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Lighting Tomorrow
By Ariella Rosen ('18)

“Light tomorrow with today.”
-- Elizabeth Barrett Browning

Peel away the plaster,
See what's there inside.
The inside was once the outside
Before the mortar dried.
We live in a world of layers,
One age on top of the next.
Just like books in a stack,
Page upon page of text.
I wonder what I'll find if
I look in the dirt and the damp.
Deep in the earth there'll be secrets
That I'll find with a hurricane lamp.
Tear back a piece of wallpaper
To see what was there before.
Think about how, in the future,
You're going to put up more.

Photographs by Maayan Rosenfield ('18)
Fire Island
By Callie Sampton (‘18)

Summer, 2006

After the rain, the island was mine. The ground was damp, the air smelled like salt water, and the bay was still dark and brooding. The pavement was dotted with puddles, like oceans to our eyes. The sunlight came through the mist in ethereal tendrils, bathing the streets in an unworldly glow. Parents huddled inside, away from the rain and the earth and the worms, but to me, it was magnetic. An ineffable force, it drew me onto the wood porches and outside the gates. This hour belonged to all of us; as if by some unspoken word, we pedaled our bikes to the end of the street, captivated by the petrichor in the air and the water droplets on our skin. Finally, it was my turn. My legs moved at the speed of light, black pedals a blur. The trees became a watercolor brush of green, and I felt time slow down. The front wheel touched the puddle, and like sparks, water came up on both sides of me: an iridescent wave. The puddle deepened, tsunamis forming beside me. I was infinite, eternal, electric, riding with legs out to both sides like wings. I felt like I could fly, and then I was in the air, floating above the bike and the puddle and all of the island. It was a moment of serenity, like the eye of a hurricane, and everything stood still. The waves stopped breaking, the dragonflies froze, and it was just me and the salty breeze. Then, just as quickly as my wings had sprouted, I was back on the ground. I was a body of bruises, pink and purple and yellow splotches in the shape of bike parts and cement. My knees were cut and my elbows scraped, but I had flown. A graceful array of knobby knees and bare feet, I had been lifted into the air by some strange, ephemeral spell as old as the island itself.

Summer, 2010

At night, my friend Emily and I padded, barefoot, into the town. Flashlight in hand, I walked, guided by the small hand in front of me and the luminescence of the bulb. Together, we giggled, toes in the cold sand and whispers floating up to the speckled sky. To my right, the bay was black, and so foreign to us that it seemed like a Kraken would reach out of the water and pull us in. This walk, 2 blocks from my house to the ice-cream store, was the drawbridge, leading two small girls over a pit of snapping alligators and to the castle. With wide eyes, we wandered, led by sweet scents and florescent lights. Cotton candy and mint chocolate chip dripping onto our hands, we gathered napkins and sat on the swings, kicking our legs in unison. Backwards, forwards, backwards, until we were miles in the air. Below us, the crescent light reflected on the water, like the watery stain left behind on a table by a coffee mug. I felt like I ruled the world: the strange fairytale underneath my feet. There was something captivating about it all, from the soft blue glow bathing the boats beneath to the melancholy cries of
the seagulls circling in the dark. As the two of us sat, legs dangling, side by side, I searched the sky for shooting stars. Nose pointed up, I strained my eyes, searching for something, anything, until a glimmer caught my eye. Something flew through the sky. Its lights flashed, red and blue and green, coloring the moonlight. Wide eyed, I turned to look at Emily. My heart was pounding in my ears, crashing waves inside my brain. Together, we sat, hands clenched together and mouths open in awe, staring at this preternatural object in the sky. The only possible explanation: a UFO. So Emily and I sat, drifting back and forth, pondering the distant ship with a curiosity that only children could muster. This could not have been a normal airplane, no. It was something mystical, some rocket that had come from a planet with rings and moons and swirling dusty winds. Quietly, I concluded that this particular celestial body had sped through all of the galaxies, dark and quiet and vast, in search of such an amaranthine place as this.

Summer, 2016
The ocean had crept up, over the sand and into the dunes. Earlier, the waves had swelled, until they towered like a skyline: their own city against the horizon. Wildly, the water had rushed onto the beach and under the houses, as if sloshed over the sides of its cup by a trembling hand. Hours later, though, it was tranquil. The choppy waves had grown still, and all that remained of the tempestuous afternoon was lakes of water between the ocean and the damp boardwalks. I stood ankle-deep in the cool water, watching rings form in the water, ripples spreading out and dissipating. Squinting against the amber light, the tidal pools seemed endless. Vast and deep, they stretched farther than I could tell. There was no division between the sand and the sky. The cerulean sky and rosy clouds made up the entire world in front of me, a kaleidoscopic reflection on the glassy water. With one step, I could tumble into the sky, past the wispy clouds and into the cosmos. Behind me, Emily laughed, and the sound drifted, a message in a bottle. I sat at the edge of the mirror, my fingers mindlessly circling the wet sand. The pools were a strange world, a tiny one within my very own. Jellyfish drifted through my fingers, invisible except for a wine colored fringe lining their amorphous shapes. Fish darted underneath the surface, silvery flashes that reflected the falling light. I was warm, with the sun on my back, and happy. I scooped up a handful of sand, letting it fall through my fingers, golden. I was left with smooth gray pebbles and a piece of seaglass. The small piece sat in my palm, a vibrant red, clouded only by the wear of time. Tracing its edges with my fingertips, I was sure that this glass had travelled through time to reach me, tumbled in the waves as empires rose and fell. This broken bottle was not mine by sheer luck, but by a syzygy in some universe, somewhere. It had landed at my feet, dropped from a larger world in which I existed only in tidal pools.
Enlightenment
By Sarah Baum (‘18)

As humans, there is much we don’t know of;
There’s only so much that we comprehend.
We don’t understand life or what’s above;
We don’t know when our existence will end.
We don’t know how our planet came to be;
Or how life first when coursing through our veins.
We don’t know death or war, except for she,
Who lived through conflict and has felt such pain.
Though she writes many books on her hard life,
Stories on what it felt like to near death,
Many will never understand that strife
And so we read to understand it best.
No human will ever know everything,
In our lifetime we’ll never learn it all.
And for this reason, to books we should cling.
So we can by enlightened by things big and small.
JFK is Dead
By Zev Ginsberg ('21)

JFK was being driven through Dallas when he was shot once in the back and once in the brain. The unofficial footage of the wounded, wheezing man and the fatal blow that had his frantic wife grasping at the slush of his presidential mind only to find her stylish clothing spattered with the blood of her late husband is repeated every fall without fail on national TV. The mysteries of the assassin caught and killed pre-trial and the conspiracy theories of a second gunman or a magic bullet miraculously curving through the air from a warehouse window and the evidence disproving its existence are discussed and debated and fretted over decade after decade by the people and politicians alike, the end result just being that no one will ever know which car the Commander in Chief is riding in at any given moment.

Every hour, the country mourns the passing of its dashing young leader with fresh flowers and mowed grass surrounding the tombstone of his burial site at Arlington. It curses the young marine marked simply "OSWALD" on his own grave and pouts at his swift demise. It sighs a sigh of relief at the cheap justice and the mess avoided by having a nightclub owner take care of little Lee Harvey himself rather than put the accused through the painfully public and dreadfully slow process that its justice system would be with the alleged murderer of a president awaiting his verdict, yet it hangs its head in shame at showing even the slightest satisfaction at its letting Jack Ruby act as judge, jury, and executioner on a whim. Alas, John F. Kennedy is dead.

There is no tactical advantage to watching carcasses decay. The country might only carry out these ceremonies (forging plaques, digging graves, lighting eternal flames, etc.) because it doesn’t know what else to do. It’s so used to tri-folding American flags for fallen soldiers that it can’t think of anything else, even when its own president gets shot in the head. However, maybe it’s something different. Soldiers follow orders through thick and thin because they need to keep on moving. The dead are evacuated, and the living keep trekking through. The army has its rituals because, despite however brutal it may seem, it can’t afford to slow down an operation because of one man. So, when one dies, it cuts its losses. This country, despite whatever partisanship takes hold, is a unit. Its schools cannot make their grade school children say Kennedy’s name alongside the Star Spangled Banner because he is not as critical in keeping the country unified. For all intents and purposes, President Kennedy was a soldier in an army, and its core beliefs are more important than the names of the departed in moving forward.

America will never, never forget the blood spilled that day in Dallas, but John F. Kennedy is dead.
Trees
By Jaileen Pierre Louis ('18)

I've been searching trees to find
What I don't believe
You say there are laws in nature so I look
But I can't see
They tell me I am lost, but I know that I am not
I've been running in the woods to free
myself from the evil ways they perceive
I've been flying with the bees because they are wise
You say that you know everything but I don't have the time
To be confused, or lied to

Drawing by Shay Rutkowski ('18)
Road Trip
By Lucy Brewster ('18)

Nobody was surprised that Julie was lagging behind. Julie’s dad honked the horn and sighed, as her mom, Anne, screeched out the car window, “Juliette! You’re putting us behind schedule! Get in the car.”

Julie reluctantly strolled out of their two story white suburban house, already putting her headphones on. They had been doing these road trips since she was 11, and they seemed to get more and more excruciating each year. Every year, her parents picked somewhere different and over February break, they piled in their old mini van and hit the road. She had told her parents multiple times she could stay at her friend’s house while they drove to Florida, but her parents would have none of it. “Of course you have to come! Julie, you barely even interact with your brother these days unless you’re yelling at him. You know Adam’s been having a hard time in school. This is your chance to get close again! It’s a family tradition.”

Julie hopped in the car and slid the mini-van door shut, only to be immediately greeted with the sound of Adam yelling at their dad to adjust his seat. Julie rolled her eyes and climbed in the back, bracing herself for the next 17 hours.

“Alright!” said Julie’s dad, Peter, starting the car and turning on the GPS, “Here we go, the fifth annual McNulty family road trip! ”

“And hopefully our last,” Julie muttered under her breath, turning up her music to full volume.

When Julie was eleven, she didn’t mind long road trips. This was unusual for a child, most children hated sitting still, having nothing to do but stare out the window and count different colored cars. Yet Julie looked forward to these trips, she knew her dad would let her pick the radio station and her mom would bring her favorite snack, cheese puffs. She was never allowed to eat cheese puffs at home, but for the long car ride, her mom would make an exception. Most of all, she liked to play twenty questions. Usually her parents would give her an easy one, maybe her second grade teacher, or George Washington. Once in awhile it would be somebody Julie never heard of, like Lee Harvey Oswald or Lucille Ball. Julie found this wildly unfair. Julie, her mom, and her dad could play this game for hours while her brother Adam, then only four, was fast asleep.

Now it seemed Adam never slept in the car, or anywhere else for that matter. It seemed impossible that one boy could create so much noise and trouble. Adam was always up to something; locking his fifth grade teacher out of their classroom, stealing their mom’s credit card and buying a $300 remote control robot toy, causing a girl in his class to need three stitches after he kicked a basketball straight into her face or blasting rap music from the room next door to Julie’s while she was trying to do homework. “He’s a problem child,” his principal said bluntly to their parents. “He is quite literally endangering other children’s
“Oh come on! She could have ducked,” was Adam’s response. “It was an accident. Not my fault she doesn’t exactly have lightning fast reflexes.” After seeing the appalled look on the principal’s face he added, “I’m sorry Principal Hagans. It won’t happen again. I promise.”

