



The Willow

Poetry Prose Photography

Literary Magazine

Fall 2015

Cover Art

Glowing Tree

By Pansela Schaetzle '16

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Willow: A Brief History

The Willow Literary Journal 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:

After a semester full of planning competitions, organizing events, and designing layouts, it is my pleasure to present you with the 16th edition of the Willow Literary Magazine.

I would like to thank everyone on the Willow staff for coming to weekly meetings, promoting contests, providing suggestions, showing enthusiasm, and most of all, being the dedicated and beautiful people they are.

I would also like to thank everyone who submitted to the Willow. I deeply appreciate every contribution that was made and am so proud of all the student talent that can be seen throughout the magazine. It is an honor to be able to share submissions with so much character and emotion.

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

Enjoy.

Sincerely yours,
Tara Stanzione '16

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Autumn On My Thoughts

By Tyler Lancaster '19

When I think of Autumn I think of her
I think of the way the wind flows through her hair
The way the burning color of her eyes match the falling leaves
When she wears oversized sweaters to stay warm
Or the way she holds coffee close to her heart on a blistering day
Then there's the way that she pulls me in
She says she wants to be warm
But I hope she just wants me close
So when I think of a beautiful Autumn day
I think of Her



Autumn

By Crete Clifford '17



Stepping Into Fall

By Caroline Kelley '18



Shapes And Colors Of Autumn

By Brooke Pennington '19

If You Ever Get The Chance, Fall In Love With An Apathetic

By Maria Buonasora '18

“I love you,” I say. “You too,” he says.

I’ve never once heard the words
“I love you” leave his hardened, chapped lips.
Those lips that kiss me good morning
and goodnight – the lips I never see
curl upward, are the lips that leave
the most beautiful purple marks
on my body, my mind, my heart.
His eyes don’t brighten when they stare
into mine as we curl up together with
a bottle of chardonnay on the plush
bean bag chair, the only furnishings in
his basement studio apartment. His
rough, calloused fingers don’t comb
through my hair when my head
rests on his lap. I look around the
bare apartment with its pizza box
tiles. I wonder what he does
when I’m not there.

“I love you,” I say. “You too,” he says.
He scowls at the TV as I smile to
myself. He doesn’t say it back, but he
doesn’t need to when I’m the only
thing he hasn’t pushed away.



With Your Hand In Mine

By Ellena Sweet '16

The Hand Holding My Heart

By Abigail Truesdell '19

Yours is the hand holding my heart
I know you don't want it,
But it chose you, and for now
It's yours to keep
I don't expect much,
Except negligence and forgetfulness
Just remember it's fragile,
So don't let it slip

Yours is the hand holding my heart
It's a forgotten treasure,
The fate of which is unknown
Someday you'll rediscover it,
And toss it aside remembering childish dreams
Or perhaps you'll tend to it as a rose bush:
Make it grow,
And love it,
And find beauty in it

Yours is the hand holding my heart
And for some reason,
Or another, it chose you for its keeper
If you let it fall,
It's yours to catch
If you let it fall,
It's also yours to watch break

Yours is the hand holding my heart
I hope one day you'll use your other hand
To protect it, and love as your own
For now, my heart is open and still
Resting in your flat palm

What happens to it is up to you
Knowing full well that it is the very thing
Giving me life



Hold My Hand

By Veronica Beretta '19

Because I Was Loved By You

By Deanna Mckenzie '19

The water was calling my name, I had a feeling it could ease my pain. That its overwhelming beauty could sooth me, would wash me of my sins and set my conscience free. The sea breeze overwhelmed my senses and I forgot my fear of what was beneath and the voice of reason that said you cannot swim. The cold numbed me giving me the release I seek, but my mind was still going a thousand miles a minute, my heart still heavy, I needed to go under.

As I laid back I could see the stars and my mind, still racing, brought back your image, your smile, your smell, your voice, and your overwhelming and unconditional love filled me, as the world came rushing back. Even though you were gone, you were the only one for certain I know loved me, never asking for anything, accepting my flaws and telling me to be strong. And I knew, that is when I knew I could pull through, because I was loved by you.



