



The Willow

Poetry Prose Photography Artwork

Literary Magazine

Spring 2017

Cover Art

Cross Sound

By Amy Williams '18

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The Willow: A Brief History

The Willow Literary Magazine was founded in December 1998 as a student organized literary publication. The magazine'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. If you're interested in becoming involved, email our staff at willow.magazine@gmail.com.

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

Letter from the Editor:

I am very excited to present to you the Spring 2017 edition of *The Willow Literary Magazine*. As a club, we strive to support the arts on campus. Young writers, artists, and photographers are the life blood of our creative community, and I am proud that we have a platform like *The Willow* to compile their original work. I am truly blown away by not only the amount of submissions that we received this semester, but also by their quality. It has been my honor to be a part of this during my time at Salve Regina.

Between successfully hosting a Writer's Workshop with the help of creative writing club Modern Ink, recruiting new staff members, and editing this magazine, *The Willow* has had a busy semester. Thank you to our wonderful staff and e-board for their dedication and keen eyes for editing. Thank you to our advisor, Dr. Jennifer McClanaghan for her endless support and inspiration. Thank you to Paula Telford from Design Services for her patience and enthusiasm. Finally, thank you to all of the English Department for providing us with the tools and knowledge to produce this magazine.

I hope you enjoy.

Sincerely yours,
Stephanie Menders '17

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My Kind Of Romance

By *Julia Morisi* '17

My kind of romance
is a romantic novel.
A lovely proposal
is one proposing to read.
If I could marry but one sentiment,
Sense and Sensibility would be the marriage I seek.
If I may attend to only one friend,
and *Pride and Prejudice* the only character I meet,
and if in want of more
no gentleman I receive,
then about excitement and love
I can always speak.



Essence

By Amy Williams '18



New Year
By Abby Burke '19

Fantasies

By Daniela Gadala Maria '20

It's true when they say that you fall in love with the most unexpected person at the most unexpected time. I didn't plan to fall in love with you. I didn't want to. But it was 4 a.m. and we were laughing too hard. Then you looked at me and I forgot how to breathe. I felt like I had known you my whole life, and I didn't have to pretend to be anyone or anything. It was right there that I knew I had fallen in love with you. And I think I fell quite hard. My mind goes to you when it wanders. It's almost crazy, but I love it. You give me the kind of feeling people write novels about. The feeling of a rush and serenity at once. The kind of feeling that would make you do anything. And whenever I look at you I just want to lay on your chest and listen to your heartbeat. Run my fingers through the cracked and broken pieces of you and heal them. I want to give you forehead kisses and tell you how much I adore you. I want to spend my days with you and stay up late learning everything about you and teaching you everything about me. I want to hold your hand and kiss your knuckles. I want to make your bad days better. Hold you tight until I memorize the pattern of your breathing. I want to know every single detail of your skin. Every flaw and every weakness. I want every little thing that is a part of you. I want to dream about you knowing that I have you. I want to go to the movies and sit in the back row just to make out like kids falling in love for the first time. Go to parties with you just to ditch and slow dance in your bedroom with the lights out. I want to be your Sunday mornings and eat burnt toast for breakfast. I want to kiss your lips and taste the love I've never felt before. You are my favorite kind of something. My most beautiful daydream. And I'm a slave to your fantasy.



A Morning Walk

By John Brennan '17

Our Life Underwater

By Nicole Anschutz '19

We curl our toes under sheets hot, where prickled hairs catch
balls of fuzz, sweaty feet, dry heels.
Under layers of quilts Grandma sewn, he speaks lies
of adventures in Atlantis.
Rainbow sharks kiss his biceps
and the belugas kill.

Hold my breath between covers, shut my eyes
and pretend I'm not dead. He cares.
Nails dig into skin sharp like needles.
I make note not to be needless. He's scared.

Our hairs fall out,
collect together in pile on pillows,
and my thoughts are cancelled. Whisper that he hates the way I
kick while unconscious.
I correct him—I am still.

Stamped marks down my shoulder
from a stampede of rhinoceros feet who came from
the insides of his cheeks.
Made houses in-between lips and mated behind the teeth.
We explore underwater for the morning.



Small Rock, Big Rock

By Bryce Sholtes '20



Clowning Around

By Ryan Colwell '17

Disconnect

By Ryan Colwell '17

There is a deserted island,
and I sit on its beach.
You are the sand.
Every time I grasp for you,
you slip through my fingertips, yet
you constantly surround me.