“He’s going through a phase. He only just turned ten,” Anne added. “Adam’s a good kid, please give him another chance.” Principal Hagans reluctantly did.

When hearing this, Julie rolled her eyes, Adam was getting more second chances than she was hours of sleep ever since Adam got that new stereo that connects to his iPod for Christmas. Their parents slept on the second floor, and Julie and Adam both had rooms in the basement. Julie reminded herself to thank Peterson Construction, who had promised the best insulation available for their finished basement. Apparently it was the best insulation, as miraculously the blasting rap music was not audible on the upper floors.

“When do you sleep!?” Julie roared at Adam one night when he was playing music at 1:25 am. “I’ll sleep when I’m dead,” he replied.

“That can be arranged. You know with this music on full volume I doubt anyone could hear you scream.”

“Ha. I’m sure you think that one’s real clever. Glad you find yourself funny because nobody else does. Whatever, I’ll turn it down.”

Adam’s shenanigans did not pause while they were in the car. As soon as their old, beat up, blue minivan got on the highway he was immediately stealing Julie’s cellphone and trying to read her texts. In response Julie snatched her phone and pushed Adam back into his seat. Adam shrieked. To add to the road trip cacophony Anne and Peter were fighting about directions. Julie shook her head, 10 minutes in and everything was going to hell already. Just another week, she kept telling herself. One week she would be back home, not in confined quarters with her impossible family. That would be the real vacation.

“Look!” said Anne. Outside everything was covered in crisp white snow. “Isn’t it beautiful? We won’t be seeing much of this down South.” This picturesque scene seemed to calm everyone down for a minute. The snow weighed down the tree branches, causing them to hang over the narrow road just enough to create a canopy above them. Heavy flakes were still falling.

“Wow. This would be perfect snow for a snowball fight,” Adam marveled.

“Oh don’t even think about--”

“We need to be careful,” said Peter interrupting Julie. “There’s snow up here but further South I’m sure they just have ice. I’ll drive slowly, but it might slow down our schedule.”

“That’s okay! Who minds sitting in the car when they can have...” Anne smiled and pulled a bag from the cooler with a huge grin on her face, “Cheese puffs! I was in Stop n Shop the other day and I saw these and thought of you Jules! You used to go through entire bags of lives.”
these!” Anne laughed.

Julie barely looked up and only blurted, “I’m on a diet,” before looking back at her phone. “I don’t eat that crap.”

“Whatever,” Adam said, more for me!”

Julie saw how hurt her mom was as she handed the bag to Adam. Julie thought she might have even seen tears in her eyes before her mom turned back around to face the road. Julie almost spoke up, almost told her mom the real reason she wanted to diet. But she decided against it, she didn’t want to think about it anymore. The truth was, Julie did go through entire bags of cheese puffs as a kid. Yet it wasn’t just cheese puffs. Julie ate all kinds of junk food, at school, in the car, when her parents weren’t looking. Julie never really cared about her weight when she was eleven, but she cared now. Julie recalled a fight with her best friend Denise a few days earlier.

“Why didn’t you guys tell me Eric was having a party? I would’ve gone. Instead I had to sit home and listen to my brother get yelled at for almost setting our cat on fire,” Julie questioned.

“Look, I’m sorry. It’s just Eric said I could only bring a few other girls, and… him and the other guys on the basketball team… they asked if I could bring Iliana and Kathy, you know, because they’re really pretty and stuff. And Ava knows everyone in our entire town, so I knew she could introduce me to some people. If it were just up to me I’d bring you, okay?”

“What? I’m not pretty enough to go to Eric Caffrey’s party? Is that what you’re saying?”

“No, they just think… well some of the guys… they just said it wouldn’t kill you to lose a few.” Julie could feel her face getting hot. She looked down so Denise wouldn’t see her cry.

“Hey, I didn’t say it,” Denise said as if that could make it better. “And I think you look great Jules. Just because you’re not a size two doesn’t mean you aren’t pretty. You have beautiful green eyes. It’s just high school guys, you know. They say some rude stuff sometimes, but they don’t mean it. Just don’t let it bother you.” Julie got up from Denise’s couch and started putting her shoes on. “Calm down Jules! Look, this senior, Lily, is having a party this Friday. Come to that one!”

“You know I’m on this road trip with my family for the next week Denise.”

“Oh, right. Well, you can come to another one. No big deal. Eric’s wasn’t even fun...” she tried to explain, but Julie was already out the door.

Now they had officially been driving for two hours, and Adam was getting antsy. He was begging their dad to let him control the stereo. “Dad please let me play my iPod! You have been playing this dumb radio talk show for the entire trip!”

“Nobody wants to listen to your music. Can you please be quiet for five seconds?” said Julie, hearing her brother complaining.

“I wasn’t talking to you. Put your headphones back on nobody cares what you think,”
“Can you two stop fighting for once?” asked Anne. “You're making a four hour trip feel like ten hours. Everyone quieted down after that, but the tension in the car only rose. Half an hour later, Adam announced he had to use the bathroom. “Are you serious?” asked Peter. “We told you to go before we left, Adam.”
“I’ve been very well hydrated this trip! It’s not my fault.”
“I could use some coffee anyways,” said Anne, sighing. “Let’s stop at this exit over here.”
The old blue mini van turned off the highway. “I can’t believe it’s already dark,” said Anne. “It’s only 6 o’clock.”
“Well actually, Mom, the sun sets earlier in the winter and later in the summer! I know this is all new information to you,” said Julie sarcastically, rolling her eyes.
“Hey, cut the attitude Juliette. Apologize to your mother, you’ve been nothing but rude this entire trip and I’m sick of it,” sneered Peter.
“I’m sorry,” whispered Julie reluctantly, shocked at how quickly her dad snapped at her.
The car pulled into the rest stop, and the whole family got out, greeted by the frigid air.
“What state are we in?” asked Adam.
“Pennsylvania,” answered Anne. “It’s colder than I was expecting.”
“It’s freezing. Can we get some more cheese puffs? And maybe a Coke?”
“Adam, you’ve had enough junk food this trip,” said Peter, who was becoming increasingly frustrated.

“Peter, just let him eat what he wants,” interjected Anne. “We’re on a road trip it’s not a big deal if he has some soda.”
“It’s a big deal if he doesn’t learn to eat healthy!” yelled Peter, unintentionally glancing at Julie. The annoyance in his voice was palpable. Julie looked down.
“I just want my cheese puffs! Can I just have two dollars mom, I can buy them at the vending machine. Pleaassee!” whined Adam. Anne handed Adam some change as Peter sighed and rolled his eyes.
The family of four now realized they were the only ones in the rest stop, besides two middle aged truck drivers who were smoking cigarettes and a young couple who looked just as distraught and exhausted as they were. It was almost completely silent except for the sound of Adam chewing cheese puffs and the couple arguing in the distance.
“Adam, try to chew those a little more obnoxiously,” said Julie. “Really, I don’t think it’s possible for you to be any more annoying.”
“Can you just leave me alone for once!?!” yelled Adam. “I’m not even doing anything to you.”
“You did something to me by being born. You can’t even eat food without annoying everyone.”
“I’m annoying everyone. You’re saying it's me who is the problem. You’re the one who has been putting everyone in a foul mood this whole trip. You’re the one who has had a terrible attitude and has done nothing but complain. For once, this cannot be blamed on me.”

“Why do you think I’m in a foul mood Adam!? For the same reason Mom and Dad are fighting! The same reason I’m in a foul mood 100% of the time. You annoy everyone around you! You can’t help it!”

“At least I talk to Mom and Dad! At least I try to talk to you. You do nothing but sit there and complain and blame other people for your problems.” Julie rolled her eyes. She hadn’t eaten in 14 hours and she could feel herself getting unreasonably mad.

“Adam, at least I have friends to complain to! Nobody even wants to be around you long enough to even become friends with you.” This especially hurt Adam, because on some level this true. Other kids thought Adam as funny, they liked to be around him or be part of his shenanigans, but none of them were really friends with him. Adam was the quintessential class clown. At the end of the day he was the butt of the joke just as much as the people he was making fun of were.

“You two! Stop!” cried Anne, “Nobody wants to hear it. Get in the car. Here, Julie, I got you a powerbar. It might be a few hours before we stop for dinner.”

“I told you a thousand times! I’m. Not. Hungry.”

Adam snickered, “Sure you aren’t.”

“What did you just say?” roared Julie.

“I said I may not have friends, but at least I’m not ugly and fat.” Julie’s face became hot.

“Well at least I’m not ugly and retarded.” yelled Julie, tears streaming down her face. Adam was shocked into silence.

“You two cannot speak to each other like that! I will not tolerate it,” shouted Peter, standing up from the bench.

“Apologize to each other,” was all Anne said.

“I won’t apologize to him!” screamed Julie. “Not after what he said to me.” They were causing a scene in the rest stop. The truckers were observing them through the cigarette smoke, and the couple had gone silent and seemed to be staring at them. *They’re probably thinking that when they have kids, they’ll never let them talk to each other like this. I’m sure they think their family wouldn’t fight*, thought Julie. That’s what she would be thinking if she were them. She heard her mother sigh loudly.

“You two better apologize right now or I’m leaving both of you at this rest stop,” said Peter sternly. Adam looked up, realizing this had gone too far.

“I’m sorry, Julie. I didn’t mean what I said. That… that wasn’t nice,” Adam sputtered. “And… it wasn’t true. You’re not ugly… and you really aren’t fat. I’m really, really sorry.” The truth was, Adam wasn’t acting at all. He really did feel terrible for what he had said. He was a lot of things, but he wasn’t stupid. He knew Julie’s insecurities. That’s the thing about
family, they know you so well. They know exactly how to make you feel better, but exactly how to hurt you.

“Now, Jules, said Anne. “What do you have to say to your brother?”

“If you are implying I should actually say sorry to him, you are in for a disappointment. I’m not apologizing to that brat.”

“Julie!” said Anne, raising her voice.

“You think everything can be fixed with an apology, you let Adam off the hook every single time he does something wrong. He doesn’t learn! You don’t get how infuriating he is. You let him say things like that to me, you let him kick poor Sarah Rosen in the face with a ball, you let him stay up late. If you don’t punish him, how are you expecting him to change?”

“Don’t try to tell us how to parent!” shouted Peter. “Don’t act like you’re little Miss Sunshine either, it is not acceptable to call your brother names. Not while you two are living under my roof. Now get in the car! I don’t want to hear even a peep from either one of you for the rest of the trip.”

“I’m not getting in that car until Adam is given an actual punishment for what he said to me.”

“Why can’t you just apologize to your brother, Juliette?” cried Anne desperately. “He apologized to you. Just say sorry and we’ll talk about this later. Please.” Seeing the pain on her mother’s face, Julie almost just said sorry. She almost swallowed her pride, said sorry, and got in the car. Yet she thought about Adam keeping her up half the night, Denise ditching her, Eric Caffrey saying she could “lose a few.” Her eyes welled up with tears.

“No, I’m not getting in the car with any of you.”

“Please,” said Adam, beginning to tear up himself. “I shouldn’t have said that. Please get in the car.” Julie looked away.

