

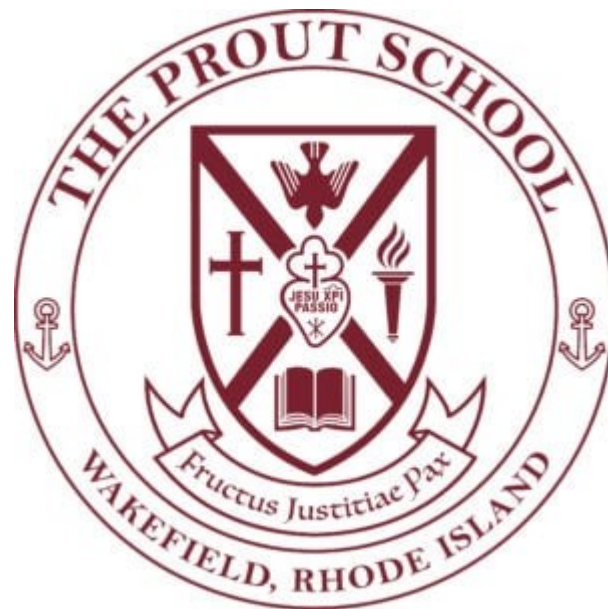
The Heart



March 2021

The Heart
A Literary Magazine
March 2021

The Prout School
4640 Tower Hill Road



Editor in Chief

Kate Plunkett

Faculty Advisor

Mr. Gould

At the very center of The Prout School community is the notion of The Heart. Within all human beings, the beating heart provides us with the distinct ability to love, care for others, and empathize. Most importantly, it is the place where we encounter God. The creative endeavors on the following pages embody The Heart, mind, and spirit of our community.

Cover artwork by Brian Laboissoniere, '23



Ashley Bush-Nickerson, '23



Phoebe Ferguson, '23

Melina Gardiner, '21

New England

It's not that New England isn't sunny or that it hasn't got charming weather.
It doesn't, but that's not the point.
The point is that when it's dark in New England- in the early, not yet dew-soaked spring,
or the winter months with their bitter, Grim Reaper shadowed world,
or the bracing, inescapable frigid chill of the middle-end of the harvest months-
-it's very, very dark.
The clouds choke the sky, the skeletal trees tangle and twist and cry in mourning,
and lure with their pointing,
all rough, brown-gray bark and leafless limbs.
A decaying child in the winter wind.
The shadows stretch long
despite that holy sun missing
and one traverses the graveyard with a stiff nose and a stiffer chest.
The fingers, toes, ears, and nose are the first to go,
and the beaches either crash and tumble with malevolent abandon
or creep silently,
hoping to smother the lonely passerby.
The moon dances to silent music, the bonfires glow,
and the stars shine prettily,
but the night bleeds into day as the incessant roots do their work,
spread against the maggots and dirt.
They break their shriveled skin and imperishable stone fingers up from the mixed, mud-covered
ground.
That blanket of dead grass, of dark, dark dirt crawling with half-rotten ants and worms and
black-shelled beetles,
and frightened spiked flowers aching to reach out,
is smothered by those shadows that form when there is no sun,
by the hiker's unforgivable boot
that descends as God's righteous Flood.
There are stone walls and crushed leaves, tombstones waiting and town life far away,
away from the distant, intolerant faces of supposed neighbors.

To us,
hotter places and those of milder weather are chaotic,
with murders, proper festivals with light and dance, endless summers or well-spent, sportive winters.
Spontaneous there, nothing so plotted as our cold crops and caustic comments.
There are buzzing casinos, walks for ice cream,
and happy, bouncing pets.
Where the shining people, even cold, quiet ones, have no inhibitions,
and nudge the minds of those like us, who are possessed by nothing but inhibitions.
To us, those places are of danger,
casual trips to shady gas stations, walks with silky suits,
secrets behind the bright, stretching smiles, outrageous desires,
and loud, barking policemen that care for the law, that hunt down some evil-doers.