Lover's Skies

By Juan Roldán '16



New Dawn

By Kristin Wilinkiewicz '16

Hurt

By Tyler Lancaster '19

You are always feeling down,
I'll be your shoulder to cry on,
When you are heartbroken
And on the verge of letting the floodgates loose,
I feel your pain,
When you weep I weep with you,
I'll be the one to lift you up.

The one that pained you last did not deserve you,
He put the weight of the world on your back,
I will take that weight
And carry you off to a better time and place,
I'm there for you,
I'll heal your pain,
When you are with me, you will hurt no more.



Portrait

By Ellena Sweet '16

Everyone Needs Someone Like Her

By Esther Hoekstra '18

It's this pit in your stomach,
it overpowers you,
a cloud of negativity which seems to follow,
consuming you everyday,
with every word and thought,
your mind races,
not able to escape.

Days go by,
weeks follow,
light becomes darkness,
you become weak,
you're dying on the inside,
but you're not showing it,
hiding becomes easy.

Suddenly a light flickers,
it's that person,
the one who asks,
the one who knows,
the one who saves you,
from yourself,
from your mind.

They take you to another place,
a place of peace,
a place of happiness,
they show you love,
they show you how to feel,
they show you how to be,
in a world of unconstructiveness.

The Curious Incident Of Oliver The Stranger

By Viviana Torres '16

The road is lit up by the only two car lights,
as the street lights create orange circles on the concrete sidewalk.
There's tension in the heavy, midnight air
that can only be lifted by the soft laugh of two strangers
who have just met under the rarest of circumstances.
He introduces himself as Oliver.

With a smile on her face "Hello Oliver,"
she says, looking up at him, all the lights
creating shadows on her face. Given the circumstances
she should introduce herself, but instead sits on the sidewalk
and continues to keep the relationship as two strangers,
standing under the night clouds in the dense, misty air.

Wrapping its unwanted arms around her, the night air
becomes cold, giving her goose bumps as Oliver
talks about how the stars look like strangers
in the sky among the big city lights.
And somewhere between the words and the giggles the sidewalk
becomes their seat, despite the current circumstances.

And they question whether there are circumstances
anymore unusual, as the lifting air
begins to whisper, turning long dead leaves on the sidewalk,
making them dance around Oliver.
And now they are growing dimmer, the lights,
as the two begin to grow into something more than strangers.

Deep, genuine thoughts are shared between more than strangers
and the conversation now moves away from the current circumstances.
They both lay on the hard ground looking up at the yellow star lights
as the mosquitoes dance in the cool spring air.
And the shy girl opens up with her new friend Oliver
that she met here standing on the rocky sidewalk.

These two new friends share stories on the sidewalk,
the same way others might have when they were strangers.
She looks to the stars and then she looks to Oliver,
and she smiles thinking they met under the strangest of circumstances.
Both are happy and are cooled by the changing air,
as they lay side by side under the dimming street lights.

A miracle is happening on the sidewalk tonight, despite the unlikely circumstances.
These two lonely strangers quickly become a pair,
all because of a boy named Oliver, who wanted to be her guiding light.



Streetlight Stroll

By Veronica Beretta '19



Sunrise Over Ochre

By Cecillia Lacouture '19



Rooftop

By Veronica Beretta '19

The Inexplicable, The Mystery

By Maria Buonasora '18

There are some things in life
I just can't explain, some things
that are just a mystery to me.
For example, I can't explain why
cats decide the best time to jump
up onto your lap is right when
you're about to get up.
I can't explain why the mailman
reaches past your open hand to
the mailbox, even when you're
standing at the end of the driveway,
eagerly awaiting the birthday card
from your grandma that you know
contains no less than twenty-five dollars.
I can't tell you why the sun shines brightest
when I'm at my lowest, or why my
demons seem to be nocturnal. I
can't explain why your mind was
so drawn to mine, but I know it was
one of the best things to happen to
me. It's a mystery as to why you've
stuck around so long, but I believe
some mysteries aren't meant to
be solved. Mysteries are puzzling
and they stick in your mind, but
when they're solved, they end.
I never want this to end, so I'll let it
pick at my mind, I'll let it perplex
me a little longer. Just, please,
don't play detective.

