

THE SALESIAN

LITERATURE, ART & DESIGN AT NCCHS



ISSUE 2025



Francis de Sales

Be at Peace

Do not look forward in fear to the changes in life;
rather, look to them with full hope that as they arise, God, whose very own you
are, will lead you safely through all things;
and when you cannot stand it, God will carry you in His arms

Do not fear what may happen tomorrow;
the same understanding Father who cares for you today will take care of you
then and every day.

He will either shield you from suffering or will give you unfailing strength to
bear it. Be at peace, and put aside all anxious thoughts and imaginations.



On Saint Francis de Sales

As the team of *The Salesian* searched for an emblem of our purpose as a literary magazine, we found an instant connection to Saint Francis de Sales. The patron saint of authors, writers, and journalists, his identity not only encapsulates our Catholic faith, but expresses our commitment to literature, the arts, and their publication.

Born August 21st, 1567, he was the first of twelve children. His father, a lawyer and powerful aristocrat, had destined Francis de Sales to inherit his position as a senator in their home country of France, sending his son to college in pursuit of this wish. Despite receiving a doctorate in law, Francis de Sales felt compelled by a strong religious calling and became an ordained priest in 1593. Immediately, he began strenuous missionary work, committing to sharing his Catholic faith in the midst of a rising Calvinist population. Through his patient and resilient spirit, Francis de Sales converted many to the faith in the face of fervent backlash. In 1602 he was ordained bishop of Geneva, and continued to share his beliefs through his sermons and founding of the Order of the Visitation of Holy Mary. Yet throughout this demanding role,

the
Fran-
Devout Life,

cis de Sales published three of his most notable works. These pieces, *The Introduction to the*
The Treatise on the Love of God, and *Spiritual Discussions*, developed ideas of spiritual practicality

and spoke to the importance of the personal vocation through artful writing. Accompanied by hundreds of letters, his literary skill cemented his influence in the Church while illustrating his clear devotion to Her. After his death in 1622, saints like John Bosco drew inspiration from Francis de Sales' charitable work by founding the Salesians, an order dedicated to caring for impoverished children disadvantaged by the Industrial Revolution.

Through our publication, we honor Saint Francis de Sales' legacy as a humanitarian, theologian, and writer. Our mission to share the gifts within our school unites us with the faithful members of the Salesians. We hope, within our small community, to nurture his passion as beneficiaries of his namesake.

Letter from the Editor

Dear Reader,

As we unveil the third edition of *The Salesian*, we pause to acknowledge a force both ancient and often overlooked: rhythm. Not just the steady beat of a drum or the rise and fall of a melody, rhythm is the quiet architect of order in a chaotic universe—pulsing through seasons, speech, tides, and body.

Too often we relegate rhythm to the arts, unaware that it undergirds the sciences, structures our habits, and defines the flow of time itself. In this issue, we explore rhythm as more than repetition; we treat it as a principle of resonance, a language spoken by nature and spirit alike.

Whether in the disciplined cadence of monastic life, the syncopation of youthful energy, or the subtle cycles of growth and decay, rhythm deserves recognition. Take with you an appreciation for this force, let it guide your perception of the works featured in this magazine.

Regards,

Nathaniel Burger
Editor of *The Salesian*

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Works marked with a cap symbol placed in the 2025 Illinois State Poetry Society Student Poetry Contest.

What Now?

Narrative by Zion Fiorini

In the back of a car, packed tightly between two other guys, I hummed along to Jimi Hendrix, who was spilling out of the radio and into the night. My friend Andrew was telling me something about his vacation to Miami. It seemed like he was always on vacation. The driver, blasting through the late fog, responded to each bump in the road by jerking the wheel back into place, sending our heads into one another. Andrew seemed to shout a name at me. I couldn't hear anything but Hendrix. My eyes remained fixed on the radio for some time. "Hey Joe, where you goin' with that gun in your hand?" it screamed. Andrew seemed to be anticipating a response from me. His eyes studied my face as I nodded, "Yes." I wasn't sure if he was finished. He began again. Turning off the highway, I couldn't help but notice that Kenny, to my left, was taking up two-thirds of the back seat with his open legs. I didn't say anything. We had planned on meeting with a larger group, but the details escaped me. I wondered if there would be girls. I turned to Kenny.