That is not New England.
There's something about the air here, intangibly different.
It's stale, rich with platitudes, with the crisp scent of new death,
and the lingering stench of ancient fatal tales.
The people breathe out,
with secret obsessions bordering on addictions of anything more interesting than the coast's restrictions.
There's bubbling joy in other places,
charm that tumbles from red lips,
or laughs like a blasting trumpet traveling around a room,
the kind of humor that spills and drips.
It's unlike the slithering, smirking humor that radiates from deadpan eyes,
the type of laugh that stutters and stops,
that sometimes runs smooth as a rudder cutting through waves under solid skies.
Even the clouds, more often than not alone,
link together only to bring the rain,
to soak the land surrounded by the sea.
Surrounded, indeed,
because, to the west, there are people,
and to the east,
there are finned creatures and the breeding ground of storms.

God help a child that grows up with laughter from the deep.

Everything here is muted,
laughter and light are two of the ones.
We have trees lit up with flame, with golden apples and teeth of violent red leaves,
in those harvest months.
Their beauty choruses, a rhythm among the sickly sunlight's notes.
New England takes that light,
the unseen beams, and casts it about the struggling land.
Our rooms in the houses we are forced to love, as the sunlight streams in,
bow under the rough burning hand,
just as the trees, leaves, soil, boulders, hills, and people
stumble bow-legged, ragged and crippled,
from the shielded sunlight, a glow that grows like algae on lakes' ripples.
Lighthouses reside, beacons that drag sailors home, back to the land the fairies' abandoned and where
the fungi grows, where the critters trip and purr,
on cliffs of scraped rock.
Their light is safe, but even they flicker and are left for dead.
Our light doesn't fight the darkness, but joins it instead,
the kind of light that was never meant to reach the earth's bed.

New England likes to stare, whether burning, drowning, or following the timid mountains,
there remains a sea glassy-eyed gaze.

We judge, we speak below the waves,
and have to remind the others that we're here.
Frank, but somehow coy,
the people here are gray,
but their heads are bursting and the words escape
and are buried in the ground to infest and fly some time never.

We think we know so much.
I have lived here my whole life.
I know that other places,
other homes and inhabitants can be dark as well, can be deeper and way more than the impression
from a brief tourist trip.
Homes seep into your bones, settle in your mind.
I know not a lot about those other places,
other homes with bonfires,
with their own moon,
with their own people.
Other homes that are hard to define.
All I know is New England.
All my life is here, so.
It's failing light, sinking laughs, unsavory history, and sea salt-lined eyes,
people who are like the ocean in their bare and suffocating embraces.
The weather doesn't rule the day or the week or the tone of this home, no matter if it's muted or stark.
All I know is that when it's dark in New England-
-it's very, very dark.





Lilli Borke, '23

Eva Wibeto, '23

Dual Bus

My head jolts to the beat of the road's imperfections. A cloudy stench has long since filled the air- only its riders could imagine. A dreary existence- misunderstood at best. It serves as my humblest abode on the school's outskirts.

When I think of a school bus, a yellow alarm clock quickly infiltrates my mind. An unparalleled experience that the driver only adds to. That tension felt before an oncoming speed mountain. The uninviting narrow walkway restricting its passengers. Crossing the road is a treacherous journey in itself. It's easier to detest than to adore.

A mere bus ride reveals the mind's landscapes that went previously unexplored. Literature's lover, music's mistress, procrastination's paramour, reflection's romantic rendezvous. A grotesque representation of potential.

Each driver distracts from my dreamful intentions. One has perished, one traveled far, and countless were happy-go-lucky. An adequate job each has done, though some of the goldfish crackers began to stare back. Yet, I must be grateful for their endurance throughout each of my nauseous episodes.

There's no feeling I miss more than my numbing leg, nearly falling when I stand. I refuse to sit properly, rebellious I suppose. After all of those years of secretly snacking, and peering through the crevice between the window and the seat - I finally am appreciative.