Still, I carve small images into the surface
with my hands,
trying to make some sort
of impression.
Each day,
a new wave of sadness comes
and washes away my
progress.



Reflections
By Zachary Cabill '17

Laughter

By Madeline Davis '19

Sunlight fills the halls and your laughter
makes me feel as warm as your freshly baked cookies,
gooey with love and sweetness, melting
on the tongue.

I want to remember that soft sober smile
in the dying light of that distant star.

But moonlight fills the room and your laughter
rakes against my skin, digging into my bones.
I long to smash that smooth glass bottle
filled with poison that numbs the mind and slows the senses,
so I can watch your world shatter and seep
into that childhood rug leaving a stain.

You look upon the stain like an ugly wound and think
it will take years to rub out while I pray
for the laughter of morning.



Netting

By Rachel Sandri '20



Green Grass

By Rachel Sandri '20

Leaves

By Abby Wasylean '20

“Nothing gold can stay.”
The seasons change.
Leaves, once lush and green,
slowly becoming colors of fall.
Red fades to orange,
orange fades to gold,
gold loses its shimmer,
becoming dull.
Shells of their former selves.
Floating down from their branches.
Then they're gone.



Bikes in Amsterdam

By Malysa Kettavong '18



Narnia

By Kelly Richards '18

To Fireside

By John Farrell '18

To an approaching harvest season,
which is darker, colder, quicker.
Where weathers feud between
hot and cold.
We know the tables are tilted,
hot will not survive three rounds.

We answer with our own heat,
man-made, with logs, twigs,
and only good news.
To stoke the fire is to light
these kindred spirits.

Basked, in an aura of warmth,
we tell stories.
Let it not be swirling shadows
but flickering war paint
dancing across our faces.

We are warriors
in a campaign against discomfort.
And we have the
Scarves and blankets
To prove it.

We are masked
and able to admit
only to those in this radiance
how we feel in our dark
and how glad we are
for crisp autumn fires.

We are together,
we are apart,
an adieu to embers,
smoke that lingers,
but never goes out.
“We have to do this again.”



Growth

By Rachel Sandri '20

Birds: A Poem About Humanity

By Maria Buonasora '18

The grackles flee their roosts as a hawk nears their perch, for he is larger and stronger. He who is stronger and larger will triumph, for that's how things are in this bird world.

The robin hides in a forest and hoards worms for her kin. She shares her nest with her Robin. She only hunts when the vulture allows, for that's how things are in this bird world.

The snowy owl scours the arms of her tree and spots a dark crow beneath her. She screeches and thrashes her wings. She attacks and evicts the one darker than her, for that's how things are in this bird world.

The ostrich looks up and sees two bald eagles, taunting and teasing her below. They often mock those who can't fly. They ignore her pleas for justice and peace, for that's how things are in this bird world.

This bird world is sad, incredibly sad.
I dare not be a bird in that bird world.



Snow Day

By Tatiana Mehos '20



A Moment Frozen In Time

By Carly Perini '17



Innocent Elegance
By Kyle McGuire '18

Documented

By Deanna Mckenzie '19

If there is one thing I've learned, it is that our experiences make us who we are. Funny how those who have not many of these and lack the wisdom thereof can deny the genuine authenticity of hope, will, determination and courage of those with. We've been called thieves, well then so I am, because if I must steal my freedom to own it, so be it. I am handcrafted and homegrown and, like a quilt passed down through the ages, I've been patched and stitched with raw hands and furrowed sweat sleek brows. It was never easy; the sacrifices made were many. Guilt stricken mothers who leave their daughters behind, heartbroken fathers working three jobs who can never seem to find the time, always wondering why they grow up so fast. The lives lost on dreams of a future are many, celebrated as fallen heroes. The pioneers lay the foundation, and I am of a generation of many. We are old age and new culture; Americanized they call us. Too new to be old and too old to be new, we are burden-carriers. We build the house on the foundation of our forefathers, raised knowing we have no choice but to succeed and that every step must be documented. Our greatness hides in the confines of society, waiting for our presence to be acknowledged and at the same time hoping it won't.



Old Town Tallinn, Estonia
By Alana Boulter '18

The Wasp Sings Loudly

By Madeline Davis '19

The wasp sings loudly; it stings softly
and I am numb to the pain.
The flutter of wings caresses my cheek,
whispering "There is no danger here."

I am numb to the pain.
No tears in my eyes because
there is no danger here.
I have felt worse stings.

No tears in my eyes because
weak I am not.
I have felt worse stings
and pain has made me unafraid.

