

The Willow

Poetry Prose Photography Artwork Literary Magazine



Spring 2016

Cover Art

Love Life

By Abby Burke '19

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Willow: A Brief History

The Willow Literary Magazine was founded in December 1998 as a student organized literary publication. The journal's purpose is to encourage and celebrate creative expression within the campus community through the publication of poetry, prose, artwork, and photography from the student population.

Since the fall of 1999, the Willow has continued to grow through the dedication and heart of the staff and the artists of Salve Regina University.

The Willow is published with the financial support of the Activities Funding Board.

Letter from the Editor:

This past year was one of the most successful years for the Willow. We have grown so much as an organization and as a publication on campus and I am honored to be able to leave Salve Regina University knowing that I took part in creating the 17th edition of the Willow Literary Magazine.

I would like to thank my incredible staff for working as a team throughout meetings, creating competitions and special events for the campus community, providing editing feedback, and being the best group of people I have ever worked with during my time at the University.

I would also like to thank all students who submitted to the Willow. The talent that can be seen throughout the magazine speaks to all that the students here have to contribute not only to the University, but also to the world.

Lastly, I would like to thank Paula Telford from Design Services, our adviser, Dr. Jennifer McClanaghan, Kiki Butler, and all of the members of the Salve Regina University's English Department for their continuous support.

Sincerely yours,
Tara Stanzione '16

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Three Out Of Three

By Caroline Kelley '18

Chandelier sunlight illuminates the winding road.
Crisp gusts whisk away each nominal worry
On our minds as we breathe in the familiar foreignness.

The ebbing of the massive indigo body before us
Draws us deeper into the all-consuming atmosphere
Surrounding the day.

The journey is one often travelled and never rushed.
In its exhilarating element,
The hideaway unravels.

Lucky to encounter it,
We encapsulate this very moment
Under open skies of contentment.

Midday honey-golden specks
Fade into a navy blanket
Woven into the glow of constellations.

We dance before headlights
In the fleeting eternity
That is the ten-mile ride.



