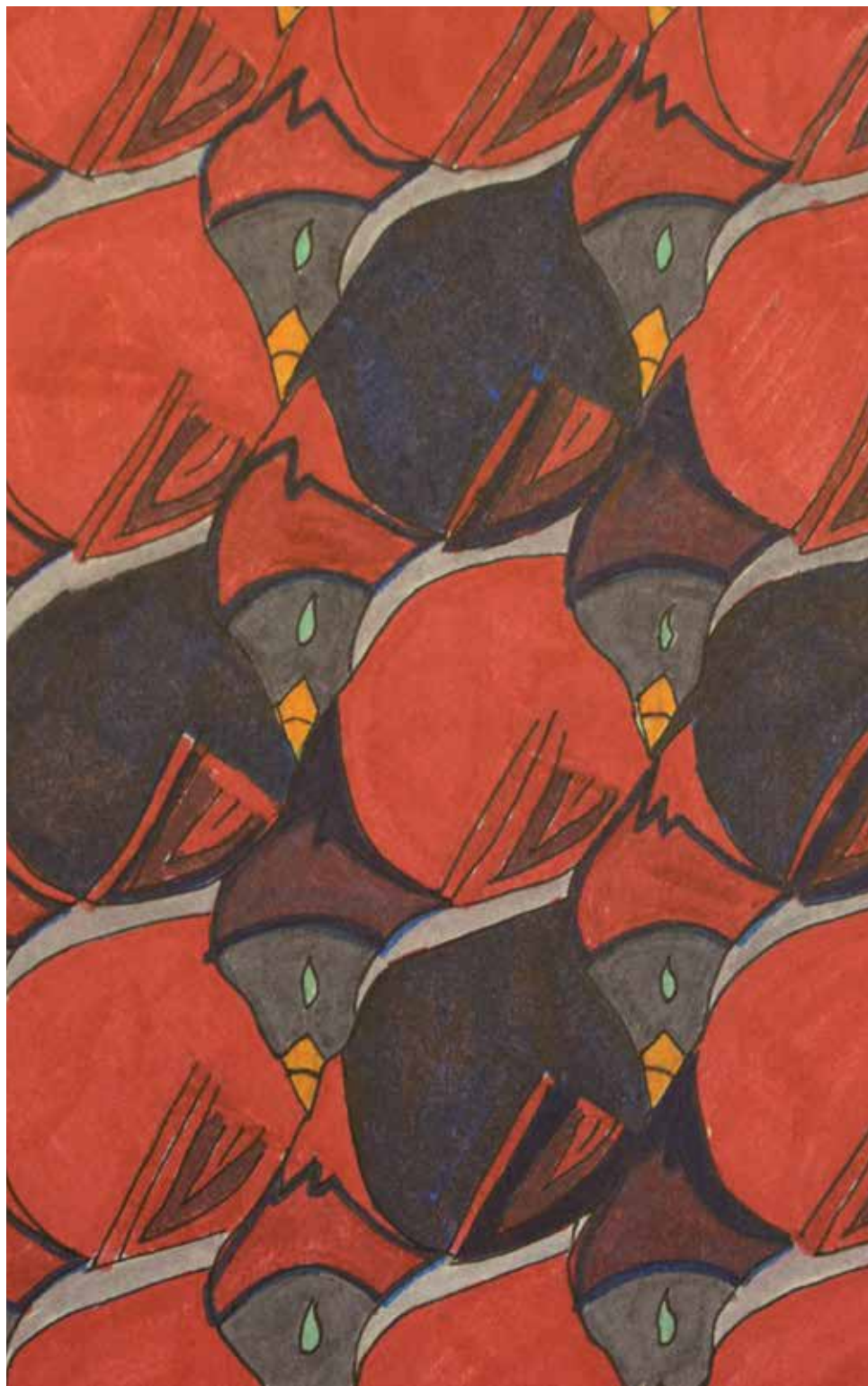




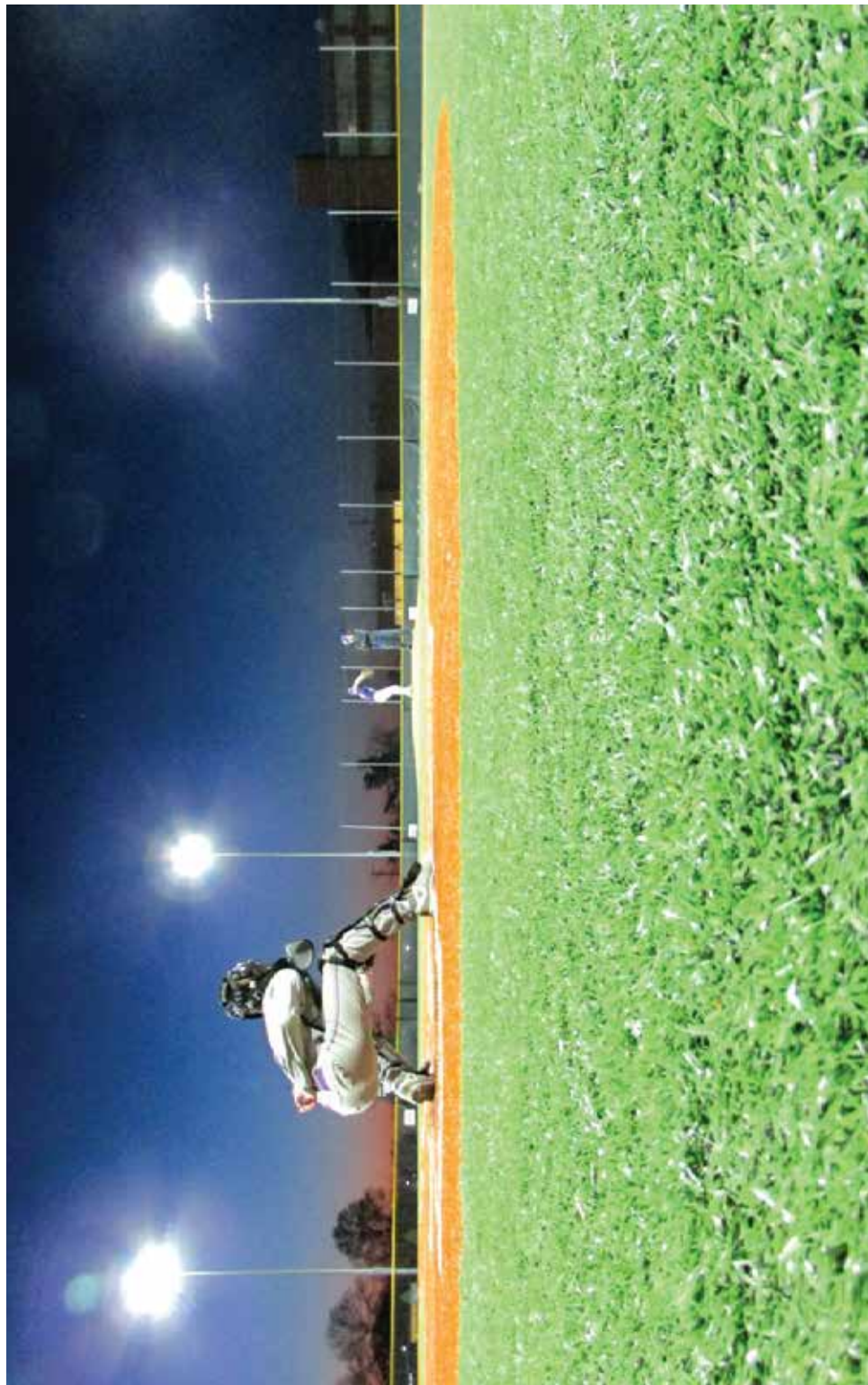