“You know what. Fine! Don’t say I didn’t warn you!” screamed Peter. “Adam, Anne, get in the car”, he said. Anne got in the passenger seat, shutting the door and looking down. Adam got in the back. Finally, Peter slammed the door and started the car.

“No! We can’t leave Julie at the rest stop!” Adam cried, realizing what was going on. He tried to open the door, but it was locked. Peter backed out of the parking slot and began to drive away. Julie looked up, she thought her dad was bluffing at first, but they were actually leaving her!

“NO!” she desperately shrieked. “I’m sorry! I’m sorry! I love you Adam! I’m so sorry!” Tears were streaming down her face. “I’m sorry!” Yet Adam couldn’t hear her.

“Turn around Dad!” Adam yelled in the car. “It’s all my fault, I don’t care if she apologizes. We can’t actually go.”

“Peter, you’re taking this too far. I know you’re just making a point. Stop torturing your daughter,” whispered Anne, feeling defeated. Adam continued to throw a tantrum.

“STOP! DRIVING!!” shrieked Adam hysterically.

“Calm down,” said Peter, sighing. “You think I would actually leave her at that rest
stop? Here I’m turning around now.” He turned around and looked at Adam’s tear streaked face, “I was just teaching her a lesson. Look we barely drove 100 yards, she can still see us.”

That was true. Julie could see the car. She saw them drive away, she saw her dad speed up when leaving the parking lot, and she saw them hit a patch of black ice as the minivan tried to do a U turn. She saw the car spin wildly out of control. And she could see the truck, pulling into the parking lot. That truck was definitely going too fast, wasn’t it?

**The Richmond Times**

Tragedy in Charlottesville– February 16, 2015. A deadly car crash right outside a rest stop on Route 1 killed three, including one child, and injured one when a family’s minivan collided with a Horizon Dairy Truck after hitting a patch of ice. The driver of the truck is currently in the ICU at Richmond Hospital. Peter and Annebelle McNulty were both killed, along with their 10 year old son. They are survived by their 16 year old daughter.
Blue Light
By Jonah Frere-Holmes ('18)

When she heard the man’s bark, the old woman was in front of the TV, solemnly rocking back and forth as The Price is Right gave off its blue glow. She heard the man, assertive but too excited, jumpy or new to his job. She heard a chorus of primal, electrified shouts, the sounds of young men in a state of peak energy, like an electron moving to an outer shell before returning to earth, emitting light in the form of photons. She heard the footsteps of running boys, the constant patter of their feet hitting the pavement the way rain hits a windowpane, only more amplified. Her stomach turned, and she felt a blush throughout her entire body, the sudden warming indicative of miracle or disaster. As she reached the door, she heard the pop, two times, and when she flung open the door to the best of her ability, she was rigid. She took it all in; the uniformed officer screaming into his mic, the still boy on the pavement, and the blanks she did not see her brain filled in from memory, because she had seen this before. Not this exact scene, but the standing uniform and the slain boy. When she saw who the boy was, she was devoid of feeling, and the world suddenly quieted itself, as if to allow her peaceful passage to the body. She put one foot in front of the other as she always had and always will, trembling furiously as she bent down. She had seen it before, but she had never lived it, there were parts she had never seen. She had never been up close, seen the way the sweat glistened on the face of the boy, the skin on his face still pulled taut with urgency. Her golden cross clinked quietly on the pavement as she collapsed next to the boy, the blue siren of the squad car glowing and reflecting off the base of her cane. The barrel-chested uniform crouched and advanced, fearing retaliation, divine retribution, and his own thoughts from that point forward. The old woman, unable to move, wailed softly, her tears and the boy’s sweat pooling on the pavement to create a puddle that reflected a weathered soul, failing to absorb the life of the still boy, who had been teeming with energy only moments ago. The holes were in the neck and the back, and a scarlet stream dripped slowly down the right side of the boy, adding to the peculiar mixture of sweat and tears. The ambulances came and took the boy away, and the officer was driven back to the station for a uniform Q&A session to determine his fate. The old woman was shunted back home, and what she lost that day remained on the pavement forevermore, talking to the boy, cooking him dinner, laughing at his mischief. Her body, weathered and crumpled, forged on for a few months, awaking to the light of The Price and descending into rest, as the glow of the moon and the darkness of the evening mixed in her windowpane, casting a shadow over the long pulls of breath she took, patient but expectant, awaiting a new world.
an empty picture frame resting on a shelf
why is it blank?
it was not always by itself
the wooden frame knew of something else

once it captured a moment in time
that you never wanted to forget
you were happy then- even sublime
yet naive, you didn’t know what was coming yet

but nothing gold can stay
for every moment of happiness you get a moment of pain
how could you have known everything would be taken away
all that was left was a picture in its frame

so you tore that picture out of its wooden cage
tears in your eyes
your chest full of rage
falling only hurt because you flew too high

an empty picture frame resting on a shelf
deserted and blank
scaffold of its former self
The Infinite Tragedy
By Sarah Baum (’18)

We all are cold, lost, and alone
In this dark, dang’rous place.
Where disasters and murder
Will end the human race.

The world has been turned upside down;
At the hands of bloody palms.
Each day babies are babbling,
Rather than crying for their moms.

Yet people, they’re not wailing,
Though tragedies do fall.
Our morals, they are failing;
We no longer care at all.

The mother and the father
Aren’t upset by the news.
The doctors are not bothered;
By the impacts of the flu.

We all are not alone
And this place is filled with light.
But we no longer have tears to shed;
Bloody palms have lost the fight.

Photograph by Lyla Rose (’18)
Ma Petite Chérie
By Victoria Siek ('18)

Prologue

November 23, 1812

“Come in, Mrs. Stevens.”

“It’s Miss now, Dr. Fosterem.”

“Oh, right…. I am very sorry for your loss.”

Miss Myra Stevens was a dainty girl of seventeen years of age with beautiful chestnut locks and a fair complexion. Many of the lads wanted to marry her, but she loved only one. And that was her dear deceased husband Harold Stevens. They had one beloved child, a boy, to whom she would give the whole world to if she possessed that power. Nothing could measure up to the love she felt for her little baby boy. She may have even loved him more than her husband, but no one has to know that.

“Have you been taking the medicine I gave you?” asked Dr. Fosterem while taking out his notepad and pen.

“Yes, sir. Every night. Just like you said.”

“Can you describe what you are feeling right now? Your thoughts, your feelings, your desires….”

“Well, I haven’t been able to fall asleep and I haven’t been eating properly. As for feelings, I feel nothing… pure numbness….”

“Mhmm…,” said Dr. Fosterem, while taking notes. “I believe I might have to increase your medicine dosage.”

They sat in the small cozy room full of paintings and books. “I am afraid I am going to have to report you, Miss Stevens.” “What are you talking about, Doctor?”

He leaned in and whispered in her ear: “I know what you are.”

Myra, confused and innocent, got up immediately and replied: “Sir, I believe you are mistaken and I have to ask you to please respect my personal distance.”

“Be careful, Miss Myra. You never know who might be watching.” His tone was calm but at the same time skeptical.

Myra quickly left the office and rushed out into the cold wintry air. There were no carriages or people in sight. The road was full of snow. She began to walk home, quickly but steadily, almost slipping on the ice that covered the sides of the road. It wasn’t a very long walk; however, the chilly breeze and the darkening sky seemed to extend its length.

As soon as Miss Stevens reached the familiar red door, she sensed something was wrong. The atmosphere was strange, bitter even. She carefully opened the wooden oak door and quietly stepped into the house.

“Hello?” Her frightened voice echoed in the empty hallway. There was no reply, so
Her beloved child, the one whom she loved more than anything in the world, had been slaughtered. It was a terribly ugly sight. Myra, unable to believe it all, sank down to the floor. It was then that she felt something inside her, a strange vibrating feeling surging through her veins. And just like that, everything happened but nothing happened at all. For Myra was a witch yet she did not know it until this very moment. There was a reason for her poor eating habits and her lack of feelings. That was the beginning of her development, her development to become who she truly was. She was never sick; human diseases do not infect witches and neither does any medicine work that is used to cure humans, weak creatures of this world.

The room, of course, was completely demolished; no power is greater than the power of pain and sorrow, especially if it is the First. One figure, however, was left completely untouched by the impact, and that figure was him, the baby boy. It was as if he were asleep; all wounds were mended, his body clean of all blood. Asleep, but dead.

Myra would soon preserve the body in a glass case with the use of embalming fluid and seek revenge for what had been done to her only beloved child.

*End of prologue*

August 17, 1877

The doorbell rang and a lady entered with a little girl, about seven or eight years old. The girl wore a frilly light blue dress along with a light blue bow in her luscious long blond hair. The lady wore a long violet coat, her hair tied up in a tight bun.

“Good afternoon.” Miss Myra Stevens, old yet still so young (for witches did not age) now owned what had been the old doll maker’s shop. The same doll maker who had so ruthlessly murdered the young kin.

“This is my daughter, Lisa. It will be her birthday soon and we would like to buy a doll… made out of porcelain, of course,” said the older lady. Their extravagant attire reflected their rich and expensive lifestyle.

“Ah, yes. Would you like to order the doll or have a look around and see if anything catches your eye?”

“Order it. I want my Lisa to have the exact doll she desires.”

“Alright then. Let’s start with the size?”

“Lisa, how big would you like your doll to be?”

There was no reply from little Lisa. She was too preoccupied with one doll in particular. This doll had the same light blue dress with the same light blue bow and the same luscious long blond hair.
“Lisa!” the woman said sharply. “Would you please come over here?!”

Lisa didn’t budge. She just pointed to the doll on the shelf behind the counter and said:

“This one.”

June 1878

After only a few months, Lisa befriended the doll. They were inseparable; constantly in each other’s presence. Lisa eventually learned that the doll had feelings, thoughts, and could speak.

“Come and play,” the doll would say.

Of course no one knew about these strange abilities the doll possessed, except for, obviously, Lisa and Miss Myra Stevens.

Over time, the doll required its own bed, its own seat at the dining table, and, finally, its own room. The funny thing was, no one ever suspected anything. It was as if the doll never existed; never had come in to Lisa’s life. They were all under some sort of incantation, slowly accepting the doll as part of their own family. Lisa’s parents treated the doll like their own daughter; the servants treated it like their master.

October 22, 1878

All good things must come to an end. “Come and play,” said the doll.

“I would like that,” replied Lisa and followed the doll into the bedroom. “Close the door,” commanded the doll.

Lisa did as she was told and then sat on the bed. The doll was already there, sitting among the pillows.

And just like that something in the doll’s face shifted. There was a sort of flicker in its eyes; they were… glowing; a red color illuminated its irises. Suddenly, the doll began charging at Lisa, a knife in its hand.

April 2, 1924

A middle aged woman entered the old doll maker’s shop, a little girl holding her hand. The woman wore a long sleeved gown, her hair up in an extravagant hat. The girl, about nine years old, had short brown hair and wore a quite simple pink dress.

“Good morning,” said Miss Myra Stevens (still as young as ever).

“May I help you?”

“We are just going to have a look around, if that’s all right,” replied the woman.

They began walking slowly around the shop until, suddenly, the girl stopped walking.

“What’s going on Margaret?” asked the older woman.