Weak I am not.
The wasp sings loudly; it stings softly.
Pain has made me unafraid.
There is no danger here.



I Did

By Zachary Cabill '17



Winter Does Not Mean Dead

By Kyle McGuire '18



Hypnosis
By Maria Teresa Miguel '20

Bottled Up For Safe-Keeping

By Allison Graham, '17

I keep all my emotions in a little glass bottle.
I haven't felt anything in a long time.
It's not all bad though.
I don't hurt anymore.

I haven't felt anything in a long time.
It protects me and those around me.
I don't hurt anyone anymore,
but I feel it all bubble under the steel of my skin.

Bottling it protects me and those around me,
from my whirlwind rage to my crushing sadness.
I feel it bubble under the steel of my skin.
Boiling until the glass shatters.

My whirlwind rage and crushing sadness,
they are free,
have boiled so hot until the bottle shattered.
They are not the only ones to have escaped.

My bounding joy and vaulting excitement stretch their unused legs.
Everything is free and it's not all bad.
I've felt more than I have in a while.
I no longer keep my emotions in that glass bottle.

Enough

By Abby Wasylean '20

Pretty but not pretty enough,
smart but not smart enough,
sweet but not sweet enough,
cute but not quite cute enough.
And in the end good but not good enough.
When will the world have enough?
What more could one person possibly give to please the masses?
To please themselves?
You don't fit the stereotypical molds.
You're a bit of every mix.
That's something people want to fix.
Because when you can't describe someone with one word it somehow
makes them less than a person.
Labels appear everywhere and if you don't have one hanging above your
head then you don't count.
You're not one of them.
You're smart, but not smart enough.
Sweet, but not sweet enough.
Cute, but not cute enough.
Good, but not quite good enough to please.
And that's the thing that eats away at the mind with incredible ease.
Because there are high expectations and you don't want to let anyone
down.
So you try.
And you fight.
For every bit of your worth with all of your might.
And yet, you're passed over.
You've failed again to win.
But instead of accepting defeat,
you're the one to get back on your feet
and keep trying.
For whatever reason.
No—you have a reason.
It's the hope that one day you'll be:
good enough.



Helen Patricia Part I
By Amy Williams '18



Modern Vintage
By Maria Teresa Miguel '20

The Ring

By Carly Perini '17

My great-grandmother's first wedding ring, a thin tin band. Mom slips the ring onto her finger, answering all of my stepsister's questions.

"Can I see it?" the child asks, face neutral, staring down the thin band over the bridge of her nose.

No. The kid will drop it, or break it, or steal it and lose it. I see her trying to discreetly take the case of the baby pearl bracelet my great-grandmother wore on her wedding. The child thinks she's sneaky, holding the wedding picture and the treasures behind her back. I take them back, placing them gently back in the box. I can't take a normal breath until the box is away, and she leaves the room.

That's only half of my great-grandmother's wedding ring though; I have the other one, the thicker gold band from later in her marriage. The one she wore the day she died.

I pull it out smiling, and Mom's smiling too. The sad, glowing smile of a memory you hold close to your heart, bringing tears to your eyes. I've never worn the ring, or tried it on. My great-grandmother's skin is stuck inside. It made it hers, made it too unsettling to wear. Mom and I keep talking, holding the ring, and Mom slips it on her finger. I watch my great-grandmother's skin slide out of the ring, landing on my bedroom floor. I'm laughing; Mom looks unnerved. I find the skin, but I can't. It's my great-grandmother's dead flesh. Mom picks it up and puts it back inside the ring, and we close the jewelry box.

Silver, Silver

By Serena McHugh '19

He needs a new ink pad.

He thinks of this every time he stamps out a new book, but the actual number of books that are being checked out are so few and far between that each time he doesn't immediately get up to retrieve a new pad from the back, he forgets about it. He only remembers the next time somebody comes up to the counter with a book cradled in their hands. But he's close to the end of his shift anyway, close to locking up, and he doesn't think any of the browsers left are going to pick any more books to take home.

Firstly, because he recognizes most of them. Secondly—and as a result of this—because the people he recognizes are the people who wouldn't dare.

They know better, and it sounds a lot more dramatic than it is; or maybe he's just used to it. He doesn't see why it matters either way. Mistakes will be made and the books will be returned. The warnings are clear all over the shop.

There's really no use for another ink pad tonight.

Maya's over in the restricted section, or at least she should be—she's the only other one working this shift with him, and that section and the counter are the only two locations that need to be manned at all times. Or so Dana hears. He's never seen the apparent calamity that would occur otherwise.