Autumn

By David Fairchild '18



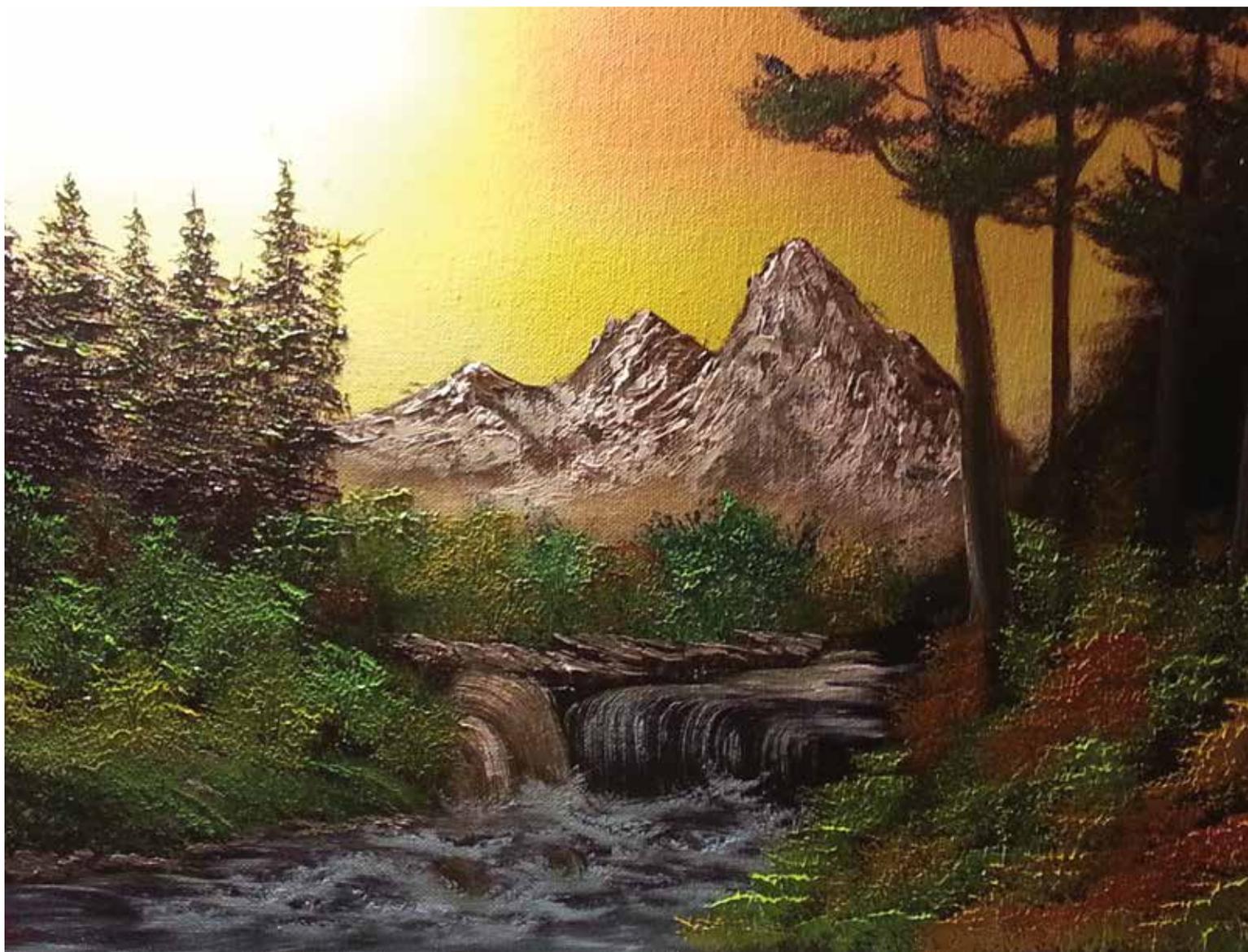
Yellow Wood

By Jolie Slater '19

Planetary

By Maria Buonasora '18

I walked down the road
Contemplating my decision.
I was a traveler at a crossroads,
That was obvious.
I was alone; I looked around
But saw no friends.
All I saw was a bent tree branch
Just lying in the road,
Waiting for me to trip on it.
I tried to tell myself things would get better,
Easier,
But, by now, I had lost hope
Because that's what I do best.
I spent the rest of the day waiting for morning.
I sat at my window
And blinked at the leaves outside,
Not understanding why
I was having so much trouble.
I sat there confused and,
Though I was perplexed,
I could tell the difference between
The leaves and the grass outside
Just as I could tell the difference
Between right and wrong,
Good and bad, and
Life and Death.



Summer Sunset

By Yana Grigoryeva '17

The Humble Man's Ode To The Sun

By Cleora Obar '16

Rising above the horizon,
Standing higher than Earth herself,
Each day this immense ball of gas and fire greets the horizon in this way.
It is a continuous natural cycle.
However, sometimes the clouds threaten to cease the existence of this magnificent shining light.
Whether one knows it or not, the sun is here to stay for eons to come.
It casts its rays whether there's a shower or not.
Sometimes the sun may make a cheerful salutation:
 I am the sun; I greet thee with a warming embrace every day.
 I am the heat that warms every cold situation.
 I am the light that shines over darkness.
Everyone, even those who can't see with their eyes, notices my presence.
Ode to the sustenance of mother Earth,
For he fortifies all who cross his rays.



California Dreams

By Abby Burke '19



Yosemite

By Abby Burke '19

New Beginnings

By Tyler Lancaster '19

At birth you exude innocence and ignorance,
You are ignorant of the brutal world.
The cruelty of this Earth is running at full speed,
Toward you.
However this is only the start,
The Beginning.

First day at school.
A new scary, evil place,
You cry and scream for the woman you cannot live without,
Your mom.
Weeping for her warm, gentle embrace.
Someone new and funny comes to comfort you.
You learn a new word, Friend.
He will be your spine when you are scared,
Your smile when nothing else can lighten up your day.
True friends are hard to come by,
But a true friend you have made.
This is a New Beginning.

A girl catches your eye and captures your heart,
She is your first love.
You think it will last forever,
But heartache is all you receive.
Alone forever with your thoughts.
Light, there is a light at the end of the tunnel,
The beauty of Aphrodite herself,
Emeralds shine as her eyes,
And she has the voice of an Angel.
A girl who teaches you what true, endless love is.
This is a New Beginning.

Growing and living with her you learn,
Learn that life without her is meaningless,
You get down on bended knee,
Where she took you out of the darkness of your thoughts.
Yes! A loud yes rings through your mind.
On the day that you will remember until the end of time,
As she is ordained in sheets of silk and the color of pure snow. I do.
This is a New Beginning.

Birth of your little girl,
Your Lily.
As you watch her blossom,
You remember the harshness of life.
You think of what she will have to overcome,
Frightened by those thoughts you look to her for comfort.
But all the bad memories of life rush back,
All of The Ends.
The Ends hurt the most,
But at every end there must come
A New Beginning.



In Vitro

By Brooke Pennington '19

Flowers, Female, Feminine, Fragile

By Carly Perini '17

Why group them together?
They go through more, they fight and they weather.

Why only attach beauty and charm?
Why make them too delicate for harm?

Why is a girl armored in white,
While boys are taught to fight?

Why keep the girls locked in maidenhood? Objects to be gained;
unrealistic even for Gawain.

Why keep the words “tiny, delicate, thin, narrow and wide-eyed?”
Why put their personalities aside?

Why make flowers weak and soft;
something beautiful because it is lost.

That is their common beauty though,
short lived — though we never wish to see it go.

We try and care, try to nurture.
But at the slightest fault, at any hints of age-related mature,

“Remove the dead bloom from the vase.”
Its beauty is lost; caring for it has no cause.

The beauty and sweet fragrance is short lived,
only a momentary charm to give

to both girls and flowers.
We're only seen as withering, dying plants. Not steel towers.

What makes feminine fragile?
What makes a flower female?

Ask the people who created the concept,
the people who are long dead and out of the conflict.

The ones whose opinion holds no weight,
they've already passed through hell's gate.



Petals

By Abigail Truesdell '19

I'm Not Your Lighter

By Mattia Lombard '19

I don't feel the fire anymore;
I don't notice the burns
until I can smell my own skin singeing.
I don't feel the acrid ache in my throat
until my lungs are screaming because
I have taken too many hits with too many boys I hate.

For some reason,
they hear my gasping coughs as meek laughter,
and my wasted, violent shaking
as an eagerness to please.