Your Eyes

By Alison Cadieux '19

Your eyes –

I can see galaxies in them.
I can see stars divide and atoms multiply.
I can see your eyes with my eyes.
I can see sonder
And I can see wonder.

I can feel your stare when I am inches away
And when I am galaxies away.
I can feel your stare like I can feel fire,
With a tender heat,
An enigmatic luminescence
And a mutual understanding
That you don't need to touch something to feel it.

Your eyes never age, for your soul lay there.
They are born flawless and sound
To become scathed with the cruelty of the world
With memories and stories.
Of sunlight and darkness;
Where distance doesn't exist
And worry lay dormant,
And they tell stories as boundless
And infinite as time.

With my eyes, I see my eyes in your eyes.
I see endless galaxies of supernovas and black holes.
Your eyes make me believe that
Our souls are everlasting,
Like the sky we look at at night
When we're together by the ocean.
They make me feel that fiery presence
Of limbs entangled
And minds in tandem,
Like what you see in the movies
And read in Walt Whitman poems.

And yet, with my eyes
I see the rich soul in your eyes,
Looking at mine.

The gravities of our galaxies are endless
And you make me feel like
I never want to return to Earth again.



Space Intimacy

By Alessio Ayuninjam '18



Natural Luminescence

By Melissa Prunier '16

American Spirits

By Gabriella Rodriguez '17

You shoved your tin of nicotine
and cancer beneath my nose
and told me “smell it,
it tastes like evergreen.”

And as we walked these streets
of gentle suburbia, hardly
touching - but remembering all those
days of adamant high
school love (now unravelled and lost
like a paperclip you unwound
and can't put back together) -
I breathed in your smoke
and spice and mint, and bottled
it up like a souvenir.

You kissed me that evening,
even though we both knew you shouldn't.
Your lips tasted like champagne,
(bitter)sweet and free,
even though all you ever drink is beer.

“My insides are fireproof,”
you said as you lit another
cigarette, and I pretended not to mind.

When It Rains

By David Fairchild '18

This mind is the rumble of rain on the rooftop,
assaulting walls in a war declared by the sky,
its acidic taste stings ears into submission
until they're covered by rough, dirtied palms,
that become swirling combinations of dust and white scars.

Remember Lily Dew?
Remember London?

It wasn't a war, only the spring welcoming you back
until that picture of her thin, quiet smile brought you far away
to the cobblestones of Piccadilly, where you met,
both foreign to love and the streets, so sure that it would work.

The barkeep whispers "I'd get after her, mate," when she walks out,
and the door clicks closed with the soft thud of longing
but you stay still and boil like water.
You evaporated through the roof that day, Dave.
You'll float far off into the clouds soon,
like a balloon thrown up by a sighing parent.

"Just let the clouds engulf him," she probably said,
"and we'll be able to hear him just fine from up there,"
muffled and distant as the rumbling thunder
which we so rarely turn to hear.

Tempus edax rerum.
Like the shower head that fools you, with many open arms,
to glance upward, eyes wide, and be attacked by them all at once
in a silencing wave.



Void

By David Fairchild '18



Something Wicked This Way Comes

By Viviana Torres '16



Life In Death

By Gabrielle Schmidt '19

When I Slip Away

By Marrison Ballard '17

You wrap around me, trapping us in an earthly circuit.

My mouth tastes like tiredness; a mix of cotton and
steak sauce from last night's dinner.

My steps are too slow, and you pull me along to
follow our Salem-born tour guide.

The sidewalk is steadily rising to meet us.

Maybe not rising; it's falling, slipping, dragging
us lower into the cracks within the cobblestones.

Our hair lifts and the inky, cold air whips around us.
The acidic, medicinal scent of alcohol circles our necks
and your hand is heavy on my shoulder.

We are the last ditch trip, an attempt to sew ourselves
back together, but this was much easier when our days
were shorter and our eyes were brighter.

