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2
Move
by Parker Hyde ('18)

Let’s detach ourselves from perspective
Rid ourselves of all proper and common and unsightly nouns
Along with I’s and
We’s and anything resembling relation.
To be somewhere and nowhere in the surrounding world
existing verbally rather than nominally
With an emphasis on “being” before “having been”
and direct objects over any description of self
To be performing
rather than a performer
To be screaming rather than a lunatic
To be dying rather than a dead man.
Separate from solidarity; you are not
a person in motion: you are moving.
Sea Monster
by Jim Sherwood ('16)

Within the sea sleeps a monster
It lashes occasionally with its teeth covered tentacles
Beware the monster they say
It doesn't think
It doesn't play
Most times it is safe
The waters chill over with the icy stillness of sleep
Sleep that pacifies the anger beneath
Don't watch too closely
The shooting stars that mostly
Signal the end of a life
Than a light in a none too sullied night
Don't bring friends along into the deep.
Too much racket makes the giant sad
He groans sounds of pain from his underwater plain.
Welcome him home they say
He lives alone they say
Sucking on a marrow bone one day
Or two
Or three
For the monster there within does reside
Trapped beneath a subtle tide.
Ice Cream Shop
by Grace Archibald ('16)
Colored pencil
A Fresh Start
by Ashleigh King ('16)

An epiphany hit me while I was on the subway. Somehow through the distinct smell of depression, body odor, and Chinese food, I came upon a higher level of thinking. I looked down at the little cardboard box that represented my life. Twenty years of devotion and work that had been thrown away like garbage this morning. My boss seemed almost glad to kick me out. I had packed my things while he stood close by with a smug smile; only a diploma, a few awards, and pictures of places I would never visit. A sad feeling came over me - to have known that everything that matters to me could fit into one cardboard box. My life’s importance was next to nothing, and nobody would ever talk about me one hundred years from now. My throat closed up and I couldn’t breathe. I only knew of what I must do next.

I packed my bags with a sense of urgency. I grabbed everything and anything that fit into my suitcase. I needed to leave. I’ve felt it for some time now, but now I am certain. I suddenly got an idea. A stupid, crazy idea, but I needed it. I pinned a map of America to my wall and dug through one of my drawers for a dart. Wherever I threw my dart, I would live there. I could start over and become someone new. Someone worth remembering in one hundred years. I threw my dart without looking. When I saw my new destination, I had a feeling I haven’t had in a long time: hope.
When Logan H. Wells was seven years old, his mother sent him to school. He did not want to go to school, seeing as he spent his kindergarten year at home and had quite enjoyed it. Nonetheless, his mother sent him to the horrid place. He “needed to experience it”, she said. So, being the oh so rational boy he was, Logan decided to become mute.

On August 8, the first day of school, Logan stayed strong and had not spoken a word. At lunch time, the teacher took the class to the park as a special treat. Logan took his lunch to the bench by the pond and decided to eat there. He didn’t want to run around with the other kids. They were too loud and running made his cheeks turn rosy.

“Hi. I’m eating here.”

He looked up to see a girl in a bright blue dress and matching hair ribbons standing before him. True to her word, she sat beside him and also started eating.

“You’re going to have to leave. This is my bench,” said Logan who had given up on his silence. The girl ignored him. “Excuse me lady, you cannot be here.”

“Look at the ducks,” she said, completely ignoring him.

“What?”

The girl pointed.

“The ducks. I have been coming here for three days, and those ducks have been there. They’re abandoned.”

Shocked and utterly disappointed in the world, Logan marched straight away to his teacher and told her that the evils of humanity had struck again. After a lengthy discussion the teacher took the matter to the park ranger, who was not aware of what had happened. She said if their parents agreed to keep them safe they could keep the ducks.

“Trust the grown ups to put everything on us,” said the girl, rolling her eyes.

For the first time all day, Logan smiled. By next week the girl, who turned out to be named Ella, was deemed the “only acceptable first grader” in the class. Logan had been going to Ella’s house everyday after school to check on the ducks. She seemed to be a good parent, so he decided to marry her.

The wedding was the most extravagant thing that two poptarts and a juice box could buy. Ella wore her favorite pink dress ( because white was too overdone ), and Logan wore a bowtie ( which was a clip-on borrowed from his brother ). It was the social event of the year, lasting all of recess and with invites sent to the entire class. Even the ring was glamorous. It cost Logan 25 cents, and he was quite proud. He had a right to be.

When Logan H. Wells was nine years old, he was fed up with women. Missy Chaplin had kissed him on the
cheek in front of Ella. Ella had of course stopped speaking to him.
“Cheaters don’t deserve words,” she said.

The next day he went to her house and told her they had to stay together, for the ducks. When she said no, Logan sighed in exasperation.

“That’s not how to be, Ella Louise Hester.”

“Don’t call me names.”

“I did not call you a name, genius, I said you weren't being.”

This conversation led to a trip to Logan’s house to talk to his brother, Matt. Matt was fifteen and knew everything, especially about being.

“It’s a way of life. It has no boundaries, no rules. It just is.”

He gave Logan and Ella two t-shirts to wear and they instantly started complaining that they were too big.

“It doesn’t matter how they look,” he responded. “That’s the point. Be New.”

They wore the shirts for the rest of the day, and the previous fight was forgotten. Almost.

When Logan H. Wells was sixteen, he fell in love. He was at his first dance, standing in the corner by the punch bowl listening to his girlfriend, Adelia Stevenson, go on and on about how her newest teen idol was amazing. Ella was there as well, but she was on a date with some guy. Not that Logan was complaining, he was perfectly happy for her. She had talked about him for months. Ella had liked this guy forever and finally got her dream date. For some reason though, Adelia didn’t seem as great as he thought she was.

By the end of the night Logan was still by the punch bowl, alone this time. Adelia had gone home after he caught her kissing another guy. She just “got confused”, but Logan thought it best if they just split up. He was walking toward his car when he saw Ella crying on the steps.

“Ella?”

“ You were right, ok? He was a jerk. Jai is a useless, no good, jerk.”

Logan racked his brain for some inkling of what was going on. Then it dawned on him.

“Adelia, crap.”

So that was the guy she was wrapped around. They sat on the steps in silence, just staring at the sky.

“Remember when we got married?” Ella asked suddenly.

“Um, yea. You wore that pink dress and carried a bouquet of half wilted dandelions,” Logan laughed.

“We walked from the swings to the top of the slide where I gave you that plastic ring. I was so proud of it, that thing cost me a whole week’s allowance.”

It got quiet again.

“I still have the ring, you know. I always carry it with me.”

Ella pulled off a silver chain from around her neck with a blue and purple ring attached.

“Wow. I can’t believe you kept it, you must really know how to be,” said Logan chuckling.

“You haven’t said that in forever.”
“I haven’t had a reason to say it. In order for something to be, it has to be special, remarkable.”

Then for the first time he looked at Ella and saw her. He saw her hair, that beautiful, curly, chocolate brown mass cascading down her back. Next he saw her smile, how could he have not noticed that smile before? The way it just showed happiness, pure, untarnished joy, was mesmerizing. Then he saw her eyes. They were eyes that weren’t a single color, but a somehow coordinating jumble of browns and golds. Eyes that gleamed with a strong, innocent heart. That was a heart he wished he could have, but knew he never could. Logan knew if there was ever a person to increase how much he could be, it was Ella. So he kissed her, and she kissed back, and they both knew they would be forever.

When Logan H. Wells was twenty-one, he and Ella were married for the second time. Their love grew to include two beautiful children named Jessika and Marcus. Of course the two ducks who brought the couple together also had a place in the family. Ella became a college professor, teaching romantic literature (though she thought her own story was better than any classic Shakespeare). Logan, having always dreamed of perfect endings, became a movie director. Everything was wonderful, until that one day when it wasn’t. As you know, Logan was returning home from the studio when he had his heart attack. He had always had his heart problems, they were barely noticeable but there all the same. We thought he had gotten better, but - I guess not.

So that’s the story, kids. The talkative, rambunctious, and spontaneous tale of Logan H. Wells always ends here, no matter how many times you tell it. It had an almost perfect ending; he always said that almost was better than perfect anyway, you can improve almost. This letter will reach you when you’re older, so you will probably not remember much by then, but at least take these lessons from the man you get to call your father: First, you need to live. Your father was dying since the day I met him, yet he’s lived more of a life than any other man in the universe ever will. It’s not the fact that you breathe that gives you life, it’s what you do in between the breaths. Second, you must realize that moments define you. It doesn’t matter how many people are around you, you could be alone or in the middle of Times Square on New Years Eve, but you know that moment happened. You are made up of millions of moments, so make sure you’re ok with being known by each one of them.

Finally, this is the most important thing. If you take nothing else, please remember this: You must be. Be loving, be caring, don’t be afraid to admit to something that makes your heart sing, be spontaneous, be special, be remarkable; be. You see, there is no set rule for being because there’s no way to avoid it. You be until you stop. One can be as much or as little as they choose. If you ever have any doubts on how to be anything look to your father and this letter. Because if there’s one thing Logan knew, it was how to be. He was, he is, and he will. That’s all you ever need to do.
Drug mist hazed the people paler, and everything really, in that town where sorrows were drowned under gallons, and gallons, and gallons of liquor. Beer and ale were synonyms for water, and people downed them at every meal. And I lived there. I lived there. And I still wonder how I kept my food down at my rare meals. How I saw through all that pale haze. How I kept sober, because lots of people there got drunk on just living, and I don’t mean that in a nice sentimental way. I mean it literally. Just walk out and be stone drunk from that smoke and the overwhelming smell of the liquor.

It was a city where the prostitutes thrived; and not just the woman, every kind of prostitute. From rich to conniving to getting by. All of them boomed. It was grotesque, but the filthy clatter of music all the time in one of a million bars kept you from thinking too much about it. Just drowned those thoughts right out of your head, like everything else.

Ellanorah Youse, my mother, had the most awful nerves since my father had gone off to the war and died about four years back at the time. Ellanorah never really could see me through the haze of the city, which leaked into the small apartment from every creak in the walls and floors which lavished the dusty old place. Even on the higher floor, second from the top, it just flowed right on in, covering everything up just like that. You could hardly see the gold lacing from behind that curtain of muddled grey that turned everything it touched to corruption.