He thinks that he might, though, and the first thought after this one is something along the lines of "How annoying," hanging off the edge of a tumbling crash a few rows down.

"Dana?"

"Wasn't me," he says easily, dropping his feet from the counter and onto the floor.

"Someone trip again?"

There's the sound of gentle footfalls coming around the corner past the shelves where Dana can't see, and suddenly Maya's voice is exasperated.

"Yeah," she says, "in the fucking horror section."

Dana blinks, deadpans, "Oh no," then

thinks that he should probably try to sound more concerned than he is, but this thought doesn't last long. The clock is still ticking away, and twenty minutes is more than enough time to get someone out of a book.

Maya isn't so pacified. "Don't sound so worried."

He isn't *not* worried, but he's seen worse situations before. If this were three years ago, when he'd started working at the library, he might be more concerned with the idea of someone accidentally falling into a dangerous novel in a part of the restricted section—in fact, he had been the first time he'd seen it, the first time he'd seen someone go in after them and pull them out. He remembers very easily his own confusion, and how the carelessness of the other employees had done nothing to quell it.

After all, horror's one of the hardest genres to escape. Narrowly beaten out by psychological fiction, but that's something he's had yet to see. Maybe, he thinks, when that day comes, he'll be more frightened.

"Need me to take care of it, then?"

"No," she says, too quickly; and she must know this, too, because her head appears around one of the shelves to pin him with a determined glare. Dana steadily sits back down from where he'd been rising.

"I can handle it myself just fine. Just fine."

He wants to ask whether she's still speaking to him—otherwise if she's just trying to calm her own ever-present nerves—but before he can she's toeing the book into the center of the floor. And, honestly, he wouldn't want to handle this one, anyway.

Once the book is a safe distance away from any other surface, she tips her head down and stands up straight. Her very outline starts to glow and implodes, swallowing up the rest of her in a short burst of white light, and the leftover sparks collect in a stream that flows steadily into the crease of the open book. Well; he's read this one, and it surely isn't one he'd like to be trapped in himself.

In the end Maya doesn't take very long—Dana might get a handful of minutes alone before

he hears it again, the sound like wind over water, rushing back into the empty air of the shop. And just as quickly as it comes it's over, and then comes her voice, unapologetically angry.

"The sign," she huffs, and Dana looks to see her towering over some poor kid that can't be any older than either of them, "Says 'restricted area.' It's for experienced customers only."

The kid, behind thick-rimmed glasses and a too-large jacket, says, "Excuse me?"

"I've never seen you here before. Ever. Don't tell me that you're anywhere near as experienced as you need to be to touch that book."

Dana can't see Maya's face from this angle, but he can imagine how intimidating it is; the kid, for his part, looks understandably shaken. Words must be jumbled in his mouth and in his head, too, because for the first time he looks past Maya and his eyes come to Dana; and what a sight Dana must be, regarding the situation with as much boredom as he would while watching grass grow.

Then the kid jerks his gaze back to Maya, and he blurts, "I'm sorry!" It is unlikely that she would be satisfied with the apology, and he lowers his head as such. "I am! I hadn't meant to enter that area, and I wasn't thinking when I—just ... if I may ask, how did you even manage to follow me?"

Maya's shoulders tense, betraying her annoyance. "Only trained staff can know that. And I don't care if somebody throws you headfirst into that section. Unless you have a pass, don't touch anything."

It's all very fair in the end, even if she's probably overreacting. The kid stands, takes a breath, and bows his head. "My apologies."

While he isn't looking, Maya glances over her shoulder at Dana—there's something fiery behind her eyes, that's as coldly unforgiving and as intense as he's gotten used to seeing them, in both her and her brother, as long as he's known them. Her hair falls, just as fiery as her eyes, down over



Into The Light

By Ryan Colwell '17

one shoulder and she slumps, hands on her hips as she sighs. Her frustration is both visibly within her and rolling off of her, and Dana can't help his own overwhelming urge to sigh.

"This isn't the first time it's happened," he says, and the kid's shoulders jump. "Don't worry about it." Maya stiffens and turns again, abruptly. "That doesn't mean it's okay for it to keep happening! How many people have you had to pull out of one of the restricted section books this week alone?"

The actual answer is too many, but she makes it so easy. "Only your brother so far today."

While Maya glares, the kid seizes the opportunity to take a step back.

"I am sorry for all the inconvenience I've caused," he says, bringing her eyes back to him. "If there is something that I could do to—"

"Look, just—" she waves a hand.