"Will there be girls?" I asked. He just smiled."

Staring idly out the window, I noted the glare of a large neon sign up ahead. MIDWAY, it announced, in bold lettering. A drive-in theater, the only one of its kind for 200 miles in every direction. A sharp halt rocked the car, followed by a turn. Kenny, lurching forward, reached for the volume knob, stopping Hendrix mid-sentence. A silence fell over the car, and for a moment you could hear its rubber wheels scrape along the gravel. Ahead of us was a booth, shaped like a UFO. From behind it, a large man, about 6'3" or so, shuffled toward us. He wore a crisp white collared shirt and a gaudy, jet-black cowboy hat. He had small, black eyes like a badger. The driver, rolling the window down, said, "Five tickets, please." The man stepped closer, resting his hands on the car door, craning his neck for a better look. His golden cross chain dangled in front of the driver's face. The man smiled.

"You boys eighteen then?"

"Yeah," the driver muttered, unsurely.

"Uh huh," he said, stepping back, walking toward the rear of the car. Tapping the window

with his knuckle, he motioned for Kenny to roll his window down. The man, entering a football stance, now rested his hands on his bent knees. He scanned our faces for what seemed to be an eternity. I sat, my eyes, yet again, fixed on the radio. Suddenly, without protest, the man stood upright, walking toward the front again, grabbing the money from the driver. He nosed the car past the threshold, turning off all but the parking light. Kenny jabbed me in the stomach with his elbow. "Did you see his eyes?"

"Yeah, dude."

The place was packed, and I wondered if we would get a decent view. We came up on a large van that had backed into its spot and was surrounded by lawn chairs. I could barely make out the silhouette of a man, lifting his hand and waving. I immediately identified the figure as being Wyatt Widolff, who I had been friends with since the first grade. The car came to a stop. Through the window, I noticed that Wyatt was accompanied by a couple of his friends, who I barely knew. Hesitantly, I unbuckled my seatbelt and exited the car. It was cool that night. I made a beeline straight to Wyatt, who had been talking to two other guys. He turned to me, his face skewered.

"What's up, man?" I said confusedly.

"Where are your glasses?"

"I froze for a moment. Then, suddenly, my hands leapt toward my eyes, and I gripped my face as if I were trying to rip the skin right off."

I saw my glasses. They were on the brown wooden coffee table in the center of my living room. In that moment, I could have drawn a perfect picture of them, the coffee table too, had you asked me to. I laughed. I looked at him and said, "I can see just fine." He laughed too, handing me a box of Junior Mints. "Hold this for me," he said. He returned shortly after, offering me one of his lawn chairs. And so I sat and waited for the first of four movies to start. The screen was a canvas, and the actors were obscure splotches. I couldn't make out a single limb or structure. I sat in misery for the entirety of the first movie. Every once in a while, I would hear a voice and think, "Is that Kurt Russel, or maybe Patrick Swayze?" It was okay for a while, until it wasn't. In the middle of the second movie, I decided that I just couldn't take it any longer. Fumbling

around my pockets for my wallet, I opened it to see a lonesome five-dollar bill. I shot up from the lawn chair, heading for the concessions. There were few people inside, occupying mostly the booths along a brick wall, coated in rotting paint. The room was freshly designed with cheap, tacky Halloween decorations and various horror posters, the movies, I did not recognize. To my left, a short, bald man stood acutely between the bathroom and concession line. "Are you in line?" I said. He chose to ignore me entirely. I waited behind him for a moment before I approached the counter. Behind it was a small, thin girl who seemed to be at least two years my senior.

"A Coke, please." She glared at me.

"Uh, medium," I clarified.

Turning around, the girl exited through a heavy wooden door, disappearing into the back. She returned with my drink, five minutes later. "Thanks," I said, sliding the five across the counter. Starting for the door, I raised the straw to my pursed lips. It was Pepsi. Perhaps this was a test, I thought. I stood, for some time, shaking with anger. I was not angry because I particularly disliked Pepsi, but because it simply was not Coke. I planted my foot and pivoted, looking her square in the face, marching forward.

"This is Pepsi," I said.

She cocked her head. "You said Pepsi," she remarked.

"No, I did not," I shot back. "I know what I said because I know what I want."

"And you wanted Pepsi."

