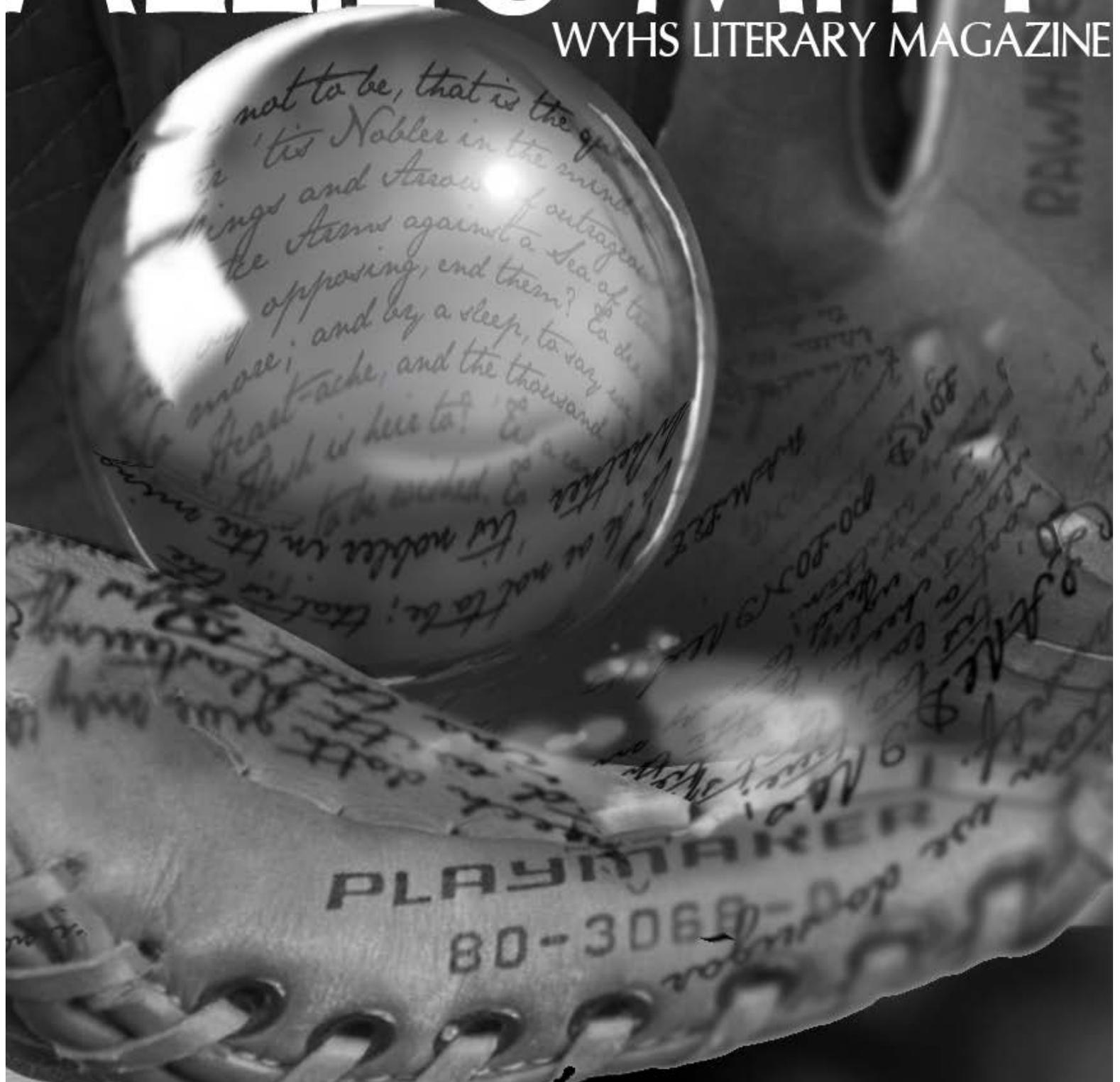


ALLIE'S MITT

WYHS LITERARY MAGAZINE



Dear Reader,

We are delighted to present the 2015 edition of the WYHS Literary Magazine, *Allie's Mitt*. We have thoroughly enjoyed reading and compiling the works from the students and we affirm that these pieces are only a glimpse into the giant pool of talent at the school.

If there is one thing we learned while working on this project, it is that there is no single way to view the world. People see everything differently as a result of their own experiences. This diversity mixed with sheer creativity is what drives the artistic world to success. It is the writers and artists who are able to change the world with a pen, brush or camera according to their own vision and dreams. They can move people, make them feel. And so we raise our metaphorical glasses to you, the "Makers of Fine Art," the people who create and inspire. Neil Gaiman once said "The one thing you have that nobody else has is you. Your voice, your mind, your story, your vision. So write and draw and build and play and dance and live as only you can."

We hope you continue to observe, discover, and share your thoughts with the world in a way that only you can do.

Sincerely,
Shoshy Ciment, Daniella Cohen, and Baila Eisen

Allie's Mitt

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Cherie Landa ('15)

To Write or Not to Write

To write, or not to write;
Not to write.

Portrait by Sara Khambalia ('17)



Cherie Landa ('15)

To Beam, or Not to Beam

To beam, or not to beam, that is the question—
Whether 't bring the Captain back up to
The Bridge and await further orders,
Or to leave him on Kronos with Khan troubles,
And make him finish his mission? To voyage, to explore—
To boldly go; and by going, to say we discover
Strange new worlds, and the thousand other species
That inhabit the universe? 'Tis the goal that
The Enterprise strives for. To go, to explore,
To explore, perchance to fight; Aye, there's the catch,
For in that investigation of Kronos, what aliens may attack,
When we have wandered into their territory,
Will give us chase. There's the problem
That makes life on the Enterprise so hard:
For who would endure the Wrath of Khan,
The Search for Spock, the Voyage Home,
The Undiscovered Country, the Next Generation,
The insolence of Command, and the pains
That come with being an engineer aboard,
When the ship is always getting half destroyed
By some angry alien? Who wouldn't want to live
The adrenaline life, to travel into
Space,
The final frontier:
These are the voyages of the starship Enterprise.

Eli Litwin ('18)

At a Crossroad

What to do?
Only two options
Which seem so simple
But are in fact
As complicated as a
Woven rug.
The threads,
Of which it is composed
Are different.
A special characteristic
A shade, pattern, or texture
Changing its appearance
In an everlasting way.
My options are
Threads
Making the decision
Ever more strenuous.

I approach it
Like a chess master
Devising a plan to
Ensure the least loss
As well as set up
An opening
For future maneuvers.
Each option
Unlocks doors
Challenges and teaches
And proves to be rewarding
The answer appears so close
But continuously moves further
away.
Unsure
I remain
At a crossroad.

Picture by Shuli Mayer ('16)



Sara Merkin ('17)

Butterfly Sitting on Barbed Wire

A giant cement brick is on my back
They've just shot the guy in front of me
Though by now he is more of a skeleton
I look over and I see it
A butterfly sitting on the barbed wire
And I get the strength to keep going

I'm starving
All the food I have is a tiny piece of bread
The guy who sleeps next to me died of starvation last week
I look over and I see it
A butterfly sitting on barbed wire
And the bread fills me up

I've been marching for miles
My legs can barely move anymore
Half the group has been killed or died
I look over and I see it
A butterfly sitting on barbed wire
And my legs pick up the pace

I'm being liberated
The soldiers have arrived to save me
No one is being killed anymore
I look over and I see it
A butterfly sitting on barbed wire
And I thank it for saving me

Noa Grunhaus ('18)

Her Diary

It holds so many secrets
And contains so many lies
It tells all her stories
And it details her disguise

It hides her true thoughts
And describes her very being
It tells the tale of a thousand moments
And mirrors all her feelings

It records all her words
Both good words and bad
It listens to her retellings
Of all the experiences she's had

It's where she learns all of life's lessons
And the key to how she frees her heart
It's her most trusted confidant
And her most personal form of art

It's where the truth presides
And where her conscience lives
It's where her story is told
And where she receives all she gives

It's her favorite escape
And her most dangerous expedition
It's her lonely little hideout
And her private exhibition

It's all her crushes and heartbreaks
Her best friends and enemies
It's her smiles and her tears
All her lessons and memories