Ellanorah was one of those people who was always drunk in that town, though she hardly drank nearly as much liquor that would feasibly produce the effects that showed. I had her admitted to a hospital when she nearly tried to jump out the window of our small apartment to become a bird. It was a shame because I heard the prettiest words from her I’d ever heard at that time. She said she wanted to become a bird so she could fly around and find happiness, because there’s always happiness somewhere. A real shame she had to go away. I liked her a lot, even if she never knew who I was half the time.

I don’t know where I heard this, but I remember someone somewhere had said that sometimes the people you care for are just illusions in your head that you make up. I think my vision of Ellanorah is like that. What child would care for a mother whose forgotten them? But I do because I like to imagine when she looked at me she’s just feeling so much pain she’s pretending not to remember me to help herself relieve the pain. I hope it’s like that. I really do you know.

The only person I’ve ever met in that town that I think I really loved was a man with no relation to me. I didn’t even know him for more than a day, but I loved him anyway. He was an old man who lived in the hospital. I met him on a rainy day when I was visiting Ellanorah. He was staring at a window with the most pained expression I have ever seen on a man. The care woman who was leading me to Ellanorah’s room told me he was always like that on rainy days.

After I had talked with Ellanorah, trying to not cry in frustration every time she called me Fionse even though my name is Tepes, I saw Drussel again. He was still by a window in an open room which I would call a grand library save for the bed, still looking on with that disgusted expression. I had decided then, to talk to him.

“Hello, sir, my name is Tepes Youse. May I sit down and talk with you?” I asked politely, knocking on his door. He turned to me, revealing his thin framed face.

His face was pale, and age wrinkled, but his eyes where the deepest, wisest blue I have ever seen. He nodded his consent at my companionship.

“You keep looking at your reflection in a disgusted way. The care woman said it was the rain, but the way your eyes are focused it has to be a memory. Can you tell me?” I peeked shyly at the man, and he looked on towards a horizon only those eyes of his could see.

“Drussel Walter, I dislike being called sir. It’s a distant term, and a painful one. It’s a term of responsibility to the younger generation and it’s a responsibility I can’t live up to anymore. I just don’t understand the world enough today. You’re a wise girl, Tepes, but slightly off. I’m looking at my philosophy, not my memory. After going to the
war I’ve learned a lot about humans and myself. I’ve learned how foolish praying to God is. A peasant about to get murdered does not wait for a king to step from his throne to save him. You have to use your senses and save yourself, it is a blessing if you are rescued by another, not a given.”

Drussel sighed softly. His voice was hued a deeper shade of blue, and his words slurred through a misty haze of despair when he spoke. The pale dimness of abuse fell across his skin in slanted, crude lines of a darker tone like rain down the pain of a frosted window. You see, the view from the window was the same as ever, but the rain and creaks kept that from showing to anyone who looked at it. You had to look past the window to understand the real view.

“It’s all okay? What phrase is that? It should be banned!” Drussel scoffed, continuing on as I sat quietly and listened to the rain accompany this man’s philosophy. “Murder, war, famine, abuse, abandonment, unemployment, corruption, death, hatred. Is it really “all okay”? The world is a holocaust, and it’s scary and frightening, and it’s so human. It’s just so human to kill people and make them suffer. And then all those murdering soldiers come home and are praised for it all. We should be hanged! We should be executed, not praised. We killed so many people just so we could stand where we were.”

“What ever happened to protecting your country?” I asked, not critically, but more to provoke his answer the question.

“I don’t care if it’s for your country or your family murder is murder. There’s too fine a line in our definition of that horrid act to punish it thoroughly. We need a clearer definition. They all say murder is the taking of an innocent life, but how are those men any different from us? Those men also went to war and most of them left a family behind. They all had families. Even if you couldn’t see their little five year old girl running around out there, she’s still alive and crying for her dad every night now.”

Drussel shifted in his chair by the window.

“I saw a child when I was in the battle of Tultinne, up north, over the rebel forces’ main city. She was a small slum girl with eyes like fire. You could tell she had lost someone important. When she saw my fellows and I she tried to stab us, she was crying and shouting like a wild beast. She was saying that if she killed us God would reward her and forgive her father for his sins and let him be in heaven.” Drussel shook his head lightly at the memory.

“When people are in a situation where something tips their world entirely, they go mad with this thing we call desperation. It is a mix of hope and despair that give a person life. People crave a meaning for life, a meaning for all their suffrage, and that’s how religions come about. Sometimes people use that meaning and twist it so that it fits whatever they desire, and they hold onto that sentiment if it kills them. They just desperately want that feeling of hope for the end of suffrage. That’s what happened to that little girl. Though she must have been a sweet child to think so strongly for her father’s salvation and not her own.”

Drussel shifted again and his eyes blinked slower and heavier. He stayed quiet for a long time, thinking to himself, and I just watched him and waited, the rain filling the air in amiable silence. My patience was rewarded when Drussel asked me a question to resume our audible companionship.

“Who are you visiting in the hospital?” He asked lightly.

I smiled sadly at him as it was my turn to look into the rain.

“My mother, she has become very…off since my father died in the war. She tried to kill herself so I had her admitted here to keep her safe. Maybe someday she’ll recover, though when she does she may still never remember me.”

“It’s almost harder for a child to be loved then forgotten then to be never loved at all. A child who was once loved knew the feeling of being on the throne of human happiness, only to be cast into the mud below and stripped of their crown.” Drussel commented, his voice lulling to a gentle whisper.

The way he phrased the feelings I had long felt and many could not understand made me feel more respect for this man’s intelligence. I began to feel tears running down my cheeks. The way Drussel’s pale skin sulked under the dim light and his fading voice slowing with his tired wise eyes made it clear he was in his final hours. In this town of sinners here sat this man with the intelligence of a respectable vastness.

“As I grew older and older, I found how much life never really meant to me. I went through the motions of
happiness and sadness, love and heartbreak, but I never lived them. I never cherished any of it and I took no care then or now too. You have the same eyes as me, not physically, but in the soul. You also just go through life carelessly. There is no wrong to it, it is more our nature then our sin, but it is good to be knowledgeable of it.”

Drussel’s voice was but a wisp and his eyes were closed.

“There is no wrong in anyone’s life, only difference. We all come from different backgrounds and circumstance, born to high ground and low and that effects us. It causes us to change and become individual and some think it’s wrong but it’s just different. That is the miraculous vastness of human life.” Drussel faded to silence, after a moment his breath faded as well to the opening of the sky. If I believed in divinity I would say his soul was leaving to heaven.

He no longer looked pale, and his face didn’t seemed so wrinkled with age. Instead it glowed as all the knowledge he had gathered from those dusty old books in his grand library floated into the world, not to be known till someone else catches them. I wonder if I’ll ever hold the fireflies he held, and see the light they gave in the dark. That would be real nice.
Sheer Dawn of Humanity
by Annemieke Buis ('17)

Humans. Amazed by the light,
But have their fun in the dark.
Don't want their land to change,
But must leave their personal mark.

And then sometimes we wonder,
Where competition comes from.
So we look back to the animals,
Whose knowledge is numb.

The animals, oh animals compete
For food and a mate,
As the people defend their wisdom
Boxed up in a mental crate.

While the business man stares
At the ranks set by his peers,
The Freeman bathes
In his enemies' tears.

I saw a car crash last night,
Straight into a dog.
He's alright,
But the driver's dead as a log.

Who shall we pity?
The dog, of course!
For the animal is unaware,
And for that, we remorse.

But the human, he understands.
Shall not we care?
Even though we shall hate on the clueless human
Who has something he and the dog can share.
Daisy Buchanan
by M'Kenzy Cannon ('16)
Ink pen

Tiger
by Willow Dickey ('16)
Pencil
Glass Half Full
by Anonymous (’18)

I can't flex my nostrils. I can't wiggle my eyebrows. I can't shake my ears. I can't move my fingers in a willing manner. I can't walk, or run. I can't swim or skate or golf or dive or jump. I can't laugh. I can't wink. I can only blink.

And breathe.

But I'm good at watching. Watching from afar and waiting; waiting for the time that God releases me from my cage into the real world. A world full of happiness and acceptance. I've been stuck here, unable to do anything to change my fate. Right now my fate is to die alone still in the care of someone else, perhaps a stranger, perhaps not. I will be looking back on the days when I thought things would change, and change for the better.

People say they have life hard; that they wish they could be anything else; that they have witnessed life’s most treacherous deeds; I hear them, endlessly complaining and stumbling through a life they despise. If only they could switch places with me. Then they would feel the true wrath of life’s evil. But I sit quietly and say nothing, because I am unable to say anything.

Thoughts swarm into my head like bees slowly eating away at my humanity. I calm myself down, pretending that I can speak, telling my mom everything that has happened in the past day. I listen to her sweet voice ask me how my day was. I answer her gleefully. We engage in conversation and gossip over silly things. Things most people would talk about effortlessly, things that I watch fall off their mouths enviously. Things like politics, religion, new products, culture, etc. One thing turns into another and another and another. It is truly blissful.

I'm brought back into the harsh reality of life when a dodge-ball is hurtling toward my face. Push your arms up. I think. Just do it. How hard can it be? I swing my arms up and deflect the ball. Yea, just kidding. I start to spasm. The kids turn around and begin to stare. I hate it when they do that. My arms are part of a tornado of legs, neck, stomach, feet and hands. My head is throbbing but no one seems to care that I was just pelted with a dodge-ball. The adults are running over now, yelling at the kids to tell them what happened. I know that that will get them nowhere. A teacher kneels beside my wheelchair and begins to caress my hands gently.

"It's okay now. You can stop, everything is fine. You'll be okay. It was an accident," she is coaxing. "There is no need to worry. You're safe now."

Don't you think I know that? I think. Seriously. Doesn't she know I can't control my body after serious emotions have suddenly occurred? I can't help the spasmodic motions that my body chooses to enhance after emotional strain. Don't you think I would stop if I could?