But we are too big to play holiday and this town gives me
the creeps and you should know I hate Halloween.
Walking around here will turn me into a ghost,
and I am not built for staying, for haunting.

"This place is a witch's battleground,"
a vehement Bostonian in the back of the crowd cries.

My crisp sigh of discontent builds between us,
and the harsh silk of your dress shirt rubs at my wrists.
Dissolving until I am part of the wind, I fold into myself.
"Ris," you say, tugging me back by my coat sleeve.

One day I will successfully slip away off course.
But omniscient streets know my plan and clutch at my shoes;
they are on your side.

Our sky darkens, and the moon abandons us.

Inspiration Point

By Ben Conover '19

On a humble boat, just two kids and the captain
Scour the northern countryside for honesty
And estate sales for not yet written biographies.
It is not a boat, but an arc.
It is not a boat, but a home.
Or, at least a model.

With no worthy role model
Neither is captain
As an unorthodox vessel nears home:
A relationship formed over pulsations of honesty,
A relationship built with the arc;
The writing and splicing of two biographies.

What becomes apparent is that biographies
Are just a portable model
Of life, and as Joan of Arc
Would tentatively tell her confidant, her captain,
Cannot convey such intangible hartshorns as honesty
That make a house, or a year, a home.

It is hard to know what makes a home.
Reason vanishes like mystique from Harry Houdini's biographies.
(He could not be slowed by chains nor honesty.)
But sometimes a model
Must be burned to make Emotion the captain
Of such a fragile arc.

It was not that he realized that there was an arc,
Though he suspected; it felt like home.
He had grown close with the captain
Until he was written into both of their biographies,
Until he was a model
For a past not restricted with honesty.

But surely it is no breach of honesty
To imagine dining in bicycle helmets with Joan of Arc
Or a tête-à-tête to learn Houdini's tricks, a model
Before the home;
Before the biographies
Were built and written by and about the captain.

That captain of the kite and arc
Builds a better home than model,
And invokes tranquil honesty within both young biographies.



Aerial View Of My Happy Place

By Gabrielle Schmidt '19

Nox

By Ryan Ciocco '18

Commencing the quest for a midnight sun,
I found myself lost in an eternal night.
And without You, I could not run. The mission was left undone.
The mystical darkness became my specter of light.
The obfuscated Demon restrained me in the starless shroud.
But after deliberated hesitation, it is I who bowed!

What was my objective, then?
I embodied everything that I had once despised. Where were You?
The crystalline tyrant attempted to usurp me again and again.
The transparent facets left nothing to misconstrue.
Why did You fail to vanquish this foe?
My life was consumed by diabolical woe!

With these three entities, my battle became a ripening war.
I recall the cosmic struggle: the assault from three directions.
Such combat shook me to the core.
My open, gaping wounds exposed my imperfections.
You abandoned my cause, did You not?
Remember? You scoffed at the gleaming shield I had wrought.

And now, I find myself crawling in Your shadow.
My soul is still in crisis, but my heart is wholly ice.
Even You cannot pierce such an unloving heart with Your arrow.
I cannot return, no matter the price.
There are no more questions to be asked.
I have been conquered by this dead hand of the past.



Dusk

By Pansela Schaetzle '16



A Carnival From Above

By Maria Buonasora '18

Lone Toy Tent

By Marrison Ballard '17

My summers were always marked by festivals.
I can trace my life in event dates and sun burns, and in
my calloused skin I am the young girl arriving
alone to blend into the background.

Each month a troupe of food trucks
invades the streets, rumbling and shaking
the glass cups in the houses.
I am the pink teacup set in the cupboard, disturbed,
chipped, rattling with movement.

The humidity sticks to my hair,
it hits my face like moist drywall.
I pat down my brittle curls, knowing they
will spring up as soon as I lift my hand.
I am the irritating drop of sweat that slips
from my neck down the middle of my back.

The strong smell of gasoline and kettle corn
fills the mid-June air.
I follow my nose to the large gate that surrounds
the old track on the edge of town.
The field is full of stands,
and I am the lone toy tent, tucked in a corner.