It's her flashbacks and reminisces
Her daydreams and nightmares
It's her ideas and theories
Her somewheres and nowhere

It's her world within a world
A most wonderfully safe place

It's where she can shed her false mask of
confidence
And flaunt her lovely naked face

It's the one place like no other
Where she has the luxury of being herself
It is an eternity of timelessness
And a utopia within itself

It is her fairy tale ending
A fantasy of dreams
It encourages her ambitions
And it plans out her schemes

It is her lifeline of selfishness
And her outlet of emotions
It is her peaceful getaway
Of epic proportions

It's her most trusted companion
Her very best friend
It's the burden she carries
The only mess she can't mend

It's the sins she confesses to
Her deepest darkest secrets
It's the blessing of openness
Her biggest strength and weakness

It's her prettiest lies
And her most bitter realizations
It's her loneliest heartaches
And her loveliest frustrations

It is her image of perfection
Her reality and her dreams
It is her view of the world
And it's bursting at the seams

It is her life within two worn covers
Her naked soul contained but fiery
It is her heart, freed and caged
It is her beloved diary

Tsippy Kilstein ('17)

Journey Through the Ocean

Take a dive into the journey of the ocean, to see, and appreciate the beauty. The peaceful movement of the sea is calmness, serenity, and life. Even in the dark depths of the abyss in the trenches, life flourishes. Fantastic creatures that look like they are beyond this earth thrive in the heavy pressure of the tons of water weighing down. Fierce anglerfish and interesting looking squid dwell among the dense darkness flashing their fantastic bioluminescent lights. Swim up a few miles to the colourful coral reefs, home to thousands of species. Sunlight streams through the water in rays, illuminating the different types of fish and marine mammals. Travel out a distance to the vast open sea where whales, turtles, and dolphin migrate. Hundreds of Tuna and Marlin glide through the ocean on their grand adventure. Come back home to the beach where the waves crash onto the sand. Crabs scuttle about the shore and seagulls dive into the blue water to catch small fish. Rest on the sand and watch the light of the setting sun reflect in sparkles on the dancing waters. The ocean is a truly fascinating place.

Picture by Shuli Mayer ('16)



Eli Litwin ('17)

Individuality

There is a common belief
We must all appear as one;
Live, act, and dress the same
Or the world will become undone.

Rules and laws are important
Of that there is no question,
But what kind of world would it be
Deprived of self-expression?

We would be nothing more than robots.
Our identities erased;
Look alike, talk alike
Individuality displaced.

The world would lose its color
Nothing more than shades of grey.
Devoid of individuality
No variety, no array.

Each individual, has a right
To choose not to be the same
To chart his own course, choose his own path
So individuality can be sustained.

The beauty of each person
Is that we are special and unique.
With our own strengths and talents
We can rise to the highest peak.

Like polka dots, stripes, and plaids
Creating a pattern neat and fine,
Sewn together in a tapestry
Evermore precious and divine.

Differences make the world go round
That is how it was meant to be.
Creative thoughts, daring minds
Forever individuality.

Tova Bitterman ('16)

The Unwritten Wanderer

Creation, for me, was a split second between not being and being. My first moments were spent in a burning house. There was no way out, and I was held in place by my author's vision of me. Time seemed to stand still as I waited for my author to think up the next scene. I was solid and bright with my author's excitement over writing my story. After a few weeks, my author abandoned the idea of writing my story, and my scene faded. The fire and the house faded, became incorporeal and disappeared. All that remained was the ground that the house had been created upon.

Freed from my author's control, I could do whatever I wanted for a limited time. A character whose story is never written fades away like the house I was created in. Staying in place made me restless, so I began to walk. It was hours before I crossed paths with another character. He was on the brink of fading away to nothingness and it was hard to see him.

"Where is everyone?" I asked him.

My question startled him, and it struck me that he was as surprised to see me as I was to see him.

"The Solids, characters whose stories have been written and are still read and remembered, are in their story-worlds thriving from people's memories of them. Faders, like you and me, are destined to wander the world until we fade away."

It was odd how he said "destined to wander." I asked him, "Why do you wander when your fading is evident?"

He laughed mirthlessly and returned my question to me. I told him that I didn't know why I wandered and repeated my question.

"I guess that I wander out of hope," he told me. "Rumors speak of a well where you can look into your author's mind. It may not be real, but I have to try finding it because if I can find a way to communicate with my author through it, then I can convince her to write my story. It's our only hope of survival. Do you want to look for it with me? I get rather lonely walking alone for so much time."

Aimlessly, we walked through the world with only hope to keep us moving. One night, when we made camp, the other Fader handed me a piece of folded up paper. It was too dark to read without a fire, but I refused to make a fire out of fear. "If you find the well, will you put this in there for me?" He asked me. I told him that I would. Satisfied, he thanked me and said good night.

Good night had meant good bye. I woke up the next morning to find that he had faded into the night, leaving behind nothing, not even a name. After that, I roamed the world alone with a purpose and a destination with an unknown location. The need to find the well drove me both forward in my journey and insane. For years, I continued to fade a little more with every passing day as I traversed the land.

The final moments came before I was ready. All I could think was that I'd failed the man who gave me the letter for the well and therefore, I'd failed myself. I'd written my own note on the white of his letter and ripped the paper into two notes. Every day, I

read my letter to give me the strength to continue walking. Even with my fading only hours away, I continued to seek the well.

In the distance, the well was visible on a hill. I told myself it was a mirage, that I had imagined it because I so desperately wanted to see it. Regardless of my doubt, I ran to the well because chasing shadows is better than remaining still with no hope for survival.

Brick, concrete brick was beneath my hand. The well was real and I'd finally found it. Joy surged through me, but I was still not saved. I reread my letter for the last time before dropping it in the well. It read:

Dear Author,

I'm fading. You created me in your mind, but you rejected me. Why do you not write my story? If you never write it, then when I fade from your memory, I will disappear from the world; gone as if I never existed. I've felt myself in your thoughts. Barely a trace of me remains. Please, write my story before time takes me from you. Write it so that I can live in the minds of others when you are no longer around to think me up. Save me. Write my story. Write me. Do not let me fade.

*-Yours truly,
Your Unnamed Character*

Our letters drifted down to the water, so delicate looking for something that my existence depended on. The water ate at the paper until it dissolved. I waited for what felt like an eternity, but nothing happened.

Knowledge of how close I was to the end propelled me to do something desperate. I could see my author's thoughts and that the note had made no effect. I needed to put myself into her mind, so I did that, literally. I jumped into the well. Water filled my lungs and darkness filled my vision as I sunk into what I hoped would be my author's thoughts.

The smell of smoke woke me up. A house was burning around me, but I was happy because I was strong and bright and not fading. My story has begun, and this time it will be written to the end. My story will be read and I will live fueled by memories of me and I will not fade.

Yoni Mayer ('18)

The Injury

“Oh! The pain, the pain!” It seared through my veins

I'd never witnessed such a nasty contusion
And maybe, just maybe, I'd need a blood transfusion

I fell flat on the floor remembering life as before
And thought it would end with such agony and gore

I saw bright lights before me and tunnels ahead
And truly thought that I would be dead

My body was lifted and started to soar
Straight through the clouds and the heavens galore

I walked straight through the gates and right up the stairs
And went directly to God who wore robes and white hairs

God came before me and started to judge
And all throughout His speech I could not budge

I just stood there and listened to all the deeds I had done
But my face changed expressions as something peculiar had begun

His voice was my mothers and that's when I came to
Right in the place where I had been cut through

My mother ran in
And I expected sympathy but
All she proclaimed was
“Stop exaggerating, it's a paper cut.”