Margaret didn’t say anything. She just stood there, not moving, and stared at one doll in particular on the shelf across the counter. This doll had the same short brown hair and wore the same simple pink dress as the girl. She pointed to the doll and said: “This one.”
September 30, 1924

“Look how much you’ve grown, Margaret!” greeted Aunt Elizabeth. Margaret smiled at her, her doll clutched tightly to her chest.

“I’m very glad you will be staying with us Elizabeth,” said Catherine, the woman who came with Margaret to the doll shop.

“Oh, and who’s this?” inquired Aunt Elizabeth.

“This is the new addition to the family, Margaret’s new sister,” replied Catherine.

Aunt Elizabeth thought she was joking, but then realized she wasn’t and said:

“That’s… nice…”

“Would you please pass the the potatoes, darling?”

Margaret passed the potatoes to her mother, Catherine. Catherine put a spoonful of potatoes on her plate and then turned to the doll and did the same to it.

“Um, Catherine, don’t you think it’s a little strange to have a doll at the dinner table… and also be giving it food?” asked Aunt Elizabeth.

“No, it is not strange at all! If you say anything to offend my daughter, then I will—“ Catherine stopped talking abruptly and then continued: “Excuse me. I didn’t mean to raise my voice like that.”

Aunt Elizabeth just stared at Catherine and the doll. She sensed something was wrong but decided not to speak her mind.

It all happened that night.

Aunt Elizabeth was still up after everyone had already gone to bed. She couldn’t sleep, not with a doll treated as family in the house. After tossing and turning for a couple of hours, she decided to get up and try to call her husband. There was a phone in the room.

“Operator, could you connect me to Arthur Cameron?”

Aunt Elizabeth waited and waited until, finally, someone answered the phone.

“Hello?” said a sleepy voice.

“Arthur…. Arthur, you have to help me.”

“Elizabeth? What are you doing up at this hour? Aren’t you supposed to be at Catherine’s?”

“I am, I am, but there’s this doll and—”

That’s when the door opened and there it stood.

Aunt Elizabeth, in shock, dropped the handset; it hung from the cord. She began slowly backing away further into the room.

“Come and play… or else you will pay,” recited the doll, it’s eyes glowing red.

Suddenly it charged at Aunt Elizabeth, knife in hand.

The door to Margaret’s bedroom opened, and there stood the doll. “Come and play,” it said to Margaret.

“It’s is a little late, but I would like to play,” Margaret replied.

“Close the door,” commanded the doll, and Margaret obeyed. She then proceeded to
sit on the bed, the doll already there.

The doll’s face shifted, a red glimmer in its eyes. It charged at Margaret, a knife in its hand.

**January 1937**

After all these years, Miss Myra Stevens still worked at the old doll shop. Every time a little girl came to buy a doll, she would always point to the same one on the shelf behind the counter, and that’s the one they would buy. After having the doll in the house for a few months, they learned to accept it as their own, giving it everything a real girl would need. All was well until the day that it would all end. It would always be the same: the doll would say “come and play” and the girl would obey.

It was always the little girls that would end up dead. No adults were meant to be killed. The only reason Aunt Elizabeth was murdered was because she knew something wasn’t right since she didn’t live in the house. Maybe the doll would have left her alone if she wasn’t planning on telling anyone, but, of course, that was unlikely.

Miss Myra Stevens walked downstairs into the basement to add the latest addition to her collection. The basement was full of glass cases and inside those glass cases were… bodies.

But there was something off about them. They didn’t look quite like normal dead bodies would. The bodies of the little girls had been stuffed, their faces painted, and their eyes glass. They were made into real life size dolls preserved in glass cases.

Myra kneeled and began working. First the stuffing, then the painting, and finally, the eyes made of glass. Once she was done, she carefully picked up the new doll and placed it gently into an empty glass case. She then picked up her litter and threw it down the chute that led to a hole deep underground.

“Well done *ma petite chérie*,” said Miss Myra, while lightly stroking the killer doll’s hair. Why did the doll have human abilities? Because, in a way, it was human. You see, when Miss Myra Stevens went to avenge her dear beloved son, for her, killing the murderer was not enough. So, she trapped his soul in this very doll. He would now have to serve her and be devoted to her for all of eternity.

She believed it was her duty to make people feel the pain of losing your only child. To her it wasn’t fair that such a horrible thing would happen in her life but not in other lives. But these parents could never feel the same pain that she felt. Because of the incantation that the doll brought upon the families in order to be accepted into them, the residents could barely remember having a daughter, let alone loving her.

Why make the bodies into life sized dolls? Well, this *was* a doll shop. No one was ever going to find out anyway; Miss Myra’s protection charms did the trick. No one would ever suspect anything. People came and went but only entered the shop if they had an intention of purchasing a doll (one doll in particular, to be precise).
March 7, 1948

Arthur Cameron, husband of deceased Elizabeth Camerson, had finally arrived at the place of the murder of his lovely wife. He was here to investigate not his wife’s murder but something his wife had said before she had so abruptly stopped. Something about a doll….

“May I help you?” asked a police officer.
“Yes, actually. I am looking for something that has to do with dolls.”
“Sorry?”
“Like, for example, a toy store that sells dolls or—”
“There’s a doll shop on the corner. No one really goes there but you might as well have a look.”
“Yes. Thank you, sir.”

Miss Myra Stevens was a bit confused when she saw Mr. Arthur Camerson enter her shop. He didn’t have a little daughter, so why would he ever be interested in a doll shop, especially this specific doll shop.

“May I help you, sir?” she asked.
“I don’t know. Do you sell any… special dolls?” “Special? Whatever do you mean?”
That’s when Arthur noticed something. It was a very small flicker… on a shelf across the counter… just a small movement coming from a doll with slightly red glowing eyes.”

“Excuse me, ma’am,” said Mr. Camerson. “I have to be somewhere right now.” Arthur hastily exited the shop, probably saving his life by doing so.

Who would have ever thought there would be a fire that very night, a fire so bad that nearly the all of the buildings on the street would be burned down. It had never occurred to Miss Myra Stevens that her long life would come to an end due to a fire. A fire would be no match to a witch like her if she had been conscious. But she wasn’t…. She was fast asleep….

As for the doll, it was destroyed in the flames as well. It couldn’t leave without the witch’s permission; it was bound to her for all of eternity as long as she was still living. All the bodies were destroyed; not a single bit of anything was left. Except for one thing…. The old doll maker’s soul was released and it migrates from place to place, doll to doll.
Fathers’ Day

By Jesse Weiss ('18)

A spellbinding sequence of scales float through the air. The subtle but steady rhythm flows effortlessly, reverberating through the walls into my room. “QUIET, he’s sleeping” yells mom, breaking the trance. I slide out of bed, and assure dad that his strumming is what soothes. He offers a white noise machine as reimbursement for the disturbance, but I decline, as the late night guitar playing has remained a constant.

From a young age, I was imbued with the knowledge of his childhood. The Rolling Stones, the Who, and the Beatles all colored my earliest years, as did the accompanying trivia. Always I was given three guesses as to the singer, bass player, or chord progression. The cheery reply remained, “Wow, you got it!” despite the fact that any answer was welcomed with some reaffirmation of my brilliance. The excess knowledge spilled would remain useless, but there all the same. My mother often speculated on the exact number who recognized purpose to his wisdom; I saw persistence and pride in his attachment to the mostly defunct bands of his youth. His identity as a self-taught guitarist has remained since age nine, and his love of performance is apparent in his exaggerated facial expressions, both on and off the stage. The years spent on the club circuit may have been in vain and he may never live out his wildest fantasies of musical accomplishment, but the energy and love he brings to life has left me with one thing: gratitude.
"Master of Two Worlds" is an epic poem about a museum guard named Auguste, who has fallen inside of a painting. In this excerpt, Auguste is inside a WWI painting:

305 Auguste considered what the soldier’d said.
It seemed so wrong for this young man to fight
And kill. Auguste was only twenty-three
And had his life ahead, but even though
The soldier seemed to be about that age
As well, he’d lost his hope and will to live.

310 And if he even lived to see the war
Through to its end, his youth would be long gone.
How strange a thought it was that he would go
On with his life, but this poor boy would be
Forever tainted by the blood of war.

315 A soldier’s cry broke through the curtain of
The rain: "Get ready men, take up your posts!"
Auguste heard soldiers shout and scramble up
Above the shell hole where he lay. He risked
A glance above the crater’s edge and saw
320 The soldiers line up in a trench with backs
To him and rifles resting on the bags
Of sand and earth that lined the frontmost wall.
He ducked his head back down again just as
The noises from the field beyond began
325 To taper out. He sat then and he held his
His breath and listened to the heavy rain
That quickly turned the dirt around him to
A slimy mud that wrapped itself about
His limbs and bound him to the earth. But as
330 He sat encased in mud, he started to reflect:
The ooze around him felt so real; the rain
And thunder, absolute. Who was to say
He would return? Was he not in this war
As well? Not once since plunging deep inside
335 That painting at the Met had it occurred
To him to think how strange it was to walk
And breathe inside the confines of a frame.
He wondered now what had aroused in him
The urge to jump at all, and if he could

Get out. He’d jumped between two paintings twice
Before, but neither time had it been his
Intent. But could he ever jump again?
The words the goddess told him back
On top the mountain Fuji came into

His mind. Could this have been the power that
She’d meant?

Before he could begin to think
About what that might mean, Hamor walked up
To him and said that men approached them from

The west. But even as the donkey spoke,
A whining screech cut through the air that made
A surge of panic pound inside his chest
And terror shake his bones. He closed his eyes
And thought of warmth and love. He thought of skys

Clear, bright, and blue; of gentle waves beside
A beach; of sunshine on a summer’s day, the scent
Of flowers on a breeze.

The mud he lay
In pulled him tight and dragged him deep into

The earth ‘till water rushed around his limbs.
He kicked and flailed and when his head again
Met air, he found that he had jumped once more.
So muddled were his thoughts that he could not
Yet comprehend the fact that as he’d lain

Beneath the mud, his thoughts had sent him far
Beyond the soldiers’ cries. For with closed eyes,
Auguste still thought himself to be in mud,
Which pulled him down and down. His face beneath
The shallow waves again, his gasps for air

Brought only water to his lungs.
Hike
By Maayan Rosenfield (’18)

A dusty flurry topped the ice-covered mountains as my cousins and I embarked on our dangerous expedition. Our clothes already clung to our sweat-soaked bodies, despite freezing temperatures. We stood just ten steps past the base of the mountain we were about to climb. Our plan was hike up a double-black trail with two goals in mind: reach the top to look victoriously at the ground we had left behind, and then, more importantly, to race down the mountain, sliding on our butts and watching the trees speed by that, minutes ago, had seemed unmoving at our slow pace.

My cousins and I began climbing. We stayed towards the side of the slope, finding the least icy part, easiest to climb. As skiers zoomed by, they stared at us curiously, wondering why we would not simply hike up the dirt road on the side of the mountain. The expression we returned was that of pure determination.

An hour’s work paid off at the peak of the mountain. Lakes exposed themselves, glimmering in the ever-dimming sunlight. Mountains rolled on for hours into the distance and time seemed to pause all around us. Stillness groomed the sky and flooded the trees. There was something beautiful about feeling as if time was simply paused, allowing us to look over the world in a moment that would never end. I wanted to take a picture, but we had no camera. It didn't matter: the image was engraved in my mind anyway.