I cup my elbows in my hands, feeling the dry
bumpy skin against my sweaty palms.
I make a circuit around the track, sinking slightly
into the black, hot tar underneath my sandals.
The air is full of bass-lines and chimes;
I am the clash between ice cream truck tunes
and Top 40 hits blasting from a radio.

A tribute band clumsily sets up their instruments
and I am the beat up, poorly handled drum set.
The lead singer turns to the drummer, and he starts
packing his old instrument back into its black case.
I fold myself up, too, and retrace tired steps
back to my cold, dark cupboard.

To All The Friends I've Ever Had

By Veronica Beretta '19

To the friend that isn't good with feelings,
You make me laugh until I cry to make up for it
I always look forward to our long car rides

To my pessimistic friend,
I know you hate everyone and everything, including me
But I know there is a heart in there somewhere
And I'm thankful I get to see some of it

To my biggest motivator,
We've been friends for ages
You always know just what to say
Even if it's spelled wrong

To the friend who gives the best hugs,
I don't think you realize how much I need them
And how much better you make my day

To one of my best friends,
We barely ever talk anymore and it's really neither of our faults
But when we do, it's like we never stopped, and that's awesome

To the friend I talk to at 3 AM,
I vent to you about my boyfriend and you whine about your existential crises
Our talks make my day

To the friend with the most contagious laugh,
You understand me
I am thankful I found someone who can relate to me on so many levels
And that can sing along to the radio just as loud as me

To the friend with the biggest smile,
Your constant sarcasm make the conversations interesting
You have stolen too many pencils from me I've lost count

To my friend who I meet so rarely,
You're really great, you know?
The fact that we even talk to each other boils down to dumb luck
But every conversation is worth the wait

To my crazy friend,
I never know what to expect when we are together
But I love every moment
The late hours are the most interesting

To the friend who smiles at me,
I don't think you will ever understand how much something so simple means to me
Never stop smiling

To all the friends I have right now,
Thank you



"Would Ya Airplane Me?"

By Gabrielle Schmidt '19

Pigeonholed

By Marrison Ballard '17

I am their twitching necks and feet
but not in their flocks and homes.
Fog cannot obscure their paths
but it blinds my eyes and
I am lost.

It's been years and I have yet to
find my own place. I try
to join their nests, where they are
uniform, but I am the feather
that grows in the other direction.

I practice their steps, following them,
digging my pointed feet into the soft dirt.
I only dirty my toes and stumble,
grace is foreign to these land legs.

I look at the violet sky,
envisioning taking off, spreading out.
But how would I find my way back?
Do I want to come back?

My vision is as blurred as theirs is clear
and I am swallowed by gray clouds,
watching the back of their wings disappear.

This time of year their feathers are
the color of milk, pure and clean.
But I know that as seasons change and
skies darken, their dirtied plumes
will be left behind.

Maybe I will pick them up and add them
to my collection, add them to the skins I've shed.
Maybe when I stack them, I will finally be
able to follow their path and fly.



People Watching

By Julianne Nienstedt '17

From Somewhere In The Back Of Our Minds

By Stephanie Menders '17

One day, hopefully not soon,
I will replace all of the clocks with twinkle lights
And there will be a glow where the time used to be.
But when that day comes,

I will string the dead leaves back onto the trees.
I promise to cut my hair when it grows too long.
I won't let my nail polish chip, I'll never even let it dry.
What crumbles I will reconstruct and what falls I promise to pick back up.

I promise not to make any marks on the calendar,
And not to let any of our fruit spoil, or milk sour.
Your sneakers will stay white and my blue jeans won't fade.
I won't grow an inch and dad's hair won't turn grey.

Let's just deny any chance of fleeting time.
We can pack it away in the back of our minds.
And while we sit and wait
I can practice writing our names in cursive
And you'll draw flowers and pretend everything's fine.



The Essence Of Time

By Maria Buonasora '18

"Tic Toc. Tic Toc."

By Carly Perini '17

Soft crickets chirping,
The low hum of the fan.
Everything is quiet,
The floors and the walls of the house settling.
That stillness, nothing better than
It. It's peaceful, freeing, private.
Tic Toc. Tic Toc.