Eli Litwin ('18)

Regret (Narrated by Death)

As the old man
Sits in his living room
He is hunched over
Like a rose wilting
In its vase
On a worn leather chair
Dust collects
Waiting for me to claim him
Pictures of his life drape the walls
Each in a different frame
Crooked, on display
They all play like a flashback
In his cluttered mind
As sadness sets
Painted on his aged face
His lips down turned
A tear rolls slowly down his lined cheek
Until it falls on the worn carpet below
As if he wants to change
The past
Rearrange the photos askew
Askew on the wall
The faint light of a lamp,
Like a single ray of sun
That penetrates a small clearing
In a dense black forest,
Flickers
But all the old man can see
As if peering into
A bottomless hole
Black and endless
Is the doom
That lies ahead
But as I approach,
He starts to grimace
The expression is more
Powerful and
Intensified
It is as if an enraged beast
Is racing at him
Ready to pounce and gnaw at him
He seems helpless

Trapped in a cage
Like an animal
After its capture
At first I thought
It was me
But I know he cannot
See me
He starts to
Scream
As I come closer
And closer
I hear him louder
His voice echoes, reverberating
Off the walls of his inner cave
His gnarled hands
Shoot up
And grab at the ghostly white hair
Wrinkles become pronounced
As if crevices
Bored into his skull
Have captured every memory
His eyes start twitching
Opening and closing
He seems to be strapped in
On an endless ride
Trying to escape,
But miserably failing
A constant agony,
Pounding now
Throbbing,
He is lost
In a sea of despair
I want to look away
And move on to my other
Victims
But his time has come
With a swift movement
I charge forward
To claim another
Life
With his soul
In my eternal grasp

Baila Eisen ('15)

Flight

Every time my parents talk about college, I kind of scrunch my eyes a little and wish I could fly away. Just...take off.

I can, of course. Just thinking it, I feel myself floating a little, my weight lifting gently off of my crumpled sheets. But I can't fly when my parents are talking to me – they'd see, and who knows what would happen then? Most superheroes fear science experiments and misunderstanding; I'm afraid of the intrusion into my most private, most secret, most special experience. If someone else knew I could fly, it wouldn't quite be flight anymore. Do you understand?

And then there's the fact that they're right – I've got to get my essays done, and work on my SAT math practice, and do my homework besides. By the time I'm through, there's not much time for anything except sleep. Funny, now that I think about it, I haven't flown since...since...I can't even remember. That's sad. Oh, that is sad.

You should have seen me in the beginning! Those first few nights after I looked Mr. Genie in the eye and said, "I wish to fly!" I thought he'd try to trick me, like they do in the books, you know, but he just gave me this sort of mysterious grin and said, "As you wish." Like he didn't have to pull anything over me at all.

That grin made me so uneasy that I tried the first time under my bed, so that if something went wrong I wouldn't be hurt too badly. But I just scrunched my eyes...felt a swooping, wrenching, roller-coaster thrill in my gut...and I was floating, just a few inches off the floor, above the dust bunnies and forgotten papers. It felt amazing. I could hardly wait to get out of that house and take to the skies. I rolled tentatively out from under the bed, supported by a cushion of air, and slowly turned myself vertical. I rushed out of the house with my feet an inch off the ground.

"Baila, where are you going?" I heard my dad call after me, then mutter to my mom: "I swear she's getting taller again."

But I was gone. I was so gone. I had shot straight up the second I got out the door, swerving around the gigantic tree whose leaves, constantly falling on my dad's car, irritated him so. I was above all that now.

It was just how you'd imagine it – glorious, misty swirls of clouds – the stars, huge and radiant up close – floating on my back to take them all in – and then, down below, the streetlights as bright as the heavens – and everyone so small, it was easy to pretend they didn't matter at all –

I was so naïve, in the beginning. People still matter, and college matters, as much as they ever did. Flying doesn't change that.

Oh, but I loved it! In the silent pallor of night, I drank in the beauty. And when I got sick of that, I learned to dive. I swooped. I flipped. I let myself drop out of the sky like a bird clipped by a hunter's bullet, catching myself a foot above a gigantic, empty lake I'd spotted from the sky as a dark splotch among the brilliant city lights. And then I pushed myself downward, flew faster than I could fall, until I sent waves rippling around the surface of the water from the force of my almost-collisions.

I've always been a roller coaster kind of girl, and this was the most exhilarating ride I'd ever experienced. I swirled summersaults until the sky and ground collided in a

dizzying spectacle of pinpricks of light and darkness and the heaven and earth were one. I thought I saw the truth, then. But I've forgotten it now, and it seems like such a foolish thing to want to see, anyway.

I took myself on a grand tour of the city. I found all the hidden nooks and niches – the pigeons' nesting grounds, the pale, glowing-marble rooftops, the shadowy corners hidden from every angle but up. I thought I was a superhero. Well I suppose I got what I deserved for that one.

It happened exactly as you might have expected. A girl, young, slim, and blonde – she was even blonde, for heavens' sakes – getting mugged over in some corner of who-knows-where. All alone, and no one to save her but me.

I swooped down until I was hovering right over their heads, but they were too absorbed in their task to notice me. I cleared my throat. They still didn't look up. Two fat guys and the slim blonde, all caught up in untangling her purse, which was one of those sling-it-over-your-shoulder affairs and had gotten twisted, somehow, with her long, dangling turquoise earrings. I didn't know what to do, to tell you the truth. I just sat there watching them struggle for the longest time. I started to get a little angry, even.

Suddenly it dawned on me exactly how ridiculous this whole situation was. You should have seen them, the dumbos! The looks of utter, stupid concentration on their faces! And there I was, just sitting there in midair, right on top of their heads! I put my hands over my mouth, but it was no use – I was laughing, bellowing with laughter, bouncing up and down in the sky with it like Peter Pan, tears streaming down my face. I turned a lazy summersault in the air, hiccupping, unable to stop myself.

Well that got their attention sure enough.

“Hey!” said one of the robbers stupidly.

“Hey,” I managed, cheerfully, between gasping fits of giggles. “Um...”

They gazed up at me, jaws slack, absolutely riveted.

“Um,” I said again, trying to restrain my wheezes – God, they were really absolute idiots – “Give her back her purse?”

The robbers silently took their hands off of the lady's purse, which was still caught in her earrings anyway, and melted away into the shadows. That is to say, they would have, except that I could still see them perfectly well from my high vantage point as they slipped between garbage cans and into alleyways. They were running. I sure gave them the shock of their lives, alright.

It sounds great, doesn't it? All of the adventure and laughter and shining craziness of it. Well let me tell you something. By the end of the night, I'd saved another three people – it was quite a night for crime, apparently – and it was the most boring thing I had ever done. I had to sit there mere feet off the ground and say “Boo” until the criminals ran away, when the whole time I could have been flying, really flying! But I had a duty, of course. I was a hero now, and heroes were noble, and brave, and never bored at performing the same mind-numbingly simple task over and over again. I knew that much from the movies. So I gritted my teeth and tried to convince myself I was enjoying it.

It was the same with the next night, and the night after that – I flew around as much as I could, and if I saw someone in being mugged or murdered or whatever, I'd go and rescue them. Eventually I got quite good at it – come from behind, tap a bad guy on the shoulder, and run – that is, soar – away, checking behind me just once to make sure

that he was fleeing too. I was always irritated when this happened, though. I would sit there and wish for just one night without crime, so I could enjoy myself in peace for once.

I guess Mr. Genie was still watching over me, because one night, I got my wish – the city was completely crime-free. Buildings bloomed silent and majestic before me, cast in the purplish glow of night, streetlights hazy through the gloomy fog. I took a few laps around the big old clock tower, then ended up back where I had started, over the lake. I did a couple of flips, but I was kind of sick of being dizzy. I lay on my back, but the stars were the same old stars that had been there the first time I looked.

I was tired. I never had time for sleep nowadays, what with all the schoolwork during the day and all the flying around at night. I was irritable. I just wanted to go home.

And why shouldn't I? I thought angrily. I don't *have* to stay out here. Nobody's making me.

So I lowered myself to the ground and walked home – so I wouldn't be suspicious, I told myself, but the truth was that I wasn't really in the mood for flying.

After that, I flew less and less, until I guess one day I stopped flying at all. I'm not even sure if I remember how to do it anymore, other than floating a little on the sheets like I described to you just now. And maybe I'm even imagining that. Flight's beginning to seem like nothing more than a brilliantly hazy memory. I keep telling myself to go outside one night and try it again, but you know, I'm a senior now. I've got studying to do. I want to get into college. And flying – well, who really needs to fly, anyway?

Picture by Maia Groman ('15)



Shoshy Ciment ('15)

Shadow

I have been to that so-called “heaven” before. It was dark and pierced with fire with nowhere to sleep. The first day I arrived, I skated down the Milky Way and floated into Orion’s arms, but I fell with a crash; they were just cold statues.

