

2015 - 2016

*impressions*

the **Edge**





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**2015 – 2016**

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## Letter from the Editor

The first time I visited Marlborough, I left with three copies of *The Edge*. I had picked up the little book while sitting in the Admissions Office and been unable to put it down. Six years later, I can still remember many of the stories and poems I first read there. Stories about quarreling parents and unhappy teenagers, family secrets and a visit to a lake-house.

Our 2015-2016 theme is “Impressions,” which is all I can hope for this year’s issue—that in several years these poems and stories will flood back to you and you’ll remember the jealous siblings and the distorted friendships and the many other stories and works of art you’ll find here.

One of the most powerful things about writing is the great impression that stories can have on us. There have been numerous times when I’ve begun telling a story only to realize that it never happened to me—it’s from something I read. I know that I shall never forget Kurt Vonnegut’s “mustard gas and roses,” Sylvia Plath’s late-night New York parties, Emily Bronte’s lonely moors and Flannery O’Connor’s Misfit. I know that I’ll always remember Adam and Eve and Seymour Glass parading around English class, and I’ll always remember Jane Eyre’s Red Room. I also know that in 20 years it will be very surprising if I can recount Nick picking me up at midnight after one of Gatsby’s parties. Oh pardon me; I read that in a book. Though this may reflect mostly on my perception of reality, I think it also speaks to the effect that stories have on us and the ability they have to shape our lives and alter our memories.

Goodness me, the clock has struck—

Clementine Forbes Wolodarsky

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I reckon a good poem lasts a whole lot longer than a hundred of those  
people put together.

– SYLVIA PLATH, *THE BELL JAR*

## **summer berries**

come round, sit down  
have a glass  
memory town

simple times, summers past  
bodies gone  
feelings last

cold water, golden skin  
not a ripple  
slip in

bare feet, long arms  
august moss  
sun warms

splinter in, splinter out  
blue hammock  
no doubt

slow steps, silent breaths  
hung stars  
darkest depths

*Alyce McFadden '16*





*Adventures*

*Mira Marlink '19*

## **Contaminated Constellations**

Raindrops pelted the treetops in harmony, the plentiful leaves preventing the moisture from encountering my skin. Tired eyes rose slowly from the circle of girls woven together by arms, crossed hand-in-hand, to the similar pattern formed above by the interaction of the Old Pine's leaves with the silky black New Hampshire sky. In the moment, I felt at ease, for I was secluded from society and comforted by a patchwork quilt of friends from all edges of the earth, shielding me from my inner thoughts that I had pushed to the back of my mind for a rainy day— rare occurrences at home but refreshing and thought-provoking, nonetheless. Suddenly, the notion came rushing down at a higher velocity than the precipitation pelting the trees, as I realized that no matter how far apart we were at that moment, we were both gazing up at the same stars. They glimmered across the soft, dark blanket, and it felt as though they were smiling back at me. As the fire grew dim and we sang our final song, I shook the daydreams off, along with the rain my hair had acquired, but a shooting star caught my eye. I wondered who at home was gazing up at the same constellations, before recalling the polluted ozone of my hometown: an old and unkempt blanket blocking out the shimmering dots of hope above, as well as in my soul.

*Dorrit Corwin '19*



*The Highline*

*Natania Chaskes '17*



*Boston*

*Miranda Simon '20*

## Growth

long platinum strings  
turn into golden rings  
like saturn.  
then become longer rounds in blondes and browns

in constant pattern.  
forever changing  
and rearranging  
and always moving around, but when it's loose

there's much more use  
when the strands have been let down

*Hannah Littman '18*

## Inside Out

I could feel the heat of the curling iron, resting right next to my cheek. I painted a new face on myself: one with perfect skin, luscious lashes and rosy cheeks. I must have spent hours in the bathroom that night, but it was worth it when I saw the final product. I could barely recognize myself.

I had never enjoyed going to parties, but I knew James would be there, and I never saw him outside of school. I wanted him to see the girl beyond the school uniform and perfect grades, the girl who possibly still had some fun left in her, like my sister did.

"Vi, let's go!" my sister yelled. I smiled at myself in the mirror, brimming with confidence. I headed downstairs, the smile still plastered on my cherry lips.

"Are you driving Viv, or should I?"

Vivian turned around, the keys in her hand. Her hair hung perfectly around her face, her eyes were huge and alive. She looked more beautiful than I ever could. The smile remained on my face, but it felt fake now.

She raised her eyebrows. "Oh god, is it my hair? I just left it normal. I got ready ten minutes ago; I barely prepared!"

"No... your hair looks great. Why don't I drive?" I grabbed the keys and headed to the car. Vivian stared at me as I drove. I could feel her eyes burning into my face.

"Violet, you're makeup looks amazing!"

"Thanks, Viv."

I watched her recline out of my periphery. She let out a long, drawn out sigh. "I love going to parties, but I also hate them." She paused for a moment. I

didn't respond. Sometimes Vivian just needed to let loose her deepest thoughts, and I've learned, after many years of being her twin sister, to not interrupt. "I feel like everyone is just trying to impress everyone else, and when they go to these parties they become someone different."

"I guess, but isn't it okay to show people another side of myself? I mean- -"

"Jeez, I wasn't talking about you. Why are you being so defensive?" I took a deep breath. "I'm sorry, I just, I really like James, and I don't think he's ever noticed me like that."

"You like James?" Her voice cracked, and her face fell into a frown. Neither of us spoke for the rest of the drive.

I was overwhelmed even before we entered the party. The music pounded from inside the house.

Vivian headed straight in, brimming with confidence. I caught up and stood as close to her as I could, hoping that her confidence would rub off on me. I looked around the room trying to find James. I spotted him in the corner talking to a couple of friends. I turned quickly so he wouldn't see me staring.

"Viv, let's go get drinks." I looked to my left and right. Vivian was gone.

"Viv?"

I searched through the crowd and felt sick when I spotted her. Vivian had ditched me for James. I watched as she laughed at some hilarious joke he made. I marched over and smiled really wide.

"There you are, I've been looking for you." She smiled at me and turned back to James.