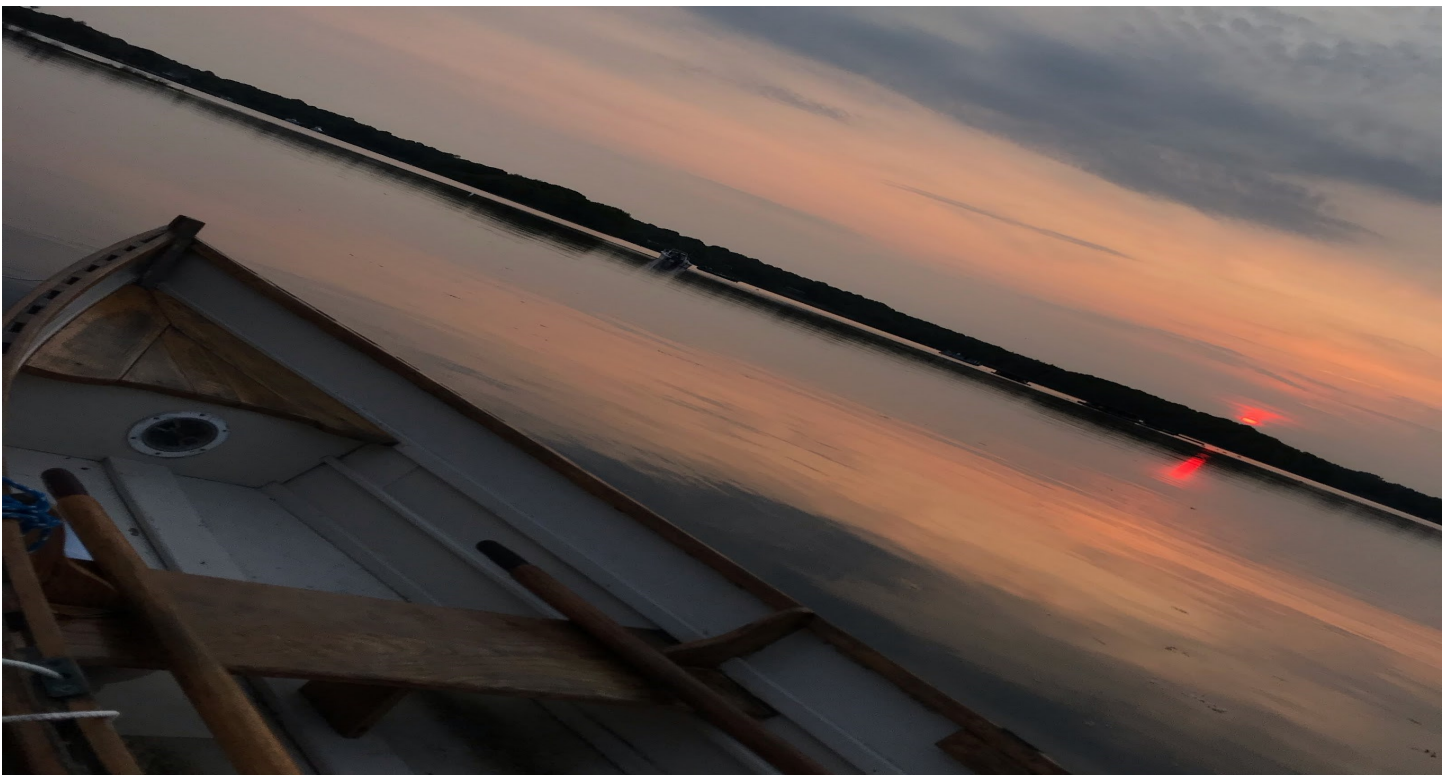
Writing this, I stare at an elegant bracelet with a delicate charm engraved with the word "Friend". A favor that I can never return. Who knew that someone so special lives only minutes away?

A young girl, unthreatening yet incredibly wise. Every moment with her is cause for celebration. A dance party, tossing a ball, listening to music, eating snacks, and even an uncomplicated conversation. It's one of those situations where you can't help but want to be involved in their life. You can't help but be there for their performances, you can't help but give them gifts, you can't help but share snacks with them. The fruit of my life truly does lie in the hands of others.