The second day I danced with Saturn’s rings till dawn, but I found no comfort in her arms either, for she was made of stone as well.

Stars were larger and crueller than I thought. They threw their meteors at me in attempts to see me burn. I was lost and everyone knew it. I wandered through space like a bag in the wind, longing for a force to ground me.

In the rare moments of silence I encountered, I cried to myself. But my tears were like ink, scarring my hollow face. I did not remember arriving, and memories of my past were forgotten. I wanted to feel something other than hardness.

I grew darker as the days passed. Soon, I could not discern myself from the vast sky behind me. Everywhere I went, I cast shadows of black. Planets and stars alike felt me every time I walked near, but something about me was different, forbidding. They were all scared of it. I was scared of it.

Then I went to the moon, and things changed. He had always been the revered monarch of the sky, so I entered his domain with caution. He spoke to me about many things, mainly about me. He said I had a purpose, I just hadn’t found it yet.

Coming to speak to the moon became a regular habit of mine. When I was with him, I felt alive and resolute. When we were together, the atmosphere around us changed, it glowed.

They were all jealous of us and the glorious radiance only we could produce. Saturn was humbled in our presence and stars bowed before us like the ones in Joseph’s dream.

I came to the moon less and less over the years, but I now walked with the new confidence bestowed upon me. Everyone watched me shine as a smile stretched across my whole body, eclipsing the light of my heavenly friend.

And at that moment, I knew this was the heaven I had heard about.

Daniella Cohen ('15) and Baila Eisen ('15)

Pulled Sugar

Teardrops in a glass bowl
Float and swirl between bubbles
All of them catching the light.
Gummy bears on the carpet
Licorice twists in the crevices of the wall
Remembrance of a child's sticky fingers
And teardrops and bubbles in a bowl

Picture by Maia Groman ('15)



Asher Eisen ('18)

Smiles

There is a boy. There is a room.
 The lights are off.
 He sits on a desk, contemplating in the
 Silence
 Idly swinging a black shoe back
 And forth
 Back
 And forth
 There is a boy, contemplating.
 There is darkness.
 A tear forms
 Tugging,
 Tugging
 Falling
 A crystal, falling
 He walks out the door
 Into the light, the air
 Still
 The tear falls
 He passes a playground
 Swings, seesaws, basketballs,
 Children, laughing
 His black shoes slap the pavement,
 Echoing
 Children play
 But one
 A little girl
 Is shoved away
 Ha, ha!
 Children shriek and point

As she turns away
 She walks
 He walks
 She walks
 He watches
 She nears him,
 About to pass him by
 Then, she looks up
 Sees him
 Smiles
 Not a child's smile,
 Full of innocence and glee and
 Fresh morning light
 No, this is a weary smile
 That of an old,
 Old man
 Who has carried too much
 But still, somehow
 Has found joy
 And smiles,
 Nonetheless
 Up
 At the boy standing before her
 The tear drops
 Plop!
 Hits the ground
 And the boy
 Smiles
 Back

Ben Amsalem ('16)

Adderall

That feeling of being trapped in a box –
That feeling is the worst feeling ever
Not being able to do what you want
Because that pill you took controls you

It tells you to forget about your friends
Focus on all this work that you have
And make sure you behave in class
No need to make jokes or laugh

And not wanting to eat or drink kills you
All you want to do is do work
Or become an OCD freak
But that's fine because it'll be gone soon

And once it's gone you feel free
You want to watch your favorite show
You want to go outside and play
But you still have that determination it gives you

But without it you become nothing in class
You fail and get kicked out
But your friends are the ones who stick with you
They understand what you're going through
This thing, this pill, is Adderall

Moshe Weiss ('15)

My Prayer To You

This is my prayer to you:

Too often do I see people of great spirit.
That is not to say they are possessed with some Divine Power,
Rather they are blessed with a wonderful individuality.
Too often do I find in the face of immense tribulation,
Opposed by tasks that appear insurmountable,
And struggle of seemingly infinite duress,
These beautiful souls lack the passion to persevere,
Instead choosing to forsake, disavow their *sui generis*.

Too many people I know,
Drowned by a suppressive onslaught of challenges,
Flooded with a never-ending flow of assignments,
Submerged in a cold blue sea of monotony,
Without pause
Find their brilliant personas buried under a stack of paper,
Six
Feet
Deep.

When I find these people,
In moments when their original effervescence
Has bubbled to the surface of the domineering duties
That usually push and shove such a pleasant idiosyncrasy
To a secluded corner of the mind,
A great juxtaposition of emotion occurs within me,
For I laugh and jump and leap for joy!
Exulting in the knowledge that there are those
Who still have such pleasant demeanors,
And yet my soul cries out, mourns the loss
Of another who falls victim to the great myriads of pressure and stress
That drive away a sweet disposition.

And thus, this is my prayer to you:
Let your singularity never be snuffed out,
May it last through thick and through thin,
Be a joy to all those around you
And a pillar of light that shines brighter in strife.

Above all, defend the brilliance of others against this cursed brigade of darkness,
That seeks to blot it out, to entomb the great spirits in the doldrums
And how?
By example.

Isaac Ovadia ('15)

From Fear to Faith

The words “Army. I want to go to the army.” rang in my head during the ceremony in honor of Israeli Memorial Day. My older brother recited these words a couple months ago. Millions of thoughts rushed to my brain. “I don’t want him dead. I don’t want him enduring the hardships of the Israeli Defense Forces”. And through this, a connection I had never experienced was formed.

Until this point, I had always thought of going to the army as a terrible experience. One must get up early after sleepless nights to put many lives in jeopardy. Additionally, as a child, I always took Israel for granted. It was always there. Yet I remained uninformed about all the wars and hardships Israel struggled through.

After hearing my brother’s decision, my mind opened a plethora of doors. I started to research Israel’s history. I read *Start-up Nation*, a book explaining how Israel became one of the most thriving economies in the world. I joined my school’s Israel advocacy club and sent articles and videos to the adviser of the club and developed a close relationship with him. I volunteered with Bnei Akiva, a religious Zionist youth movement with branches throughout the world. My connection with Israel strengthened so much that when I celebrated Israel Independence Day, I was now equipped with immense pride and joy.

While educating myself, my eyes truly opened to having hope when some of my family opposed his decision. “Why would he go to the army? Is he stupid? He is wasting his time!” They criticized him to no end. I couldn’t believe they had no faith in my brother: a warrior, a leader, and a role model to me. All of their disapproval pained me. “Why”, I thought, “can’t they see the bigger picture? He is risking his life for *our* homeland and you look down upon him? How dare you! Where is your courage? Where is your hope? Where is your faith?” This just strengthened my respect in my brother as well as my love for Israel to the point that their remarks fueled my pride.

With this sense of dignity, I was constantly by my mother’s side supporting her and reassuring her that he would be fine while she stressed and worried over him. I reiterated that we needed faith in God. With no hope, everything is meaningless.

Today, the memorial was honoring a fallen lone soldier and a boy killed in a suicide bombing. I started trembling during the ceremony. Memories of my brother kept flashing in my mind, one after the next. All these memories helped me overcome the mental barrier I had in experiencing this deep connection to the land.

I was and still am proud of my brother for having the courage to volunteer in the army. I was and still am proud to be a part of the Jewish nation and have the land of Israel as a haven even when it is being attacked and criticized. I was and am even more proud of the Israeli Defense Forces and the work they do to combat terrorism. Never again will I experience this connection with anything.

Esti Fridman ('18)

Depression the Diagnosis

We see the pain in their eyes.

We see the scars on their arms that never seem to disappear.

We see their happy pills and their inability to bring joy to the ones they love.

We question the Higher Force for bringing them this sadness.

Are they wrong for believing that taking their own life is the better option?

We see how big of an effect their depression has on every detail of their lives.

We wonder at every waking moment if they are thinking of doing any self-harm.

We hope we said the right thing to stop their negative thinking.

We feel responsible for their lives, and for their deaths.

Is it selfish to be upset at the fact that they believe we are not worth living for?

We stay awake on late nights and wonder if they are okay.

We realize that there is no one to blame for their sadness or the blood that was spilled.

We can only be there and try to help with open arms and a smile.