I can feel the scorching tear trample against my face. I want to reach up and wipe them off, embarrassed, but the only thing that happens is even more tears galloping down my face after accidentally smacking myself. Man, it sucks having cerebral palsy.

The lady wheels my chair inside, mumbling that she knew it was a bad idea to bring me to recess. The wheel squeaks in protest after three years of service. The door cracks open and we enter the classroom. We roll in and I am placed in my normal position and am handed the same building blocks. I am told to stack them, and I focus, but I'm just not feeling it today. I let my arms flail about. My necks tilts and I can feel a cramp coming on.

I shake my head to maneuver it into a comfortable position and after I do I am able to see something, not something but someone. She has beautiful blonde hair flowing down her spine. Eyes like the ocean laughing at the shore. She has petite delicate body structure and seems mediocre in physical capability to me. Then the lightning bolts that are her eyes roll back into the clouds of her head. Her arms and legs start to shake violently, her head twitching. It looks as if she is being struck by lightning herself. Then in another moment the chaos of my beating heart is slowed as she returns to her sitting position, unflinching and looking puzzled.

My arm juts out in front of me, circumspectly. Not any cumbersome traces about the movement. My hand turns in the air, motioning towards her. Then it retracts back into my bubble. My eyes open in bewilderment as I realize that what I just witnessed was not a dream, it was reality. It was real. It really happened. I controlled my hand.

* * * * *

“I’m sorry you have to go through all this. I know you liked your old school, but this is a fresh start. Think of it that way. Glass half full. Okay?’”

“Yeah, don’t wor-r-r-ry Mom, I got it."

“Okay then. Are you ready? We can just go home, wait another day perhaps?”

“No Mom. I’m n-n-not a worthless girl. Just because I’m autistic doesn’t mean I can’t do things o-o-other
people can do.”

“That’s the spirit! Okay, here we go.”

My arms are numb from being strapped in all day, but I barely notice. I guess it’s good to have a change once in awhile. We walked into the building and I felt as if I could breathe for the first time in a long time. My head swiveled from side to side trying to take in everything. There were intricate drawings of flowers and pale faces turned away from me. They were beautiful drawings with beautiful poetry attached at the bottom.

The principal greeted us warmly and showed us to my classroom.

“All right, I guess this is it.” Mom said nervously, biting her nails.

“Mom, you’re biting your nails again. I’ll be fine. Now go, do whatever moms do.”

“Alright. See you after school.” she said, backing away being very circumspect to inspect my face for any signs of fear or uncertainty. I sat unflinching, waving goodbye. She motioned one last wave before slipping behind a corner.

I turned my wheelchair around with a smile on my face. I examined the room, seeing my peers stacking blocks and solving puzzles. I begin to roll into the room when my eyes roll back into my head and I can feel a seizure coming on.

I wake up in a classroom, not exactly certain of the previous happenings. After the oxygen reaches my brain I imagine that I must have had a seizure. No one seems to have noticed, except for...oh.

He has chocolate hair matted down on the top of his head. His eyes are the green that you would find in a meadow, calm and preserved, with hints of sparkling dots of colorful flowers inside. His brunette head was flailing, but now it has stopped. He is staring at me, and I can feel my cheeks becoming rosy. He saw me. He saw my spasm. But he doesn’t turn away or laugh. Instead his hand reaches forward, in my direction. It is completely steady, no shaking. His hand points at me and then retracts back to his body.

I quickly turn around, still embarrassed with the encounter. I wheel myself away. Sometimes I love having epilepsy, I meet the cutest and most available guys. Glass half full, right?

The back of her wheelchair is facing me now, and I can no longer see her eyes. In them I could see the brightness of her soul. Now I don’t know what she could be thinking. I feel slightly ashamed, but also like she started looking at the perfect moment. It felt like I was no longer me, like I had complete control over everything. Over my body and mind.

I drop my chin to my chest and stare at my still hands. They haven’t been still like this in a long time, maybe ever. Unflinching and peaceful.

I keep them there; breathing in and out, in and out, controlling my emotions to a minimum. a girl rolls up and bumps into me.

Hey! Watch it! I wish to scream. She pushes her wheelchair next to mine and holds out her hand.

"Hi. I'm May, and you are?" She speaks and I realize who this is. May is a good name, but not one that I imagined she would carry. Her eyes dart across my face looking for any signs of recognition or caring.

I longed to answer her, to tell her my name. I can’t, and I never will. I turn to her and tell her that my name is Skyler. That she is the prettiest girl I have ever seen. That she is amazing even though I just met her. But I can’t and I don’t. She sits there, eagerly staring at me. When I don’t answer her her face begins to lose its hopeful expression.

“It’s okay.” she says gently yet disappointedly. “You don’t have to answer.” She turns away. My hand reaches out to her but in vain, and only in my mind. The spark in her eyes has faded and I begin to spasm again. Darn you, love.

I’m behind him now. I’m not sure if I should but I do anyways. I push all my fears aside. It’s my turn to feel those feelings that I see everyone else experience: love, passion, embarrassment, the fear to make mistakes and take risks.

“Hi. I’m May, and you are?” I ponder, attempting to start a conversation.

My eyes scan his face almost beggingly, wanting to hear his voice, wondering what it sounds like. He looks right back at me, almost sorrowful, sad, wishing. It seemed as if he was trying to will something to happen, but nothing did. Slowly the calm presence faded from his eyes. I turn away first, realizing no answer will come, for whatever reason.

“You don’t have to answer,” I say, pushing my wheelchair away from him. Heat rises to my face and I feel
nauseous. I look myself up and down as best I can. Did I scare him away before he could even get to know my true personality? Was it my wheelchair? My seizure? My looks? Should I have not approached him? Maybe left him alone? I felt as if my glass of water was looking less and less by the second.

I don’t look back. My glass is half empty and my spirit broken. Darn you, love.

A girl with an understanding and pitying expression written on her face walks up to me. She is tall and lengthy, looking down at me.

“Hi, my name is Amaya. I will be your helper for this year. If you ever need anything you call for me!” she states with enthusiasm, pulling her mouth into an imitation of a smile while waving her arms in over-enthusiastic gestures. “First let’s take a tour of the classroom. You will get to meet each of your peers. Keep in mind not all of them are as advanced as you in speech and physical ability.” Another mock-smile and gestures to follow her around the room.

We started in a corner where one boy sat, eyebrows furrowed in serious concentration as he stared at math problems multiplication and division problems like thirteen multiplied by fifteen and division problems such as 195 divided by thirteen.

She introduces me and he waves, but only half there. Then he turns back to his work.

“This is Jake,” she says. We move on to another boy. His name is Arthur. He is doing a puzzle. The pieces are medium sized and I can already make them out to be a constellation, maybe the milky way, or a planet? Again she introduces me, and again we move on. “Arthur is one of our most advanced boys in the room. He can complete that puzzle and ones possibly more intricate and opaque, he just needs time. Although he is very advanced in intelligence he is unable to hear or speak. Not uncommon in this room.”

We move around the room but I don’t really pay attention. None of it really matters to me, I just feel like going home. The floor is quite filthy, it has various stains on it and appears to be pretty greasy. I stare at it, though, and just try to tune out whatever Amaya is saying. We keep moving. Then a flash of green halts over my eyes, and is lost. I look up quickly. Him.

“He cannot speak, although he can hear. He can’t communicate by any technology known to us today because he cannot control his movements. He has a combination of several specific cerebral palsy symptoms. It is most irregular, but we love him all the same, like how we love all of the people in this room. We are one big family....”

I tune her out and turn my attention to the boy. He is intensely staring at some building blocks as if there is something he is trying to figure out. He is shaking but he hasn’t noticed me yet.

“What did you say?” I ask, my eyes still focused away from her and on him.

“I was explaining the differences in cerebral palsy symptoms.”

“No, no, not that the part before. Before the family thingie.”

“This boy is different because he shares different symptoms like he can’t speak but he still has spasms?”

I don’t answer her. I feel my head being heated as a light-bulb appears. “When is the next recess?” I ponder turning to Amaya.

An overwhelming buzzing sound appears in my ear. Then I feel pain, like needles jabbing at my muscles and bones. I don’t see anything.

* * *

Recess has arrived. At least I can see the sun. See the blue sky shining above me. This is a time when I am content with life. Nothing especially good nor bad.

“Hi.” A voice, very familiar yet only heard to my ears once before. May. My head is rolled to where I can see her. I was afraid. Afraid of the unknown of what words were to come out of her mouth next.

“My name is May. I think we got off to a bad start. So let’s just start over.”

“Hi. My name is May. I have epilepsy. So if I ever randomly blank out or spasm I apologize. I know that you can’t talk and I never caught your name. So let’s do this: charades. You do whatever you have to do and I’ll guess. I’ll get better at figuring it out the more we talk. Sound good? Just give me a sign.”

It takes a lot of focus and concentration, but I blink. Even more than that, I wink. Then out of surprise and excitement I smile. Probably one of the biggest grins anyone could have ever seen. The Guinness World Records should have been there.

“Good. Let’s get started.”

I just think for a moment. What could I do to explain my name? Skyler. My head returns to its original position. Towards the sky. Sky-ler.

Sky? Animals?"

I begin to spasm.

“It has something to do with animals?”

I shimmy my head to look at her and glare.

“I’ll take that as a no.”

I look at the sky again.

“Sky?”

I turn my head toward her again but this time instead of a glare I give an encouraging look.

“Okay well all the names with sky in them are girl names...do you have a girl name?”

My vision is clouded by the blue of the sky.

“No, okay. Sky, Skyla, Skier, Skyler...um...”

Spasms of joy. No pain just movement.

“Yes? Yes? Skyler! Skyler!”