*Pluto*

*Ellie Feingold '18*



*After Rain*

*Roxy Cowan '19*

James looked at me. "How are you?"

"I'm great!" He smiled, at me! "I was just telling your sister about the run in I had with Mr. Peterson."

"Oh, I heard about that, what happened?"

"So I turned in my creative writing essay on desire, and, the next day, Mr. Peterson calls me into his class and tells me: this was not the assignment. And I said: I wrote about what I desired the most. And he told me that I was supposed to write about an inanimate object. But here's the thing, when I think of the thing I desire the most, a person comes to mind."

He turned to face Vivian. In one moment his story went from being a funny anecdote at a meaningless party to my worst nightmare. I definitely did not like where this was going.

"Vivian, I really like you, and I have for a really long time. I've just never been able to put it into words."

I knew what Viv would do, and I knew that I definitely wouldn't want to be there when she reacted. I mustered up all the strength I had to keep my tears back and murmur a shaky "aww" before I sprinted to my car and collapsed on my dashboard, heaving with sobs and shaking with anger. I pulled out of my spot and drove home way over the speed limit.

Vivian had won, she had taken from me the only thing I really wanted. Vivian always won, I was always second to her, and, as I slammed the car door and silently entered our house, I promised myself that I would triumph this time--no matter what it would take.

I barely slept that night, but I felt more energetic than I ever had before when I woke up. I went straight to Vivian's room and sat on the foot of her bed. I placed my hand on her shoulder and gently shook her awake. She opened her eyes blearily.

"I'm sorry about running away like that. I'm so happy for you." I gave her a hug. "I really am okay."

She held on to me tightly. "Thank you, thank you! I was so worried!"  
I let her go and smiled. "Don't be: I love you."

As I walked out of her room, my smile became genuine. Step 1: Make Vivian think that I forgive her. Done! My plan was now officially in action. Step 2: Find out what James likes best about Vivian. This would be a little harder.

"Violet, you have a letter!" My mother called. I walked down to the kitchen. My mother was hunched over the counter, looking over her bills. She handed me the letter without looking at me.

"Oh, Mom, this isn't...." The letter wasn't addressed to me, it was addressed to Vivian, and the return address was James Cepher. Exactly what I wanted had fallen directly into my hands.

"Mom, I have to go run an errand." Without waiting for her to respond, I ran to my car and ripped the letter open. It was James's essay. "Her hair cascades like a river of gold, resting right on her shoulders. Anyone who sees her knows that she is the most beautiful girl in the world." I stopped reading and put the car into drive. I drove to a pharmacy and bought exactly what I needed to perfect my genius, and somewhat twisted, plan. By the time I arrived home, I had disposed of the letter and my receipt. No one would ever find out that I purchased the lotion, but they would see the results when they looked at my sister.

I said a casual hello to my family, raced upstairs, poured out a little bit of Vivian's shampoo and filled the bottle back to its normal level with my newly purchased lotion. On the side of the bottle it said "Nair: hair removal lotion." I left the bottle of shampoo on her shower shelf and hid the bottle under my sink.

Now all I would have to do is wait.

The screams came from my sister's bathroom just as I expected they would. She raced into my room.

"Violet, my hair is falling out!"

I gasped and looked at her head. Chunks of hair were missing and loose hairs were plastered all over her wet face and shoulders. "What happened??"  
She burst out in tears.

"You're nairly bald!" I exclaimed as I left my room, unable to hide my satisfaction.

I waited. 1... 2... 3... 4... "You didn't!"

Today I will marry the love of my life, and my family won't be there to support me. My sister barely speaks to me, and my parents are ashamed that I am their daughter.

Today I will become Mrs. Cepher, and I will never look back. Sometimes people just need to be shown that beauty on the outside is only temporary, but beauty on the inside lasts forever.

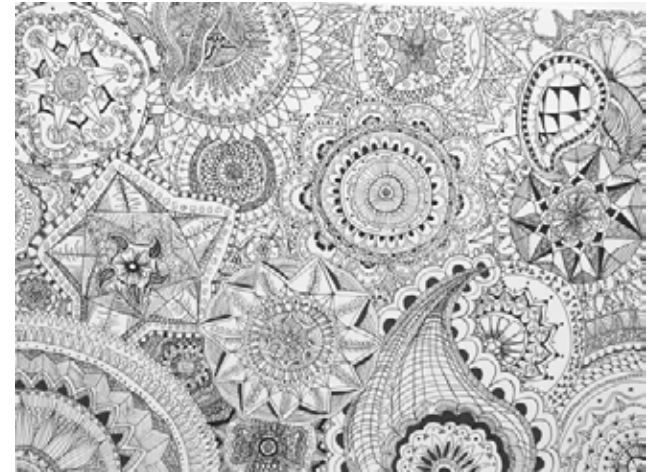
*Imogene Wolodarsky '20*



## Rose's Stem

When carpe diem cuts the rose's stem  
And rose's petals start to lose their gem,  
The sun surpasses its loyal patron  
Continuing on to its next station.  
And so the rose and day both meet their end  
To begin like planets their great ascent.  
The time to mourn is not without contempt.  
Dying seems worthless over an attempt.  
Yet when I've chosen life instead of doom,  
I feel as though these flowers never bloom.  
To spend my days in a barren garden,  
Would be to stand behind a wooden curtain.  
So even if the day severs my rose,  
It's at Fate's shears that we'll both decompose.

*Josephine Cassens '17*



*Zenflow*

*Nicole Gurzeler '20*

## Restlessness

Night.

Curled in a ball there is a drumming in my head like Athena working her way out. My palms clench over my ears to stop it, but that only pushes it inside—further. I force my eyes closed, but when they flutter open, I don't see the dark shadows that cascade over my nightstand. I'm standing alone. In a box. A big box painted white. I know it's paint because the stench coating the walls burns my nose. I can see it now. The pearls of paint dripping down. But before it reaches the floor, I'm moving. I'm spinning. Blurred into blindness. The white becomes black, and I'm sitting. But not in my bed, in a car. Midnight looms outside the windows, and suddenly I hear the faint buzz. Beside me there are flashes of people going to places that need them. Desperate. I am still. In a single row of traffic, I sit. Pushing past next to me, the others barrel full speed. And I wait for something. What? And then I go. The thing blocking me from moving disappears, and I'm pulled forward. Maybe pushed, but before finding out, I'm back on my bed. My eyes pull apart. The crust of a thousand nights sits on the corner of my lids. Looking around the room for evidence of my journey. All I find are the streams of light peering through the glass.