We must come together and make them comprehend that we do love them in every way.

Portrait by Sara Khambalia ('17)



Moshe Weiss ('15)

Profess or Not Profess

Profess or not profess
 That is the question.
 Whether 'twould more endear
 To speak my love outright
 Or to be aloof, and in that receive more
 To hide, to show,
 No more.
 And in showing disregard the human nature
 That is known to shy away from such acts of love,
 In hopes that the intended will be different and above it
 To hide, to show,
 To show, perchance to receive, ay there's the rub
 For once one side loves so much as to show
 The other feels no need to act in kind
 And promises of future hold no worth,
 "I love you" falls upon deaf ears,
 Letters once so cherished whither away,
 And time with one romantic goes to waste,
 All because one cared too much,
 And, in caring, showed too much
 For who would confess feelings of affection
 If they are meant to show a loving care,
 But by profession drive loved ones away
 And fail intended purpose.
 Thus instinct is the bane of tender thought
 And thus the desire to profess such twitterpation
 Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought
 And innocence is lost, replaced by pain
 And love goes unprofessed
 Soft you now,
 The one exception!
 Nymph, in thy cabinet
 Be all my letters collected

Max Abramovitz ('18)

After Death

When first I died
 I was scared
 Then
 It just ended
 All I had known
 Disappeared

When I woke,
 A man greeted me
 He smiled
 He calmed me
 He welcomed me.
 Heaven

Life after death
 Everything new
 A new life
 A new beginning
 Yet so much
 Ended.

Heart Attack
 Painless Physically
 Mentally
 I was scarred
 My previous self
 Nonexistent.

Am I missed?
 Do they know?
 Why me?
 So many questions
 All the Answers
 Unknown

Many Years passed
 Yet time seemed
 To stand Still
 Never aging
 After life is
 Stagnant

I learned later
 It ends too.
 Even after life
 Heaven ends too.
 But is it truly
 Over?

When next I died
 I was prepared
 I did not fear
 Who knows?
 Maybe it will
 Continue

Tova Bitterman ('16)

The Glass Harp

The center of the room
A glass harp
The audience sits waiting
The harp's beauty calls to them
The fragility of it scares them
Repels them
They do not understand the harp

The harpist strides in
A hush falls over the room
He strokes the harp
The touch is familiar
Like greeting a dear friend
The first note fills the room
A song follows
Its melody floats towards the audience

The audience leans towards the harp
The music lulls them
They are entranced by the music
All previous fear for it forgotten
Desire grips them
They want the glass harp
To be a part of the beauty

Its melody speaks to them
Stirs their emotions
Brings forth tears from their eyes
The music of the harp moves them
What they dare not touch has touched them

The music stops
The spell is broken
Confusion returns
They love the sound of the harp
But are afraid to play it
If only they would learn the harp
How to pluck the strings without breaking them
To treat the glass so it will not shatter
If they understood that the harp is not as fragile as it seems
They could make the music for themselves

Jessica Shuman ('15)

The Darkness

The light shines dimly through the door
And my growing fears shrink away,
For the creeping darkness I could not ignore
Leads my thoughts astray.

It stalks my every movement
Like a lion in his wait,
And lures me in without consent
Like a fish onto its bait.

Its greedy hands surround my face
And obscure my worried eyes;
The darkness has a cruel embrace
As it waits for my demise.

It calls to me with a voice so cunning
That I can't help but fear,
So the opposite direction I'll take to running,
For to wickedness I'd never adhere.

I'm swallowed into an empty lake
Of nothing but endless black,
As I try hard to stay awake
And fight the darkness back.

Though something I've never realized before
Will keep the dark at bay,
A light that shines dimly through the door,
And my growing fear shrinks away.

Noa Grunhaus ('18)

The Monster

It burns in her heart
It kills her inside
It builds up ceaselessly
And eats her alive

It invades her thoughts
It conquers her soul
It possesses her body
And creates a black hole

It travels her bloodstream
It poisons her mind
It bubbles inside her
And renders her blind

It twists her logic
It prevents her healing

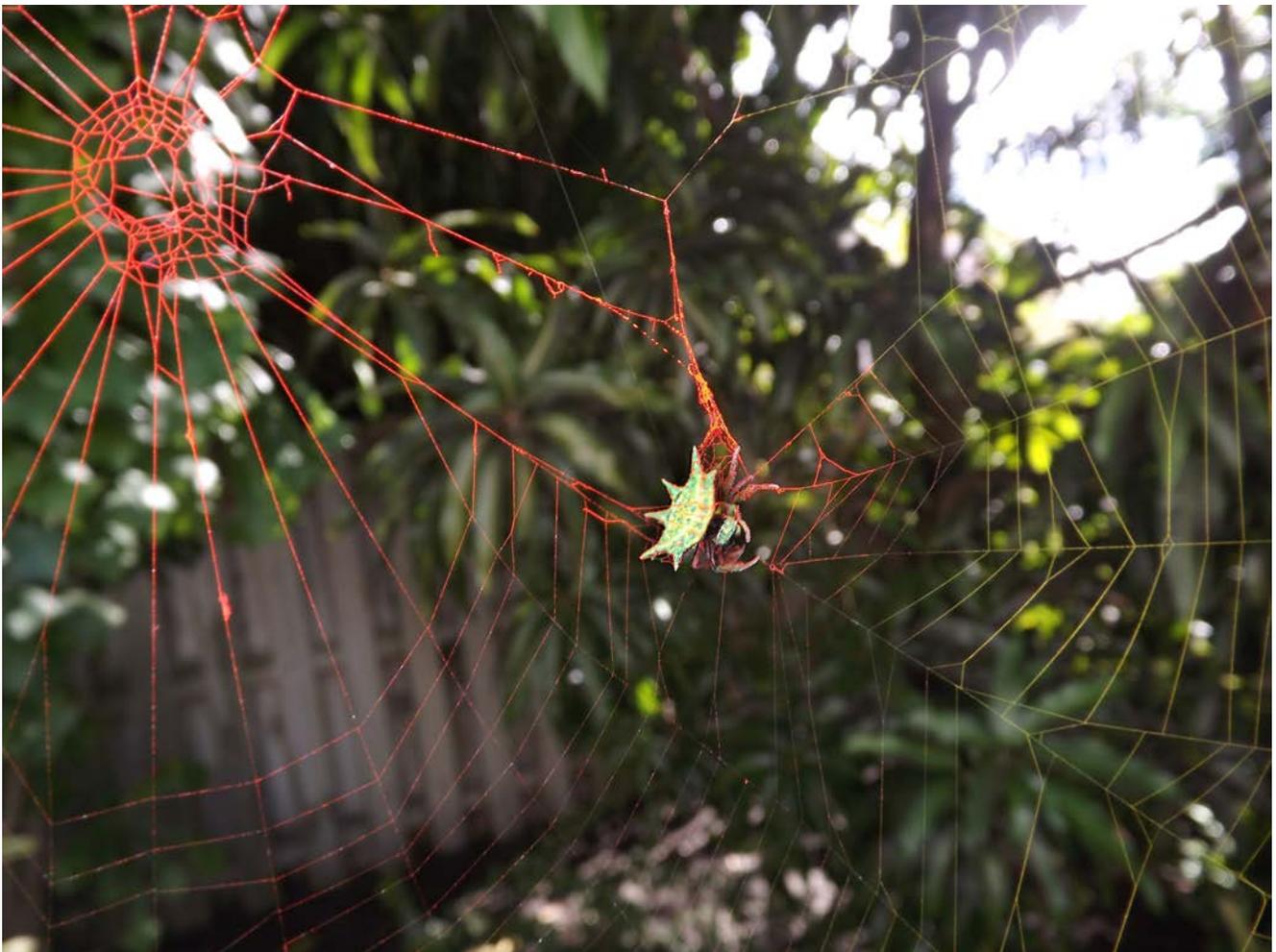
It attacks her morals
And leaves her unfeeling

It deceives her emotions
It haunts her dreams
It disrupts her serenity
And breaks her at the seams

It clouds her judgment
It contorts her vanity
It effaces her confidence
And threatens her sanity

It expands inside of her
It grows with density
It floods her systems
And she's killed by the jealousy

Picture by Cherie Landa ('15)