“Hi, my name is May. I know yours is Skyler. Do you want to be friends?”
Rain
by Ian Reyes (’18)

Rain Is
pu(rain is)rif(cation e)verch(rain is)anging

cal(rain is)m ing waShin(rain is)g away

yESterdAy’S muD aNd PurGing the sO(rain is)iled sOil of the Dry Earth

Product of(rain is)crowded clouds some(rain is)thing new

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Self Portrait
by Elizabeth Norvell ('14)
Block Print

Spoiled Rotten
by Willow Dickey ('16)
Gouache and graphite
Remembrances
by Jim Sherwood ('16)

William awoke on The Bridge. He sat upright, grabbing his ankles and watched as people walked by. Most didn’t look at him. Some looked behind themselves, regarding the path they had followed, hoping to see some footprints. Some had their eyes fixed upon a distant point. Some simply held their eyes closed. William squinted upwards at the snaking suspension coils, remembering a conversation with a man he met.

“You know, people walk on those things. You know, those, eh… what are they called... wires, yeah on those wires.” He had a slur to the way he spoke, as if he didn’t exactly know what he was going to say until it had already flown halfway out of his mouth.

“Really, I doubt that. I’ve never seen anyone go up there. What if they fell?”

“Wouldn’t we all like to know.”

William hoped it was water. Most people said it was water; however if you stood next to the edge and stared downward, a dark, swirling mist blocked your view.

“Could be concrete below it,” the man said. “And when we hit the bottom… Splat! Hehe…”

What scared William was that everyone fell eventually. He was no exception. The bridge’s width shrinks minutely, over hundreds of miles, until a misplaced foot slips and you fall tumbling down.

William dreamed sometimes. While he dreamed he forgot everything about The Bridge. It was actually impossible to remember in a dream. He didn’t remember the silver pillars that supported the path. He didn’t remember the brick ground. When William dreamed he always began where he left in his previous vision. Unfortunately, when William awoke he always found himself farther along The Bridge. Today, he gazed at the clear sky. Past dreams bubbled upwards in his mind as he lay. He let them wash over him.

He was in sixth grade. A new girl had joined school. A short redheaded boy, Harold, was talking amongst a group of friends while waiting in the lunch line. William could hear the entire conversation.

“She has giant cans,” Harold uttered. Normal Harrold talk, William noted.

“And, you know who she likes?” said a friend.


“William.”

“What would like the boy scout!” William felt tears in his eyes.

It wasn’t Williams choice to do boy scouts. He began to feel embarrassed that he was a boy scout. The girl soon decided that she didn’t like William anymore.

William remembered a dream of learning to snap in kindergarten. Amber taught him. Most of the people in his class learned to snap from Amber. What he remembered most distinctly about kindergarten was nap-time. He never slept. He simply counted. He counted by tens sometimes to make it more interesting. As far as he knew, he was the only one who couldn’t sleep.

William’s father was a doctor, and his parents had more money than most of the other families. Mostly farmers’ children went to his school. He didn’t realize it until fourth grade. There was a game that the kids used to play. You were given one word to describe someone.

“William! Do William,” a girl said to Rachel.

Without a moment's pause Rachel laughed and said, “Rich…”

This was something he thought explained why some people didn’t like him. He never told people that he had money. How had it shown?

He looked around at the people strolling next to him on The Bridge and tried to guess what they dreamt. He focused upon a man with sideburns, oddly large sideburns. His eyes were brown, but they were lulling closed; William thought the man was drunk. William, giving up, landed upon a random profession: taxi driver. That is, if he could improved his posture.

There had been a group in the second grade that they called the dinosaur club. Don had started it. He was the president, their valiant leader William thought sarcastically. During recess they would go to the far side of the playground and dig for rocks. Fossils. They were fossils to them back then. They were often as large as William’s arm. The most destructive force to team’s excavations by far was the third graders. War was declared immediately when the group found a rock displaced.

“Hey William! Do you know who did this?”
“Oh no… Third graders…” William was dramatizing his memory for fun obviously, but the feud had continued until Don left for Utah, though. The club crumbled without him. The third graders had won. William later learned that Don had created a frog club in Utah.

*Maybe there aren’t rocks in Utah,* William thought.

William felt a breeze begin to gust on The Bridge. The air smelled of sweat. A man ran past William. He looked athletic with the headband and sweat pants. William hoped the man enjoyed his run. His type always slipped first.

In dreams William could run fast. His school always had an annual hundred meter dash. The kids that won were usually those that had been held back. William came in third place one year. That occurred only because the runner previously in third ripped his tendon in the last twenty meters. William had no problem leaving Luke behind at the time. Later, William wished he had stopped.

William feared the dark until he was thirteen. He would stay under his covers so that he wouldn’t have to see all the shadows. He later decided he feared the unknown. Because he had difficulty sleeping he often stayed under his covers for what seemed like hours. As he took each consecutive breath the encapsulated environment grew hotter. William thought that there grew increasingly less oxygen with each breath. He always believed he experienced minor brain damage from the death of brain cells under those sheets.

*Perhaps,* he would think, *I could have been a little smarter, and my life would be easier if I hadn’t been afraid.*

When William was in preschool he had a speech impediment. He went to speech class for most of preschool. There was a boy named Alex sometimes in it also. He had blue eyes. Alex would say at roughly the same time everyday,

“I have to go peepee!”

William wondered what the difference between going pee and going peepee was. He asked the teacher one day. She said,

“Well, William, I guess if you really have to go, it’s going peepee.”

William didn’t like that answer. In kindergarten they moved to a completely different building. There was a small pair of rooms in the middle of the school. This was where William now went to speech class. Everyday he would tell the speech teacher halfway through class,

“I’m bored.”

The teacher would respond,

“Do you want me to give you something to do?”

“No.”

William would resume what he was doing. It almost became a ritual.

He liked to be called a nerd because, to him, that meant that they thought he was smart. Why did he remember that?

A large rukous had sprouted on The Bridge.

“Give me my shoe man! Just give me my shoe…”

“You really want it? How about a dollar.”

“C’mon man you know I don’t have a dollar.”

The man with one shoe had a worn look on his face from a life of being pushed around.

“Please…”

His mother picked William up from school in his dreams. He lived too far away to take the bus. It didn’t go to his street. His mother was always late. William would spend time on a bench and think. He had grown tired of counting. It no longer held his attention the way it used to.

He had a dog when he was younger. It’s name was Turbo. It had actually been a fairly great dog as far a dogs went. It would perform tricks that appeared very amazing to a seven-year-old. William’s mother picked him up early from school one day. She let William in the car. The door was still open when she turned around and stared back for a few moments.

“I need to tell you something William. William, Speed died last night. The vets gave him too much anesthesia. His heart stopped.”

That dream was the most William had ever cried. A woman going to a classroom passed by the car, looked at his mother, and said,

“Just one of those days, eh?”

Williams mother, now crying too just nodded and tried to smile.
William’s family received a letter from their cousins Rod and Leslie. It said something about Speed. He didn’t read it completely. It was an attempt to comfort William, he knew, but all the same he hated them. He didn’t want to be reminded; he just wanted to forget.

There was a mirror in the hall in front of William’s room. It was broken on the bottom right edge, and it was always laying propped against the wall. He would look at himself in the mirror as he walked out. He passed the mirror the only time he ever saw his father crying. William’s grandfather had died. He had something wrong with his brain, and they had to cut his head open and perform surgery. It didn’t work. Almost everyone in the house cried that day. His sister was crying too without actually knowing what was happening. William hadn’t cried, though. He didn’t know his grandfather.

William’s parents had told him all types of funny things that William had done when he was younger. William didn’t remember doing any of them. His cousins said he was an extremely funny kid when he was little. Apparently, he decided, he had lost something since those years.

His cousins on his mom’s side of the family always met for Thanksgiving in Indiana. Both of William’s parents originated from Indiana. His cousins always liked him more than his sister, and he hated that he couldn’t stop it. He was more mature because he was older, and he was a foil to her. He never knew the cousins very well on his father’s side. People on his side of the family remarried a lot, and William was always confused who was actually related to him.

William had never worried about his weight until he passed his old third grade teacher in the hallway. Thinking back upon it, William believed he was in sixth grade at the time.

She said, “Wow, William. You’ve really lost weight.”

William was happy at first but then wondered, *Did I have weight to lose?*

He went on a diet some weeks. His parents were worried he didn’t eat enough so they would scold him for doing so. Later when he was older, he thought that it was this dieting that caused him to be shorter than the other children. Less nutrition, perhaps.

His mother told him that he would be tall because his feet were large.

“You’ll grow into your feet!” she would say.

Looking back upon it, he was suspicious that his feet were not as large as his mother thought.

In the latter days of middle school William grew uncomfortable facial hair on his top lip. He didn’t have a razor, and he was too embarrassed to ask his parents to buy one. He always felt self conscious about his pre-mustache.

William’s thought was interrupted by a voice behind him:

“Hey you. Yeah you. Sitting down over there. Have you seen a kid. He’s only about two. He can barely walk.”

William turned around and saw a woman in overalls with a worried look on her face. William had indeed seen the child a few days ago, but it had been climbing on the railing of The Bridge. He had no idea how it climbed up there. It had been balancing precariously. He had turned away from it because he didn’t want to see what happened; he feared knowing.

“No. I don’t think so,” he said, lying.

“Oh,” she said.

William tried to walk away from her. She too was balancing precariously, but in a different way. He tried to drown out her anguished calls for her toddler (*accurate name for a small child, he thought cynically*). Seagulls circled above. They were the only animals on The Bridge.

*Good, he thought, Seagulls always leave before a storm. I’ll be fine for a while.*

William thought about another dream. There was a movie he watched in guidance class. Part of a movie, actually; there wasn’t time to watch all of it. The film was about a huge storm that was about to sweep across a group scientists. They didn’t stand a chance. That’s what they said in the movie at least. It didn’t seem like a tragedy, so they probably survived.

When William was very young he tried to decide why there was gravity. He knew that compasses worked by the magnetic fields of Earth and that people had iron in their blood. He concluded that people must be held down by the metal in their blood.

Sometimes William would stare at things trying to make them move with his mind. Nothing ever did. He did believe, however, that he could predict the future. Once he had correctly guessed seven coin tosses in a row. He usually won at rock, paper, scissors.
When William was in seventh grade his teacher recommended him for a program called, “Gifted.” It required an IQ test. They took him to the same minute room that he had speech class. Most of it was an oral exam. At one point of the exam they were given an animal and number and were supposed to return them in opposite order.