"Forget about it for now. Just do us a favor and walk slow through here next time, okay? Clumsiness isn't an excuse here."

"Of course. Of course!"

"Good," she says, and turns one final glare on Dana before heading for the back room. "Have a nice day."

"Wait!" and he catches her arm; it looks gentle, but she jumps anyway. With this he has the decency to look embarrassed, and releases her. "Um. Thank you? I mean," he splutters, and Maya's ears start to glow hot. "I mean. Thank you. For ... saving me?"

It's disappointing, Dana thinks, that he's unable to see Maya's expression; she's never been so easily flustered, but she certainly seems to be now. She starts smoothing her skirt down, over and over, before words finally come to her again.

"It's my job," is what she says, before she spins on her heel and walks away after all.

She leaves through a door behind the desk, and suddenly the air is electric

with tension dissolved too quickly. Dana closes the book, drops it on the counter.

"She isn't mad," he says, getting up to grab the keys to the front door. He doesn't look to see if glasses guy is watching him. "Come again."

It's a cue to leave if Dana's ever given one, and the kid takes it easily—he's out through the door in a streak, and behind him Dana locks it.

He tosses the keys into the air and catches them, over and over, while he makes his own way into the back. He can hear Maya's shuffling, imagines her sporadic organization, and can't hide the grin by the time he makes it to the back. It grows when she looks at him.

"Thank you for saving me," he says, high and mimicked, and the laugh coming up through his throat is crushed with the book she throws into his chest. "Shut up!"

And he does, for now—until tomorrow, when he will open the doors again.



Boston Bustle
By Rachel Sandri '20

Dreams Only Go So Far

By Tyler Lancaster '19

I'm sitting quietly, anxiously awaiting for class to begin.
It's the first day of class;
I'm all dressed up in my brand new clothes from Christmas.
Waiting, just waiting, shifting my weight back and forth
on the hard plastic seat.
Finally, people start coming in slowly by two's and three's,
and I'm sitting there thinking "I came in alone."
Right as I finish that thought I see,
I see her.
She walks in surrounded by friends, like guards protecting a queen.
They're chatting and laughing, but I can't hear them.
It's like my world went in slow motion,
the way her hair bounces as she strolls to her seat.
As I'm in my own little world, I wish to know what was so funny.
Maybe, maybe it was about me.
Subconsciously, I fix my hair.
I know this might sound crazy,
a little weird, or even creepy.
But I couldn't help myself. I stared at this beautiful girl.
Wishing she knew to just look my way.
Our eyes, our eyes would connect
and we'd stare into one another's soul.
Our time would pass by without a hitch.
When asked how we met we'd laugh and say
"It's somewhat of a fairytale."
Both of us would think back fondly on the first day of class.
The years accelerate, we finish college.
Move in together, even a pet.
"I'm more of a cat person," you say.
Each step in our relationship gets checked off on a list.
As the years pass I see more checks than empty boxes.
I get the courage to ask "Will you marry me?"
Again our lives are put on fast forward.
Kids, Grandkids.
The last of our days spent with each other.
We go into a deeper, and deeper sleep.
Ahem, Ahem The sound of a cough pulls me from a dream.
Noticing I've been studying your hair all class.
As soon as class ends I time my leaving so we cross paths.
So nervous I try to speak yet nothing is said.

My anxiety kicks in, I run, or should I say, I walked away smooth-like.
Well, I'm not smooth.
I run back to my room with my earbuds in, blocking out the world.
My years in college end, having multiple partners.
Yet I never feel satiated, never feeling fulfilled.
After college, I move away with no expectations.
And to my dismay my life ends never having talked to you.
I never get married, never have kids.
I always go back to reunions but always miss you.
You're too busy with kids and grandkids.
As my life comes to a close I regret.
Regret never giving myself a chance.
I've had dreams;
dreams of conquering the world with someone by my side.
My life being at its end I become wise.
Wise enough to realize that dreams aren't enough.
Dreams only go so far



Roots
By Zachary Cahill '17

Flowers For My Love

By Allison Graham '17

I've been snapping my rubber band against my wrist anxiously since I've been forcefully re-directed because my normal route to my bus stop is closed for construction. I walk quickly down the sidewalk, swiftly avoiding any contact with the milling pedestrians while keeping my head down and trying to block out the sounds of automobiles, and sirens, and mindless chatter, and the peals of the most beautiful laughter I've ever heard. The laughter makes me stop in the middle of the sidewalk and jerk my head up, looking for the source of the sound. I am mesmerized when I see her standing there outside a flower shop across the street in a plain t-shirt and jeans under a simple black apron. Her dark hair ruffles in the breeze and her blue eyes light up when she smiles. I can feel myself falling for her just as I stumble from some pedestrian behind running in to me. Looking for a place out of the way, I duck into the café to my right. Sitting at the counter, looking out the window, I have the perfect view of the flower shop and her. I find I can't take my eyes away from her and, when I see she is locking up the shop and leaving, I glance at my watch in surprise, not having realized how late it was. I look up, but she is already gone and I trudge my way to my bus stop. Maybe this new route isn't so bad after all.