So yes, I truly adore the school bus. To delve deeper is to reveal all of its secrets. All of its unpleasant, incredible secrets.



Abbey DiIuro, '22



Rachel Kempf, '21



Haley Bush-Nickerson, '22

Phoebe Ferguson, '23

The Lighthouse

All around was rain and fog.
Alone in an ocean of black
The ship had nowhere to run,
Nowhere to turn back.

There was no sun.
There was no moon.
It was completely dark
Except for you.

The light cut through
The rain and fog,
And was a beacon of hope
In an ocean of fog.

The ship followed the light
With hope in its eyes,
That maybe it too
Would stand tall with pride.

As the ship drew close
It watched in glory
As the lighthouse continued to shine
And prosper without worry.

The ship had no doubts.
It had no fever.
After what seemed like years,
The ship was back in gear.

It was not stuck
Out in the ocean of gloom.
It was not alone
Because it had you.

He saved her soul
Because he shone so bright,
And because of that
She owed him her life.



Emily Wishart, '21



Shelby Dellasandro, '21

Riley Milhoua, '21

“Thank you”, the little girl said. She was about five or six, depending on the age her mother allows her children to dip dye the ends of their hair green. Her tight and slightly damp curls bounced with the movement of her steps as she began through the door her grandfather just opened for her; the creak would normally make her cringe, but her tiny feet tapped down the carpeted stairs regardless. Her bare feet gripped the musty green underneath and she ran her fingers over the oak rail alongside her. The little girl had been admiring the railing and its pretty light brown highlights ever since she was three years old and could reach it on her tippy toes. Before that an adult would hold her hand, but some days she needed to be carried down.

“Jackie”, her grandfather said softly, as if the power behind his voice could break the wall between the outside world and the tears behind her eyes. “Why don’t you take a seat on the sofa while I pick out a game for us to play?”. The little girl nodded and plopped herself down next to the plaid blankets stacked on the couch in the basement of her grandparents’ house. There was an imprint in the leather of the familiar shape of her legs, and that’s the way she liked it. Everyone in the Gibbs family didn’t bother sitting in Jackie’s spot on the couch or touching her dolls in her room or pushing her on certain things. It wasn’t that the little girl was spoiled, but everyone knew that Jackie simply lives in her own world, and sometimes it just happened to conflict with everyone else’s.

She sat on the couch, tiny hands folded over in her lap, watching her grandfather push his glasses back up the bridge of his nose and slowly walk to the wooden double doors full of dusty board games. She observed the watery-ness of his creased eyes, how they opened and closed slowly like an old blinking dog. Jackie’s own eyes were a deep brown with thin, straight lashes; they always seemed to stay open much longer than the average person’s.

She looked down and ahead at the glass coffee table, studying the dust bunnies on the rug underneath rather than the deck of cards her grandfather placed in front of her. “Jackie”, he said. “Mom said that last time you came over you really wanted to play Uno. Do you want to play this time?”. He kneeled down in front of the couch and took her tiny hands in his old, wrinkly ones, but Jackie’s eyes held onto the carpet in silence. “Ok”, she said.

The colors and symbols on the cards relaxed her knee bouncing under the glass table and stopped the twitch on the left side of her mouth. Sometimes, her grandfather would cautiously place a hand on her shoulder once in a while, as if he would pass right through her with contact.

“I want to play Operation,” said Jackie. Her grandfather sighed but contained the glassy look in his eyes. “Do you mind going to get it from the closet? My legs are a little worn out today”. Jackie nodded and pushed herself up from the sofa. Her attention went to every object in the room as she passed by, and only when her body moved past them did her eyes snap back and focus on something new. Only when her thin legs carried her past the oil painting of her grandmother’s slender face and bird-like neck did she draw her own eyes to the beautiful doors of the game closet; she ran her thin fingers and bitten nails over its chocolate brown surface, smooth like hot coffee. Gently, she grasped the grooves of the indented handles and pulled the doors apart. The brightness of the slightly yellow ceiling light in the reflection of the plastic wrappings made her squint and shudder. Regardless, she smiled back at the Monopoly man and his mustache, who always sits on the third shelf on top of the Risk box; it was quickly replaced with a look of disdain when she looked down at seventh space to the right on the bottom row. There was no yellow box and no round man with a big red nose like a circus clown, and there was nothing in its space except air. Her eyes darted across each row, scavenging for the game; her pale palms began to get clammy and an unsettling feeling sat in her stomach like a rock.