“Giraffe eight,” the old woman giving the test said.

“What if it’s a verb?” he said.

“It’s not going to be. Just follow the instructions.”

“But it’s ‘Giraffe ate,’” William said a little confused.

Misunderstanding him, the woman said,

“Just answer.”

“But what if it’s a verb.”

“It’s not going to be!”

William just sat there. The woman wrote something down on her notepad. They moved on with the rest of the test. William’s mother didn’t tell William his score. She told William when he was much older that she didn’t want it to go to his head. William found out that the lady had messed up some other girl’s test also. The girl’s father was the superintendent, and the old bat was fired.

Sometimes William thought he saw the woman on The Bridge. Now she walked a very thin path. It rained oil over her. William couldn’t help her, so he just ignored her.

Every year William promised himself he wouldn’t cry at school. He broke that promise every year until tenth grade. Most of the time it was because he had forgotten to do a homework assignment. He hated crying. It made him feel weak. He hated the way people looked at him.

After Speed, William’s family had gotten a new dog: Jodo. Jodo jumped down the stairs as a small puppy and broke his leg. Shattered was a more accurate description. They had taken him to the vet. They gave him too much anesthesia also. His heart stopped like Speed’s, but they started it again. Jodo had permanent brain damage and always limped from his leg that was more metal than bone. The surgery was expensive; more expensive than Jodo actually cost to begin with.

William had a grandmother, Phyllis, that he grew to love. When he was very young, she had moved to William’s town from far away. William thought it was his other grandmother, the one that lived in Florida that was moving to his town. That grandmother was always nice. He tried to hide his disappointment when she came rather than “Florida grandma.” William watched sports with grandma Phyllis. Mostly they watched basketball. She loved the Bulls. She had no reason to do so. She had never lived anywhere close to Chicago.

*One day, thought William, she just decided to like them. People do that more than they realize.*

For months William had nightmares that she had died. He would wake up sweating. She went to the hospital because of constipation when William was at a friends house. The laxatives that she was given created to many gasses in her upper intestine, and her organs stopped working because of the compression. William cried one tear in the hospital room. It was less than he cried for Speed but more than for his grandfather.

William rarely saw people he knew from his dreams on The Bridge. He was glad. He didn’t want to know their proximity to the edge or the care with which they placed their feet.

The “Gifted” program took field trips sometimes. In eighth grade “Gifted” went to a car factory with huge presses that shaped vehicles. A sign read, “35 days since an accident.” They were supposed to bring long pants, but William didn’t know. He came to school in shorts. He couldn’t go without pants. The teacher went back to the room and asked to see if anyone had an extra pair while William waited in the principals office. She walked in and trailing her was Harold. Harold was the only one that had volunteered to let William wear his pants. For the rest of the day William wore Harold’s pants and Harold wore William’s shorts. Although William had a hard time showing it, he was more grateful to Harold than he had to been to anyone before.

The only cousins that William knew on his father’s side of the family were Abraham and Samuel. Both had brown eyes. They were brothers and much younger than William. William always showed more affection to Sam. He wondered if he learned this from his own cousins.

William stopped walking for a moment. There was a pencil on the ground. It reminded him of the stories he wrote in his dreams. *What was my most recent story? Oh, I remember, it was some sort of autobiographical piece. What was it called? Oh yes, “Remembrances.”*
The Halfway Winter
by Brady Flanigan ('16)

Das einzige Gegenmittel gegen
psychische Leiden körperliche Schmerzen.

Henry and Jacob stood like wild, porcelain figurines on a colorless horizon. The mud crept over the edges of Henry’s boots and into the sides—sliding vertically between his sock and inner wall. The ground was grey and soggy. They stood at the top of a hill a few hundred metres from the trench—watching wind sift through short, gunmetal grass. They both set off in a continuous stream of motion to the ditches at the bottom of the hill. Their rifles served greater purpose as crutches than instruments designed to force the hands of mortality on another. Henry’s boots lost their olive patina. And the wool pants Jacob wrapped around his waist were held by a piece of rope drawn from a supply wagon. The sun was blazed over—so like an uncolored painting.

They climbed back in the trench and Jacob staggered his way down. A sharp man in a helmet shoved his body off the riser and to Henry’s chest. The brim of the helmet grazed through his hairline. He spoke of intelligence through an assertive tongue; though any vigilant observer could hear the alarm in his voice. His eyes were lit like a distant burning fire with a flat amber hue. The smell of liquor drifted off his breath and to Henry’s nose. Alcohol was not permitted in the theatre, but viewed as a forbidden indulgence even by higher officers. Jacob broke the stillness with his Ivy-League accent.

“Do we have sufficient time to prepare our rations?”

“Scouting element estimates the regiment will be shipping through at round nightfall.”

The last company predicted to be stirring through the fields followed the edge of the trees seven miles down and kept the troops roused in the cold for three days.

“They’ve skipped our breakfast two mornings in a row.”

“With this unit moving through any feast is unlikely.”

Jacob pressed his back against the wall with enough power to conquer the mud. The trench consisted of two sides with no changes in direction or intersection the entire way. The forward side faced off into a far field and housed the firesteps used to peer over. They were waist high and hollow beneath—with short ladders in ten foot spacings. His rifle was propped between his legs—resting on his left thigh. Henry sat alongside Jacob—gaze fixed infinitely on the grey muzzle of his rifle. He captured his stare but didn’t intrude, and scanned down the trench watching all the bodies shift anxiously in the mud, packed against the walls like pieces of the landscape. A looming forest stood to the east with burnt looking trees that hung outward. They had never crossed through this sinister obstruction, and the thought of land beyond the trenches never arrived to their minds. There were no shadows from the trees; the ground threw up its usual grey with no opposition. The west was dead land. The ground was stacked with large white stones on a steep incline. All the enemy infantry sent that way were killed by guns at the top. Jacob looked up to the crest of the hill where the defenses rested. Several miles down beyond the black pines, green artillery pieces were believed to sit in a field. Jacob watched small, marionette men latch to their weapons.

“No man should carry such power to alter fate as those weapons provide.” He kept his eyes off to the west, and Henry had to trail his stare.

“War is a willful contempt of civilized behavior.”

“Then why do we participate in such dreadful activities?”

“Because it is you who is intended by God to endure.”
Henry shuffled off the mud—pressing his weight on his rifle as a balance. Jacob stood at loss to his movement and rose to swing his chest and follow him. He turned his body to the east and the forest and sloped his head down to ease the wind. The west field had a tendency to funnel air down the trench, and diminish the troops' will to fight. There was splintered tan paneling that sheltered the walls. It was deteriorating and only still standing in a few places. It was muddy from the passing troops dragging their uniforms on it. Dryness was the extension of Utopia for the trench boys.

Henry turned to Jacob with an uneasy irritation. He had learned to identify the symptoms of his anxiety; they were marked in the depth of the creases on his cheeks, and the tension in his chin.

“War is a game of the most informed, we need to know when this all begins,” he said while he jammed his rifle in the ground. The way he spoke and the way he speared the earth left the impression he was a top-heavy explorer planting a torn flag in savage country.

Jacob and his innocent conduct stood out markedly against the rows of stern faces. He would fire off hurried glimpses as he shuffled by. When a look was returned he would snap his eyes to his boots. They gaited by a group of men passing around cheap cigarettes with half yellow paper, hoarded around dark wooden crates. They carried a little further 'til they saw a young lad. They knew him only by the named sewn on his overcoat.

“Private Piege,” Henry said attentively.

The boy shook off his slouch. He inquired about the enemy movement, and appeared flustered by the brashness in the searching man’s words.

“They’re estimated to be moving through at dusk, sir——they’ve been seen to be mounted, with armoured trucks.”

Jacob climbed up on a gunner’s platform, and watched over the numb earth with a restrained gaze. The sky was grey. And as the days ran off into night, the cold swept back in. Henry stepped up and his breath escaped his lips.

“Does God weep?” Jacob asked, as he pattered stares along the dark trees.

“The sightless and the dead never weep. I’ve grown to believe our godly world have turned their eyes to the atrocities of men, or perhaps even actively seek them out.”

He nodded humbly—for allowing shifting figures and frozen wind to take their conversation. Close of day was lingering, and something ghostly mustered men upright and shuffled their arms around their rifles in a stiff embrace of iron and flesh. They told them a man was an extension of his weapon—a man without a rifle was little a man at all. Henry knew these unfortunate words, and yearned to impart this shameful philosophy on his younger. Remain aware and cautious, he would instruct. And perhaps you shall return home to your mother, and sit on the front porch of that cold, white house with a genuine grin, and for a few daring instants, feel happy.

Jacob’s eyes flared wildly, never fixing a gaze on any one thing for more than a brave moment. While the last sun shone thinning behind the black divide, residual bursts of orange hung above the treetops and retreated with eruptions of light. This was the first colour the men had seen in the sky since daybreak, and all eyes fixed on the foreign horizon. The wind settled slightly,—bodies began to stand atop the risers, and emaciated heads peered out over the earth. Green helmets and hollow eyes hung like spectral figures in the dark. Henry looked off to the gunners on the rocky slopes. Jacob ran his hands through the motions of reloading his rifle—fresh memories. He shook in little tremors—his eyes fluttering willingly.

“What time is it?” He said with a gust of words.

Henry stretched his hand into the left pocket of his uniformed jacket. He fumbled a miniature pewter watch into his right palm. He held it close, hunting for small clusters of light.
“It’s not ticking—-” Jacob broke in, “perhaps it’s not wound”.

He slipped it to the base of his fingers and extended his thumb and wound. For an uncountable distance one of them waited for that irresistible ticking, and the other stood there feeling like a disheartened father.

“It’s broken” Henry said, with the strictest controls on reality.

“Of course it is”

“I’m sorry”

Jacob shuffled and twisted his neck to Henry, who snapped his head down to the boards below their feet.

“There’s not much mud up here.”

Jacob paused—“No, not as much.”