Seized by violent impulse, I balled my hand into a fist, extending only my index finger.

"Which one of us do you think is wrong here?" I asked, pointing at her now. "You, who processes orders all day, or me, the customer, who has to remember one dang thing?"

I clasped my drink tightly, fidgeting with the straw. I turned to see a crowd forming around the booths. The people stared blankly. Soon, more faces appeared in the building's windows. I felt a bead of sweat roll down my forehead, wiping it hastily with the cuff of my shirt. I set the drink on the counter. As she spoke, a flush crept up her neck, spreading like wildfire across her cheeks. "Sorry sir, that'll be just a minute," she said, disappearing into the back. When she returned, her eyes shifted around the room, never meeting mine. She handed me a Coke.

But a sharp, open-hand slap to the back of my bare neck, jolted me back to consciousness. I shot up from the lawn chair. "Movie's starting," a voice from behind me droned.

Indivisible

Photography by Kat verdick

A Meeting of Souls

Poetry by Reagan Hammes

Eyelids to eyelashes
The world around is dim
But I see a light,
A look alike
Trudge Forward
The whisper raises
Go on
Let your joy rise
Your feet fly
Your mind soar
Your beauty be worn
The war is tough
You'll overcome

I never thought she really knew
But I look up, and
I saw You across the room



Air War

Photography by Payton Hanna

Significant Moments Papers

Dear Reader,

There are days, hours, and moments that bring our sense of knowingness to what life it is. It is sometimes possible to put a lifetime's knowledge into one realization. These are some of the Significant Moments in our lives.



Above and Beyond

Photography by Kazimieras Grazulis

Opa

Poetry by Elise Vanderbleek

My heart is hardened, cauterized by time
And still is prone to bleed
Because your wisdom's left unauthorized
For the little ones like me

I'd never known you like my kin
With your button down flannel shirts
I thought they irritated your skin
Or so said your nurse

I see your shadow in your rocking chair
You say: "Did you get enough to eat"
Then focus on the voice I hear
Much too feminine and sweet

If my memories are stories
Then what do I know is true
For a narrative passed down
Can not replace knowing you.

Significant Moments in My Life

Short Narrative by Zion Fiorini

My bed was a terrible bed, no matter how you looked at it. I complained to my mother to no end. My brother, however, bragged about his bed, attributing his success in growing to a hulking six-foot-three to the bed's "aerodynamicism." I now know that's not even a word. When he moved away, I eagerly awaited inheriting his "nice" bed. Upon realizing that mine and his were the very same bed, I confronted my brother, to which he responded, "I thought it was a nice bed." I never complained again.

Significant Moments in the Life of my Father

Short Narrative by Helen Papoccia

Being the middle child in a big family, my dad always had entertaining stories of getting left behind, he was in fact the designated forgotten child. In fact, one of the stories he tells more often is being left in Mexico without any clothes and more importantly, no passport. Probably a traumatic experience being stuck in Mexico with nowhere to go until your family realized you were gone and came back with your passport so you could finally cross the border. Probably so traumatic that he'd never leave his own kids anywhere, even if it was only their school.

Turns out the traumatizing event wasn't traumatic enough. Even several years later I still remember the first time I was forgotten at school. It was an early out day so I remember looking forward to going home and eating. It had been a long day and I was starving. Yet there I was, a couple hours later, getting picked up by my grandpa because my dad had forgotten me. Maybe not as crazy as Mexico, but I still hold it against him today.

Significant Moments in the Life of an Adult

Short Narrative by Ryan Partington

Mom stood in the kitchen, phone in hand, staring out the window. The call had come. Her mother was gone. For years, dementia had taken pieces of her, but now it had claimed her entirely. The house seemed to hold its breath, the noise of daily life replaced by silence. Death is inevitable, but it still stings. Mom had fought beside her mother every step of the way, enduring the slow, unrelenting march of the disease. Now she paced the house, her steps uncertain, as if searching for what was lost. I realized this was the moment her world had shifted. Life would now be shaped by both the ache of loss and the quiet strength of survival. Somehow, she would find what truly mattered in its shadow.

Significant Moments in the Life of my Brother

Short Narrative by Cody McBride

My mom gave my brother and I a quarter each to get something from the prize machines in the mall. I followed my brother because he took my quarter telling me he'd hold on to it. I was seven. Just trust me Cody, I know what I'm doing," my brother said as I screamed at him to give me my quarter back. "The machine will be worth it, I just need to use your quarter to get what's in it. I promise you'll get something too."