“Hi Operation Man”, she whispered. She shut her eyes closed, counted to three, and opened them once more and there he was, looking down at her from the side of his box on the top shelf. The color came back to Jackie’s face as she called back to her grandfather asking if she was alright and needed any help. She placed one bare foot after another onto the few inches of space on the bottom of the closet floor, her knees gently touching the edge of the bottom two shelves. No matter how tall she made herself in her head, her scrawny arm could not reach up to the Operation Man. Sighing to herself, she grabbed two squishy cushions of the chair in the corner of the room and stacked them in between the rough wooden floor of the closet and her cold feet. Her hands clung onto the taller shelves of the closet almost as if they were handles on a rock climbing wall.

The ongoing mission in her head was instantly put on the back burner when she noticed a glass fish on the shelf of games. Its edges were smooth and clear with swirls of yellow and green going through its interior like a marble. The fish had big, wide eyes as if it was staring back at Jackie; she had never seen a fish before, but they surely don’t have eyes as large and inquisitive as this one’s. She shuffled her feet on the floor of the closet a few centimeters closer to adjust her view of the shallow glass eyes. Every square inch of the transparent, smooth complexion of the fish was beautifully flawless except for a chip right beneath where the left eyebrow should be. Jackie’s eyes fixated themselves on the little indent like a robot zooming in on a threat. Unconscious of her own movement, she reached her arm out to touch the chip. Her doll-like fingers jerked suddenly, and the smooth glass fish was falling down, passing every game on every shelf of the closet, and shattered on the wooden floor below.





Sedona Wibeto, '21



Lilli Borke, '23

Chris Bell, '21
Views of Nature



Melina Gardiner, '21

Speaker, Whisper, and Sing

Speak, and whisper, scream, wail, and sing.
Drown in the drink with pretty sounds that ring.
That human noise is bubbling,
Like a misty, shimmering spring.
It's roaring and snarling,
Like the teeming jungle's mighty king.
I know those sounds, and you do, too.
They've been with you crying, giggling, gasping
From your hung-open mouth.
Yes, I make them now
Just as you do.
Speak, and whisper, scream, wail, and sing.
Downing the drink with awful sounds that spill.
Those notes are breaking, cracking with despair,
Like the smack of a hand that whistles through the air.
They're overlapping, tumbling,
Rising, growing as loud as you can make,
Like the shivering of the earth in a massive earthquake.
You know those words, and I sure as hell do.
They bring the bitter change, the inferno of will,
To your hung-open soul.
Don't look at me or listen,
As I make them,
And so do you.

Cara Eaton, '23

Terminal Love

I saw him first on the platform
Sometime late afternoon
Among a crowd of people
They'd all be a memory soon.

And finally, like a metal savior
AMTRAK 182
Came creeping in my direction
I felt both blithe and blue.

We all hastily scouted seats.
I found one I could call my own,
And there across he sat
World-weary and alone.

His eyes were heavy with the world,
His collar was adorned with pearls,
His glasses framed a sturdy face,
Crowned with a halo of ebony curls.

His energy was consumed by a book.
The spine thick and the cover plain.
It was probably something pretentious
Orwell, Salinger, or Twain.

An hour or so in
He finally looked my way.
His lips quivered with uncertainty,
As if he didn't *really have anything to say*.

"Where are you going?" He shyly smiled
And his world-weary eyes shone.
"What's a girl like you doing here
Melancholy and alone?"

"I've always wanted to live in New York"
Crafting my words to seem witty and deft.
"My boyfriend just broke up with me,
So I packed my things and left".

"I get exactly what you mean,
I'm a traveler at heart, I confess.
But I can't seem to stay in one place for long
I always end up getting restless".