A mechanical motion occupied the hands of the men on the risers, each playing through an individual orchestra of movement. The firmer selection stood fixed against the wind. Their dark faces wore stern expressions—kiln fired and glazed. It was dark. The number of cigarette-torches down the row had diminished. And as the fires nodded off to sleep, men woke—looking far into the black. Henry loaded his rifle after Jacob—who jammed cartridges in the magazine with force; he delicately selected several by feel of hand that slid loosely around his pocket. The noises faded, and his voice hardly broke the stillness.

“Infantry follows armor.”

Jacob held his head straight while he spoke—“will we see them?”

Henry pandered his eyes to the sky; the moon was a low sliver.

“Not likely—you’ll have to fire by sound.”

He placed his hand in the middle space of dirt between them and fiddled with the crumbling soil. Watching Jacob through peering eyes, he took his hand off the earth and to the grain of his stock. His breath shook and waivered indistinctly. The fiery smell of tobacco hung like some insubstantial piece of the air—a spectral fragrance, hanging in their shirts, and distinguished in the grit on the rafters. A roar came from the wind, a shaking noise that took the empty, distant fields and stood with it. Those who heard it mounted their rifles on the dirt. The young, light-haired men that sprinkled the risers watched and emulated. The noises rolled on toward the men. As these sightless sounds progressed nearer, each intricacy of their diesel engines grew clearer to Jacob; whose face took on a stern façade. He broke into the air louder than before.

“You can hear them coming near.”

Henry shut his eyes and a half genuine laugh broke the threshold his jaw. He rocked with laughter, and when he looked up to the far-off night his cheeks sunk down.

“You look tired,” Jacob said covering his observations with thin words.

“Those cots hurt my sides—I shuffle in my sleep.”

He sparsely lowered his voice—“Sometimes I pad the bars with my jacket.”

There were spaces of barren dirt along the opposite wall where holes were dug—two or three bunks deep. The cots were hung by high iron rods covered in a green cloth. If you rolled while you slept they would leave bruises on sides. Jacob leaned forward. Holding his stomach on itself. Seconds raged by, and soon the wool on his torso and the instruments in his hands matured to unfamiliar relics of a wicked time that bred wicked men.
Henry sat by, watching the few stars that ventured out tonight to see the hands of men force fate upon another. He leaned against the earth with a tired looking face. The engines faded off into the night; which carried a softer, more pulsing sound to the men buried in the mud. It was a crumpling undertone on the permafrost, which rolled from heel to toe. The wind caught up with the tension, and a crack broke their right ear.

A burst of vibrant light injected from the top of the trench; firing short-lived colour out into nothing. The sweeping sounds of machine gun fire punctuated a light wind. Jacob pressed the brass butt of his rifle improperly against his shoulder, and held his body far from the weapon. There was a howl that came off from the ground near the west edge of the trench. It spiraled fire into the sky at a sloped angle, burning over top of the strange men in green jackets. Jacob watched the flashes of orange sputter from the risers, and the occasional loud thud that shook the earth. His rifle flung jacketed shells out of the breech and hit the man next to him. He wondered who he was—his name. He thought lightly about it as he fired rounds down below the wasting flares. Henry held his rifle in a funny way—wrapping his right arm up under, gripping it from the left side and he had to break this stance to slowly chamber the next round. A concussive wave hit them on the chest and staggered them. The air smelled of fire and winter—a simultaneous concoction of burnt up powder, and a casual stinging cold left in the throat.

The flares were used to motion to the artillery teams in the woods. The bombardment started some shadowy amount of time after the first flare was shuttled off. They watched with the sensations of an absent heart, as rounds were dropped on green jacketed men—irradiated by dying light. The shells squealed when you weren’t directly underneath them. And excitedly exploded shrapnel. Henry turned his back towards the distant men and slipped down alongside the mud. Jacob aimlessly fired a few more rounds and slid down with him. It was nearer to silence and felt colder.

“When will it be over?” Jacob looked older underneath that fluttering light.

“Time is a recurring process.”

“What is time?” He asked and he watched Henry’s faraway eyes.

“It’s a measure of how fast we go about our lives.”

He thought of the boy he had spoken to in the cold sun earlier that day, and how he only knew him by the letters on his coat. He remembered telling Jacob a man is an extension of his rifle, but the thought of a man being an extension of his name was just as likely. The flare was beginning to dim off into the night, and the barrages of fire dwindled. Jacob tried to light a cigarette but the wind blew persistently. He looked at his dry cigarette as he spoke.

“It won’t be longer until they fire off another.”

Jacob had the tendency to speak in obvious statements, but this one carried a weight that Henry felt. He spoke it with a voice that ordered agreement and landed esteem. They sat down watching brass casings roll. The light was dimming with a sense of swiftness unseen before. And as indeterminate amounts of time passed they saw the last stretches of brightness illuminate the grimy back wall of the trench. It sputtered like some great engine as it curled off to die. The next canister of light was fired off into the black sky and the volleys resumed again. This time the mechanical light was looming over the heads of the men in the mud, and only cast long streaks of colour out to the green figurines. A shriek pierced the twilight and Henry looked to the empty sky. He began to throw his elbows against the wall when a shaking and a squeal stopped them. There was blackness for a moment and then he looked to the far east, alight with fire. He whispered to Jacob.

“They must have fired a stray.” He picked up a brass jacket and twirled it through his fingers.

“Yes,—it was a stray—war is full of casualties,” he said; “war is full of casualties.”

He looked onto the opposite wall. It was late now and if you exhaled heavy enough you could see your breath hang in the air. The numbers of men in the field were more difficult to assign; there was always the looming fear of reinforcements. The rounds still strafed the air and occasionally struck a man through the cheek—he would fall off the platform and hit his head on the far wall. The bodies were rarely removed ‘til after the engagement. It
required several men to properly haul a body from the mud.

Another wandering shell fired. This one landed several meters from the front of the trench near the center with a crackle. Henry and Jacob were about four hundred feet left of where it landed, but only heard it. The nearby fire halted for a few moments.

“We should not be up here,” Jacob said.

“Where is there to go?”

He climbed down the ladder, and Henry followed behind him. Men were shuffling dimly through the artificial light—hands extended towards the wall and stumbling over nothing. They both walked so coolly past the bustle of grey jacketed men and racks of ammunition. The shelling increased and the spitting flames above them were indistinguishable noise from the riotous booms of mortars going off. They passed along the muddy ramparts. And they stopped at the sleeping quarter in the wall.

When they got in the wind fell off. Henry pulled his issued lighter and Jacob used it to flare up a cigarette. The great bursts of colour and devastation rained over their heads. And as they sat hidden from the greasy mud and the rain, they pulled their heads in; praying fate would surpass them and their self-inflicted destinies would continue you to roll on. Those who believed their destiny was to die in the mud would likely come to fulfil these expectations. They sat there avoiding speech. Listening to the roving sounds of destruction from the dead fields, and explosive beckonings from the great alien sky. The rain rattled harder on the wood crates and the metal helmets. A shell struck some feet above the dirt cave—the quivering earth shook. And the world collapsed in. His orange-burning cigarette stammered out.
Portrait of the American Teen
by M'Kenzy Cannon ('16)

Fifteen second add on this week’s viral youtube video:

IF YOU'RE DEPRESSED GET HELP SEE
A DOCTOR TAKE THIS PILL IT’S
LIKE CLARITIN FOR THE SOUL

The pretty teen girl with neon-white teeth opens the door to a colorful world like Dorothy and steps outside into the fresh CGI:

I WAS ONCE DEPRESSED BUT NOW I'M
OKAY AND YOU CAN
BE TOO

Welcome Dorothy to the internet museum here we have a portrait of the great American teen
an ex best friend on the edge dangling toward the deep end
like she’s the first to go that far
like she’s the first to go too far
like she’s the first to go

Dear Dorothy:
I appreciate the confession
but everyone struggles with depression
you’re a special snowflake
you make the common raindrops ice over with your coolness
but how special can you be
spiraling down through the mainstream
of a snowstorm

Dorothy says she’s stronger for sipping alcohol with her medication while she sits alone in front of
her lap top and wishes her life was a little more interesting
because it hasn’t been the same since the scars started healing

Fifteen second add on this week’s viral youtube video:

You may skip this add in 5…4…3…
ON SALE NOW GET THIS SEASON’S
SCHOOL SUPPLIES
EARLY AND

Dorothy says she’s smarter for not taking school too seriously and sneaking out to smoke with
friends because life’s about the memories right carpe diem
live in the moment let’s burn like Kerouac’s candles
right into the ground right into the hole she’s dug herself too deep
and she misses sleep but not as much as she misses
something else she can’t describe maybe it doesn’t exist anymore maybe it never existed in the first place get another
puff Dorothy to be as high as the smoke takes you

Dear Dorothy:
sometimes I dream
that your high-waisted vintage denim pants
come to life and grow up and over
your ribs and zip tighter until your lungs
putter out like the last pants of a coughing lighter

I guess I’m just a writer
I exaggerate experiences until they tell the truth
I guess I’m just a stereotype and I guess I’m just a mirror of that museum portrait and you don’t need braids and red
shoes to fit that profile
I guess I’m just walking down that yellow-bellied brick road with a tin can man made of coors lite and coca cola hoping to smoke
the scarecrow til I’m high enough to get back home
I guess the lion isn’t king of the forest yet or I bet he could get out of this emerald zoo
Fifteen second add on this week’s viral youtube video:
   But I ex it out before it gets a chance to load.
I spend the next fifteen seconds thinking about killing myself but decide against it because these pills tell me it’s a bad idea or I guess it’s the pills talking
   Welcome to the habitat of the American teen who can be seen taking her life or wasting her life but which one is really worse?
   I write dumb sad poetry about my dumb sad life
   I don’t care about you and I care too much
   I want to get out of Kansas but the City scares me
   I’m scared to speak in front of class but Jesus God in Heaven let me be famous one day
I am Dorothy.