Konrad Woo







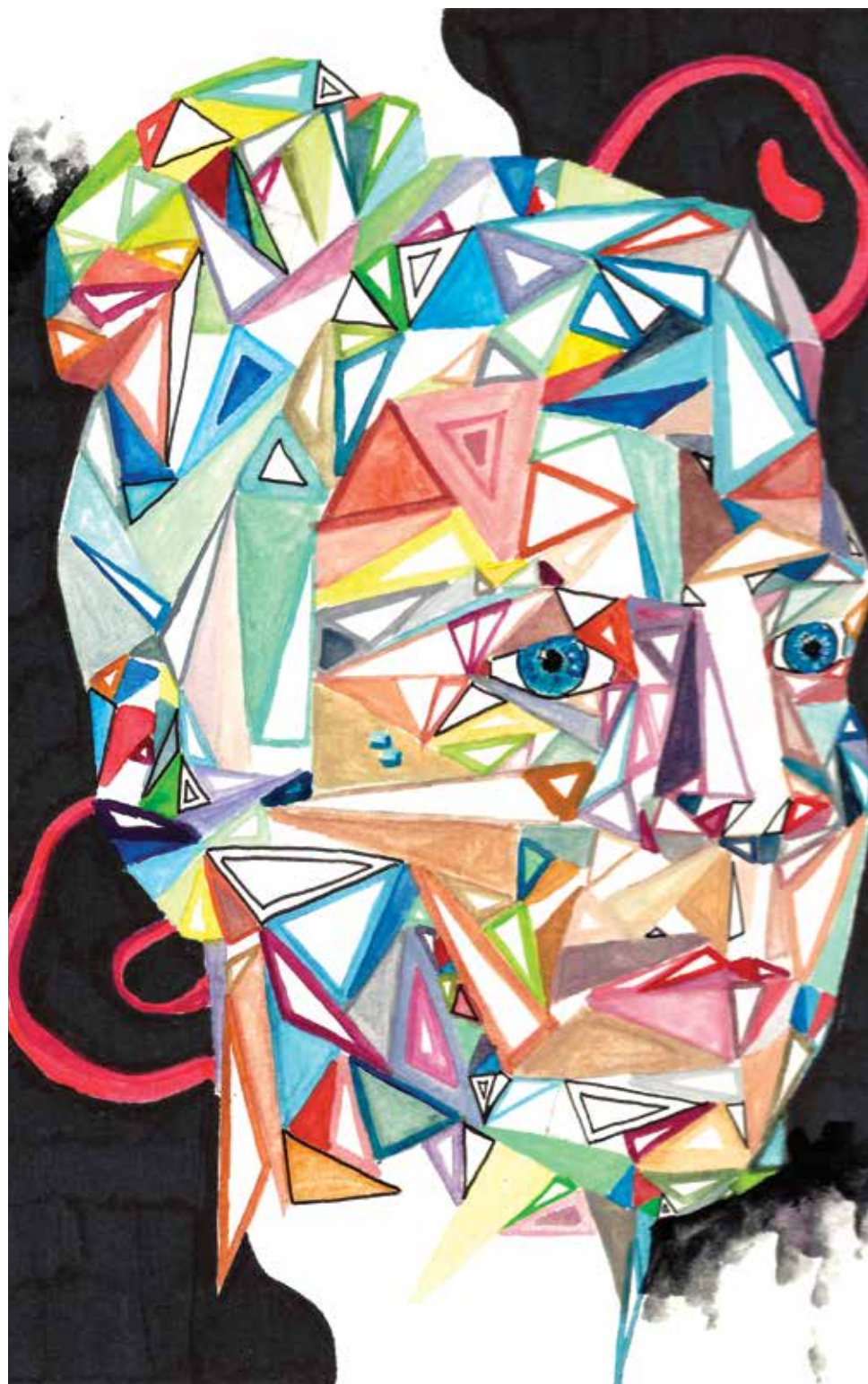


