Maia Groman ('15)

To Decide or Not To Decide

To decide, or not to decide? That is the question-
 Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to endure
 The waning and waxing of the moon in the sky,
 Or to take resolve against its ever changing states,
 And, by opposing, select one? To settle, to choose—
 Not waver—and by a choice to say we end
 The coming and the going of the waves
 That are constantly changing—'tis a consummation
 Devoutly to be wished! To settle, to choose.
 To choose, perchance to regret—ay, there's the rub,
 For in that choice of action what disappointment may come
 When we have selected from our many options,
 Must give us pause. There's the fear
 That makes us hesitate and remain in limbo for so long.
 For who would bear the constant insecurity of indecision,
 Th' approaching deadlines, the cautious man's questioning,
 The feelings of inaction, the changing desires,
 The dreaded ambivalence, and the labeling
 As a weak and incapable fool,
 When he himself could just settle the issue
 With a firm choice? Who would ponder,
 To consider and brood over the possibilities,
 But that the dread of better choice,
 The unaltered stone from whose surface
 No word may change, puzzles the resolve
 And makes us rather bear the delay
 Than choose a destiny we can never reverse?
 Thus indecision does make cowards of us all,
 And thus the native hue of resolution
 Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of FOMO,
 And fear of a different future causes us to
 Withhold decision and resolve,
 And lose the name of action.—be decisive now,
 The impending deadline!—Nymph, may this
 Decision be sufficient, but oh, what if the other choice was superior!

Valerie Hanz ('18)

Our World

We live in a world full of competition
 People are striving to be the best
 Not caring who gets hurt along the way
 We judge based on appearance
 We laugh based on comments
 We forget about others' feelings

We don't focus on what's important
 If we did...
 There wouldn't be war
 There is so much anger
 So many people getting hurt
 But for some reason
 It is not affecting us

There are people taking advantage of
 others
 People dying

Starving
 Yet many people don't care
 Why not?
 It's all about ourselves

This world can be so cruel
 Many terrible things happening
 We don't acknowledge others...
 At least not the way we should
 We have no respect
 We don't care

We forget one of the most important
 things
 We should let go of all anger
 And learn to care for others
 We forget..
 This world is really a blessing

Picture by Maia Groman ('15)



Noa Grunhaus ('18)

What Is Left Unsaid

"Trust me"
 And I'll break your trust
 I'll hold integrity in the palm of my hand
 And crumple it like a piece of paper

"Rely on me"
 And I'll let you down
 I'll let you fall on me again and again
 And then I won't catch you; I'll let you
 fall to the ground

"Confide in me"
 And I'll betray your secrets
 I'll listen to your confessions
 And then I'll twist your words and use
 them against you

"Believe me"
 And I'll tell you lies
 I'll convince you of my verity
 And brainwash you with my deceit

"Laugh with me"
 And I'll laugh at you
 I'll validate your confidence
 And mock you behind closed doors

"Talk to me"
 And I'll talk about you
 I'll let you be open with me
 And then criticize you behind your back

"Be open with me"
 And I'll close you off
 I'll break down your walls
 And then walk away with mine still
 intact

"Promise me"
 And I'll break my promises
 I'll make that pinky swear
 And hold crossed fingers behind my
 back

"Commit to me"
 And I'll make other arrangements
 I'll swear nothing will ever come
 between us
 And then I'll shatter that promise like
 glass

"Depend on me"
 And I'll abandon you
 I'll use you when it's convenient for me
 And then I'll drop you when you need
 me most

"Befriend me"
 And I'll stab you in the back
 I'll come into your life and make my
 place
 And then I'll walk out and leave you
 with an empty heart

Bailey Frohlich, ('16)

Psst.

Psst.

I
am a product of
YOU–
yes You
don't act too surprised
you must have known
in the back of your naïve
little mind
that you are to blame,
don't be so blind

I am
a product of
YOU–
Your thoughts
Your words
Your actions
Perhaps I began when you
told your best friend
(of course she won't tell!
oh wait...
she did.)
and she texted her best friend
who tweeted his best friend
who tagged
the World

Yet,
my dearest friend,
You blame the World
You blame the best friend
the messenger
whose iMessage
merely added to
the mess
LIARS!
You scream
LOW-LIFES
You shout
LAZY, LOUSY LOSERS.

But you see,
my darling friend,
I am never a LIE
I reek of truth
take a whiff, if you dare.
the stench is just
unbearable
for all to see
for all to believe
and you know,
what you see *is* what you believe
or
is it the other way around?

So therefore,
my delightful friend,
don't be that fool who blames the world
or who blames the best friend
who just
clicked
“retweet”.
when you,
my dearest, most intimate of friends,
are the beginning,
the one who got the ball rolling
the alpha to the omega
the top of the grapevine
the very first domino that led
to
the
effect.
Get it?

Oh wait,
what's that now?
YOU don't want ME
as your dearest, most intimate of
friends?
ha!
hah. hah.

Valerie Hanz ('18)

For My Parents Who Raised Me

For my parents who gave me life
 They gave me shelter
 And food
 Who took care of me
 And handled my screaming
 And controlled my crying
 They were the first ones I saw
 For my parents who lived in 2000

For my parents who took me to school
 They helped me with homework
 They taught me right from wrong
 They took me everywhere
 And gave me anything I needed
 They were my heroes
 For my parents who lived in 2006

For my parents who taught me
 everything
 They taught me who I am
 My values
 They gave me more responsibility
 I grew, and they grew with me
 They were my best friends
 For my parents who lived in 2009

For my parents who taught me how to
 love
 How to live life to the fullest
 And how to do good things
 Make an impact
 Showed me the way to life
 But got on my nerves a little
 For my parents who lived in 2012

For my parents who still love me
 After every fight we have
 Who care enough to forgive me
 Who love me unconditionally
 "It's a teenage thing"
 That's what they say
 For my parents who live in 2015

For my parents who will still love me
 After I grow up
 After all the hard teenage years
 Once the fighting is done
 They will be at my wedding
 And when my first child is born
 They will be my best friends again
 For my parents who live in the future

Yonah Freiden ('18)

An Enemy Upon Us

There is a common enemy in our world
It torments, it tortures, it teases
It is an arduous and displeasing task to overcome
A grim entity to even glance at

It sits there untouched, laughing with an evil soul
Acting like no one is there to impede it
It annihilates everyone in its way
Its way to cause suffering

It seems impossible for something to be so vile
It seems impossible for something to be so wicked
But this defines conflict, cruelty, and pain
Its nature is tyrannical, overbearing, seemingly intolerable

This mysterious entity can be tremendously effective,
One evil action by this scoundrel
Any malicious doing,
Could dramatically change a person's life forever

As people begin to see the disastrous outcomes of this villain
They start to act
To rebel against the inhumane undertakings
All done by a nasty, cruel being

What is this entity?
What is this malevolent being?
It is one simple, unforgiving thing
Bullying.

Shoshy Ciment ('15)

To The Mother of a Soldier

To the mother of a soldier-

This is my job. I am the person nobody wants to see. The thought of me sends a cold shiver down your spine and makes you numb, immobile. I wear a stiff uniform plastered with medals. They illuminate in the sun as symbols of past achievements and lives. But to you, they are worthless pieces of metal with no weight. They can never fill the void that you feel.

I've seen death parade itself in many forms, but none of them compare to what it leaves behind. The strong and vivacious woman you have tried so hard to be will break and there is nothing you can do but cry. So when the day comes for me to darken your doorstep, I tell you in advance, I want you to cry. Not like they do in the movies, where the makeup rolls down their cheeks in gentle waves. I want it to be dirty, bitter. I want you to cry until your chest hurts. Until your voice runs out of sound. I want you to scream and kick, clumsily and without aim. I don't want it to be beautiful or poignant. I want it to be real.

I will stand there solemnly, never wavering in my duties. I cannot offer you comfort because I simply do not know how. Comfort and emotions fall out of the realm of drills and commands, and render me lost. This is how we mourn- with marches and chants and gunshots. We leave the real eulogy to you.

When it is time for me to go, I will leave you with a flag of our great nation. You will be left with the decision of whether you want to wave it, or burn it. I will walk away with the image of your tear stained face forever burned in my mind. I'll return home to sleepless nights, only to resume the never-ending cycle in the morning.