Everything is shrouded in silence,
Occasionally a door closes softly.
Deep breath in, deep breath out.
It's isolation, almost a kind of defiance.
Absorbing the dull darkness is almost godly,
Finding this moment of clarity, to clear all doubt.
Tic Toc. Tic Toc.

The only indication of time is that quietly loud clock.
The muted faint stars, don't give any sign,
It seems the world has stood still.
This tranquility will shatter; it's a temporary block,
Always reminded by that overly loud keeper of time.
"Any moment now, the sun will hit the windowsill!"
Tic Toc. Tic Toc.

Great to know. Let the sun rise,
It will be a sight to behold.
But for now let the world rest.
Let the moon command the tide, shining bright as fireflies.
Now is a time of silence and silver, not loud gold.
This calm is almost blessed.
Tic Toc. Tic Toc.

Wide awake with heavy eyes,
Reflecting and absorbing the gentle yielding night.
Open windows, let in the autumn breeze,
Gone is the heated summer guise.
Still that clock Tics and Tocs with all its might,
It won't stop the enjoyment, but can it stop please?
Tic Toc. Tic Toc.

My First Long Distance Relationship

By Malysa Kettavong '18

Age 0

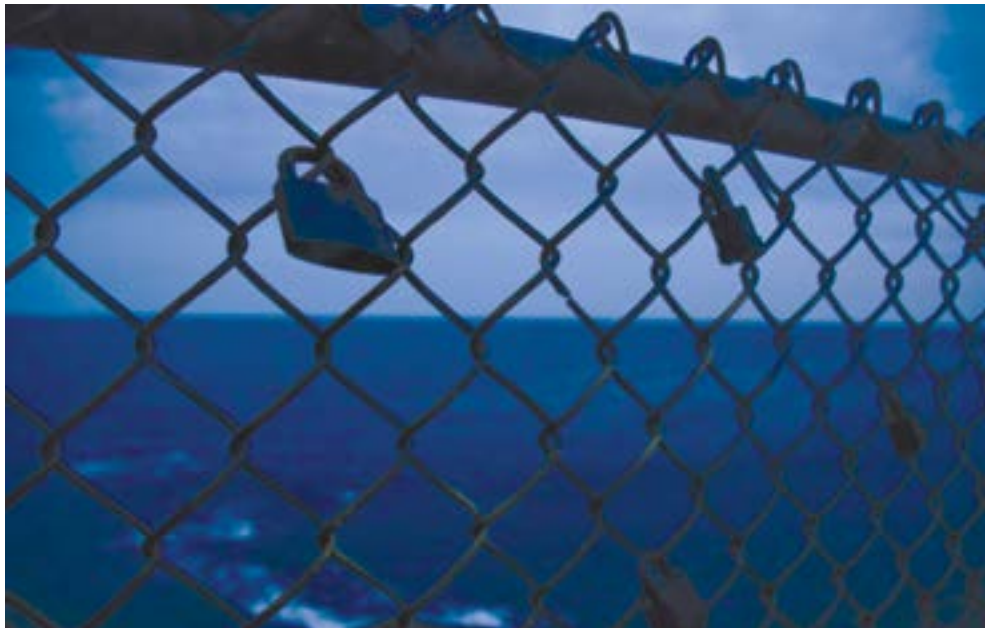
Half way across the world,
You flew here during autumn
To see me, to hold me, to name me
With your strong and war torn arms

Age 9

Half way across the world,
I flew there during the summer
To see you, to hold you, to meet you
With my small and fragile arms

Age 17

Now two separate worlds apart,
You flew here and stayed during autumn
To see me, to hold me, to know me
With absent and ghostly arms



Lock It Away

By Veronica Beretta '19

The Coldest Sea

By Gabriella Rodriguez '17

The boys are playing,
and I am cringing from these
frigid waters. The grains beneath
my feet have nowhere to go
but everywhere, and I am
tiptoeing between these sandy
mounds and aspiring dunes.

The boys are tackling
and roaring, rolling and
rolling until their bodies
are just sandy creatures
of mirth and glee. The sand
is in my mouth, and I'm not
sure how it got there.