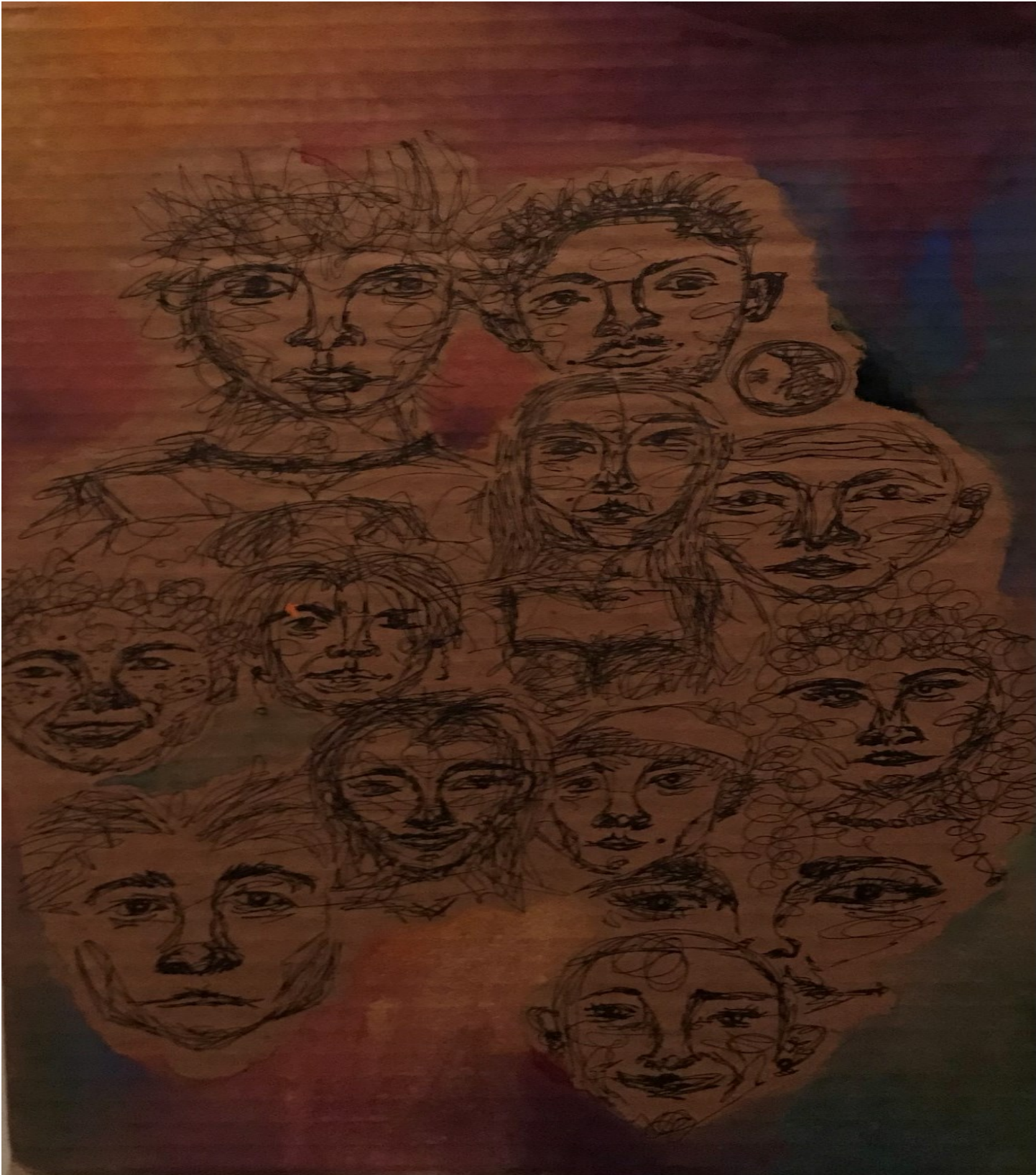
He sounds so pompous, I thought to myself.
Who does he think he's trying to fool?
I could turn my head and refuse to talk
But I didn't want to come off as cruel.