Morning.

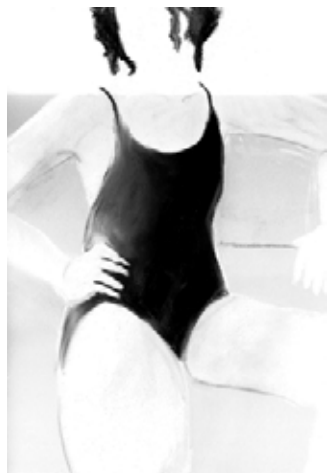
*Avery Girion '17*



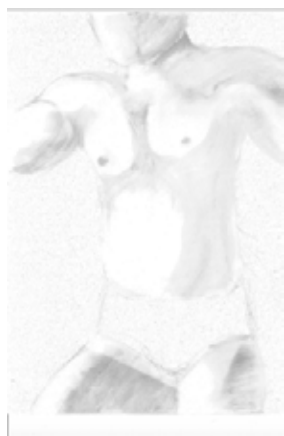
*Bloodstream / Sisters*

*Allegra Smith '17*





*Maillot Noir / Man in Orange*



*Cynara Fox '20*

## This is Vivienne

This is Vivienne.

Vivienne has skinny wrists and a habit of tucking her hair behind her ears. Her hair is curly but not in perfect ringlets. Sometimes it decides to form a halo of frizz at the top that drives her mad. Her mother used to say that she envisioned a time when Vivienne would stop tucking her hair behind her ears, in college maybe, where she could let it all loose.

Her mechanical pencils are all 0.5 lead, and she likes to line them up on her desk. Even though she prefers to write, she isn't afraid of speaking; often she speaks too much. She can be soft like her mother's velvet and loud like an acid washed pair of pants. She often wonders why they are called a pair of pants, because a pair implies two of something; it's the little things that get to her, like seeing how small she is in this very big world.

She has her friends too, and a couple boys she doesn't hate, but she thinks they are small minded.

Vivienne likes to drive in the night. The wind whips her curls and ruffles them up in a nice, windswept way. They make her feel romantic. She never minded her name, Vivienne. It is French, even though she isn't. Vivienne, like a small yellow rose. Vivienne, like a fine wine in a Parisian café. It's the little things that get to Vivienne. Her name meant alive, which is exactly what she is and grateful to be.

She often sits at the dinner table alone with the little gray cat. Francine, they call her. Francine is fed all of Vivienne's leftover Chef Boyardee. Francine, the cat, likes Vivienne, but mostly because there is no one else to be with in the small house.

Vivienne's mom likes to keep her door closed, and not just at night. And her dad? Well he has dropped by the little house a couple of times. In 2007, she didn't even see him once. They never know when he'll show up on the doorstep. Vivienne's mom has a way with her words. She knows how to stab Vivienne in all the right places.



*Binding Game*

*Julia Cárdenas '16*

Vivienne's mom used to be beautiful. Her brown glossy hair fell back on her shoulder in a nice, windswept way, like if she had been driving in a car at night with the windows rolled down. She was romantic. The epitome of allure. Her legs were long but splattered with bruises. They were purple all up and down.

Every morning at 7am, Vivienne opens the door to her mother's bedroom. Equipped with a broom, a dustpan and paper towels, she cleans up the shattered bottles. Her mother is a lump in the sheets, her cracked lips unable to say a word, but her bloodshot eyes saying everything. Francine, the small gray cat, meows and nudges at the lump on the bed. At 7:15, Francine and Vivienne exit the room. She is always careful not to slam the door too loud, so her mother won't yell. She always carries the shards in a trash bag and dumps them out on her way to school.

*Clara Nevins '18*



*Love You Forever*

*Shira Subar '18*

## **Stones**

Slowly and painfully, I stumble toward my best friend. Usually I would run and we would hug, but not today; today I stumble and sit in the grass next to him, examining a flower, talking to my friend. Sitting up straight, back pressed against a stone, "Elevators," I smile, twirling the white daisy, "my favorite thing about us, elevator rides. They change so much. Instead of vacant stares, it's games and laughs. I remember one time, we must've been around 10, and we were going to lunch, our parents were waiting for us, but we stopped to play in a fountain. And there were these businessmen, right? They had been waiting for the elevator, and we both ran on in before them, pushing past them, nearly knocking them over. The look on their faces! You do remember, right?"

"Oh and you shook their hands forcefully asking, 'What floor, sirs? Oh seven, what a marvelous floor indeed,' you cheered, your pants soaking wet from the fountain. We laughed and ran in circles. I threw my hands in the air and we danced together and water sprayed from our clothes, splashing the two well-dressed men. We were cheering. I swear it was the slowest elevator in the world," I chuckled. "We've had some good times together, you and me. We've had some damn good times," I pick another flower from the ground to examine.

"The last time I saw you," I say, rambling on, "I can replay it in my mind like a movie." I fidget with the bouquet of flowers laying by my side, "You were late for your flight. You were going to your grandma's for the summer, but you were nervous, maybe I'm just imagining it. Your nervous energy was almost tangible; I can still see you standing there, adjusting and re-adjusting your tie.

'It's so depressing, going to see her,' you said, so I said, 'I know, call me every night, okay?' I remember that promise we made. Do you? Do you ever feel bad, you know, about breaking it?" My hand grips the grass and I tear it from the ground, clenching my jaw, "You looked nice. It was very you, a tie and a blazer. The same thing you wore when we made up that scam, you remember that? It was brilliant."

I can see the scene in my mind, “We were selling homework passes, pure genius, but when we sold too many it got tricky. When we finally admitted it, we were both grounded for a month, not that that really meant anything. We got away with murder, you and me, there was never a more perfect match.