He twisted the machine's knob. I sat and watched as close to thirty gumballs came flooding out of the little silver slot.

My brother really hasn't always been lucky with things but to me it feels like he has. It might be because most of the time, his luck is at my expense. I have realized I need to accept the fact that I am the younger brother, and really don't have much control over how I get treated. I can try to tell on him and get him in trouble, but I am not seven any more.

Two

Narrative by Daniel Kelly

As the short white bus backed out of the bumpy driveway, the only sound I could hear was the repetitive beeping. Other wrestlers, coaches, and I on the bus had a short ten minute ride to the State Farm Center at the State Wrestling Tournament. The ride, full of right turns followed by left turns, ended as we pulled into the spacious parking lot covered by a small layer of white snow turned to brown mush. I grabbed my wrestling bag and headed to the door at the front of the bus. The door opened with its usual creak and the frigid air hit my face. I stood face to face with the arena, round and glowing orange from the lights within. We hustled to the wrestlers' entrance to get out of the brutal weather. We made it to the door and checked our bags in time to hear a bout being called to the mat. Butterflies were in my stomach.

I'm not the type of person who gets nervous for matches. I didn't think much of the feeling as we found a place to set our stuff down. We found a spot a few rows up where we had sat during the first session which I won 4-2 from someone I had lost to earlier in the season. I pulled out my lunch box and took a caramel rice cake from it. I put a freeze gel pad on my shoulder, which had been bothering me the last couple weeks. I pulled on my knee pads and then my blue and yellow Agressor One shoes which I had bought for \$168. I taped my laces. Listening to the call for the 190 weight class, I figured I should warm up soon. I climbed over the bags in my way, my steps thumping over the seats, and started down the metal stairs.

The noise was absurd: the roar of the crowds, the whistle of the referees, the announcer's voice calling names—I couldn't even hear my own thoughts. On the floor, I showed the guard my lanyard to prove I was a wrestler. I descended the lumpy concrete ramp and into the tunnel filled with wrestlers warming up. I noticed one wrestler's shirt that read Joliet Catholic. I continued down the ramp where ten to fifteen wrestlers were waiting before a large screen showing bouts and assigned mats. From there I took a quick right down a narrow hallway with blue and orange walls, TV's flickering with match

scores. I walked into an open area where I sat my headgear, water bottle, and phone down. I could not lose these. I took a slight hop into my jog. I jogged the perimeter of the white wall to get a light sweat going. Just a few laps to get warm. I needed to sweat before my match to release tension. I sat on the end of a navy mat and stretched my legs. Then I did stance in motion for about twenty seconds, bouncing, then more stance until my body was feeling good. I felt a bead of sweat roll down my arm. I could sense my face getting red. I was a little out of breath. A great start to my warm-up. I found my friend Carter on the crowded mat where if I took the slightest step I would trip over another wrestler lying down or warming up. Carter and I began slip wrestling. We have warmed up this way since the beginning of the season. I heard a muffled voice call 3A 285, which is all I needed to hear. Wrestling for me would begin shortly.

I was sweating. I was warm. I was feeling loose.

The announcer's voice hit my ears again: "First bout for 150!" I made my way to the tunnel. The matches were going quick. I knew my name would be announced soon. I put my straps up and began shaking out my legs. Looking at the jumbotron from the tunnel, I saw my name pop up: Kelly Mat 6. The butterflies flew in my stomach. I made my way out of the tunnel and toward the mat. I strapped on my headgear. I slipped out of my shorts and handed them to my coach. The butterflies were gone. I heard the slap of a mat and a whistle. I was up to wrestle. I took a small sip of my lukewarm water and stepped onto the orange and blue IHSA mats. I walked slowly to the table, checked in, and walked to the center of the mat. Slowly, I put on my green ankle bands. I took a few small steps back, shaking my left leg, then my right. Stepping on the line, I shook hands with my opponent. Then there was the roar of the whistle.