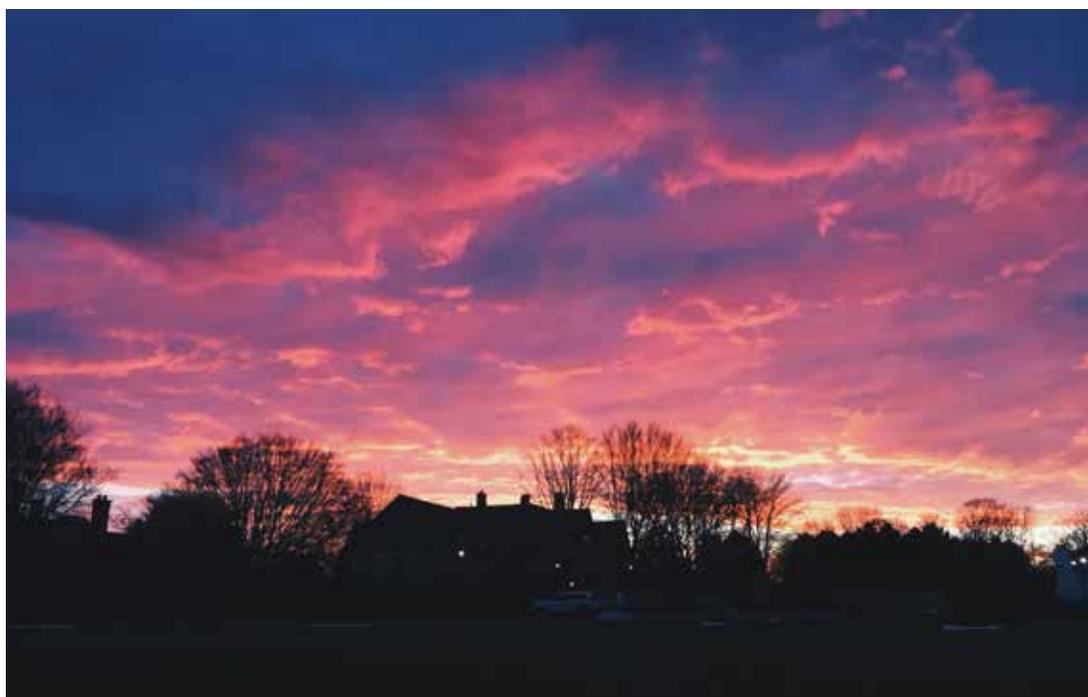
I want to shake them,
I want to shout the smoke back in their faces,

"I gasp because I cannot breathe,
and I shake because I know
they always win."



Cold Beauty

By Clara Corjulo '16



Wallace In Wonderland

By Caroline Kelley '18

T. M.

By Crete Clifford '17

When was it too much
Was it that last kiss
Where you declared your love
Was it that last touch

When did we go too far
Was it what I said
It confuses me
To the point I've felt dead

Was it when you wanted to go steady
Where you kissed me under the moonlight
When we held hands
And I said I wasn't ready

Was it when I wrote in black ink
When you lent me your sweatshirt
Where we told our secrets
And we had time to think

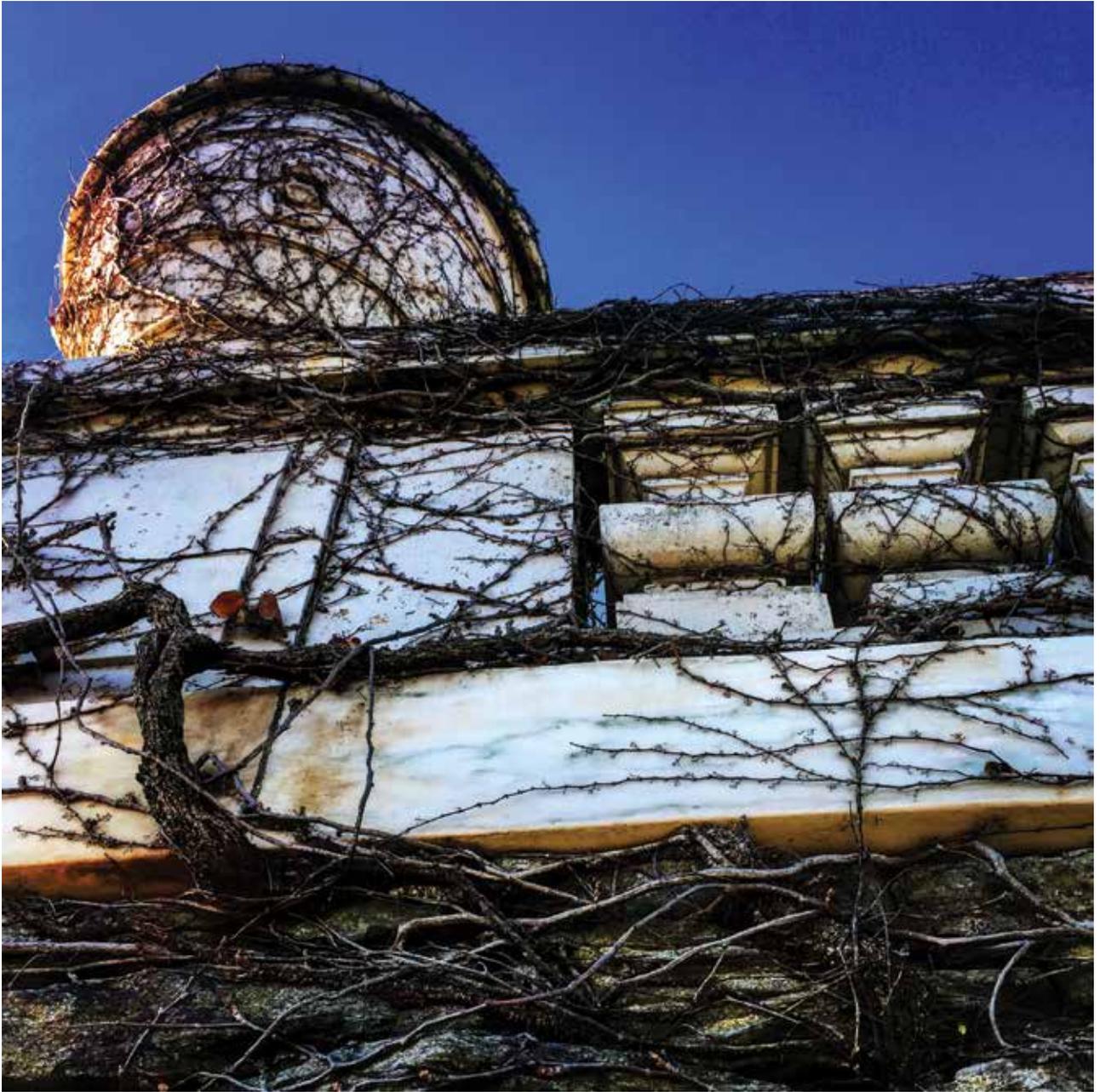
When was it too much
Was it that you were scared
What was it that I said
That it was not you, but me that cared