For weeks I take this new, longer route to my bus stop, just so I can see her face everyday. My impulses and anxiety contained by my rubber band until one day, as I slow down my walk by her shop, it snaps. I stop, staring at my wrist and the rubberband falling to the sidewalk, then back at her. Maybe this is a sign. Maybe - this time - I don't have to hold back. Maybe...I stare as she gives some flowers to a little girl...maybe she'd like someone to give her flowers for a change.

As I sip my coffee in this little café, I watch Abigail, my love, run her flower shop across the street. I watch as she wraps up a bouquet for her last customer, before she packs

some supplies away, dons her coat, and flips the sign saying when she'll be back before she locks the shop and walks away. Looking at my watch, I see it's twelve on the dot. This day is unlike any other, she's going on her lunch break. Picking up my paper cup of coffee, I leave the café and follow her from across the street. I follow her and she surprises me by leading me to her usual café for lunch after months of trying new places.

I lean against the building behind me, out of the way of other pedestrians, and start smoking. Taking a drag, I stare as Abigail smiles politely to the employee behind the register. The way she daintily lifts a pale hand to flick back her dark hair which had fallen past her shoulder and into her face. Her legs and hips as she sways to an open seat by the window with her sandwich and coffee. How carefully she eats, making sure to never leave a mess or stain her blue pea coat or dark-wash jeans.

It feels as if I have watched her eat forever, but looking at my watch again I see it's only been half an hour. Abigail rises from her seat, gloriously, to throw the wrappings of the sandwich away. Coffee in hand, she leaves back the way she came toward her flower shop. Where she will work until five and then leave for home. I watch as she floats away down the street, disheartened that I can't bask in her presence anymore today. Throwing my cigarette to the ground and grinding it under my heel, I head to the bus stop for home.

My home is as dark and empty as always. I flip on a nearby light and it flickers before dying out. Frustrated that I'll now have to buy a new one, I angrily shuffle into my kitchen and jerk open my refrigerator door. It is marginally better than the dead lightbulb, with enough fixings for a sandwich.

I sigh happily, previous frustration draining away as I take out everything I need to make my own sandwich. Eating, I reminisce on today and the way she ate. I lean against the counter and close my eyes while I eat, imagining that I had the balls to go up to Abigail and introduce myself, that she had invited me to eat

with her, how we would have laughed and enjoyed each other's company. As we converse, Abigail takes my hand lightly in hers and never lets go. I let my thumb caress soothing circles on the back of her hand. Thoroughly distracted by the way her eyes sparkled at me, I don't notice that I have already consumed my sandwich and bite down on my fingers, immediately back in my dark kitchen. Washing my hands, I decide that I should show my love, again, how much I appreciate her gracing me with her beauty. Drying my hands, I grab my tools and out to my backyard garden where I have been growing flowers of my own.

I had spent longer than intended in my garden picking out the perfect flowers

for Abigail's bouquet, but it was time well spent (any of my time spent on her is time well spent). I stand outside her door clutching the bouquet of amaryllis, gardenia, lavender roses, and red roses. I hope she likes this gift better than the others, the lavender roses were difficult to grow. I carefully set the bouquet on the ground and ring her doorbell before rushing to my car. I quietly open the door to the backseat and get in, shutting the door behind me. Back here I can see how she likes my gift without being seen myself through the tinted windows. I watch in anticipation as she opens the door, her eyebrows cutely scrunched in bewilderment as she sees nobody's there. Then Abigail finally spots my gift. Her eyes widen in surprise, I can see the blue sparkle