I keep staring at the same sky. The downcast, gloomy and eerily warming sky with undertones of red and orange creeping through the cracks in the clouds. I bite my lower lip. “Sweetie!” my mother’s voice drifted my way, pulling me from the conversation; she was climbing the stone-covered hill toward me. Her heels sunk into the soft dirt.

“I’m ready,” I called, placing the bouquet of forget-me-nots in front of the stone. “Goodbye, I’ll be back soon, I promise,” I tapped the stone and ran toward my mother.

“You alright?” she asked.

“I’ll be fine,” I said, turning to look over my shoulder at the lonely stone in the middle of a field covered in the same white, rounded stones.

“You two were close.”

“Yeah,” I said, “We were.”

“You want to talk about it?”

“No, but you know what I do want? Ice cream.”

“On a day like this?”

“There won’t be a line.”

*Car Yaeger '17*



*Untitled*

*Emmie Johnston*



*Chasing Peaks / Floored*

*Sophia Goldman '17*

## Untitled

15 years ago, the world was a different place. It was a place of hope and trust. I was born into that world, but I am living in a world of death and injustice. Who knew how easy it could be to flip a world upside down in just 15 years? The minute you are born, ideas are being carved into your mind. From day one, your parents are telling you to be true to yourself. I cannot help but wonder, is it even possible to be your own person? Where does the innocence go? When you are little, the world seems like a fairytale, a place where anything is possible. I used to believe that little gnomes would leave me notes in the morning before school, telling me to have a great day and be kind to everyone. What happened to my fairytale? Now my mornings consist of me fearing what the day will bring. Oh sweet innocent world, where have you gone? And what have you done with my gnomes?

*Lili Bernstein '18*

## **Curdled Milk**

Curdled milk is my voice  
Thick and gurgly when I tell my brother  
that I don't want to play.  
Curdled milk is the apprehension  
before I get a test back,  
and the apprehension when I start one.  
Curdled milk is my teacher  
when he says that I could've done better.  
Curdled milk is my brother  
when he huffs his stinky breath right in my face.  
In fact, I am curdled milk.  
I wallow in it, splash it around,  
make it ripple all over. Curdled milk.  
Curdled milk, curdled milk, all day, every day.  
Bask in the curdled milk;  
you can't help loving curdled milk  
anymore than you can help hating it.

*Leslie Gonzalez '19*



*Dog Years*

*Lily Pearl Langos '20*



## Simulacrum

I dreamt of speaking beautiful words with you. I ground and ripped apart  
the tendons of my heart to ignite something  
tender, unbroken in you.  
Scorching self-torture,  
I reined you back to who you were, kneading  
softly and gently with my bruised and blistered hands,  
so visceral, so transcendental that when I woke, it was still true.

But you did not wake too.  
I saw my blood splattered on your teeth, your skin, your mind;  
stains of my youth on your hands, dripping down your thoughts.  
I held you harder, inspected you closer until I became you, so intertwined  
we were not one, but none.  
We had not lost, but surely had not won.

That's when I fell back most,  
entranced by a simulacrum,  
so sunken down within it was impossible to grasp.  
I could never seize precisely the kernel of you,  
some figment of my procrastination.  
You and I, fluent in a language of misunderstandings.

For some odd years  
I'll succumb again and again to my dream of you.  
A dream of what your dreams ought to be --  
within it, a distance immeasurable,  
a marathon toward my words enraptured by  
a nothing I give you, over and over --

*Sarah Pearl '16*



*It Hurts*

*Taylor Pirtle '17*



*Lily in a Flood*

*Sophia Goldman*

## **Bitter Sea of Bitterness**

*Inspired by Sandra Cisneros' The House on Mango Street*

In Hebrew my name means bitter sea of bitterness. In English it means a nickname, a name not really me. It means sacrifice; it means solidarity. It is like the color blue. A lonely color. It is the last girl in the kindergarten classroom who everyone else forgot, a kid completely lost.

It was my grandmother's name and now a part of it is mine. She was an independent woman too, born into a family of the Star of David - which is supposed to be full of anarchists and job stealers- but I know this is a human lie because all humans, like the people of the past, don't like the outsiders to stay.

My grandmother. I would've liked to have met her, a solitary wave in the sea, so independent to raise a daughter alone. Before, my grandfather and her had been married, together and happy. Until she gave up on the engineer and divorced him. Just like that, like the sudden glass cup that dropped and shattered. That's the way it happened.

And the story goes on to say she still loved him. She glanced back over her shoulder the rest of her life with a smile and a helping hand, the way so many parents check to see if their child is lost. I wonder if she ever did regret breaking that glass cup or if she was sorry because she was - in a way - all alone. Mirim. I have become heir to of a part of that name, but I don't want to become heir to her life, looking over her shoulder.

Outside they say my name funny, as if the i was made of slick oil and slipped past your tongue. But at home my name is made out of a rougher something, like the fierce roots of a tree, not as simple as my big sister's name - Tess - which is easier to say than mine. Tess who can always go out and continue to be Tess. But I am never just Mira.

I used to want to rename myself, to have a name more like the others, the ones everyone can say. Mira as Jasmine or Bianca or Mandy. But no. Something not Mira will never do.

*Mira Levinson '17*





*Fading Wings*

*Alli Yoon '17*

## Consonants

*Inspired by J.D. Salinger's The Catcher in the Rye*

I hated her because she was good at telling stories. She could start off talking to the person next to her and have the whole room silent in seconds. Breathless, hungry, dreading the ending.

We were at a party with some prep school assholes. A darkened smoky room and lots of deeply bored kids draped over the furniture in ways that were meant to seem artful. Beth was talking, and I was half hidden behind her, listening. I felt special for my proximity. I felt worthless, for my inability to do what she did so well. I remember being tired, so tired.

She was doing the thing she always did. She was constructing an entire universe, using calculated hand gestures to refine every detail, her plosives and fricatives like the invocation of a lost deity. And those idiots at various levels of intoxication looking at Beth, my Beth, unable to understand why they were so enraptured.