So I let him speak, and he poured his heart
In his words, I felt I had been whisked away.
I don't think I've ever felt such a primal connection
As our two souls connected on that day.

And when New York welcomed us
Like a cold and unfamiliar maze,
He solemnly kissed my flushed cheeks
As we parted our separate ways.

I have remained in New York for two years
I haven't grown restless as he warned.
And I wonder if he's still here, too
With his ebony curls and collar adorned.

I hardly even knew this boy
Our love was likely no more than a lie.
Still, how then I see his world-weary eyes
In every pensive passerby?



Haley Bush-Nickerson, '22



Joshua Pearson, '22

WEEKLY CELEBRATION OF THE MEATLOAF

21ST CENTURY AMERICAN RITE

REVERSED RETI VARIATION

1. The Weekly Celebration of the Meatloaf shall be held at twelve-to-three, sharp, in the afternoon of the second day following the day preceding the day prior to the day commonly known as Monday.
2. The ceremony shall be opened by the Press Secretary of the Vice President of the United States, or, in his/her stead, the person whose birthday is next. This person shall be referred to as the "Leader." Note: Red-haired Mafiosi shall take priority over other individuals if more than one person should have the same birthday. If there should happen to be multiple red-haired Mafiosi with the same relevant birthday in attendance, they shall draw lots to determine who shall serve as the Leader.
3. The Leader shall open the ceremony by sounding an air horn, crossing his/her fingers (or finger substitutes, for those individuals who are not fortunate enough to possess digits) and then loudly proclaiming, "Yes, We're Open!" to the assembled Spectators.
4. This shall serve as the cue for the Spectators to stand upright and open their hands. At this time, the Leader shall designate a Distributor of the Utensils to retrieve one Fork and one Knife for each able-bodied Spectator from the Receptacle of the Utensils.
5. Once the appropriate number of Utensils has been retrieved, the Leader shall invoke the name of Billy Joel no fewer than two times, but no more than eight, as a signal to the Distributor of the Utensils to distribute the Utensils to the Spectators. As each Spectator receives his/her Utensils – the Fork in the right hand; the Knife, the left – he/she shall thank the Distributor of the Utensils by reciting the Kinematic Equations for Constant Acceleration in any order, so long as the Timeless Equation is either first or last.
6. After every Utensil has been distributed, the Leader shall sound the air horn a second time and then recite the Recipe of the Meatloaf, pausing after each Ingredient.
 - a. During each pause, the Spectator who has been assigned to celebrate the Ingredient which has just been announced shall stand up, step forward, hoist his/her Ingredient high into the air, and then consume it.
7. An appropriate Musical Number may be conducted at this time. Only a piece taken from the oeuvres of F.J. Haydn, J.P. Sousa, H.F. Schubert, A.B. Grande, J.P. Morgan (but not Chase), D.L. George, W.A. Mozart, J.S. Strauss, senior, J.S. Strauss, junior, and R. Roenicke shall constitute "appropriate Musical Number." This is not a requirement, though, unless the average price of regular unleaded gasoline in the counties surrounding the city of Texarkana, Texas, should be below \$2.09.
8. The Leader shall open the Oven to reveal the Celebratory Meatloaf, which shall have been cooking since early in the morning. He/she shall spread Maple Syrup, Tomato Ketchup, Juicy Fruit or a substitute

condiment (only coconut Water, and only if needed for the dietary reasons of any Spectator, which shall not include the desire to eat less sugar) and then, once the Distributor of the Utensils has been beckoned forward and retrieved the Paper Plates, use the Ceremonial Knife to slice the Meatloaf into a number of approximately equal pieces equal to the number of Spectators, plus the Leader, plus one.

a. If John Lennon or Vladimir Lenin should be in attendance, that gentleman and him alone shall be entitled to a second slice; the number, therefore, shall be increased by one. If both are present, neither shall be entitled to a second slice.

9. The Leader shall then raise his/her left foot as high as he/she is capable, which shall be the signal to the Spectators to come forward, carrying their Utensils, and receive the Meatloaf.