Fifteen second add on today’s face-to-face conversation:
   ISN’T IT A NICE DAY DID
   YOU HEAR ABOUT THE GAME
   HOW WAS YOUR WEEKEND
   How can I talk small when there’s a supernova in the universe every second we waste time?
   How can I put my heart on my sleeve and be strong enough to let you dig your nails in?
   How can poetry not sound presumptuous?
   How can being honest not sound pretentious?
   Dear me:
   you can’t talk to yourself like Ginsberg
   you can’t compete with the Wizard
   you can’t stand with the man behind the curtain
   but you can pretend your way to neverland
   Is this poetry?
   Or is this just an excuse for me to say what’s on my mind without being interrupted?
   Is that poetry?
   I’m on a roll now but this is starting to sound less like verse and more like angry prose broken up by indents on a page
   is that worse than leaving it to ambiguity to release some metaphor from a cage
   when really all it is
   is some internal rhymes thought up when I don’t have time to think of a relevant stanza?
   This is a Polaroid of adolescent depression
   This is the last page of the journal I started when I was ten
   This is Dorothy’s red slippers
   This is a portrait of the American teen
   This is our generation’s viral youtube video.
Untitled
by Willow Dickey ('16)
Taken with a Samsung Galaxy S4
The Globe
by Sean Pokorny ('19)

I was sitting by the fire, when I saw it. The globe that haunts my dreams. The globe that shines with the souls of humans. The globe that rolls around with the simple sound of a creaking floorboard. I care not about what it has done to the others, but what it had done to me. My bones rub each other as I walk. My heart beats at the uneven pace of a horses gallop.

“Oh globe, why do you haunt me so,” I always propose. But alas, it never answers.

It makes a sound of Satan’s roar. The devilish fiend has killed my hopes of living. I have tried to take my life many times, but the globe heals me. It wants me to live a life of suffering and pain! But I have been alive for many years. It came around the time when I was 14 years of age. My parents tried to break it, they deceased the day after. Then I realized that I must be the one to kill it. I cannot dispose, or break the blob, for it forces my brain to keep me sitting when I have thoughts of doing so. It reads minds.

“Oh globe, why do you make me relive my torturous moments. You constructionist of despair!”

When it rolls past my flowers, they fall to the ground. The treacherous globe makes a blue flame, for that is how I know it is angry. My anger became too much for my body to handle. I held it in, obeying the globes wishes. I went to bed for some time away from it. It wanted me to suffer in the dreams. My sleep was limited, for the globe controlled it. My dreams kill me, so it must wake me to keep my life in its hands. I walk back to my chair and warm myself by the fire.

I decided that it was time for m plan to begin. It could read my mind, I had no doubt of it, but I did not care. It deserves to know what is going to happen. I leap from my chair and launch myself at it. As I am in the air, it could not control its fury. It released the largest blue flame I had ever seen. I was turned into dust. For you see my intent was not to destroy it. My intent was to destroy myself.
Do you know what you are?
by Clem Smith ('17)

Do you know what you are?
What you feel? What you see?
Do you believe those senses are also in me?

Can you prove you exist?
That your life is real?
That this not just a dream that you feel?

And what really is life?
Everything that you think is a chemical reaction.
Any action you make is the universe in action.

Why do you still fear death?
Every cell in your body that’s alive and well today
In only five years will have wasted away

You think your consciousness is different?
How could you even know when you drift off in your bed,
That when you rise the same mind will wake in your head?

Because all that is us is a camera on wheels
All that you call you is film spinning in reels
But when the wheels are changed out, you think it’s still you
But if the film was replaced, then what would you do?
Ghosts Who Don’t Walk Through Walls
by M’Kenzy Cannon (*16)

i.

The hospital is a big grey complex of cubes and corners jutting out at serious angles into the sky. I like sitting in the caged glass walkway that straddles the street below it, looking out over the crumbling city and seeing how far I can stretch my eyes to catch glimpses of a hazy horizon. The cylindrical towers stand like an unfinished set of tally marks at the edge of my vision. Most days are foggy. Some days are freckled with bits of floating ash and it almost looks like snow.

Since the meltdown, all life has disappeared. When I woke up that day in the hospital, I realized I was alone, but the city was still alive. There were no people and no birds, but the buildings and homes hadn’t yet been empty long enough to die. The hospital hummed for days, hoping for the return of its human inhabitants before finally giving up and resigning to the shroud of grey that took over the rest of the city. It didn’t take long for the invisible poison in the air to drain the color out of everything; trees lost their green, the sky its blue, and the world became the stillness of a black and white photograph. Then the quiet set in.

During the day I mostly wander around the hospital looking for anything I can find that reminds me of before the meltdown. What I do find I bring back to my room on the seventh floor. Abandoned detritus adorns the walls and piles up in the window. Stuffed animals and dolls from the children’s ward, family photographs taken from reception desks, lots of books — I even have a stack of Gideon’s Bibles from all the empty rooms on my hall. I forget where some of it comes from. Much of it has been here so long I can’t remember what was mine to begin with, if any of it ever was mine.

The silence surrounding the hospital gets especially heavy sometimes. I like to talk to myself to keep the emptiness in my head from dilating into a black hole that rips my inner ears apart. It’s easy to pretend that I can be two different people—one that listens and one that talks. It fills the quiet.

I also like to talk to the ghosts.

They’re not always around, but at least looking for them passes the time. Like everything else, they come in shades of grey. They can blend into the walls, and they often appear out of nowhere through closed doorways in complete silence.

Some ghosts are doctors who say things I don’t understand and they don’t listen to me when I talk to them. They are preoccupied in their ghostly medical world. But Dr. Griffin comes to my room to check on me. He asks me questions and nods when I answer and says things like “That’s interesting,” and “Very good.” Then he writes it all down in his big notebook.

When normal people ghosts show up they always look lost. Especially families. They’re usually broken, missing a puzzle piece, without a father or a sister. They don’t come as often and they don’t like to talk to me. But patients rarely appear. They stumble around the hallways and talk to themselves and the voices in their heads like they’re real. I’m scared of them the most. They talk to me like I’m just another ghost and speak in manic poetry that sounds like nightmares.

ii.

Some ghosts don’t realize that they’re ghosts, so they don’t know they can walk through walls. I wander through the glass bridge and follow the hallways until I find myself in the therapy activities ward. I open the door to the art room and step inside, letting the hinges groan back into place behind me. The sound echoes off the high ceilings, and colorless light spills in from the many windows that line the walls. Easels are set up in neat rows, each with its own canvas and palette, and the room is still and quiet.

I follow the rows across the room and dip my fingers in the tar black paints as I pass.

“I wonder if I could make a finger painting,” I say, breaking the silence. “I haven’t made a finger painting in years.

“Careful, Allis, you mustn’t get your clothes dirty—” I whisper to myself and I wipe the paint on my hands onto a smock hanging from one of the easels.

“Or I could take some brushes and paints back to my room, and—”
Suddenly the door winces open and the ghost sounds of muttering patients enter the room. In they walk, a straight line of around twelve adults in blue hospital clothes lead by a pear-shaped woman in a nurse’s uniform. They don’t notice me at first, and I duck behind a stack of canvases.

“Don’t they know they can walk through walls?” I whisper.

“Alright, everybody,” announces the woman. “Today we will be doing self-portraits. You may each go to an easel and begin painting. I will be passing out mirrors to assist you.”

My heart throbs against my ribcage as the patients come nearer to me. One old man sings to himself in gibberish while focusing on mixing the paints on his palette together. He takes the easel closest to me. I clamp my hand over my mouth to keep from breathing too loud.

“Mr. Harington, use this,” I hear the nurse say. “Paint your face.”

I steal a glance from behind my hiding place and see her handing him a cheap hand mirror. The man looks at it for a long time and begins to understand. He lifts the brush to his canvas and begins with a long grey streak down the middle.

I sit back and close my eyes and pray for no one to find me.

“Everybody, the hour is up!”

My eyes fly open in surprise.

“Let’s have a look at everyone’s artwork now.”

The ghost patients’ utterings become louder and more nervous and I look around for a different place to hide. There is nowhere to go without being seen. I peek around the corner of the stack of canvases. The nurse walks down the rows and nods upon seeing each patient’s piece.

“Interesting. Beautiful job, Mrs. Spade. Great use of color.”

I crane my neck to see farther, trying to get a look at what they’ve painted.

“You won’t be able to see anything from here, Allis—

“I know,” I whisper back, “I just…” I lean forward and inch slightly out from behind my shield.

“They’ll catch you—”

And they do. At once, three of the nearest patients notice me. One screams, one begins to laugh, and one simply stares with his dead eyes—Mr. Harington.

The nurse spins around in shock. “How long have you been here?” she shrieks as she walks toward me.

I cower backwards and accidentally knock down the stack of canvases, causing further uproar among the other ghosts.

“For Christ’s sake!” she shouts over them, nearly tripping over a canvas. “What do you think you’re doing? We came in that door an hour ago.”

I shake as I try to stand up against a table, looking for an escape. “Don’t you know you can walk through walls?”

She must not have heard me. She lunges forward, but I slide away from her ghost hands and start running down the adjacent row of easels.

“Don’t let the ghosts touch you, Allis—

“Don’t touch me!” I scream, ducking away from the outstretched limbs of the patients, flying toward the doorway.

“Dr. Griffin will know about this!” yells the nurse, huffing behind me several strides.

I reach the door and turn around. Staring back at me are the terrifying images of mangled faces painted from the haunted shadows of the patients’ broken minds. Each canvas its own demon with bulging eyes and sardonic smiles that don’t fit on the faces of these blackened monsters. Their teeth stand out and crawl across my skin as I shake the door handle hopelessly, too tremulous to be of any use. I can’t pull my eyes away from the terror.

Somehow I manage to push open the door and I fall in a heap into the hallway outside, sweating ice and panting. The door is immediately slammed shut by the nurse, who yells one last string of incoherency before stomping out of earshot.

“Get up, Allis.”

I take a deep breath and climb back on my feet. I continue to wander.

“Don’t they know they can walk through walls?”
iii.

The ones that understand, like the doctors and Sister Annette, don’t like it when I bring up that they’re ghosts. They purse their lips and glance away but when they appear without warning I’m sure they’ve walked through walls.

Sister Annette is the nun who comes and talks to me about God. Her black gown drapes around her like clothes off a wire hanger. She’s impossibly thin and her white blond hair leaves her face expressionless for her lack of eyebrows or eyelashes. She has blue eyes. If it weren’t for the crow’s feet she would look young.