The moment of anticipation before the punchline was perfect, the rapid cadence of those last few sentences, the ending exploding from the space between her tongue and her teeth. She ended with her audience—and herself—in riotous laughter. As always.

I am not good at telling stories.

But I am good at lying to myself, and that is almost the same thing.

She drove me home that night, and I didn't know why, but I felt like crying. I wanted to think that I loved her differently from those strangers, that I saw beyond the version of herself that she chose to be on nights like this. I wanted to think that I hated her for more than just the skill she had been born with.

I do not have the words to describe the intimacy of her inflection when she asked me what I was thinking.

"How do you think of yourself?" I asked her, shamelessly answering one question with another.

"As a person? Or as a concept?"

"No— I don't know. Forget I ever . . ."

"No, really," which was definitely the most frustrating thing she could have said to me, and perhaps the kindest.

"Forget I ever asked."

Her headlights swept around the bend onto my quiet street. "Are you sure?"

"No."

"Okay."

She laid her hand on the console, palm facing up. An invitation that I wasn't sure if I could take. At some point between my corner and my family's house, it occurred to me that I was feeling the purest form of jealousy. Being able to name it didn't lessen the pain. It didn't change anything at all.

In the space between late night and early morning, she called me. "I feel like you're mad at me," she said, softly so as not to wake the little sister in the bed next to hers.

A pause.

"I'm not," I said, even though I wasn't sure if I was telling the truth. "I just—" I was choking on my own thoughts, drowning in the sheer abundance of things I could have said. "I miss the way things used to be."

Another pause, this one lasting even longer.



*Dancing Shadows*

*Ashley Wang '19*

"I'm still here," she said, her voice breathy over the phone.

"That's not what I meant. You're not the same as you used to be."

"You aren't either." It wasn't an accusation. It was an excruciatingly melancholy combination of words to hear this late, with the distance between us as large as it was.

"Do you think this will all be a story someday?" I asked. I wanted so badly to end the call, to be alone with the weight of my longing.

"I think it already is," Beth told me. "I really do think that it already is."

*Dominique Dickey '17*

## Alice

This is the third time in a week where I have not eaten for a whole day. But the money I need isn't here, and there is no one to buy food for me. I get about four dollars a day from begging on the streets, maybe a pack of cookies or a bottle of water. But after awhile, you start to forget that you need food and water to live.

I see other people like me, wandering the streets with stolen shopping carts filled with trash bags of belongings. I didn't have time to grab what I needed. I just have my pocket mirror, my walkman, my favorite book, and my coat. And an addiction to cigarettes.

As I try to sneak my way into a fast food chain to use the bathroom and steal a few french fries from customers looking the other way, I see him. I can still recognize his eyebrows and his nose--because he is the man who threw me out of my house.

Our eyes meet, and I try to look away as quickly as possible, but I cannot. I see the resentment in his eyes, from when he told me to get out because of who I loved. I couldn't help that she was always there for me and that we loved each other. You cannot stop love. But I didn't have to. My father did that for me.

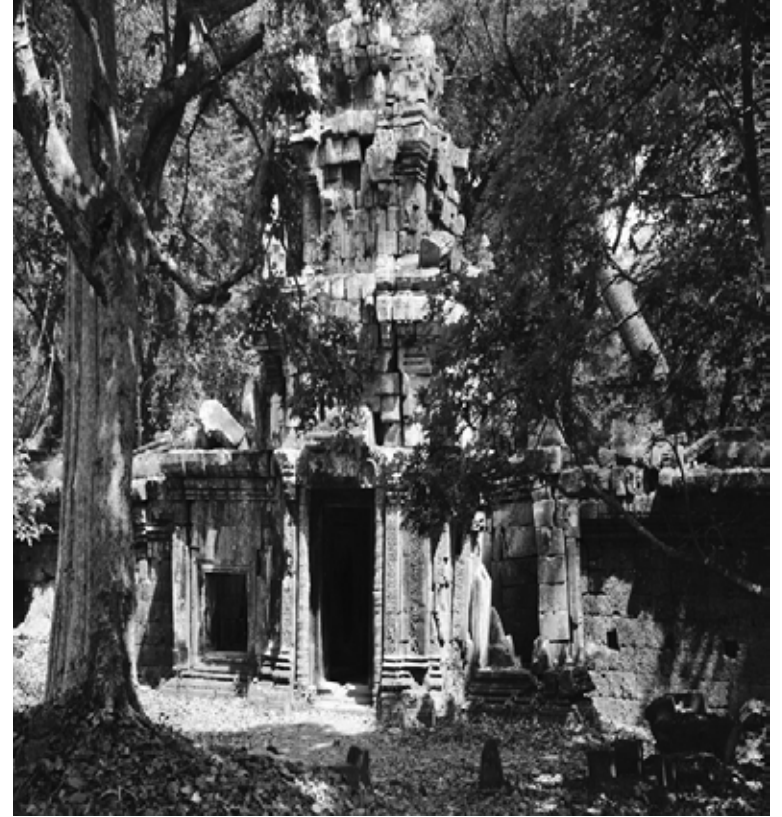
From then, it all went downhill. I am a high-school drop out, even though I had a solid 3.6 GPA, and I was set to go to the University of Illinois on a scholarship. But that dream collapsed, and now I am scraping that dream off of the concrete sidewalks of downtown Chicago.

I bite my lip, hesitant on what to do, but before I react, burning coffee splashes my face and a voice tells me to watch my way. Classic Chicago.

When you don't have anywhere to go, the days start to blend together, unsure about your age, or even what day or night looks like. The sky is always grey, and I am always depressed, so Chicago seems to suit me. When I was a kid, I used to live in the South. My dad was unhappily married to my mom, but when I was two, they separated and my dad moved in

with my stepmom in Chicago. I don't remember the South, but what I know is that the people are warm, welcoming, and conservative. Chicago is cold and dark, but at least the city can accept me. Each morning, I am embraced with a coffee to my face, and I am tucked in by stray cats clawing at me, trying to find warmth.

*Julia Steinberg '20*



*Rift*

*Lauren Yoon '19*



*Love Not War*

*Rocky Levin '18*

## Flashback

The ghost circles, stalks the heart.  
Watch him pace side to side  
Clutch callouses and prepare.