But I will never cry.

This is my job.

_____ Siev (first name varies) ('15)

Beyond the Pages, Between the Lines

“He has to be in here,” he thought. “It’s where he runs to be alone, to relax and calm down.” The Victorian cherry wood doors slowly creaked open as he apprehensively poked his head in. The warmth and the strong, familiar stench of the rectangular Grand Library embraced his nostrils like a long lost brother, making him gag for a brief moment, as it always did. Not one electric light tainted the library’s purity in accordance with the late master’s wishes. A man of refined tastes, The Maestro refused to defile his “sanctified realm” with unsightly wires and electrical equipment. Instead, the wooden walls were graced by rows of skillfully handcrafted oil lamps, all of which lay cold and dormant. The only light emanated from the fireplace in which the flames crackled, dancing and frolicking in the air, casting menacing shadows upon the books and busts that covered the walls of the study. No furniture embellished the library except for the dark brown leather armchair in front of the fireplace and the small table beside it on which an antique phonograph was perched, pouring forth the sounds of “*Lacrimosa*” from *Mozart’s Requiem*. As he slowly inched up behind the armchair, a thin haze of smoke rose from its occupant.

“Sir?” he said quietly, bowing his head and clasping his hands together. The only response he received was the snapping of the fire and the *Requiem* as the record calmly twirled beneath the needle like a ballerina.

“Sir?” he said a little louder, shuffling closer, as he attempted again in vain to obtain a reply. After a short pause, he stepped forward once more and cleared his throat politely. “Excuse me, sir?”

“I heard you!” burst a voice from the armchair, making him flinch and stop abruptly in his tracks. “If you have something to say, then SAY it already!” it boomed, as a hand shot out from behind the chair, hurling a pipe across the room, strewing its smoldering contents upon the carpet.

“Sir!” he exclaimed as he desperately rushed to stomp out the embers that lay scattered upon the floor.

“If you plan on keeping this little refuge of yours much longer,” he said, slamming his feet into the burning tobacco, “I would suggest that you take into account how just about everything in here is a fire hazard!”

“You think I care right now?!” roared the voice as its possessor swiftly rose from its armchair. He was wearing a blue and purple silk robe with the initials “JC III” sewn on the left lapel. His normally slicked back hair was disheveled, accompanied by a five o’clock shadow and a bad pair of crow’s feet. “I don’t care about you, I don’t care about me, I don’t care about anything in this idiotic house!” he yelled, sweeping the phonograph off the table in a fit of rage, sending it careening across the room like a

ballistic missile and replacing the beautiful, haunting sounds of the *Requiem* with a cacophonous racket as it crashed onto the floor.

“Sir! That’s the second one this week!” cried the butler as he scurried from one mess to the next, gathering fragments of the record and the phonograph. “This isn’t like you, James! For as long as I can remember, there’s nothing you’ve respected more than music!”

“Stop your lamenting over those useless trinkets. I can replace them like I did all the others...” he scolded, walking over to the fireplace and leaning on the mantel as he peered deeply into the flames, turning his back to his faithful servant. “...but I can’t replace her.”

“Oh, James” said the butler softheartedly, slowly rising to his feet. He walked over and placed his hand on his master’s shoulder. “You have to let her go.”

James pulled a handkerchief from his robe and wiped away the perspiration on his forehead. “You say it like it’s just ripping a weed out of a garden and throwing it away effortlessly with a flick of the wrist,” he said as he tossed his handkerchief into the fire and watched it slowly burn and shrivel into a miniscule pile of ash.

“I know it’s hard,” started the butler, “but...”

“You know nothing!” shouted James, darting away from the hand of his concerned manservant. “You think of me as an ignorant child!”

“I was once a young man, too!” he said imitating and ridiculing his servant. “I’ve learned a thing or two in my lifetime, and now I, the wise old Willemstock, will impart a little bit of my wise old wisdom on the foolish and naïve youngin, James Callenhouse, third of his name and undeserving little scoundrel who sits on his arse all day burning away the family fortune. Well I’m going to stop you right there, Willie, because I know what horrors you’ve lived through, and they’re nowhere near as painful as this,” James said, slumping into his armchair.

“Really, James!” snapped Willemstock, catching James a little off guard. “I would’ve thought you’d grown up by now! You still act like it’s all about you, like you’re the only one who’s been hurt by this! Have you even seen what this has done to Emily? She looks worse than death! She doesn’t eat, she doesn’t sleep, the only thing she can do is cry her eyes out!”

“Don’t you dare make me out to be the villain here,” demanded James sternly, straightening up in his chair.

“She only wanted what was best for the both of you, but you were too infatuated with your own agenda to see that she was slipping away!”

James swiftly stood and marched up to Willemstock, standing mere centimeters away and reminding his butler exactly how imposing of a figure he was. “You would do good to hold your tongue, old man.”

Willemstock saw the anguish in James’s eyes as he struggled to repress the deluge that raged behind them. One more chink off the concrete and the floodgates would surely

collapse. “You said you were a man of your word, but you’ve turned your back on every promise you ever made to her and on every promise you ever made to me!”

“I said SHUT UP!” screamed James, petrifying his servant as he rushed away and leaned over the fireplace again. A tense, prolonged silence followed as James tried to maintain his composure and fight back emotions he couldn't bear to let himself display.

“James,” said Willemstock, his heart going out to the boy, “it’s been four months. This isn’t healthy. For your sake as well as hers, please, this needs to end.” James stepped away from the fireplace and walked to the opposite end of the library, sniffing and wiping his eyes with the sleeve of his robe. “James, I know you still feel something for her, no matter how much you try to cover it up. The only way to make peace with yourself is if you let her go and move on.” James stood with his back to Willemstock, his head hung low with shame.

“James...please.”

The tension in the room was palpable as they both stood, unmoving, in stony silence. Minutes passed and Willemstock began to worry that he had only strengthened James’s resolve, as he had done in the past. It wasn’t until after what seemed like an eternity of silence that James spoke.

“Fine,” he said, lifting his head and turning his bloodshot red eyes to Willemstock. “I’ll let her go.” James sniffled and wiped at his eyes again as he walked past Willemstock on the way to a bookshelf. He stood at the base, scanning the many different novels and tomes until his eyes sighted upon “*Romeo and Juliet*,” which he promptly removed from the shelf and leafed through. “A personal favorite?” asked Willemstock, taking his place beside James. “It just seemed appropriate,” he replied, replacing the book and slamming it forcefully into the back of the shelf.

At that moment, the bookshelf swung upon and the two men were greeted by the potent stench of sweat and human excrement. Willemstock pressed his handkerchief over his mouth and nose to guard them from the foul odor, for it was so strong that he could taste it. The air was thick and hard to breathe, like that of a mouldering locker room. One dim light bulb flickered to life to reveal a small, gray, concrete cell, hidden beyond the shelves. There, in the center of the cell, on her knees with her arms held up by chains from the walls and ceiling, lay what once was a beautiful young woman. She was gaunt and emaciated, with her head drooped down, hair long and unkempt. She wore nothing more than a potato sack taken from the kitchen, now stained with blood and sweat.

“Emily, can you hear me?” asked Willemstock, cautiously tiptoeing over so as not to step in any blood or refuse. He kneeled beside her, placed his hand beneath her chin, and lifted her head. Her face looked like that of a woman three times her age for the stress had taken its toll on her, leaving lines and marks on her ghostly white face, scars on her arms, and gray hairs on her head, and turning her once beautiful eyes to ash. An IV in her arm and multiple machines monitoring her health were the only things keeping her alive, as she was unresponsive and had seemed to have lost the will to endure her

predicament any longer.

James reached into his robe, pulled out a key, and tossed it to Willemstock.

"See to it that she remembers nothing of this ordeal. A routine 'wipe & swipe' ought to suffice," he instructed as he walked towards the door, turned the knob and eased it open an inch before stopping himself and turning back to his faithful servant. "Oh, and while you're at it, be a dear and clean out the rest of the cells in here. It's been some time since Charles got around to it and the library is starting to reek again."

"Of course, my lord," said Willemstock while he helped Emily out of her chains.

"Good man, Willie," said James as he opened the door again, chuckling to himself. "And to think that once upon a time, I found you in this dungeon."