When did you realize
You never loved me
When we last talked
Where we used to cry

Was it that last car ride
Where we decided at my place
To just be friends
When did I become too much by your side

When did I realize
That you would never come back
Was it after I cried myself to sleep
Or when I felt I couldn't eat

When did the aching feeling subside
When the tears finally dried
It must have been that moment
I realized you were too much by my side



Rosecliff

By Kelly Richards '18

Mattawa Circle

By Abigail Truesdell '19

The front yard was covered
in snow, and I wondered
if my earring was still under the mess.
You told me you were never able to find it,
though I hoped you had.

Your room looked different.
Everything rearranged
in a way I didn't recognize.

The repainted walls
covering all juvenile marks —
the candles I drew for your birthday.

Where we gonna go from here?
fading to pencil ash.

The futon, gone,
replaced with an identical
one that didn't belong to us,
or the night
we first kissed.

Could you feel my lips
close while you carried
it away?

The day you painted,
how did it feel to roll
one year in dark grey?

I bet I looked nice
through the glass door, past
the snowflakes.
Maybe it was enough for you.
By then, I was halfway
down the road.



Hideaway

By Caroline Kelley '18

Change

By Veronica Beretta '19

Another heart break, another hair color.
This is the second time I've done it.
Another guy gone
And I find myself at the salon,
Chopping inches off of my head and dying it drastically.
I never realized how these aspects of my life coincide.
According to my friend it is my subconscious telling me
I need to change,
Because somewhere deep down I feel like
I wasn't good enough.
She's probably right.



Packages From California

By Cecilia Lacouture '19



Pulchritudinous

By Esther Hoekstra '18

Best Friend

By Esther Hoekstra '18

To my best friend.
I saw it coming,
my world was fragile
and I was in pain,
drowning, I choked on hatred,
hatred for myself.

To my best friend.
I held that bottle in my hand,
for so long it was the end,
my wounds cut deep,
my anger raged,
but you kept me sane
from the thoughts that haunted my reality.

To my best friend.
Thank you.
Thank you for holding me in your arms,
for giving me the strength to let go
of what was hurting,
of what was killing me on the inside,
thank you for replacing it with love,
thank you for being you.

To my best friend.
You saved my life.



Winter Wonderland

By Dan O'Brien '16

One More Shot

By Sarah Collins '18

And I'm used to the galaxy
The stars and the sea
The red orange storms
And the sparkling rings

But I had never seen something quite like those eyes
A nice comfy hazel
Looking like dripping caramel
That I could swim in for days

So I watched from across the room
Wanting something I could never have
While you typed away at your computer
Trying and failing to not smile when you'd catch me staring

Then that night we thought we were done for
We threw it all out the window
And let ourselves have a night
Of being anyone but who we were

And God that day I had to let you go
Both of us thinking we'd end up fine
But you'd make it out to the other side
And find out I wouldn't be there waiting for you anymore