Like all things, the moment finally did end. With a running start, we slid down the mountain at top speed. The thrill I felt racing down that mountain surpassed even that of completing a half marathon or nailing a song on stage. It was pure, and too special to be documented.

It was as we were nearing the bottom that a siren distracted our loud reenactment of Hamilton. We fell in shock, although the hill was steep enough that falling backward only meant tilting a few inches. Our minds immediately jumped to the worst conclusions. The sirens truly sounded like air-raid warnings that each of us had seen only in movies. I composed a calm face to reassure my cousins as they asked what the sound had been. Our minds flooded with ideas: imagination suggested it was a warning to take shelter from a potential bomb. Or maybe it signified an approaching hurricane or blizzard. Adding to the eeriness, the number of skiers dwindled until minutes would pass before we would see even a single one rushing down the mountain. However, as time progressed and the world remained the same, uninterrupted by blasts or strong winds, our nerves calmed slightly. But our pure delight never returned to pre-siren levels.

Upon reaching the bottom, we rushed inside and told of our adventure. Then, we asked my aunt what the sound meant. She explained the siren alerted people that it was 4pm, the end of the ski day, which accounted for the frightening lack of people we saw after the sirens. I first thought the story to be relatively anti-climactic. To build a dramatic start to a catastrophic
or life-changing experience and then reveal it was simply a daily measure of time seemed brutal. I soon realized this was fitting. We were shocked back to reality from the eternal bubble of our hike by a measure of time. It was not a bomb nor a natural disaster that would end our pure joy. Time was the culprit, reminding us of its presence through the sirens.
Watched
By Ariella Rosen ('18)

I see you there on the shelf
And I know you see me too.
I know your eyes are plastic
And I know they can't look out,
But I know that you are looking
And staring into my soul.
Stop it!
Don't look at me that way!
You have no business judging me.
There—now you are turned to the wall.
That should shut you up.
But I know you are still looking
Through the back of your plastic head.
I'll throw a blanket over it.
Surely that will be enough?
But it won't be, will it?
You'll watch me till the day I die.

Photograph by Lyla Rose ('18)
come, take a walk on the other side.
let me kiss you in the pouring rain.
let me make you insane.
let me tell you that you are okay.

come, take a break and sit on the concrete.
let me kiss the sparks in your fiery soul.
let me make you alive.
let me tell you to stop dancing on the flatlines.

come, take a flight to the other galaxy.
let me kiss your scars away.
let me make you stay.
let me tell you that it's not your game.

come, take a deep breath and let go.
let me kiss you again like yesterday.
let me make you my lost heart and cracked soul.
let me tell you that you're not the only one.
Procrastination
By Alexa Sklar ('18)

It’s the night before an exam. It’s a rather important exam, worth 15% of your semester grade. You knew about this particular exam weeks in advance but you were totally busy and had no time whatsoever to study. I mean, who would? A new season of Orange is the New Black was just released.

Do you have any goals? Responsibilities? Opportunities to improve the quality of your life? Well right here in this essay, you’re going to acquire the skills you need to put them off for as long as possible, preferably until the last minute. This, my friends, is called procrastination, and its truly an art form. Even the most determined, hard-working minds can set aside their ambitions and simply leave them to later. Just by reading this essay you’ve taken a step in the right direction because I’m sure there’s something more important you could be doing right now! So give yourself a pat on the back and enjoy.

Still not quite sure what procrastination is? Here’s another example: your project is due in 20 minutes. All you’ve written is the title and your name. You’re still iffy about the title and you’re considering a topic change. However, you’re finally about to beat your high score in this really cool game. Five more minutes won’t hurt.

Now, how does one become good at procrastination, you ask? I’ll tell you later. That, my fellow lazy dawdlers, was step number one. If there’s one piece of advice I could give you, it’s: “Just leave it to later. If you’re lucky, later never comes.” That way, you can avoid the task altogether. Later can be any time that isn’t now. Here’s a technique I like to use; set yourself a time limit, like “I’ll start at 8:00.” Tell yourself you’re truly going to start at 8:00, no excuses. However, when 8:00 does roll around, (this part is very key) you must cancel your plans and postpone them to a later date. Just keep doing this. Another technique I particularly enjoy is one I like to call the “Too Late!” Again, set yourself a time limit like 8:00. When you check the clock and it’s a different time, 8:01 for example, you must wait until later to start your work. It’s too late now. Don’t worry, once you get started you’ll get the hang of it. Hopefully it’ll soon become a habit to you and you can start doing it mindlessly!

Step number two: Lack any and all motivation and interest. It’s important to find the subject of whatever task you must do to be utterly boring and useless. So begin to dissect the assignment and find everything you dislike about it. If in the rare case it’s a topic you’re interested in, think about how much you loathe work and would rather be sleeping right now. That one always does the trick. It’s just so much easier to not do work. There are so many other things you could do. Unless of course, there are other things you have to do. Those are off-limits. Remember your mission; to avoid mandatory tasks at all costs.

Still not convinced? Here’s another example: You receive a phone call from your friend. Apparently, there’s a job opening at her office in a field you’re interested in. She says
you have a really good chance of getting it, and should apply right away. You totally meant to, except this call took place a year ago and they’ve already replaced the employee. Oops.

Step three: Think of all the other things you can do instead that are so much more important and will definitely benefit society such as drawing a face on your stomach, naming it Frank and reenacting a scene from the Titanic in which Frank plays the role of Rose. Keep reminding yourself that this is a much better use of your time.

Step four: Ignore your hopes and dreams of life and begin the spiral into depression. This is my favorite step. All you have to do is remind yourself that no matter how simple a task may seem, it’s utterly pointless and won’t do anything to change the fact that our world is slowly deteriorating. Think about how not doing your history project is so much better than murdering someone, which many people do every day. Begin to contemplate life and our purpose on this earth in the first place. Certainly it isn’t to spend our days doing work. Also, while doing this, remember how small you are as a human being and how little an impact you will make in your life. This will definitely help with the whole “spiral into depression part.”

If all fails, think about the fact that this world has allowed Donald Trump to succeed.

Doesn’t procrastination sound wonderful and not at all life-ruining? Don’t forget to incorporate these four steps into your everyday life and you too can become a master procrastinator.
Hiding from Time
By Ariella Rosen ('18)

I carve a little hole in my wall of obligations.
It is my burrow, my cozy nest.
I curl up tight and snug inside to weather out the storm,
for in my burrow there is no time:
My test is not tomorrow. It is not 1 am.
I am completely alone: just me with my thoughts
and the games on my phone.
Time does not pass and my work isn’t due,
So why has the grass been sprinkled with dew?
The clock reads 3 am.
I’ve played all the games and they’ve stopped being fun.
But the dew means defeat; I can’t let it in.
I’m tired and empty, but I must pull through:
To sleep perchance to dream, and that won’t do.
The slumbering mind links day past with morning to come,
But morning must never come, for I have not slept!
To think time would stop was incredibly dumb.
Apparition
By Lucy Brewster ('18)

The night was icy but I didn’t mind
Stars hung like crystals on a chandelier
The air was crisp and smelled of Christmastime
this was my favorite time of the year
I reminisce about when we first met
Two years ago under the same night stars
My memories of you don’t fade quite yet
In the same place, but now I have these scars
Our grave confrontation came far too soon
A pretty face yet ice cold to the touch
You froze me forever under the moon
I ran from you but could not break your clutch
In a split second everything was gone
Now I haunt the grounds I used to walk on

Photograph by Lyla Rose ('18)
What Comes Next
By Mira Overbye ('20)

A bell tolls in the distance. One, two, three... Eleven strikes of Big Ben. The streets are empty save for the occasional drunk sailor stumbling back to their ship. I stay close to the shadows, not that it really matters. No one notices me as I walk along in the rain. I have completed most of my errands for the night. All that remains are three, bothersome chores: the house with the green roof, the alley next to the theater and a forgotten corner of London.

I’m closest to the corner, so I turn down the street and cross Blackfriars Bridge. Walking along an unmarked path along the Thames, I notice old inns and taverns with their lights still on. Like many, they burn foul smelling coal to heat up the buildings. Even this late at night, dark smoke rises from the chimneys.

I check my pocket watch. In the light of a streetlamp, I see that the hands are pointing at twelve. I turn down an unmarked street. Newspapers, broken bottles and rotting wood litter the alley. In the very back, next to a stack of old crates, sits a kitten. Why this was my assignment, I don’t know. Nonetheless, I pick the wet fur ball and place her in one of my pockets. She doesn’t agree. Instead of sitting in the driest place possible, the little kitten climbs up my arm, onto my shoulder and into my hood. Fine by me. I pull out my map and curse. I overshot the theater and now I have to double back.

My book has two names left. Forty names are crossed out, with forty locations checked off. The kitten had no name. “Do you want a name?” I get a meow in response. “How about Midnight?” The cat purrs in agreement. Straggling actors leave the theater, running to escape the rain. That’s fine. It’s not like they can see me, cloaked in shadows. My work is solitary.

Down another street. Past more crates and scattered newspapers. Sitting in a corner, I see the shape of a child. Maggie. Or at least that’s the name I was given. She’s eight years old, the fifth child of ten.

“Hello, Maggie?” I tap her on the shoulder. Her tired eyes look up. “I’m here to take you home.”

“Home?” Her voice is small. She shrinks away from me, moving deeper into her corner.

“Here, wanna hold Midnight?” I offer her the kitten. She stares at me, wondering what I could be plotting. Once she decides that I’m not a threat, she takes the kitten in one hand and mine in her other.

And we walk on, through night and rain. Just a pair of shadows. The house with the green roof is nearby, merely a five minute walk away. Once we arrive, I lead Maggie through the backdoor and up a flight of stairs to a bedroom. Inside, a little boy sits next to the window, watching the teardrops run down the pane.

“Are you here for me? Mommy said someone would come soon.”
“Yes.” I have nothing else to say. I’ve been doing this for five thousand years and I still don’t know what to say.

“What comes next?” He turns his eyes from the window and locks them on me.

I just offer him my hand. A distant clock strikes one. I take a key from my pocket and open a doorway that the living cannot see.

See, it’s my job to show the dead home.
Atheisn’t
By Miles Boyer (‘21)

Plot:
An open Atheist named Dominic Waters challenges himself to live in a highly religious neighborhood for one year. He decides to live in a small unknown town called Fobala in Wyoming, where every citizen is a Hihelist, which is a follower of a fairly new religion named Hihelism. Everything seems fine at first, but after a while, he finds out that there is more to this neighborhood than meets eye, and some serious undertones that have been kept secret for good reason.

The sun rose once again on the small town of Fobala, as a moving truck came from the East, and parked in front of a house for sale. Fobala usually doesn’t see new people, since it’s for the most part unknown to the rest of the world, so this was an exciting site to those who saw it. The truck’s door swung open, and a man with purple dyed hair walked out. He pulled out the “For Sale” sign and said, “Welp, guess this is where I’m staying.” He walks to the door, but as he was about to turn the doorknob, a hand touched his shoulder. He quickly turned around to see a small, middle-aged woman with a strange symbol on her shirt. “Sorry for startling you,” said the woman in a gentle voice, “I’m just giddy to finally see a new face. I’m Janice, and welcome to Fobala! We are so happy to have you as a new member of our community!” Although her entrance was out of the blue, Dominic appreciated the gesture. She handed him a pamphlet, titled “Welcome to Fobala,” which stated facts about the neighborhood, and even had a map. However, there was this strange looking building on the map that Dominic didn’t recognize. He turned to Janice and asked her, “what’s this building?” as he pointed to the strange building. Janice stared at him with confusion. “That’s the Latripo. That’s where we Hihelists go to worship Xara.”