I was on my offense right away. I passed an elbow over my head and attempted a shot. I missed his leg. No problem, I thought to myself. This will set up my other attacks. The first period goes by. No points on the board. That didn't matter though as I am feeling good. I know I can take this guy down. The ref flipped his green and red sided

coin. The coin landed on green. My choice. Quickly I deferred my choice to the third period and my opponent chose down. I have never been good wrestling on the mat. I am much better on my feet. I have always been better on my feet ever since I was a little kid. I don't know why. Very rarely do I score points on top by putting my opponent on his back.

"My points often come when I take a guy down and hear the crowd yelling 'TWO,'"

My parents know this. At Bantam State when I was eight years old, my dad told me "Take this guy down, let him up, and take him down again." I won the match. This has been my style ever since.

Knowing I wasn't very good at riding, I covered him anyway hoping I could hold him down and he wouldn't score. The whistle blew and he stood up. I lifted him off the mat and swiped his knee out causing him to hit the mat hard. He stood up again, but this time he got away. Thirty seconds go by. I shoot a sweep single to my right, snatch his leg, and finish my shot hearing the crowd yell "TWO!" He got up immediately. The score was tied. Twenty seconds go by and I shot a straight on double leg. The move went nowhere, but I was still in good shape with double underhooks. I brought my hips in and pressured into him. I was on the edge of the mat with great position when all of a sudden I was thrown to my back. This was not good. This should not be happening. Then he let go. I felt weird. What had just happened? Is this a dream?

The crowd got louder and louder. The lights got brighter. I woke up. The first thing I said was, "Where am I?" My coach said, "You're at the State Farm Center in the quarter finals, buddy."

It all hit me at once. My mind was racing. What happened? My coaches said, "You took a little nap." I thought to myself so that's what passing out feels like. I asked, "What's the score?" They said, "Eight to two." I got up, took a sip of water.

I was ready to wrestle again. I found myself back at the center of the mat. The clock said six seconds. I need an escape here so I will only be down by five. The ref asked me a couple of questions. I wasn't paying attention. He blew the whistle and I got up to my feet. I started working as hard as I could to get away. With one second left, I got my escape.

The score was 8-3. It was my choice now. I chose bottom. My opponent covered me and the period started. Again, I was working up to my feet. I got there, grabbing his hands trying with everything to get an escape. I couldn't get it. On the edge of the mat I heard the ref say "stalling!" I was awarded a point. We went out of bounds. The score was now 8-4. We reset in the center. The whistle hit my ears, and I was already to my feet getting a quick escape. I was slowly chipping away at the lead, now only a three points difference. I took a shot but missed his leg. The ref stopped the match. I was awarded another point for illegal hands to the face. I was within a takedown to tie the match. Forty-seven seconds to go—I had to give it everything. The noise was crazy. The crowd was watching my match, cheering for me. My foot on the line ready to go, the whistle blew. Ten seconds went by. I tried to get him moving. Maybe he would get a stalling call and I would get a point. Twenty seconds go by...I take a shot. I was in deep on his leg. He sprawled then put real hip pressure into me. I circled to try to get his other ankle. If I did it would be a takedown. I had twenty-seven seconds to finish this takedown. If I didn't, I would lose.

I circled to his ankle. Ten seconds had lapsed. There were seventeen seconds left. We were on the edge of the mat. I had to be smart with every movement to make sure we did not go out of bounds. Ten more seconds slip by. I reached his ankle. The crowd of blue in front of me screamed "TWO!" It shook the building. But no points were awarded. I pulled him back---still no points. The clock ran out. The ref blew his whistle. I lost.

Jellyfish

Watercolor painting by Ella Billiet



Echo

Poetry by Olivia Clark

Every seat filled with being
Every corner overflowed with noise

Behind a curtain awaits a force
A force with enough power to silence millions
Strong enough to capture one's breath
Evoking emotion is its mission

As the curtain rises
The demand of silence follows
Music succeeds its authority

Full of love, loss, and joy
Full of energy and resilience
Full of control and madness