Owen Early



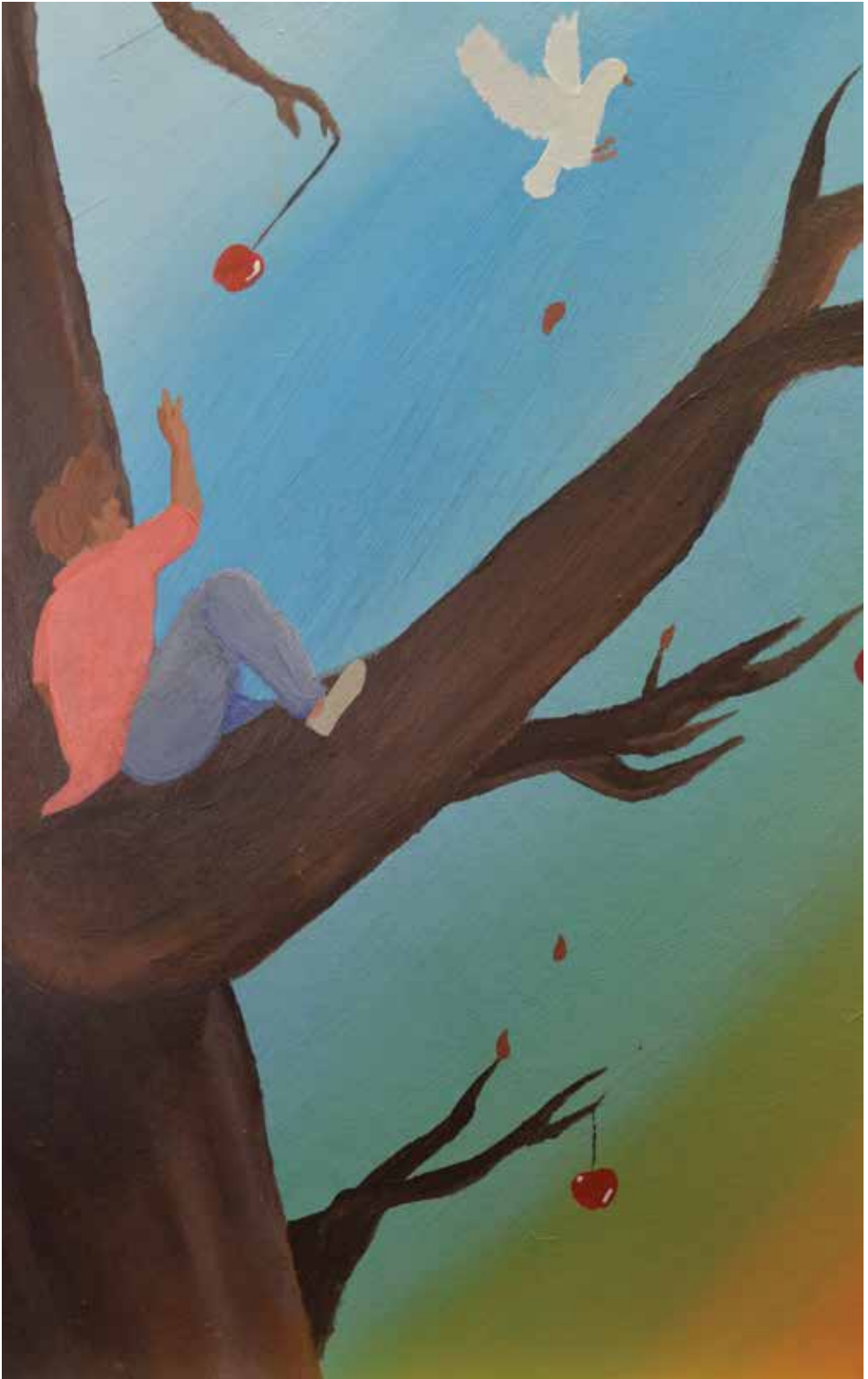






Michael Vitale









Liam Newcomer