10. After receiving the Meatloaf, the Spectators shall sit in a circle surrounding the Leader, who shall stand on his/her non-dominant leg (or arm, if he/she should not possess legs). All shall consume their Meatloaf and, when the last one is finished, the Recipe shall be recited again. This time, though, the Spectators and Leader shall chant it in unison, repeating each Ingredient three times and each Step a number of times equal to the closest whole number to the cubic root of the number of Spectators.

11. The Leader shall proceed to sing “Baby Shark” while flailing his/her arms erratically (on odd-numbered days) or erotically (on even-numbered days). One Spectator shall depart from the Place of Gathering after each verse is sung. The song shall repeat as many times as necessary.

12. When only the Leader is left, he/she shall return the Utensils to their appropriate location and then return to the Place of Gathering. He/she shall prostrate himself/herself before the Oven and, while still in this position, consume the remainder of the Maple Syrup, Tomato Ketchup, Juicy Fruit or substitute condiment. He/she shall then wave the Receptacle of the Maple Syrup, Tomato Ketchup, Juicy Fruit or substitute condiment in the air, turn off the oven, place the Receptacle inside, and then depart in silence.



Lilianna Cesario, '21

Ashley Bush-Nickerson, '23

The Telephone That Kept Ringing

The morning sun rose over the trees.
The birds were chirping a song.
I stepped outside,
Onto the damp, overgrown grass.

Cars were racing by in the neighborhood.
The gears started to change, going faster and faster.
Hearing screeches from the tires on the road.
A tree in the face and a car in the rear.

Ambulance sirens ringing,
And a girl praying.
The clock was ticking faster,
As the breaths became weaker.

There was a silents in the room,
As the birds continued chirping.
The sun started to fade into the mist and hills.
Then the beeping of the heartless machine stopped.

A telephone rang with a weak signal,
But the call didn't get through.

Maya Madison, '23

Magical Melody

Time is running out, it seems;
Days, blank memories, before long.
Through storms of blood and numbing cold
I listen to a song.

It isn't quite a simple one;
Not a tale of love or lust.
It's different, opens up a part of me;
The key fits the lock just.

Now what's this latent lock, one asks
And opened, what's inside?
If I take a peek or two
Tell me, what resides?

Inside is a melody
Of love and passion strong,
Glowing in a field of spikes
Unable to do wrong.

My body moves with all the beats,
Dancing past the hate.
Singing takes the pain away,
Performing is my fate.

The key of music brings me past
The lock of suffocating self doubt
To a valley of luminescent light.
The colors seem to shout:

Everything will be okay

You're in your field of joy.

The shades blend together, inspire, fill me up
Til' the valley's less life-like than a toy.

I'm back in the old field of spikes.
The song is to an end.
Time goes round' in circles
But I no longer pretend.

The mere magical melody
Shriveled up the lock;
Self doubt is gone and hope is up.
Art is quite a shock.



Sedona Wibeto, '21

Annelise Demers, '23

Social Justice Poems

Waiting

You say I'm too young to have a say
That my opinion doesn't matter
Well I shout and scream for change to happen
Listen to my generation
Our words speak of love not hate
A fire kindles in our hearts
Waiting patiently for our day to come
When we right the wrongs
Prove love is love
Show it doesn't matter what your skin color is
Because at the end of the day
We all bleed the same

There might be time

I closed my eyes and stood side by side with a polar bear
I ran through the Amazon and sang with the birds
I swam in the ocean and ran my fingertips through the sand
I climbed a tree and biked through the woods
I laughed and smiled for this dream to never end

The polar bear slowly lost their hair until a skeleton appeared
The trees fell down and birds dropped from the sky
The ocean was filled with plastic and junk
The bike path was just a line of debris and broken dreams
I cried and cried for this nightmare to be over

When I opened my eyes I cried and cried
My nightmare was real
My tears began to stop
When I remembered to have hope
That if we all do are part there might be time to save the planet that gave us life



Lilli Borke, '23