Its echo reaches the street
It reaches our minds
It reaches our hearts

Early Summer

Photography by Payton Hanna



Late Spring

*Photography by
Payton Hanna*



Sanctuary

Digital Photography by Kazimieras Grazulis



The Intersection Between Self-immolation and Stevie Wonder

Memoir by Nathaniel Burger

I saw a homeless man set himself on fire. The peppy soul of Stevie Wonder's "Sir Duke" was suddenly interrupted by the unmistakable click of a BIC lighter. I watched in horror as a man set himself on fire on the New York City subway

at roughly 9:30 that November morning. Well, he certainly tried to. He didn't have gasoline or anything flammable—just his arm hairs, most of which were already singed off. This wasn't his first time. His clothes were too damp with sweat and God-knows-what to catch fire. He didn't seem to care. His skin, blotched and raw, looked like a timelapse

of a rotting melon. He repeated the act, darkening his arm with each attempt—desperation written in his every motion. I couldn't look away. It was like being a child gazing at a disabled person, unable to stop staring. I tried to distract myself by skipping to the next song, cranking up the volume. "We Didn't Start the Fire" blared in my ears. I might've laughed at the irony, given there wasn't a man five feet away, desperately trying—and failing—to set himself on fire. I couldn't tell if he wanted to die or if he just wanted to introduce my nostrils to the stench of burned flesh. Either way, he succeeded at least in the latter. The familiar, rancid city odor—like a sewer, like rot—was eclipsed by something worse. It smelled like burnt meat, like rotten eggs over charcoal, but it wasn't eggs or meat. It was a man. A man who you could smell, see, touch, and hear right in front of you. The smell lingered, but soon after came the absent taste of it, a grotesque echo in my mouth. I just hit play on Nick Drake's *Pink Moon* and closed my eyes. I wanted to escape.

I've always been drawn to the idea of self-immolation—not in the literal sense, of course, but as a metaphor. We all have ways of trying to escape pain, of hiding parts of ourselves that feel too raw or too heavy. Watching that man burn himself on the subway made my organs churn, but it also made me realize: I've done my own kind of damage. I turn away from pain, numb out, pretend things aren't as bad as they are. We convince ourselves that escaping will cleanse us, that it'll make the hurt go away. But it doesn't. All we end up doing is singeing pieces of ourselves that we can't get back. My metaphorical flame is music. There were times when it felt as though the only thing tethering me to the physical world was music. Virtually any music would do the trick, I have a wide palette. Stevie Wonder in particular has always been a phenomenal anchor. His voice, full of warmth and energy, would immediately pull me back from whatever mental fog I was lost in. I didn't need to think much about it—just hit play, and the world outside would fade a little. It wasn't about solving anything, it was about finding a space where I could just be. His songs, like "Isn't She Lovely," felt like a shot of happiness straight to the chest. The upbeat rhythms were like a quick jolt, and for a few minutes, the weight of everything felt lighter. The melody didn't demand anything from me, just let me glide along with it, and for those few minutes,

Continued on next page →

everything else could wait. His music didn't fix my problems—it never promised to—but it was a kind of space where I could breathe. It allowed me to feel a little more grounded, like the world was just a little less chaotic as long as those songs played on. As I reflect now, however, I see that music really wasn't an anchor, but rather a drug. It didn't help me cope. Escaping is a temporary solution. You can only run for so long. Sooner or later you have to turn around— I always would eventually.

I remember one evening, a few years ago, when I tried a different kind of escape: running. Not for fitness or health, but as a way to get away from my own thoughts. I went out for a run in the rain—not because I wanted to, but because I couldn't stand being inside my own head anymore. I did cross

country throughout middle school, so I didn't think it was a bad idea. The world felt heavy that night—I didn't want to think about it. I don't even remember why. After about ten minutes, I felt like I was suffocating and stopped. Not only because I was horrendously out of shape, but also because I realized whatever I was trying to take my mind off of was still there.

“Eventually, I walked back home in the rain.”

My problems would be right where I left them. The music would fade, the world would press in again, and the same weight I'd been avoiding would come crashing back down. I'd feel that familiar ache in my chest, that nagging sense that something was

missing or broken, and I'd realize that the calm I'd felt during those few hours was nothing but a mask. The problem with using something like music to escape is that it doesn't change anything. It doesn't fix the mess inside or the chaos around me. It's just a temporary high—like a rush that fades too quickly, leaving behind a void darker than the original dark. The real challenge, of course, is confronting what you've been running from. I'd never realized that escaping reality was harmful in the first place. So, I'd keep running—keep playing those songs—until eventually, the pull of reality would stop me in my tracks again, and I'd have to face the truth that I hadn't really gone anywhere at all.