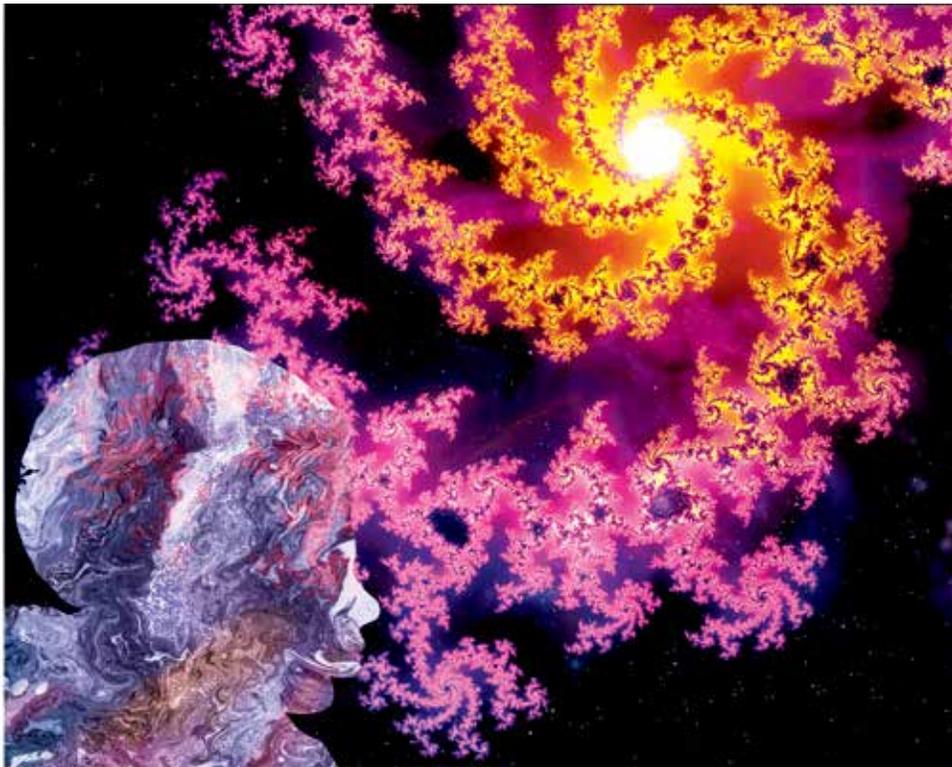
Then I came back with a vengeance
Two years later
Thinking I could just slip myself back into your life
But you had her and I meant nothing to you anymore

Then one night you cracked
Showed up at my door at 3 a.m.
Telling me how you missed the sneaking around
And how you'd never forgiven yourself
For abandoning me all those years ago

So I let you back in
And we lived in this perfect state of bliss
But duty always calls
And this time it was sounding all the alarms

And this time when I left
I knew it was the end
And even though we had done it before
We didn't think we'd ever have to do it again

So now you're here
Willing me to wake up
And I promise you I'm giving it all I've got
And this time I'll be around for good



The High Tide Of Heavenly Bliss

By Alessio Ayuninjam '18

I Wonder What Star He's Sleeping Under Tonight

By Carly Perini '17

Every night the stars are there,
sometimes they hide away from the world,
sometimes different, in the shapes they bear,
they are there against the sky, unfurled.

But the only way to know for sure is to look,
I need to leave my home and travel far,
the comfort of my warm and safe little nook,
I have to go into the dark and find the stars.

It's a never-ending attempt to find,
consistently, night after night,
but I remain safe and warm inside,
I don't venture out to find the lights.

When I do go out, I hardly look up at the sky,
only when it is convenient, only when I feel safe,
I don't even know where half the stars reside,
to me it's simply infinite space.

I know the stars hold so much meaning,
I know that some people can see their hues,
see their beauty, always gleaming,
faded red, glowing yellow, vibrant cold blues.

I don't see that, I see a sky,
I didn't know that the specks had colors,
I see lights faint enough to be put out with a sigh,
"It's filled with boundless possibilities," say others.

I don't know what star I'm sleeping under,
I couldn't tell you a constellation past Orion and his might,
the sky is a mystery to me, turning my thoughts to lovers,
I wonder what star he is sleeping under tonight.