He creeps into passing poetry  
Palm reaches across tired front  
Pray.

His hand draws back.  
Strikes, high-fives, punches, hand shakes  
All the same to me.

Fight or flight.  
Shattered windows, locked doors, darkened bottles.  
Symbols send tremors

Eyes wide.  
Screams, laughter  
Epicenter rings between memories and fear

Run.

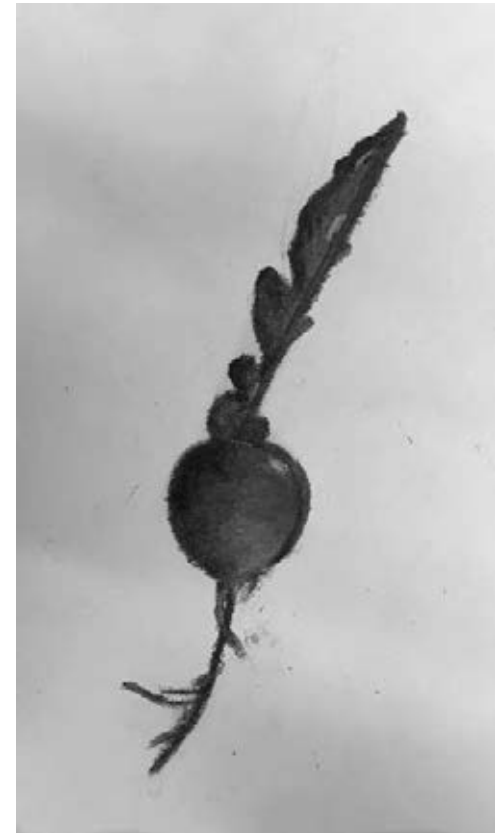
*Emma Price '18*

## Urbana

I will exert my power and smite Urbana  
Until the hardhats pounding outside are crushed by my words  
And my ability to soothe the air through the solemn cry of  
Eloquence. I will create a world where no one else has to  
Look in the mirror, feeling hatred, the dysmorphia setting in  
Only to disappoint. A world where there isn't disruptive chatter in  
The corner to distract others from ingenuity; where rich  
Girls drive by in their black electric Mercedes only to idly  
Stand by while poor girls in Kenya can't afford purified water.

I reject ignorance and pointless laughter to fill space; I reject  
Intentional social climbers and unintentional bullies; I reject  
The idea that everyone must abide by the same set of rules,  
Even though each of us is an individual and should be taken  
As such; I reject incoherent statements; I reject unnecessary  
Hierarchy; I reject the plateau I sit on when I try to focus  
On this imbecilic writing assignment; I reject wearing glasses as a trend,  
When Bolivian natives need them to see; I reject futile  
Belief over science; I reject those who have no hope; I reject an argument  
Without evidence; I reject nervous leg syndrome and squeaky chairs in a  
Classroom that should be quiet; I reject who I have become  
As a result of mass media.

Adults that condescend and don't give others the time of day, teenagers  
Who do the same, who don't care enough to try but don't try enough  
To care. Pompous assholes walking the streets, avoiding  
Eye contact with noses turned up and Hermes belts ablaze. Crying  
babies who are left without consoling, their mothers who  
Clearly care, and yet absently watch. The ringing in  
My ears for which I blame my father. Dad—the everyday  
Superhero, the underdog, the incredible. People just  
Like me who are too self-absorbed to realize  
What they have, but unlike me, not taking the time  
To think outside their selfish, pea-brained head,



*Untitled*

*Olivia Klubeck '18*



*Abandoned*

*Dorrit Corwin '19*

Because they are too busy imagining all the work they  
Have to do on their MacBook Pro's when they get home from school.  
Global warming deniers, global warming as a concept, heat stroke,  
Hypothermia, and simple dehydration. The climate changes as  
Quickly as my mood, hormones are a bitch and so are you.  
Stupid poems and stories that seem extraordinarily purposeless,  
Trying to make me write something against my will.  
Being scared of being judged, but realizing you're the one  
Judging. Feeling bad about yourself, for yourself, and all  
By yourself, when really this poem has been all about  
Yourself.

Alas, the happy ending must ensue with the princess  
Discovering the pea and the world going on with reckless abandon.  
And the schoolgirls still saunter down hallways, hunched  
Yet happy once more; the sun is out, the trees are green, the air  
Is warm, and I'm still here. Now it's my turn to smite down injustice,  
Hatred, and fury, eliminate backstabbers and back-trackers,  
Confidence lackers, everyday slackers. Now it's my turn to make  
A mark, call it beauty or birth, but it will be ingrained. Mass media turned  
Minimal while the chairs in the classroom begin to stop squeaking.  
Standing idly by is faux pas and neglect is so  
Yesterday. Now it's my turn,  
It's my turn,  
My turn,  
Turn.



## Superthumb

Superthumb  
Not a hero  
Not her  
No he

Passed his peak  
Not a high  
Not hi  
No I

Found another dead  
Not in sight  
Not I sigh  
No sí

Said Superthumb  
Not a digit  
Not digi  
No dig

Underneath the ground?  
Not a shovel  
Not shove  
No sho

Me I said  
Not heart  
Not hear  
No he

The man of the manhunt  
Not here  
Not her  
No he

*Alexandria Yap '16*



*Everest*

*Kate O'Connor '20*



## Scissors and a Match

Her lips always left a cherry stain on teacups—she had more red lipstick than food in the cupboards. Her hair was coffee brown at the time, tied back loosely around a clip, which made her blue eyes pop. I liked the way she looked. She was the girl in the French movies. A record player scratching on repeat. I remember she enjoyed the piano—how she tickled the keys and made them laugh. Even though she was tone deaf, she loved to hear herself sing and was convinced that other people did too. Sometimes she would rearrange the apartment and sing loudly in the street and make strangers angry and rip apart the pillows and tear pages out of books—just to dance in the mess. She never went anywhere without insisting that I photograph her using her polaroid, so she could see the photo instantly. She didn't like the way she looked. I remember she had this way with her cursive letter L's—they were kind of loopy and squiggly just like her. Every spring, farmers' market peonies would line her dusty windowsills and catch all the light. After a day of basking in their beauty, she would slice off the petals and burn the remaining stems—one time she lit her eyelashes too. She always had this thing with scissors and a match, with the destruction of beauty. I guess that's how it ended too.