“Xara?” said Dominic, trying to understand what on earth Janice was talking about. “Who is Xara?”

“She’s the goddess of hope and peace. She’s the leader of all the gods. You’re joking with me, right?” She began to inch forward, causing Dominic to press against the door as her face became more and more distressed. “You know what a Latrio is, right? You know who Xara is, right? YOU’RE A HIHELIST, RIGHT?”

Dominic sighed and said, “Oh boy, this is going to be awkward to say. Listen, I know that you have the right to believe whatever you want, and I’m not saying you’re wrong for being religious. But personally, I don’t believe in any god.”

“Wha...What are you saying?”

Dominic put his hand on her shoulder, and said, “Janice.... I’m an Atheist.”

Her face immediately turned from distressed and shocked, to ominous and angry. She stared at
Dominic with a death glare that sent a chill down his spine. Time felt like it froze around them, and for a split second, it seemed as if Janice’s eyes flashed red. “Listen, you heathen!” She said in an assertive and angry tone. “I don’t know who made you believe that horrible ideology. But you better save yourself before it is too late. Xara knows the evil in you and she will not regret punishing you with pain and suffering you don’t even want to imagine! She is real! She knows all! And she wants to see you wiped from this planet that she created!” She stepped back and began to laugh. Her eyes turned bloodshot, her smile turned grimson, and she continued her monologue without letting her eyes of him once. “The people of this town will watch Xara as she shatters your bones into a million. We will dance around you as you cry! We will torture you until you can't take it anymore!”

“YOU. WILL. DIE.”

Dominic was pressed against the door in terror as Janice delivered her death threat, and once she noticed this, she calmed down, while still maintaining her angry look. “Beware Dominic. Because moving her was the worst mistake you’ve ever made.” She grabbed his shirt, and brought him down to her level. “Consider this town your grave.” She let go, and walked back into her house, which turned out to be next to his. Dominic began to contemplate everything that had just happened. “Great.” Dominic said in a sarcastic, but still scared tone. “In the first five minutes being here, I’ve already received a death threat from my neighbor.” He sighed, and walked into his house and muttered, “This is going to be a long year.”

Night fell upon the small town, and the streets were vacant. However, the moment the clock struck midnight, a man appeared from one of the houses. He ran across the streets and roads, fearfully looking at every alleyway or shadowy area. He eventually reached the entrance of the Latrio, and slightly pushed on the door. The doors awung right open and he rushed in. He ran up to the piano, and began to push it away from the wall, trying to make as little sound as possible. Once he could fully see the back of the piano, and immediately noticed a passcode lock on the back of the piano. He pulled a piece of paper out of his pocket which said, “130 141 162 141.” He typed in the code and the back of the piano came undone, revealing a key, he grabbed the key, and pushed the back of the piano back into place. He ran to the isle, grabbed the carpet that ran across it, and yanked it off. This revealed a locked entrance, which he unlocked to see a ladder that led to an area under the Latrio. He climbed down as quickly as possible, and found a hallway that branched off into other areas of the underground tunnel, with one leading to a giant room with one light in the middle shining on a small pillar. The light didn’t reach far, with all the walls being shrouded in darkness. He approached the pillar to see a list of names written across them, some being crossed out in red. He scanned the pillar until he found one name. Jonas Antonis. His name. He stood there, paralyzed in fear. “How?” he said to himself, “How did they find out?” He began to step back, but as he so, a tall figure in a mysterious robe stabbed him in the back. He dropped to the floor, unable to speak because of the unbearable pain he was in. “I see you have found our little hideout. How clever
you are. But you are not the only one.” The figure slowly walked towards what seemed to be a light switch, and yelled to the walls, “Rise you heathens! Let this man here your cries!” The figure flipped the switch, and the room lit up with a red tainted light, revealing hundreds of cages across the walls, filled with people covered in blood and bruises, crying out for help. Tears were running down all of their faces, and Jonas could not believe what he was seeing. The figure grabbed him, pulled the knife out of his back, and yelled, “Now, YOU SHALL PAY THE ULTIMATE PRICE!” as they stabbed him in the stomach. Jonas blacked out, was dragged across the floor, and then was thrown into a cage as a man crosses out his name in red. “Don’t worry Jonas, you will not die,” said the figure, “Not yet. But you will experience a life so unbearable that you wish you did die. You have nowhere to run. You have nowhere to hide. All you can do now is suffer, and cry. Because this is not just the wrath of men, this is the wrath of the gods.”

“THIS IS XARA’S WRATH!”
To be Continued...

Photograph by Ariella Rosen ('18)
Haikus
By Sam Brody ('20)

The rain falls softly,
The crow’s tune puts me to sleep,
Forever I wait.

Bling Bling! CP watch,
Show my good body language,
Rodney! Stop talking.

“Math Class Drawing of an Anonymous Subject”
by Conor Landry ('18)
Cannonball

By Zev Ginsberg ('21)

I slide across the floor and nearly tip. Drunk, punk-loving Texans high above me, the unmistakable stench of the Devil’s lettuce clogging the sweaty air, electrified with the guttural chanting of the crowd.

Cannonball! Cannonball! Cannonball!
Quickly, I regain control, keep my balance, and point myself toward the stage to watch the end of the show.

But then…
Sweet Jesus, would you look at this dude!
Cannonball! Cannonball! Cannonball!
Black-rimmed spectacles cover red-rimmed eyes. A shock of yellow hair spiced up with streaks of something nasty. Black shirt, black jacket, black boots, and black jeans with two white socks poking out at the ankles. His hair wild, his body loose and wiggly, his smile crazed. This man looks like an emo golden retriever.
Cannonball! Cannonball! Cannonball!
He approaches without warning. I pretend not to notice, keeping a close watch out of the corner of my eye.
Cannonball! Cannonball! Cannonball!
He’s nearly on top of me now. Black fingernails creep silently from a leather coat pocket, playfully reaching out.
Cannonball! Cannonball! Cannonball!
We touch. Heart rate quickens, goosebumps rise, terror consumes me.
Cannonball! Cannonball! Cannonball!
His grip tightens, and I feel a sharp pain in the small of my back, merciless gravity tearing my legs from my body.
Cannonball! Cannonball! Cannonball!
A brief flush of relief as he sets me down, preparing for round two. He pulls again, harder this time, almost knocking me off my perch.
Cannonball! Cannonball! Cannonball!
If a tree falls in the forest, and no one hears it, does it make a sound?
Three angels swoop in and knock the Golem down.
I am not safe, nor will I ever be. I am prepared. I will always be ready.
Appearances
By Courtney White ('21)

Important to everyone.
Your judgement based upon.
Gallons of tears spilt from the cups of eyes because of “inconspicuous” whispers.
Bodies thrown from atop cliffs with only words of disdain flashing through their heads.
Hearts that took it all but couldn't survive.
Only the weak though.
Me.
I stand strong and tall.
The Story of Stalingrad
Daniel Faktorovich ('21)

Imagine yourself in Volgograd in 1943. Specifically, see yourself there in the first month of that year. You are a soldier on limited rations who might not actually be supporting the cause you are fighting for. The most important thing, however, is how massive the battle is, and you have no real understanding when stuff will happen. What I am describing right now is the Battle of Stalingrad, a battle on the Eastern Front of World War II that was fought between the Germans and their allies against the Russians, or Soviets.

Stalingrad, now Volgograd, is a city on the Volga River in Southern Russia, and was an industrial town when the battle occurred. It was named in honor of Joseph Stalin, the Russian Communist Party leader and de facto dictator. Despite being in Southern Russia, it is a colder than average city, as most of Russia is. Finally, it is also a city full of narrow streets, which would make the fighting there savage.

Now, a bit of background on the two leaders involved in the fight: Stalin, the aforementioned dictator, was unbelievably brutal. In his rule, 20 million people were murdered by his regime.

Many of these people were enemies of the party, which is bad enough conduct of a leader, but fairly standard of a tyrannical dictator. However, more shockingly, he killed many members of his own party who didn’t radically disagree with him or pose a threat to his rule. He would go to massive lengths in order to satisfy his paranoia. In the case of the famous communist Leon Trotsky, he forced him to flee and had the NKVD, roughly translating to National Internal Affairs Agency, a predecessor to the KGB, roughly translating to State Security Agency, track the man down to Mexico, where he was assassinated. By the way, the story of the murder in Mexico is not an exaggeration; Trotsky was shot in his home in Mexico. It takes a remarkably paranoid man in order to kill someone living over 6,600 miles from his location.

Stalin was obviously terrible, yet his counterpart was either worse or the same, though that is a debate nobody should ever have. Adolf Hitler was probably one of the worst people that have ever lived. In his lifetime, he was responsible for taking the lives of 10-20 million people that did absolutely nothing to him. Like Stalin, Hitler took power in a new and unstable government. However, unlike Stalin, the government he exploited was a republic, which meant he had to amass support. What was beneficial for him was that Hitler was a gifted demagogue who amassed the support of Germany’s community of embittered World War I Veterans, appealing to them with his incredibly inflammatory message that Germany lost because of the nation being riddled with Bolshevik traitors. He told these veterans that their sacrifice was betrayed by these Bolsheviks, and associated the Bolsheviks with Jews. He also talked a lot about making a new German Empire, a Third Reich (German for empire), to succeed the Holy Roman and German empires. He also appealed to their nationalistic pride,
talking about how Germans were racially superior to everyone else. Racism was far more acceptable in that world than in this one, and considering how many political parties there were in Germany, it wasn’t very difficult for Hitler’s Nazis to achieve the plurality in the German Parliament after the 1932 election.

Hitler was obviously in a good position as the leader of a powerful party in Germany. However, since his party did not own a majority, he was not guaranteed the position of Chancellor, the German equivalent of Britain’s Prime Minister. Unfortunately, that decision fell to the German President, Paul Von Hindenburg, the namesake for the ill-fated airship, who was ill-fated to make a terrible decision. He sadly appointed Hitler as Chancellor and when Hindenburg died in 1933, Hitler manipulated the system and took over as Leader, with uncheckable dictatorial powers.

In August, 1939, the Russians and Germans signed a nonaggression pact and agreed to share Poland when the two countries would invade the place. That invasion happened on September 1, just 9 days after the treaty was announced. World War II had begun and Warsaw fell in October. Two days after the invasion began, France and England declared war on Germany, though not Russia, as Stalin did not pose a threat to the Western European allies. Hitler had his way with the smaller European countries of Norway and the parts of Czechoslovakia he did not control before the war (Britain let him have some of the country to avoid war earlier). In 1940, Hitler invaded France and the Low Countries and ran over the territory in 46 days. Hitler was looking like a world beater before he faced off against Winston Churchill’s Britain. Hitler knew he needed air superiority before he could invade England. Yet, he failed in one of the biggest air battles ever, the Battle of Britain, against the British Royal Air Force (RAF). Hitler was stifled but hardly discouraged, as for years he wanted to invade Russia to give Germans living space and also kill Jews. His attention quickly switched to the Soviet Union and the only leader who could equal him in power and brutality: Joseph Stalin.