Window With A View

By Veronica Beretta '19

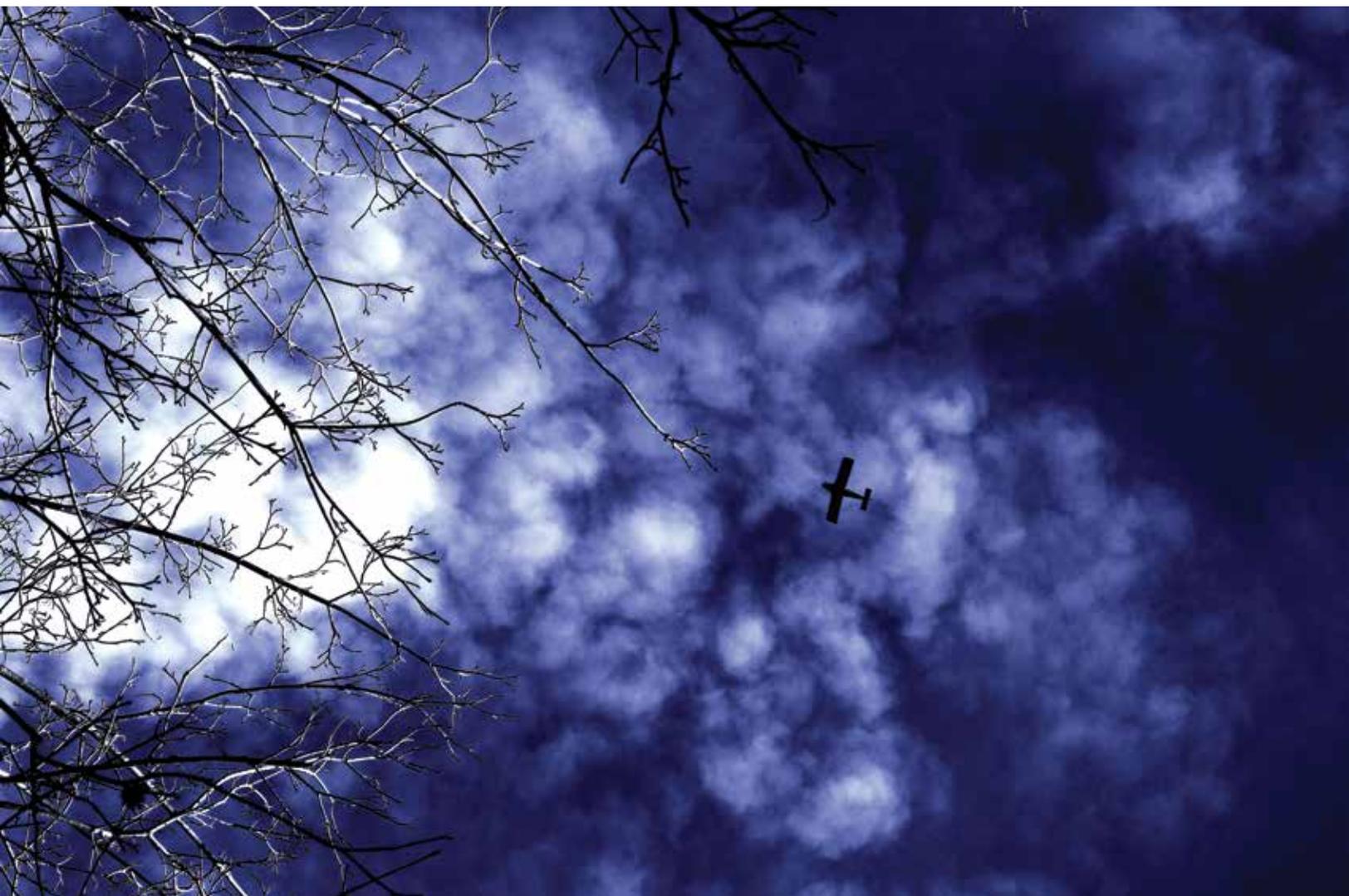
On Driving Home After Seeing A Ghost

By David Fairchild '18

She walked among the players on a stage,
dressed in black and red,
screaming "Thou hast not loved!"
with a fire that curled her soft, black hair.
And she caught my eyes with that first line,
did that mean something? I thought then,
cutting through me with words so sharply spoken.

The streetlights tried to flicker on,
without success, I'd like to think,
and I had to resist a milkshake at the drive-thru
because the useless things never change.
But I didn't resist feeling her embrace,
or, on the way home, remembering her face,
wishing I had not stopped knowing it.

The playhouse had a portrait in the lobby
of His Holiness the Dalai Lama,
like my therapist has,
and I couldn't help but ask of it,
"You've heard me talk about her,
should I try it all again?"
but he hasn't answered.



Sky High

By Alessio Ayuninjam '18

The Last Time I Died

By Maria Bounasora '18

The last time I died
I felt myself sinking
deeper and deeper
into my mind.
Razor-sharp thoughts and ice-cold words
pierced my skin.
They created in me a monster
of ridicule and hate
that pushed itself down
into the depths of Hell
and made me stare at happiness
that was always just out of reach.

The last time I died
I stitched up the wounds
that scarred my flesh.
The thread caught on the gashes
and they reopened,
but I started stitching again.
I destroyed the demon
that lived inside my head.
I pulled myself out of Hell,
not yet victorious, but getting there.
I stopped ignoring happiness
and fought my way through life
until I wrapped my fist around it
and pocketed it, taking it everywhere I went.

The last time I died
I didn't just die.

The last time I died
I came back to life.



The Lightning Tree

By Dan O'Brien '16



Fire In The Sky

By Dan O'Brien '16

The Sense Of A Ghost

By Clara Corjulo '16

I look at my hands,
Pale white like the moon,
Like the clouds on a
Sunny day.

I look around me
And see snow on the ground,
Snow falling from the
Sky.

I hear wind howling
Around the trees,
Leaves are blowing
Past me.

My hair remains still,
It's unmoving on my back.
I run my hands through it,
But nothing changes.

I don't feel cold.
It's snowing and it's dark.
I'm wearing a
Short dress.

I turn and see a body,
It's not breathing.
It's covered in bruises,
And there are ligature marks
On her throat.

I move closer and see
My face.
My eyes are wide open,
And my mouth is gaping.

I try to close the eyes,
But my hand fades through
Them like mist in the
Morning air.

I want to cry,
But no tears fall.
I try to scream,
But hear no sound.

I sit next to my body,
Watching as it's
Buried in a shallow grave.
But I can't brush
Away the snow.



3489 ft

By David Fairchild '18

The Adventures Of India Archer: Raider Of Upper Middle Class Graves

By Allison Graham '17

I see dead people at night. An occupational normalcy as a part-time grave robber. I don't do this because I want to, but because I have to. I come from a family of lawyers, and when I told my parents I wanted to become a nurse they completely cut me off. Tuition, books, living, I have to figure it all out on my own. Between my two part-time jobs; one at Starbucks, the other at a small ma-and-pop store called Mason's Candy Jars, I'm barely making enough to pay for rent and feed myself. Plus, my full coursework from my nursing classes doesn't leave me with enough study time to take on a third job.