Crimson Blossoming
By Carly Perini '17

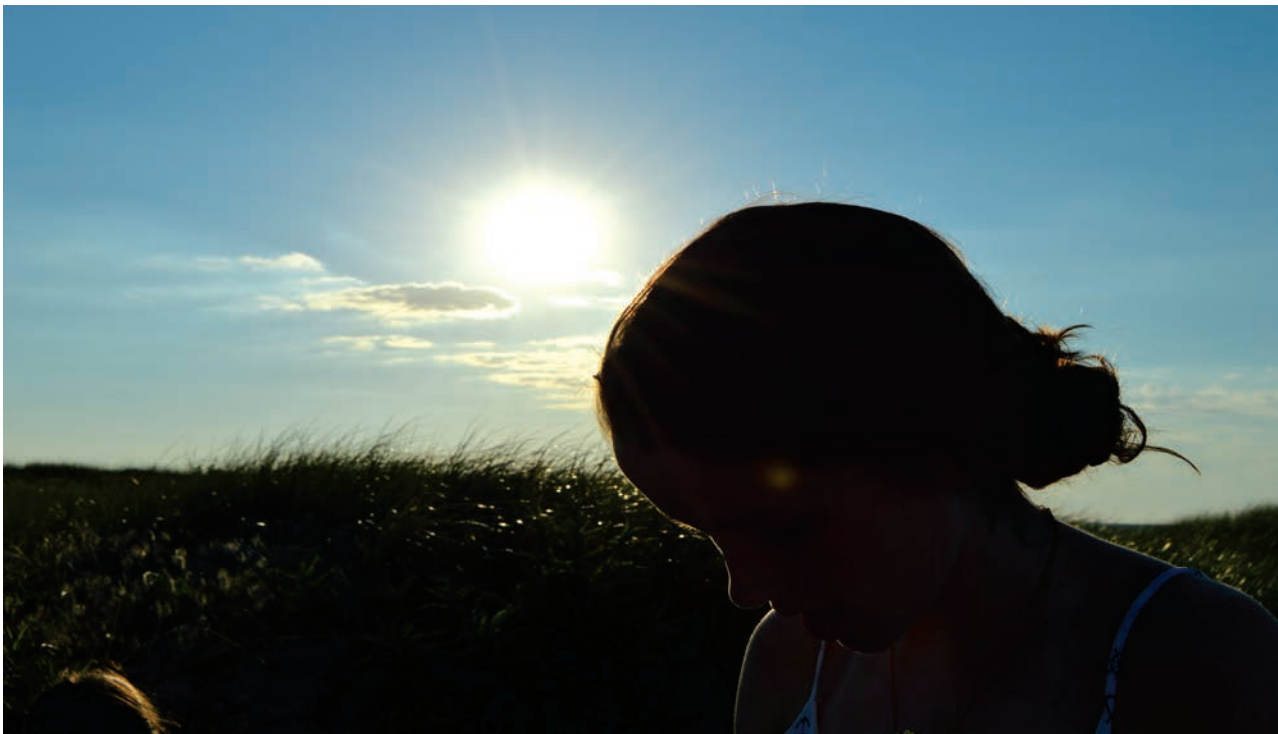
from here. She rushes back inside and firmly shuts the door. I can hear the loud click of the lock from inside my car. Now I'm the one whose eyebrows are scrunched in bewilderment. Why did she leave my gift outside? Did she not like it? I wait to see if she'll come back out and accept my gift, anxiously tapping my finger against my thigh.

I sit in my car for three hours. Three hours and Abigail has not left her house or accepted my gift. I'll probably have a bruise on my thigh from all the anxious anticipation she has left me in. I can feel myself growing a spine as I get out of my car and stride determinedly over to her house. Reaching her stoop, I gently pick up my gift for her and knock on her door. When she answers it's everything I dreamed it would be. Light shines behind Abigail like a halo

on her dark hair, which beautifully frames her face and her smile. Though her smile drops and her eyes widen in surprise, oh they're so much more beautiful and blue up close. I lift the bouquet of my love to her as I say, "Haven't you liked all the flowers I've been sending? After all, I grew them – and these – just for you, love."

Her terrified shriek startles me and Abigail tries to slam the door in my face, but I catch it with my foot and the hand holding her bouquet before it closes. I hear her stumbling back, "I don't want your flowers," Abigail says as she backs away, "I'm calling the cops!"

I chuckle as I make my way inside, the flowers luckily only slightly ruffled after that harsh greeting. My love continues to play hard-to-get as I close the door and lock it behind me.



Helen Patricia Part II

By Amy Williams '18

What I Thought I Knew

By Tyler Lancaster '19

In these past years, I wrote of Love,
but I knew nothing of the sort.
Now I have Loved.

I wrote of Love before knowing Love.
The unconditional, uncontrollable Love
I imagine in my dreams.