She is also a ghost. But she doesn’t let me talk about it. I think she’s scared because she hasn’t gone to heaven like she thinks she should have. I like Sister Annette because she’s not a doctor or a patient, and even though she’s a ghost, she’s an outsider, haunting this hospital to guide all the troubled souls within it. She’s more like a lost angel.

But she comes and talks to me and sometimes I don’t mind the company. Sometimes I believe in God. When I’m alone and I feel someone watching me. When I steal and I know it’s wrong but I can’t help myself I cross my chest and say a small prayer and kiss the rosary I found in a drawer of the patient’s empty room next to mine.

Sister Annette shows me pictures in her ghost books of Cathedrals and icons of Mary and tells me that I look like her. I didn’t know this. There are no mirrors in my room and I often forget what I look like but Sister Annette points out the color of my hair and the blue shade of my hospital gown and holds up a page with a picture of the Blessed Virgin near to my head.

“Tilt your head, child,” she says, her voice like velvet and church whispers.

I tilt my head, shifting my weight on the end of my bed. She sits in a chair across from me, her long thin arm reaching toward my cheek.

“Yes. There is a resemblance.”

“Could I have the messiah inside of me?” I ask her, my hand fluttering to my abdomen.

The nun’s china-set complexion becomes blotchy with a darker color.

“No, my dear.” Her hands busy themselves with closing the book and smoothing her habit.

I glance at my collection of baby dolls lying in a heap in the corner of my room. When I turn to ask Sister Annette another question, she is gone and her chair is restored to its usual place beside the heart monitor. She’s disappeared through the walls.

iv.

From the glass hallway I can see the storm clouds of God’s angry fists stretching out across the sky. Spider webs of lightning glow from inside the cumulus folds some miles off but above me now the sky is the familiar grey-white of old chalk. For a moment I wonder if God disappeared after the meltdown too, but Sister Annette’s eyes pierce my memory, a built-in reminder to have faith lest I disappear as well, into whatever red hell exits beyond this grey purgatory. I’ve been staring at the sky for a while now. In the distance the reactor towers are sheathed in rain but it will be a while before the storm reaches the hospital. The wind makes the glass tremble.

I find myself wandering to the rehabilitation ward and I know Dr. Griffin is looking for me but I can hide for a little longer. I don’t want him to treat me today. He says that since the medication doesn’t work he’s going to try a different method but the machine he told me about is scary.

There are ghosts here. A family that I’ve never seen. A mother and young son haunting the hallway on the fourth floor, waiting outside a cracked door into a private hospital room. They whisper to each other and I watch them from behind a corner, making sure they don’t see me. Family ghosts are easy to scare away if you’re not careful. A nurse ghost steps out of the room and nods to the mother, who turns to the little boy and tells him to wait outside for a moment until mommy gets back. She opens the door instead of going through it and the nurse disappears, leaving the boy alone.

I smooth my hospital gown and tuck my hair behind my ears and step out from behind the hall-corner. The boy notices me immediately and watches me wide-eyed. He gives a shaky glance to the door and then looks at the ground.

“Hi,” he says, slightly louder than a whisper.

I don’t reply. I look at his blue Velcro sneakers. They have dinosaurs on them.

“I like your shoes. Do they roar when you walk?”

He shakes his head.

“Don’t you know you can walk through walls?” I ask. “Why did your mom open the door to go in?”
He looks at me. “My daddy is sick. He is very sad, and he doesn’t eat his vegetables when mommy cooks, but mommy and the doctors are going to fix him so he can get better and show me how to ride my bike.”

The door cracks open.

“Richie, who are you talking to?”

The boy looks back at the floor. “Some girl. I told her about daddy. What you told me to say when people asked.”

The mother appears and I stand up.

“Who are you? What do you want?” she demands, taking her son by the shoulders. “Should you be here?” She wonders aloud where the nurses are and I know that they’re sure to find me now.

“Don’t you know you can walk through walls?” I ask.

The ghosts disappear behind the door and I don’t get an answer. Perhaps it’s better to let lost souls haunt their own histories as if they were merely reliving them. I take out my rosary and start a prayer to send them into heaven just like Sister Annette showed me how but I don’t remember how it ends, so I stop. I hear the nurses coming.

I take off. Dr. Griffin doesn’t like me talking to other ghosts besides him and Sister Annette. He says it’s dangerous. The nurses are following me, I can feel it while I run blind down the hallways past the horrifying grotesqueness of the patient’s artwork— their self portraits hung on the walls. My vision gets blurry and I feel like I’m running backwards and suddenly I’m at a dead end.

“Stop!” shouts someone behind me and I try to keep running but I slam into the walls as I try to squeeze through the corners and I can’t make the ghosts disappear.

My hands claw at my face to make me wake up even though I know I’m not sleeping. I’m sitting on the floor and I feel myself screaming but I don’t hear the sounds and I don’t see the ghosts. But they’re coming. Their voices get loud in my ears like a thousand snakes and beetles crawling around in my brain. I feel them grabbing at me but I thrash back.

“Allis, wake up.” I whisper to myself.

I keep kicking but they keep trying to pull me in with their ghost arms.

“Allis wake up—”

“She’s off her medication, not that it ever worked anyways.”

“She shouldn’t be allowed hall privileges. Where is Dr. Griffin?”

“Go away,” I scream but I can’t move my arms, “Let me out—

“Alliswakeup—!

“I can’t—”

The air tastes like electricity and rain. My breath comes out in hot gasps as I peel my temple from my pillow. My body aches like it’s been charged with fire. Outside the window everything is tinged green by the clouds and the wind slices against the side of the building, harsh whispers of another language spoken by the earth itself. My things remain in their pile in the corner of the room. The room holds its breath like it’s waiting for me to run.

 “…and she has responded well, I think, this time.”

I hear Dr. Griffin speaking to a nurse outside my room. When I turn my head toward the door my vision swims before me and colors start to bleed through the grey. I shut my eyes. The door opens and I hear Dr. Griffin walk in.

“We’re going to answer some questions today,” he says. I hear him pull up a chair and click his pen. “Open your eyes, Allis.”

“No.”

“Why don’t you want to open your eyes?”

“It hurts. Colors are coming back.”

His pen scratches on the paper. “Very good. Do you remember the colors appearing before?”

“Not in the hospital.”

“Do you remember anything from before the hospital?”

“No.”

He writes something down. “That’s interesting.” He sounds disappointed. “What is the earliest you can remember now?”

“Ghosts.”

“Any specific events?”
“Running away from ghosts.”
A silence broken only by his pen.
“What do I look like?” I ask.
“What do you think you look like?”
“Sister Annette says I look like the Virgin Mary.”
Dr. Griffin pauses. “Open your eyes, Allis.”
I do. The colors bubble up through my vision like burning acid through film. Dr. Griffin sits with his notepad on his knee and watches me like he’s looking for something.
“What do I look like, Allis?”
“You’re grey. All ghosts are grey. You’re a ghost. Don’t you know you can walk through walls?”
“What about Sister Annette?”
“She is grey.”
“And the nurses, the patients—?”
“They’re all grey ghosts are grey you’re grey don’t you know you can walk through walls you’re grey don’t you know you can walk through walls.”
Dr. Griffin sighs and shakes his head and I close my eyes again.
“What do I look like?” I ask, my voice coming out in a weak tremble.
“Open your eyes, Allis.”
I do.
Out of his notebook, Dr. Griffin pulls a small stack of loose papers and hands them to me. “Do you remember making these, Allis?”
My gut gutters like a shaky flame. In my hands are images, sketched, drawn, watercolored greys and blacks of hollow eyes lined with charcoal and straggly dark hair that falls in jagged lines across thin shoulders. An emotionless mouth droops above a chin that points too sharply at a fragile-looking neck protruding from a blue hospital dress. Her grey skin is streaked with black freckles across a small nose and her head tilts to one side like she’s trying to find an angle to look pretty. She’s just another ghost.
Who's gunna know?
by Annemieke Buis ('17)

Tortoise-shell guitar pick
Sleeps alone on the table,
   It would write a song
   If only it was able,
Now all truth manifests into fable,
   But who's gunna know?

Corpse of a trench coat hangin' over the door,
   It's the form of a friend
Who ain't with us no more,
   Satan smiles back,
   He's keepin' the score,
   But who's gunna know?

The secrets of belongings
   That hide in our pocket,
There may not be a door,
   But it ain't safe, so you lock it,
   Making them think,
You tear the brain out of its socket,
   But who's gunna know?

Old train car rottin'
Behind the post office,
While a kid's caught stealin',
He empties out his pockets,
He don't believe his fortune
   Is the product of the prophets,
   But who's gunna know?

He's smokin' at the playground,
   Half past three,
Who cares if lungs are black
   'Cause nobody's gunna see,
   Well doctors might,
   But from them, we flee!
   But who's gunna know?
You, my love, were lovely
and I, my love, was me
And you, I loved, through darkness
and you, I love, through screaming
But love, it seems, had killed me
cause love, it seems, is killing
And you, truth told, were kind

You, my love, unfeeling
And I, truth told, was foolish
But I, my love, was dreaming
But love, unkind, hates dreamers
And love, my kind, is fleeting
So love, in turn, rejects me
And I, in turn, still dreaming.
Bid love, farewell, believing
that I, my love, am leaving.
A note from the editor:

Thank you for being a part of Webb’s first literary magazine! Whether you wrote stories or poems, submitted photographs or drawings, or are even reading this now-- you have contributed so much to this project. And we did it! Our first issue! A miracle! We hope to keep printing these magazines in the future, with new writing and new artwork in each issue, including a much wider range of submissions, such as essays, speeches, and comics.

Again, thanks for reading, thanks for writing, and thanks for creating. This issue is just a small glimpse at the vibrant arts culture alive at Webb, and we hope to keep showcasing student talent through the years. Special thanks to Mr. Barrett for being awesome, and the Designated Motivator for the Oracle team. We never would have stopped talking and gotten work done without your Intensely Motivating Stare of Silence. And it definitely paid off.

M’Kenzy