My friends have told me that babysitting can be flexible and lucrative, but no amount of money can convince me to watch over children for any amount of time. My Grandpa even offered to help by giving me an "allowance" every month. I declined though, telling him that I wanted to prove to my parents that I really wanted this. If I didn't work for it, they would keep expecting me to go to law school. Instead, I sacrifice my sleep and free time reading the obituaries, and digging up the graves of dead rich people. On a good night, I can make up to six thousand dollars.

After a year of robbing graves, I've gotten really good. It used to take me two hours to dig six feet, but now it takes me only twenty

minutes. Robbing graves is good exercise.

I'm a lot stronger than I was when I came back to college this fall semester. I've gotten great muscle tone, especially in my arms and back.

After a lot of trial and error, I finally came up with a procedure that's pretty efficient. Before I go out, I dress in all black and bring a metal shovel, face mask, purse full of plastic sandwich bags, and my car keys. I park in a 24-hour McDonald's, which is about five blocks or so from the cemetery, and then I walk the rest of the way. I make sure to keep to back alleys and side streets so no one sees me from the main road. I pick a plot away from sight and then, after donning my face mask, I dig. Once I get a casket open I inspect the body for valuables, and anything I find I place into a sandwich bag. I stuff that bag into my purse, cover my tracks, pick up some breakfast at McDonald's, and head back home.

It's gotten much easier since I first started. Every shovel-full of dirt gets lighter and I haven't shed a tear since the middle of last spring. Combining the funds from my two part-time jobs and my thefts, I only need a few more thousand or so until I can pay my full tuition. With all the graves I've been robbing to cover for the inoperable winter months, I was content to let the ground freeze and wait for spring to start grave robbing again.

Thanksgiving screwed it up. Come home, see the family, eat good food for once, and learn your favorite person died.

“Grandpa passed away three days ago, India.”

The last time I saw him was September. Average height, but with a stocky build that had grown more loose and wrinkled. Gray hair deceptively thick, as my Grandpa was always good with a comb. His mother was a skilled hairdresser who loved her son, but wanted girls. He was slightly stooped and was walking with a sleek black cane topped with a silver tiger’s head, dressed as if he was going to his law firm after dropping me off at the train station, even though he had retired twenty years ago.

He wore polished black dress shoes, an immaculate dark blue three-piece suit with matching tie, and the silver pocket watch and cufflinks gifted to him many years ago by his late wife. He had been battling lung cancer for a few months, but the doctors said he was going into remission and he had been discharged in time to see me off. The two of us were standing quietly on the train platform. Grandpa didn’t talk much, but anytime he did he would always scratch at his chest as if trying to tear off the vest he was wearing. I

told him that most people his age wore comfort clothing. Sweaters, old pants, worn loafers.

“I’m quite fond of this suit. It’s helped me win the toughest of cases as a lawyer and keep my senses as head of Archer and Sons. Figured some of this good luck could rub off on you, India.”

“Thanks for the luck, Grandpa.” One last hug as my train pulled in. I boarded and, when I took my seat, I stole one last glance out the window. Grandpa pulled out a cigar from inside his suit jacket, lit up, and smoked it, sending me a smirk and a lazy two-fingered salute. I sent a wagging finger and stern glare in his direction. He knew he shouldn’t be smoking.

My family and I were the first to arrive at the funeral home. The funeral director, an old man who looked close to being put in one of the coffins himself, took us into the back room where Grandpa’s body was inside his open casket. While waiting for the bouquets to arrive to spruce up the room where the service was to be held, he showed us the body. They were going to bury him in his favorite suit with his pocket watch and cufflinks. I stood there dumbstruck as my parents and the funeral director tittered about.

A ring, late flowers, and then I'm alone with Grandpa. I know I will get a good price for the pocket watch, matching chain, and cufflinks. Enough to pay my rent for the rest of the school year. It seemed conditional now that whenever I dressed in black I'd bring my tools. The gloves, face mask, and sandwich bags are in my purse. We were already halfway to the funeral home by the time I realized I had brought them with me.

I'm already slipping on the gloves as my mind tries to process what I'm doing. The pocket watch, chain, and cufflinks are already in a bag in my purse as my mind reels. I've already opened up the window, taken off my gloves, and walked away to join my parents.

As much as I want to stop, as much as I want to not steal from my Grandpa, it feels wrong not to take his things. I'm silent as I join my parents and the funeral director in the front hall as they wait for the flowers to arrive. I'm guilty when the flowers finally appear, immediately followed by the pallbearers and their families, then my uncles and cousins. I'm numb when everyone discovers a thief has broken in through the window and stolen Grandpa's valuables. News of the burglary sweeps through the service and to the rest of the family members who trickle in. It leaves a bitter undertone to an already gloomy funeral. I sit next to my parents and cry silently throughout the entire service.



Watts Ghost

By David Fairchild '18

A Memory I Can't Escape

By Deanna Mckenzie '19

A closet filled with bones, a graveyard filled with tears,
A heart pounding with fear.
A sight that haunts behind my eyes.
A scar that won't fade, a voice that never goes away.
A judge, a victim, and a criminal, which am I?
A memory that just won't die.
Tell me when will I be able to bury the bones,
Dry the tears, and find peace for my pounding heart?
Run from the fear, hide from the shame, and escape blame.
Maybe it's time, the trial has begun, the jury's present,
And the evidence is strong.
The decision has been made: found guilty, guilty of thine own actions.
Sentenced to self-forgiveness, life lessons unforgettable,
And rehabilitation for my mind, body, and soul.