My deepest, darkest desires have yet to be met.
Not my own faults,
but those hidden in the depths of my soul,
those I wish to keep buried.

In the cellars of my heart, I know my youth.
Youth in a man is childish.
A child does not know the truth of Love.
A child may think of it, even speak of it.
Yet not know Love's worth.



Ice Breaker
By Rachel Sandri '20

Drowsy Individuality

By Juan Garcia-Prieto '20

There is a me with an opposite charge,
a me of anti-matter.
I know who he is,
he knows who I am:
a paradoxical oneness.

I am fascinated by his complexion.
I am startled by his appetite.
My reciprocal appetite.

I wander into my eyes;
a saturated universe.
I fathom
an unuttered recognition of oneself.
I individually subsist.
The ramification in my gaze.

The scrutiny:
would he be me,
or would I be him?

I incubate life.
Confined organisms
ruled by synchronistic destinies.
Forced to coexist,
forced to invigorate me.

Would they control me,
or would I control them?
Would I dominate him,
or would he dominate me?
Cosmic encounters.
Vivifying struggles.



Solace

By Marrison Ballard '17



Outlook

By Rachel Sandri '20

I Talk In My Sleep

By Marrison Ballard '17

In the morning, mouth dry and throat sore
with syllables that linger in my mind,
I am made of biting aches.
I'll spend all day twisting, attempting
to crack the soreness from my limbs,
looking for comfort in a body that
does not feel like mine.

There are words trapped inside me
which only escape when I'm lost,
unconscious, cocooned in the fetal
position with my arms bent awkwardly.
I've never been able to sleep stretched out.

I have a habit of curling inside myself,
sometimes for relief, more often an escape.
I am an expert at holding words
just under my face until I feel pressure in
my temples. I push them down into my
chest where they mix with feelings
I can't quite explain, sinking and stinging.

There is damage inside my veins that climbs
between my teeth, aching for release.
My tongue shifts restlessly and I swallow
compulsively. Chewing on my lips,
a stilted breath is my only avenue for expression
until I drift, jaw loosened, with the dark
my only audience.

Remembering

By Stephanie Menders '17

The nights she wishes for the most
are the nights when she rests well and doesn't dream at all.
Her dreams are too vivid and melt in with her memories.

She counts seagulls
like they're sheep
that fly low
over the cliffs
near the ocean.

She breathes in
till her lungs
fill her mouth.

Dreaming of sleep
without nightmares.
She's afraid of
what she says
in her sleep.

She can't rely on nostalgia, déjà vu, or recollections.
Remembering can be painful and details fade quickly.
And she will always silently wonder
whether it was only a dream.



The Red Sea
By Julia Morisi '17



The Golden Girl

By Kyle McGuire '18

Cravings

By Daniela Gadala Maria '20

The worst thing is when the pain of missing him becomes physical, and you know there is no way the pain is leaving anytime soon. So you just sit there, empty and lost. Not knowing if you wish you could forget everything or if you're grateful that you don't know how to. And you want to tell him how much you miss him, and how much you want him. And you cry in silence and you grieve quietly. You wonder if he thinks of you as much as you think of him, but deep inside you know he probably doesn't. And when the night comes you miss him the most. When everything is dark and quiet and the silence reminds you that you are not sleeping next to him. So you sit there craving his presence. Craving his eyes. His smile and his laugh. His words, his touch, and his voice. Craving him in the most innocent form. To just have him next to you. Nothing less and nothing more.

Shoes

By Abby Wasylean '20

That moment when things seem great, but somewhere, in the back of the mind, you're waiting for that shoe to drop. You're waiting for what life has shown you to be inevitable. What you hope never happens.

You've hit a wall at full force, unsure of what to do next. You can't peek over the wall; you're too short for that. You can't see a way to climb the wall; it's too tall for that. The only way for you to get over the top is to fly. But how? How can you believe in yourself and believe in the power of your hopes and dreams enough to somehow get over that wall when you didn't even know the wall was there? Everyone always tells you that you choose your fate, but life has a funny way of deciding things for you. It gives you the illusion of having a choice. When, suddenly, everyone seems to know what's going to make you happy without actually asking you what makes you happy. When all you want is a break, but instead you have to just keep going, because taking a break will get you nowhere. Avoiding your problems doesn't solve them. If you want to fly, get out there and try. No one ever got anywhere without trying. So you keep trying. Keep doing you. Eventually you'll win. Eventually.



Wheel In The Sky
By Abby Burke '19