*Clara Nevins '18*

## The People's Dress

The problem is not that the dress is not pretty. The dress could never be anything but beautiful; its periwinkle skirts billow downwards in lush, swishing pleats, and the fabric is soft to the touch and heavy with tiny pearls embedded in the hem's embroidery. Its perfect cut accentuates the soft curve of the Wearer's waist. Yet the very same pearls that make the gown resplendent pull down upon the Wearer, as though she were sinking and they were intent on stopping her from resurfacing. The corset that shapes the curve of the Wearer's waist tugs at her lungs: restricting them, pulling them into a thin, narrow mold that is what the Designers call beauty. The billowing skirts surround her completely--the Wearer has no space: she cannot breathe, cannot think, cannot resurface. The dress consumes her completely, and it covers so much of her, the Wearer can't help noticing. When finally she is paraded out to be displayed, all the Watchers can see is the dress. It's a beautiful dress, perfect for her, the Watchers murmur among themselves. So caught up are they in admiring the dress, they never see the Wearer. That is the problem.

*Leslie Gonzalez '19*



*Madeline's Garden*

*Rose Collier '17*

## 1501 S. Winston

For lack of other inspiration, Joe soothed his idle hands by picking locks to doors in old neighborhoods full of good kids with college funds and old white people who like to talk about problems like they were merely a subplot to a highly overdone soap opera. He pulled his hood up against the brisk wind and muttered sarcastic praises under his breath as he walked passed a row of symmetrical, beige houses before stopping to look at the one on the corner. It looked the same as the rest: beige stucco, black shingles, clean rain gutter, and a white picket fence. But it was weathered and the glass was a bit more clouded. Inside were the secrets to happy homes, memorabilia that Joe thought would rub off on him if he just possessed them.

Joe climbed in through the window and saw the white bits of dust fly through the air. The lace curtains had provided no protection from the light or from him. All of the upholstery was faded and what patterns remained were covered with a fine layer of cream-colored flecks. Joe had entered through the living room, which led off in three directions, highlighted by sun-streaked bits of peeling wallpaper. Joe looked around the living room to see that nothing quite matched: every scrap of paper on the desk was written in a different language, and every chair represented a different art movement. There were two coffee cups laid out perfectly parallel to one another on the end table that stood between Joe and the fireplace. One was full of fresh coffee, but the other was mostly empty with a dark line of grinds to show that it had the potential to tell the story of a lazy afternoon. Joe moved on down the closest hallway. It was lined with a thinning, pale green paper and a shelf of books that hung at eye level and spanned the length of the corridor. As Joe looked down the length of the books, he could see that each one was covered in butcher paper with intricate drawings of faces on them. Through the strings of dust, he could see that most of the more carefully drawn covers had the same haunting face on them. It was the only face among the drawings that had been shaded or colored at all—the rest were just a continuous line on the page.

Joe took a step back to admire the faces—some masculine, fewer feminine. The masculine faces seemed to be less fleshed out, having been either just

line drawings of their profiles or barely shaded. That is, except for one: the incomplete portrait of a young man in a bow-tie with wide blue eyes. He was barely smirking, but the way his thin lips parted seemed like he almost wanted to tell a secret. Joe reached for that book, opening it to the first page—*Sherlock Holmes*. Joe put the book back, wondering if the portraits on the butcher paper were likenesses of the main characters. Joe skipped over the line drawings; their owner must not have made it very far in the stories, he thought.

Instead, Joe counted how many of each face there was in a series. The owner had ten books with the same woman intricately drawn and colored on the brown paper. Her first appearance was way on the left side of the cover, with her hair tied half-back in a white ribbon. She wore thin, silver wire frame glasses and she had a cupid's bow pout that curled into a neutral frown. The next occurrence showed her in the same glasses, but with a rounder collar and taller hair. The pictures advanced with the decades, as did the lines on her face. The last picture showed her in white—almost ghostly, almost bridal—but it showed signs of distress: wobbled lines and inconsistent shading. Joe plucked that one from the shelf and read the scribble on the first page: to my beloved, may you find comfort in more than just books—Marlene.

Joe noticed that the other pictures had a small M drawn onto her collar; whereas the man with the bow-tie had a cursive uppercase J. Like the sudden prick of a pin, Joe knew that he had to find out just who these people were, so he continued past the kitchen towards the stairs. As he ascended, he looked to the faded blue wall where there were pictures of people smiling in black and white or scowling in color. In each of the pictures, the same expressions of anguish and elation were repeated on each of the different faces.

Joe's eyes settled on what looked like a family portrait from the mid 90s. There was Marlene, sitting in between a man who looked to be about her age, and their children who looked like both of them. The girl was obviously older. She had long, straightened, black hair parted in the middle

and a cloak falling down her back. The son had a close buzz cut and a nicely pressed t-shirt that hung from his muscled frame like a sheet. They were on a couch with varying degrees of pained expressions splattered across their faces, but they seemed happy enough.

Joe kept moving, afraid that if he stayed too long in one spot he'd be found out. He tip-toed up the creaky, old steps until he made it to the second floor. There was a large window that spanned almost the entire width of the main hallway. Joe hurried past, so not to be detected, pausing to catch his breath in the door frame of one of the bedrooms. Joe looked over at the open door behind him, and backed slowly into that room. He stumbled briefly over a stack of papers on the floor, meeting the intricate decorations on the door with a gasp.