The waves roll in and
I smell the salty breath,
stinging my nostrils in
the sweetest way. The
water is cold, so cold and
the sun is bright and I am brighter.



Rockaway Beach

By Viviana Torres '16

A Story Of The Sea

By Anthony Gozzo '19

The Sea is a narrative like ours -
In the morning she wakes, blinded by the sun
And for all the paths she may traverse,
She cannot decide upon only one.

Her waves are insipid and calm,
Beauty is witnessed by her travelers.
Each day is a new day on the water,
But trepidation is felt by all her passengers.

At a moment's notice, her mood will change -
Insidious currents lurk beneath the waves.
Men hold tight to their rods and wheels;
Turbulence can be felt within the ship's steel.

Starboard and port, a hurried wind approach -
The Captain has no doubt of her wrath.
He's been loving and unloving of the sea
Which often has undone His destined path.

Far out from harbor He's left to his crew,
None are willing to come to any aid.
Alone, yet brave, He stands against the waves
Whose master is as fickle as that of the winds.

She sends them in droves against the ship -
He can taste the salt pummeling the deck.
It never was a more noble battle,
Then to fight to complete another seafaring trek.

Her strength is evident in the many hours she fights;
Eventually she subsides, long before He loses hope.
The crew rejoice to wander another day,
When they see their destination's magnificent slopes.

On the white sands lions prowl for prey
And the Sea is calm once again.
She guides the ship carefully into port
Where a goodbye jolt is felt every now and then.

As the sun returns to its nightly reprieve
The waves subside to a little more than a breeze.
Men return with harvests from the ocean's deep,
And not a soul could say the water was at unease.



Sunrise

By Elizabeth Acampora '19



Broken Road

By David Fairchild '18



Sea Bridge

By Matthew Levine '17

On The Cusp

By Stephanie Mendez '17

The crowds beyond these walls,
do they sense our anger,
our yearnings?
Do they hear our shouts?
We're suffocating
but our voices carry
far enough to be heard.

"Far enough"
we've been told.
In here, we hope
for escape.
Some of us just hope
for silence.

We've become so hungry
for the food we can not eat,
we've grown so tired
of the War to Secede.
We have become an echo.

The echo
that gains strength
with each reverberation off of these walls,
that women began to dream of long before we even glimpsed beyond.
Our lives now strive toward this otherworldly end.
Disdain, with every word we have ever learned taking aim.

On the cusp
we remain.
Just hoping
for an echo
with the strength
to puncture,
not maim.

Warrior

By Elizabeth Lombardo '19

1
my parents
used to hold and rock me
to help me fall asleep
2
3
they say the first poem you
read you will spend your whole
life trying to perfect it.
They read me
“Oh the places you’ll go.”
4
5
the characters in books,
their lives are perfect
they’re perfect
I want perfect.
6
despite what the kids
say, I am not great.
I’ll show you.
7
roses are red
violets are blue
is it really okay to cry
when no one talks to you?
8
9
10
backstreet boys
puberty
poems about the ones
I’ve never met
11
12
He was perfect.
I couldn’t have been
more wrong.
13
read me beautiful poetry
kiss me under the stars.
I got pushed
down the stairs.
14
I want to look
like the lines

in my poems.
a perfect size,
stunning and
captivating
15
I don’t speak.
Only my poetry knows
I haven’t eaten in days.
16
A man touched me.
I cry myself to sleep.
17
The scars
on my wrists and hips,
I created them
and I’ve
created insidious
poems depicting
my demise
18
I dreamt about death.
razors to the veins,
bullets to the head,
so much I tried myself.
Sweet sleeping pills.
19
I woke up.
20
From the depths.
I am writing to
lift myself up.
21
I was wrong.
death is not beautiful
and neither is the destruction
of your body and soul.
22
there are shifts in
the poems.
there is happiness.
23
this is the reason
why we write.
24
this is my story.
my beautiful life.



Blossoming Earth

By Esther Hoekstra '18



Vain Existence

By Esther Hoekstra '18