Carpe Diem

By Alessio Ayuninjam '18



Girl With The Camera

By Veronica Beretta '19



Just As Sweet

By Elizabeth Acampora '19

The Queen Of An Empty Playground

By Marrison Ballard '17

My feet drag and stutter across the mix
of gravel and sand as a swing pulls me
towards the ground. The corners and rusty
chains squeak under my weight.
The wind picks up their groan.

The park is empty; there are no sounds
of screaming or laughter or giggles.
A slight breeze hits my back, cooling
where the sun has burned.

The seat sinks lower as I move,
forcing myself into a space I no longer fit.
But I linger here, trying to recreate a lost bravery.
But gravel doesn't feel the same when it isn't
under light-up sneakers and plastic sandals.

Swinging high into the sunlight, I used to jump off
at the highest point, reveling in the way rocks
would sink into my skin and leave round dents.
Heights are not exciting anymore.

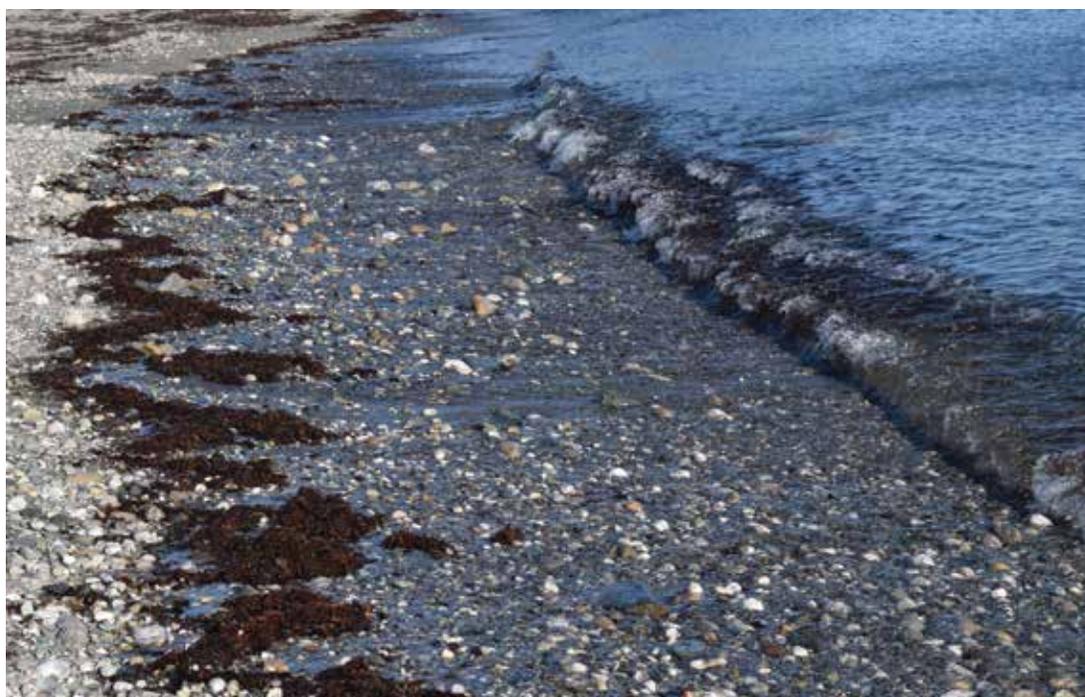
Content in my own company, I could stay
for hours, blanketed in calming silence,
with plenty of room for my made-up games.
I made up stories about secret agents
jumping away from dim headlights
to avoid capture. About being the queen of a
fictional country, elegant and powerful.
Now quiet sits heavily on my chest,
strangles my heart like a snake.

I still spend time in the cavern of my mind,
Creating alternate universes where I have
success and happiness. But these stories are not
tinged with childlike hopefulness.
A playground is not so comforting for a queen
who has forgotten how to play.



Cliff Walk

By David Fairchild '18



Safe Place

By Kelly Richards '18

In Between The Windy Sheets

By Stephanie Menders '17

In between the windy sheets
I run with dirty knees.
In between the windy sheets
my mind is full of friends.
They billow on the clothesline
fighting nature's gusts.
They are grasped
by the rotting wooden
clothespins from my
mother's old grocery bag.
My brother's image
chases me through
the shadows of their
swaying paths.
Between the windy sheets
I run in circles,
threading from side to side.
Looking forward
everyone is with me,
I don't care to know
what trails my stride.



Traces Of Winter

By Veronica Beretta '19

2 A.M. Thoughts

By Veronica Beretta '19

Why is it when everyone else is asleep, and the world feels dead, I feel so alive?
So alive that living begins to cause me pain.

These are the thoughts that echo through me at 2 a.m.,
As my tired body battles my restless mind.

I remember why I'm a failure,
Every awful thing that's ever been said to me,
That I am not good enough;
For him,
For anyone.

What if I'm becoming so focused on life that I'm forgetting to live?
This question haunts me more often than it should.

I'm eighteen;
The best age and the worst for more reasons than I can begin to explain.

I've never been in love;
I want to know what the big deal is.



Lost Literature

By Veronica Beretta '19