In May, 1941, Hitler’s troops went into Russian-controlled Poland in one of their Blitzkrieg (Lightning war) attacks. Hitler’s Wehrmacht (Military) had come up with the most impressive military strategy that the 20th century would see in the Blitzkrieg. This strategy comprised of the Wehrmacht hurling a bunch of tanks and infantry into the territory he wanted to conquer and sending planes ahead of them to destroy everything in the ground troops’ path. Hitler saw the success of this new idea no opposing commander could defend against and thought he could use it against Russia. However, since Russia was so massive, he needed a wide attack to accommodate the inevitably large theatre of war. Thus, Operation Barbarossa (the attack’s code name) was a three-pronged attack with Army Group North going after Leningrad, Army Group South going for the Volga River to tie up other Russian troops, and Army Group Center going to the Russian capital, Moscow.

Eventually, the attack reached Moscow, but a bloody resistance from the Russians, who were well aware that the price of losing was slavery, saved the city from Hitler’s grasp.
The next year of fighting was mostly located in the oil rich regions of the Caucasus and Azerbaijan before Hitler had his worst idea of the war: (Keep in mind that this idea was worse than the idea of trying to become the first European nation to successfully invade Russia) he thought that he could try to launch an urban battle in the autumn against troops that were battle tested in urban combat and winter warfare; however, Hitler’s troops were not tested in urban combat and winter warfare.

Hitler’s troops attacked the city, finding predictable amounts of difficulty in the process. The Russian strategy was highly deadly, but if you have ever studied Russian history, you would know that the Russian generals could not care less about preserving the lives of the soldiers fighting under their command. The Russian military strategy throughout history has been to throw people in the way of the enemy with little preparation and hope their dead bodies slow the enemy down. This pattern in Russian history was on display again, with Stalin ordering his troops to not take one step backward. He also ordered that those who ran away be shot at by their compatriots. This horrible manner of fighting was necessary, however, due to the Russian strategy of hugging the Germans, fighting them in tight quarters. The result of close fighting is especially savage fighting, and considering that Hitler wanted to put the Russians into slavery, Stalin’s army wasn’t going to give a room, let alone a house to the Germans.

The Germans, pushing through heavier casualties than they had ever seen, eventually took over most of the city. However, Stalin was not willing to let the city that bore his name come into German hands. He was willing to let every Russian die before that city fell. Meanwhile, the Germans were consistently moving troops from their flank into the city in order to continue the bloody street fight. To replace these troops, the Germans installed Italian and Romanian divisions on the flanks. These troops were poorly trained and had low morale.

The German flank was obviously a weakness in the German line because of the poor troops. It was also a weakness that the German commander Friedrich Paulus could not afford to have. The flank is the weakest position on a line because it can only be reinforced from one direction, the center. Also, if the flank falls, the enemy could surround you. Paulus, however, needed to keep the city, and he had to hope that the troops on the flank would not see action.

The Russians very much understood that the Germans were weak on the flank because of the massive casualties inflicted on them, leading to necessary reinforcements in the city. Finally, the Russians launched their legendary counterattack. They swept the Romanians and Italians before encircling Stalingrad. The Russians had finally gained the upper hand in the most brutal battle of the century.

The Germans, on the other hand, were trapped in Stalingrad in the dead of an unusually cold winter. They were low on food and had no suitable winter clothing. Paulus, seeing that the battle was unwinnable, asked Hitler for permission to try a breakout while he could. This breakout probably wouldn’t have worked, as the Russians, under Georgy Zhukov, had a million troops at their disposal, but Paulus didn’t really have another option.
Hitler, making another bad decision, refused to let Paulus abandon Stalingrad and tried to resupply by air. The problem with that idea was that the German force in Stalingrad was massive, too massive for air resupply. Additionally, the weather was not suitable for flying. The Sixth German Army trapped in Stalingrad was also far larger than the average German army. Paulus was commanding about 250,000 men in Stalingrad. This made it harder to resupply Paulus no matter the conditions.

The idea to resupply by air predictably did not work, so Paulus again asked for the right to break out of the Stalingrad pocket. However, this time, Erich von Manstein, the commander of Army Group Don, the force that was prosecuting the war in the Caucasus Mountains, told Hitler that he could instead break the encirclement from the outside. This was also a terrible idea, as Stalingrad was a lost cause, and the German attack would have been met by a million Russians. However, Manstein had Hitler’s ear, and Operation Winter Storm was launched on December 12, 1942. The attack initially found some success, in part because the Russians only used 150,000 men in defense of the siege despite having a vastly larger capability. However, Paulus’ starving troops made no effort to link up with Manstein’s men when they had to, and Manstein was beaten back; the Stalingrad pocket not rescued.

The siege grew more and more terrible, with Paulus’ men being reduced to a skeleton army by the Russian artillery and aircraft. The Russian general actually offered surrender with good terms, such as good treatment and repatriation after the war. However, Hitler did not let Paulus surrender. On January 30, Hitler promoted Paulus to Field Marshal. The German leader believed that Paulus would either fight to the death or kill himself. Paulus did neither: only 4 days later, Paulus surrendered to the Russian Army.

The Soviet Union won the war, along with the British and the Americans, whose impact in Europe was hard to see at this point. However, if the Germans had not been beaten at Stalingrad, it is possible that there would have been far more bloodshed in Europe, or worse, a German Empire that exterminated its minorities. The Battle of Stalingrad was a truly epic struggle between two sides: the imperial Nazis and the Russian empire. The reason you don’t see many Russian generals in this story is that the generals did not decide this battle—the soldiers did. That is the really epic piece of this battle. The Russians won because they were fighting for their lives and were determined to do everything necessary to protect their families, who would have been forced into slavery under German rule. This battle was an epic struggle for survival. The winners were the people who needed to win most.
The Unmasking Of A Murderer: Who Is The Real Scranton Strangler? The Truth May Surprise You
By Matthew Neschis ('19)

When the last season of *The Office* went off the air in 2013, it left one of TV’s greatest mysteries unsolved: Who is the Scranton Strangler? Since all nine seasons have become available on Netflix, the popularity of this inquiry has only increased, especially among the large amounts of young people who have recently discovered the show. While there have been numerous fan theories on a whole host of sites and blogs devoted to this topic, the common thread points to the character Toby Flenderson as the dreaded Scranton Strangler. While there may be merits to this argument, there is ample evidence that the true culprit might very well be another character not on the radar screen of fans.

The Scranton Strangler is a fictional serial killer who terrorizes Scranton, Pennsylvania, the setting of *The Office*, until he is finally caught in the show’s seventh season. This character is continually discussed by Toby Flenderson, the human resources representative at Dunder Mifflin, who was chosen to become part of the jury for the Scranton Strangler trial. Despite being part of the jury that ultimately convicted the suspected killer, George Howard Scub, Toby maintained in subsequent episodes that Scub was wrongly convicted, thus keeping the mystery alive. Many fan theories point to Toby’s guilty conscience as the reason for his declaration of Scub’s innocence. Or maybe even some desire that he didn’t want the credit of being the town’s most notorious killer going to someone else. These theories, while plausible, are wrong. Below I have compiled convincing evidence that the identity of The Scranton Strangler is none other than Roy Anderson.

Roy Anderson makes his first appearance in the show’s pilot episode as the boyfriend and three year fiancé of Pam Beasley, the secretary at Dunder Mifflin. Roy met Pam while working in the warehouse of Dunder Mifflin. When their relationship falls apart in the second
season, Roy takes a turn for the worse. He stops taking care of himself, starts drinking, and is ultimately arrested for drunk driving.

Throughout the show’s first three seasons, Roy’s behavior gets worse, finally coming to a head in his first violent outburst in Episode 18 of the third season, “Cocktails.” In this episode, Pam decides to come clean and tell Roy about the time she cheated on him by kissing office co-worker Jim Halpert. After hearing the news, Roy becomes enraged and destroys the bar they were drinking at with his brother. The episode ends with Roy telling his brother, “I’m going to kill Jim Halpert!”

In the following episode, “The Negotiation,” Roy decides to confront Jim at work. A fight ensues but is quickly dissolved once Dwight pepper sprays Roy. After this confrontation, Roy is fired from Dunder Mifflin and is not shown again until Season 5. These two scenes provide proof of Roy’s true character: a short-tempered alcoholic with a criminal record. Roy has no job, his fiancée dumped him, and his life is ruined. In my opinion, this is the perfect model for a killer.

The first time we hear about the Scranton Strangler is the day Pam and Jim have their first child in Season 6’s episode “The Delivery.” Andy, a coworker of the couple, buys them a newspaper from the day of their child’s birth. However, the dismal front-page headline reading, “Scranton Strangler Strikes Again,” seems to bother Andy and spoils his thoughtful gift. This day is extremely significant because it provides an important clue that Roy is the Strangler. Roy was engaged to Pam for over 5 years, and judging from his multiple violent outbursts, one can conclude he was unraveling after their breakup. Once Roy heard that his ex-fiancée was having a child with the man who basically ruined his life, it sent him over the edge.
Although this is not revealed in the show, my theory of the Scranton Strangler’s first murder is as follows: Needing to cool off a bit, Roy decides to go to his favorite bar to get drunk. Realizing the alcohol isn’t working after four or five drinks, Roy storms out and refuses to pay the tab. When the bartender demands that Roy pay, a scuffle ensues. Unable to control himself, Roy commits his first murder that day, strangling the bartender to death.

The second clue that Roy is the real Scranton Strangler occurs in Season 7’s episode, “Viewing Party.” In this episode, the office workers crowd around a computer to watch the intense car chase between the Scranton Police and Strangler. If you look closely enough, you will notice that the car evading the police is the same car that previously appeared in the episode “Gossip.” This same car model (2000 Mercury cougar) has been spotted multiple times in the Dunder Mifflin parking lot. Although this doesn’t prove that it was Roy, it shows that the Scranton Strangler is in fact one of the workers at Dunder Mifflin. At the same time, this car chase provides striking evidence against the theory that Toby is the Scranton Strangler. Toby has been seen driving multiple cars throughout the show but never a 2000 Mercury Cougar.

Roy doesn’t reappear in the show again until his wedding day in Season 9. In this episode, it is once again hinted that Roy is the true Scranton Strangler. This hint is the large amount of wealth Roy accumulates in a short period of time after leaving Dunder Mifflin. Many of the characters, such as Jim and Pam, are shocked by the huge house and fancy butlers Roy has at his wedding. When Jim does some investigating, he hears from Daryl that Roy accumulated his wealth by running a very successful gravel company. This reason does not seem plausible because not only is Roy continually portrayed as a dimwit in the show, but his only formal work experience was working in the Dunder Mifflin shipping department. In addition, Roy was fired from his past job for trying to fight someone, as well as charged with a DUI. Many of the show’s characters are skeptical as to how Roy got so wealthy, hinting that he became rich through illegal means. Roy was always seen as a violent idiot with a drinking problem, not someone who could start and run a successful company. Roy’s questionable morals are another factor that point towards him as the Scranton Strangler.