From the bottom to the top, there was not a bit of raw wood visible under the paint and frills. Joe trailed the bizarre paintings with an infatuated gaze. His eyes first met the image of a woman holding a little pink bundle in her arms, while lying in a bed. The blanket on the edge of the bed flowed upward; the name "Ruby" embroidered on the edge in gold lettering. He watched as the blanket's pattern morphed into a group of miniature ballerinas painted in blue, with Ruby standing boldly in green, pointing her little white slipper further upwards. In another image, Ruby, a little older still, sat against the tree formed by the back of her leotard and gazed up at the sky where the clouds formed images of her, yet older, running track and playing soccer. Now a young woman, she stood atop a mountain, dressed in a graduation gown and holding her diploma as she looked upward. Joe traced her trajectory several times before he got up again and ventured toward it. Beneath some of the pictures, the paint looked thick as if it covered older stories that didn't want to be seen.

Curious about the other members of the family, it seemed to Joe that he knew more about these people than about his own family who closed their doors on the black sheep that he was. Almost directly across the hall, a series of photos had been plastered in sequential order detailing the grand moments of a young man's life. It took him from infancy—with a picture

of a child sitting on a red swing—through high school, to where he stood proudly in fatigues casually eating a bowl of cereal. Less whimsical than his sister's room, this boy looked stern from the beginning—but not unkind. The photos were arranged in such a way that the collage looked unfinished, but the way they ended so abruptly hinted that there would be no more added. Joe felt a pang of sorrow for the family, a pang that he hadn't been sure he had been capable of feeling.

Every inch of the second floor had been detailed with such intention, he thought. He wished that he could value his own memories as much. A shuffle and a cough brought him out of his daydreams and back to reality. His heart raced as he remembered just how unwelcome he should feel. Yet, instead of fleeing, Joe walked slowly towards the noise until he was face to face with a pair of double doors painted white. He pushed on the left panel, and saw an old man sitting at an easel with his back to him. Joe watched the man's frail hand detail the nearly completed painting. Without warning, the man swung around on the stool and stared Joe straight in the eyes. He squinted at him, and Joe found himself unable to run. The man looked back at his painting, and then back at Joe.

"Was that mole always there?" The old man said, as if disappointed in himself. Joe couldn't make sense of his remark until a bit of sun hitting one of the nails on the canvas drew his eye there. Joe was looking himself dead in the face, as the old man carefully shaded in the mole that rested on his right cheek just above his upper lip.

*Sophie Aaron '17*



*The Vinyl Store*

*Kayla Luu '19*

## alycetown

residents must

witty cynic  
al sarcas  
tic  
tock  
couldn't tell time  
until I was  
twelve, noon

be

quick to laugh  
laughing cry  
ing  
dancing too  
sometimes

how dare you ignore me  
now leave you bore me

do things like:  
"get in a taxi  
and say,  
'the library,  
and step on it'"  
hal  
yce  
that's with a WHY  
not an EYE

what?

snip the STEM

and water the human  
ities

please

avoidsincerity  
bybeingwitty  
andusingpretty  
words words  
words,  
when in

alycetown

*Alyce McFadden '16*



*Untitled*



*Baxter King-Epping '16*

## Trench Warfare

When I was younger I liked to drink, but only on the weekends and then only when everything seemed to be going particularly slow. But I managed to stay sober at my sister's engagement party. I was 17 at the time and taken aback by the jewels that choked my sister's throat and sparkled from her fingers. She wore a pale blue, gauzy dress and drank champagne as if it were water. I had questioned her love in the stale hotel room and she had laughed. And yet I **was sober.**

Our mother made the rounds with her face sweating off, wearing a stupid hat like a crow's nest. We had driven up from the city together with the radio singing the whole way. My mother wouldn't let me drive, and I had complained for the entirety of the 4 hours. I was bitter by the night of the party. My sister's fiancé had a face like cookie dough—uncertain and pale. He had a beautifully groomed accent and handsome sums. I knew it wouldn't last.

My mother began to peddle me by the time I turned 20. I wanted to write; I wanted to travel; I wanted to be reckless and have no back-up plan. She wanted me in white. My sister had provided too easy a challenge with her mile-long legs and stream of blonde hair. No boys jumped when they saw me approaching.

By this time, I rarely drank—only on the lone Saturday at the bar. Neither my sister nor my mother had found themselves waving from the bottom of a long-stemmed wineglass.

I moved into my own apartment and took up smoking as my one hobby. I sustained my habit for about 2 months until my pockets ran dry. Withdrawal didn't agree with me, and Mother found me an even tougher sell.

I was working on a nowhere thesis about how everything had been established by old, white, privileged men and **we should scrap** it all and start over, at the university where I was legacy, when I got the call that my sister

had been in a car crash with a man who was not her betrothed.  
The blue flicker of the TV screen lit the room. "Daughter of English  
Ambassador found in a fatal car crash with well-known actor. The driver  
was reportedly drunk when the the car swerved off the road."

The waiting room was crowded, but I found her husband, his face a mask  
of dough, tucked quietly in the corner. Neither of us asked if she was okay;  
neither of us stirred. As the clock tolled 10 he turned to face me. "I knew it.  
She didn't think I did, but I knew."

"Defend your sister, defend your sister, defend your sister," I tried to shout.  
But I couldn't. He filed for a divorce before she woke up from her coma.  
The well-known actor was not so lucky.

Now that my sister was single our mother rearmed for combat. But she  
was damaged goods: an ex-wife and a dead man's mistress. Nobody  
wanted her. Nobody wanted me either.

*Clementine Wolodarsky '17*



*Lights Out*

*Delaney Michaelson '20*

## Awakening

Last night  
They said they would  
Wake me  
I told them to shake me  
To pour water  
To blast Mozart  
But soft duvets  
And trembling dreams.  
They said I looked too peaceful  
To disturb.

In the morning  
I woke to the late afternoon  
Sun and  
The smell of black coffee  
And the voices of  
Victory and sweat.  
The only red and  
Pink that dotted my eyes  
Were pursed lips and  
Neon signs.

I wanted to feel  
The crisp morning wind  
Emerald sky  
The warm voices  
Trapped in puffs of cold air.  
But city buildings and  
Late nights  
Maybe next time  
The sun will  
Surely rise.



*back cover: Swimmer Girl by Kate Planting '18*  
*inside back cover: Cacti by Isabel Clements '17*  
*Pink Ribbon by Sophie Lee '18*

# the Edge

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