Picture by Shuli Mayer ('16)



Ayelet Gross ('18)

Concrete and Leather

I sat down at my desk and checked my watch. The time was 6:45 and my students would be coming to class in an hour. Picking up a piece of charcoal with my numb hands, I wrote the date May 18, 2037 one on of the four blank walls. I looked around the room at the solid concrete and sighed. I stared at my reflection through the pencil sharpener. My pale skin, flat black hair, and empty eyes definitely matched my surroundings. Living in concrete houses was what the world was like at that time. In the corner of my eye, I saw a faint crack in the corner of the room. A few months ago, the concrete began to crumble and a frigid blast of air pushed its way into the classroom. Everybody had to be evacuated for the time being, because the air was too cold to be in. The outside world was a mystery. Only those old enough to be aware twenty years ago could remember the sheets of ice on the ground, and the billions of dead people lying in the streets.

I pushed the horrid thoughts away and opened up my desk drawer. I pulled out a stack of papers, which would be covering the day's required history lesson. Teaching a history class for sixteen-year-olds was not an exciting pastime, considering the situation. I stared at the cover of my textbook, reading the words, "A Safe History for Teens." My mind immediately raced back to the day, several years ago, when I was told about who was the cause of the earth's destruction, and why it was important to history:

A man named Adam Jones lived with his wife Harper by the water on the east coast of the United States of America in the year 2017. This was in the middle of the third World War, which hadn't reached America yet. Since Adam was the owner of a national pawnshop, he and his wife were very wealthy. Unfortunately, despite all their riches, they could not conceive a child, so Harper was miserable. They constantly tried to adopt, but the adoption agency never returned their calls. Adam tried his best to cheer up his wife, but with no success, because she seemed to be stuck in a state of eternal depression.

On May 17, Adam sat in his office when a leather bracelet in a glass cabinet caught his eye. He unlocked the display case and held it in his palm, remembering how he came to own it. Years ago, an old woman from the Amazon presented it to him during a private meeting. She claimed it gave somebody three wishes, but some kind of bad consequence always came along with it. The old woman said that her mother had made a wish, and then died because of it. Since then, the bracelet had had a bad reputation in the Amazon, so she was looking to sell it.

Adam laughed, remembering how he had bought the hideous bracelet just to humor the old lady. He pocketed it, deciding to bring it home to hopefully cheer up his wife.

That night, Adam walked through the front door to see Harper sitting on the couch watching television. He walked over to her to see what she was watching.

"Honey," he said softly, "Is watching a show about newborns really going to make you feel better?"

"But look at those adorable little legs. Aren't they the cutest things?" Harper answered, her voice heavy with despair.

"Why are we still discussing this Harper? All the neighbors say that babies just ruin the house, and make your life hectic!" Adam cried.

"I don't care. I find children to be so comforting. Just think about the pitter-patter

of little feet running around the house.”

“Forget about it, honey. I don’t – Oh! I just remembered. I know a perfect way to get your mind off of this baby stuff,” Adam said cheerfully as he turned off the TV, “I found this old mystical bracelet that is supposed to grant wishes. What a joke!”

“Okay then, I wish for a child, and I wish for that my despair over not having a kid will end quickly,” she said hastily, taking her husband’s words all too seriously.

“Come on, honey. You don’t actually believe it’ll work, do you? Even if it did, why did you have to waste two wishes?” Adam said jokingly.

“I guess you’re right. It’s hopeless to think I would ever have a baby. I guess fate just doesn’t want that to happen,” Harper responded gloomily as she turned the television back on.

“Well, even if it is a joke, I still want to use my wish,” Adam said, “I want my wish to be life-changing.”

“Sweetie, having a child is life-changing. Imagine how great our lives would be if we had a baby to share it with,” Harper said.

“Honey I know, but my wish should be something that will affect the entire world. It should be something that people will look back on and say, ‘Wow. What an interesting decision that Adam guy made,’” he responded.

“I wonder what happened to not taking the whole leather bracelet thing seriously?”

“I still take it as a joke, Harper. But if it was real, what would I wish for?” Adam said.

Adam glanced over at the television as the evening news alerts came on. He saw updates about the warfront in Europe, Asia, Africa, and Australia, and suddenly got an idea for the perfect third wish.

“I wish for world peace,” Adam whispered.

“What was that, sweetie, I couldn’t make out what you said there,” Harper replied.

“I just wished for world peace!” Adam shouted, “I mean, it’s perfect! The world is at war, and if the bracelet really works, then I just solved a major crisis! But... the bracelet won’t work. I don’t know why I’m getting so worked up over this.”

“We both are sweetie. We both are.”

The just then the phone rang. Harper answered the call, and to her astonishment, it was the adoption agency calling to say that their application has been approved, and that they will get a baby the next day. The call was from the same company who’d never even bothered to review their adoption application. Harper’s face lit up with excitement. It seemed that her eternal depression had finally come to an end.

Suddenly, a news flash came on the television saying that all the world’s leaders got together and signed a worldwide peace treaty. Adam was in shock. The wishes were coming true. First Harper’s wishes about children happened, and then Adam’s desire for a peace treaty! What else could be responsible for the sudden urge for world peace? Adam was just about to call his co-worker to tell him all about the magic of the leather bracelet, but then stopped himself. If he told anybody about the bracelet, somebody might try to steal it. If that happened, another life-altering wish could be made, and Adam would no longer be a hero. He decided that he would keep the secret of the bracelet between him and his wife.

That evening, Harper was told to go over to the adoption center to pick up their baby. Adam had received the call at work, so he was already at the adoption center signing legal documents. Harper was ecstatic, so she hopped in her car to go to the center. Perhaps, she was driving a little too fast or her mind was somewhere else because she didn't hit her brakes fast enough at a stoplight. A truck coming from another direction had a green light, and smashed into the side of Harper's car. An unconscious Harper lay in the drivers seat while Adam finished signing a form gaining him legal custody over a baby girl.

After receiving a notification from a nurse, Adam rushed over to the hospital. He hurried to the front desk and found out that Harper had lost the use of both her legs in the accident. Adam sat down and pondered over the situation for a bit. He realized that if the adoption agency hadn't accepted their application, Harper would have never gotten into the accident. He then thought back even further and realized that the adoption agency might have never contacted them, if Harper hadn't wished to be a mother. Then his mind raced back to the moment when lady who sold him the bracelet had said:

"You will get your wish, but it will come with a consequence. Fate does not like to be cheated, and it will find a balance."

Adam was hit by a sudden wave of nausea as he realized what was happening. Having a child resulted in the misfortune of Harper's immobilization. So what would be the supreme consequence for messing with the state of the world?

Over the course of the next week, all of his fears were confirmed. All of the soldiers across the globe lost their jobs because there was no more need for protection. Riots began and some people were so angry at each other and at the government that they started bombing each other's homes. Two weeks later, the world leaders responded by launching a full-scale attack on the abandoned military bases in Australia, where the former soldiers were hiding. They hired scientists to freeze the base, with a new weapon invented called "TempZee-Ro". However, they underestimated the power of the weapon. When they fired TempZee-Ro at the base, they froze the entire building, and it led off a chain reaction. The weapon sent a blast of ice into the planet, which hit Earth's core, completely freezing it. All the trees, lakes, and homes froze over. The ground was covered with a layer of ice so thick that even the sun couldn't melt it.

The only survivors were the people living on the opposite side of the world, the east coast of the United States of America. Adam and Harper both died in the hospital instantly, but their adopted daughter, who was still at the orphanage, survived. The humans built strong concrete houses to protect themselves from the cold, but over time, the world just got colder. Eventually, it got too cold to even feel the air. As new children were born, most people forgot about what the world really looked like. As for the leather bracelet, it seemed to have disappeared after the TempZee-Ro fiasco, which was perfectly fine with the survivors.

I snapped out of my daydream, despising what my adopted father had done. Sure the world wasn't at war anymore, but war was better than having it being completely frozen over! I looked over at the clock sitting on my desk. Wow, the time was already 7:45. The kids would be arriving soon. I shut my desk drawer, ignoring the piece of leather I knew was there. Then I placed a history book on each desk, and opened my own book, ready to start the lesson.

Portrait by Sara Khambalia ('17)