Despite the commonly-held belief, Toby Flenderson cannot be the Scranton Strangler for two main reasons. The first has to do with Toby’s body type. Toby Flenderson is an feeble
old man at a mere 5'10” tall, hardly the body type of a serial strangler. Personally, I doubt that Toby has the strength needed to physically strangle a human being to death. On the other hand, Roy Anderson is a young, 6’4” tall man with a muscular build and violent tendencies, proving he is more than capable of murder by strangulation. The second reason Toby is not the Scranton Strangler is because of his calm personality. Throughout the show Toby is shown getting bullied and abused by his coworkers. However, we never actually see Toby get extremely angry, or even raise his voice to yell. Even in the most aggravating workplace, Toby finds a way to remain calm and collected at all times. This is practically the exact opposite of Roy’s behavior. Roy cannot control his anger, and once he receives bad news, his responses are violent.

*The Office* is one of the most binged shows on Netflix, and although the show went off the air 5 years ago, its biggest mystery is still the subject of one of TV history’s most hotly contested debates. After a thorough examination of multiple episodes, I have officially come to the conclusion that Roy Anderson is the Scranton Strangler. With the success of TV networks bringing back new episodes of popular series, such as *Roseanne, Will & Grace*, and *Gilmore Girls*, perhaps entertainment executives will see fit to bring back new episodes of *The Office* and resolve one of television’s most famous unsolved mysteries. Until then, as long as the Scranton Strangler remains free, nobody is safe.
A Rich Guy and the Black Tie
By Marlene Santos ('21)

There once was a young man who lived in a mansion. He was extremely wealthy and had all to his heart’s desire. He was an only child and his parents had passed not so long ago—leaving him with trillions of dollars and a few stocks to keep the mounds full—but he did not mind it since it meant he could spend of his days alone doing all the things he wanted, with all the money he owned.

All.
Alone.
And he liked it that way.

He spent his days indulging in the finest delicacies, sprawling on his velvet couch; doing all the kinds of things people with actual jobs beg for.

And he did it all with a simple, black bowtie.

This man was always dressed in the finest black-tie suits, for they made him feel important and even wealthier than he already was. Even when the occasion called for a different attire, he always managed to keep the bowtie with him, wrapped comfortably around his neck. Exercise, bedtime, and yes, even bathtime, that bowtie was a part of him, something that he never dared let go. It was his air, his wealth, all that ever mattered to him: all was implanted into this little, black, bowtie.

Ring!
A call.
Assuming it was just another one of those automated voices, talking about some “great offer” or asking to join some “beneficial survey,” he let it ring. Ring, ring, ringing: the only reason he keeps that phone. It livened up the mood. No one actually wanted to talk to him.

Ring! Ring! Ring!
Then, a voice message.
Strange.

This wasn’t one of the usual robotic voices that resided in his the telephone. These were sounds made by actual, living, organic, human vocal chords.

“Um, hello,” said the voice. “I’m not sure if this is the right number, but I’m kind of a friend of the family and I just recently heard of the death of two old companions of mine. I was just wondering if I could provide any living family members with some compensation.”

Compensation?
The man made a beeline for the phone.

“Yes, um, u… yeah, um, hello there.” The rich man wasn’t really eloquent; talking to others was not quite his thing.

“Oh, hello. Who’s this?” replied the caller.

“Oh, u-uuh, yeah… This is their son speaking to you, right now. At this moment.”
“Ah, yes. I remember you.”
“That’s me.”
“Well alright. I believe you as a family member would really benefit from this.”

*Does this mean he doesn’t know I’m rich?* thought the rich man. It made sense to him: you can’t benefit from compensation if you’re already rich. The friend must have never known about the mountains of money that his parents had accumulated and left for him to live on. Their orphaned child was more than capable of living comfortably without compensation from any kind soul.

But that did not stop anything.

Greed got the best of him. The man in the bowtie *loved* money, and if he could obtain all of it in the entire world at the expense of everyone else, he would try. No matter how little the amount was of this compensation, he had to take it; it was for him anyway.

But he couldn’t go out like this.

If the man on the phone could see him in his pitch black suit and perfectly fitted shoes, not to mention the bowtie wrapped around his neck, he would almost certainly think twice about rewarding such a wealthy individual with even two pitiful pennies. He would have to go incognito.

The rich young man did not have any butlers or maids—that just meant more people to forcefully listen to—so he had to dress himself. Fortunately, he found some common clothing in his late dad’s closet. It was nice to take a look at the clothes he wore, the clothes of a rich man who pretended not to be. Strange, but a certainly interesting concept that son had to embody for the time being.

After calling a taxi to meet him at the nearest corner store, which was almost a half mile walk from his great acres and mansion (good thing he decided to get there *before* calling it), he quickly arrived at the address the old friend gave him. It was a small humble home, not at all like the one the rich man was used to. As he pondered how even one person, let alone a family, could live well here, the door opened.

“Ahh. Welcome, son,” said the friend in order to greet the man.

*Son?* thought the rich man. It was not the title itself that fazed him; it was just the way it was used by an adult he hardly even knew that was strange.

Both men went inside and sat down, yet the friend did not leave the room to look for this so-called “compensation.” He just sat there, with the child of his two dear friends looking inquisitively back at him.

“Let’s cut to the chase: I know you’re rich.”

*Drats! There goes that compensation* thought rich one.

“But that doesn’t mean I won’t give you compensation”

The rich man was confused, but felt a little more at ease.

“But it’s not monetary, you see. This compensation is advice. I see you got dressed in your dad’s clothing. I doubt it was for my comfort, though it does help.” The rich young man
noticed a little grief in the friend’s eye as he talked.

“You were willing to go through a little trickery just to get some money you didn’t even need. Your parents weren’t like this.”

“I wasn’t raised by them,” replied the rich man. “I used to live with my aunt and her family.”

“Well that makes more sense,” replied the family friend as he got comfortable in his chair.

“Here is my compensation for you: please get rid of that bowtie.”

The young man was confused. Why on Earth would he ever ask me to do that?! To him, it made no sense, so he just sat there, shocked and confused.

The older one explained.

“That little bowtie is more than just an accessory. It never leaves your neck. You had to wear it even when you tried to disguise your social status. Next time I see you, get rid of all that greed of yours. You don’t need it and it just weighs you down. It’ll keep you chained to struggles you don’t even know exist yet.”

Then he paused, and looked down: “You risked your life for a trivial item.”

The friend had set up a test to see if the man would believe anyone who said they had money. These two had never met, yet the rich man came over even though he didn’t even know of the family friend’s existence; he could’ve been in real danger if it had been a kidnapper pretending to be trustworthy.

This friend wanted to make sure the rich man was aware of that danger and that he would let go of his greed before it caused problems for himself—or maybe others.

Yet upon hearing the friend’s final words, the rich man left his seat and the house as well, unaware of the test and ignoring the compensation. Typical. Even the holy book of the Christians says it’s easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.


Short Story
By Devyanshi Chandra ('21)

1) Stare at yourself in the mirror and question your worth
She knew what it was like to be unpopular, and she never wanted to go back to whatever she was then. It was sickening to see what she was.
But then, when everything was going fine, they told her to lose some weight in cheerleading practice. They told her that she was too heavy for them to pick up, and laughed it off.
They whispered to each other about how her ass was bigger than Canada.
She nodded and told them about having a rough time at home and said that she would lose enough weight for the party next friday.
She went home, disguising her tears as raindrops. She had already gone through anorexia once.

2) Let out whatever you feel, think, and want to say
She felt completely stupid doing this, but they couldn't know that. When they found out that she was on a 'diet,' they praised her. Everyone suddenly turned their attention towards her.
She got what she wanted—attention and popularity—but it wasn't her who got it.
She didn't want to eat anymore protein bars, and it'd only been a day. She had cover up her stomach grumbles with a stupid conversation starter.
And it'd only made her feel like she was stupid, needy, and a push-over.
But, she couldn't care. There were only seven more days.

3) Throw up every grain from your intestines and ignore what they have to say
Her mother had force-fed her mashed potatoes with one too many ounces of gravy and the over sprinkling salt. She didn't like it one bit.
She left her home early, and went to the gas station to shove three fingers down her throat.
She didn't want anything in her stomach, intestines. Nothing.
She just wanted to be pretty on the outside and have a certain place inside someone's heart.
She didn't need god damn food inside her stomach at all.
She just needed to be skinny.

4) Smile as hard as you can to stop the tears from falling
She had only lost three pounds, and it sicken you that she had to do so much for them. Her crush had told her that she was doing great and that she was looking pretty.
But he also told her that she should lose more if she really wanted to become one of them.
She came to you and asked how she looked nowadays. You told her that she was trying too hard to be something horrible, that she didn’t need to hurt herself to be beautiful.
She told you to shut up, and you did. Because you loved her the way that she loved him.

5) Regret everything that you've done
She knew that she wasn’t a nice person anymore. She made fun of you at so many different
levels, and *she* felt good about it in a sick way.

**They** Shoved *her* tumbling back, and pushed *you* to the ground. **They** kicked *you* in the stomach, saying *you* weren't good enough for this world.

*You* ignored **them**, but *she* didn’t.

6) **Dream about what once was your's**

*She* knew that *she* was doing well, but *she* didn't know that **they** needed more. **They** knew that **they** could break *her*, but **they** didn't know that *you* were stronger than **they** expected.  

*You* came up to **them**, and told **them** to stop telling *her* to starve *herself*. *You* stupidly told **them** all about *her* past; *you* told **them** how *her* father's death had made so many financial problems that *she* felt that not eating would save money. *You* told **them** how *she* was hurting and that *she* loved *him*.

*You* were so stupid, and *you* were oblivious to the fact that **they** could spread it. And yet *you* were so hopeful, that it hurt so bad.

7) **Pretend like you don't know what they're going to say**

*She* went to school with a confident smile on *her* face. **They** didn't enjoy that. **They** looked down at *her*, towering over *her* fracturing self.

"Let's see if she can raise the bar by tonight," *one* laughed.

"Never," *another* said, "let's throw her out before we lose our image."

"Exactly. Now tonight, and come ready. We know what we have to do," *he* said.

*You* were behind a tree, reading *her* favourite book and listening. *You* didn't sit there on purpose. That was not *your* mistake.

*Your* mistake was that *you* hadn't warned *her*.

8) **Quietly escape**

**They** had it all planned out. **They'd** humiliated *her* in front of the crowd, and revealed everything that *you'd* blurted out. **They'd** laughed at *her* and spilled out all of *her* hidden pills to show how hard *she'd* been trying.

It was only a plan to get *her* out of **their** way; and that **they'd** done perfectly.

*She* ran into the private rooms and unexpectedly ran into *you*. *You* asked *her* why *she* was crying.

All *she* did was slap *you*. *She* cried, "why did you tell them?"

*You* had no answer to that. And while *you* let *her* go into the bathroom and let *her* body cripple into a corpse, *you* were so oblivious to the fact that *you* were never going to see *her* again.

Never were **they** ever going to be able to forgive **themselves**.

Never would *he* ever shamelessly admit that *he* was playing a game with *her*.

Never would *her* parents ever see *her* graduate.

And it was all *your* fault—;at least, that’s what *you* thought.