Choosing to escape is harmful. It is harmful to one's self, and even can be harmful to others if you're spineless enough. By escaping you are consciously making the choice to turn away from the wound rather than treating it.

My escape was music, like the homeless man trying to burn himself away—whether from pain or just because he was on drugs, it didn't matter. We are both running from something somehow, but none of that fixes anything. You can't burn it, you can't drown it out, you can't die away from it. The difficulty and turmoil of confronting one's problems is infinitely less painful than being plagued by them looming over you for longer than necessary.

“There's no perfect escape.”

No matter how many songs I played or how far I ran, the problems were always waiting for me. You can try to outrun your own mind, but it doesn't work like that. Eventually, you face the truth: escaping only delays the inevitable. It's as futile as trying to outrun your own shadow. You can try to numb it out with distractions, bury it beneath music, or even light yourself on fire, but the pain doesn't disappear. It just festers beneath the surface, lurking, until you're forced to face it. Again, escaping only delays the inevitable. Sooner or later, you have to confront what you've been running from, whether you're ready or not. There's no shortcut, no quick fix, no song or rush that can change that. And that's the hardest part—to realize that there's no way out except through. In the end, there's no real escape, only what's left when the noise fades.

Do You Realize?

Photography by Payton Hanna



Continued on next page ►

Red Lights

Photography by Katarina Verdick

Dream

Poetry by Brooklyn Smith

I succumb to my exhausting thoughts of sleep
My eyes shut and I'm reposed
Except I awake almost instantly
Uncanny but I ignore
To the wafting smell of something so inviting
I get up feeling a little odd
Yet I ignore
I walk into the kitchen only to find
My mother baking her eminent cobbler
Seems pretty normal but
I haven't seen her in two years
Not since she left me selfishly
For that empty bottle of pills in the bathroom
I ignore
She doesn't see me right away
I keep walking until she hears my footsteps
She turns around
Walking towards me
Arms wide indicating a hug
Except when I reach for her she vanishes
I can't ignore
I look around she's nowhere to be seen
That's when I realize
My mother isn't here
I'm not actually in my kitchen
Or awake
Or asleep



*Earned 3rd place in the President's Challenge Award division
of the Illinois State Poetry Society Student Poetry Contest*



Lullaby

Memoir by Joseph Oswalt

Christmas day I received the most unforgettable gift I have ever gotten, given to me and the rest of my family, by my oldest brother Matthew and his girlfriend Julie. We were all given a small, square box that was about three inches wide by three inches long, and each was tied with a red silk ribbon. My brother had asked us all to open them at the same time, so I sat eager with anticipation as my family members each got their boxes. After they had all been handed out, we waited very impatiently for my brother to pull out his phone to record. Finally, after a countdown, we opened them. Inside was a thick layer of green wrapping paper that nearly filled the box, and sitting neatly on top was a clear, hexagonal ornament, only

slightly smaller than the width of the opening.

It stated: *"Baby Oswalt, Coming Soon, 2022"*. The room was suddenly filled with emotion, a great contrast to the quiet suspensefulness only a few moments before. My mother and sisters were crying, my other brother and my father were congratulating the couple, my pitbull was barking at the commotion, and I just sat there and smiled. The next few months all I could think about was how excited I was that I was going to be an uncle.

In April the next year, I was picked up from school by my parents when they informed me that the baby was a boy, and that the couple had decided on the name Oliver. I was ecstatic. Oliver was a name I had always been fond of and it was the name of the confirmation saint I chose in junior high, Oliver Plunkett. I had chosen Plunkett as my confirmation name as he was a morally strong and faith filled person during a time of persecution of Catholics in Ireland in the 17th century. He was appointed Archbishop, and continued to defend Irish Catholics' rights until he was eventually martyred. He was willing to sacrifice what he had for his

morals, and that is what drew me to choose him as a confirmation saint. I chose the patron saint of reconciliation and peace, two seemingly boring aspects of life for an eighth grader. I stuck out because my classmates chose saints who were the patrons of sports such as Saint Sebastian or patrons of pets like Saint Francis of Assisi, and I chose the patron of peace and reconciliation. However, I knew there was a reason he stuck out to me and I chose him, despite the giggles from my classmates at his last name. My brother unknowingly matched his child's name to my confirmation saint, and I knew at that moment that was why I chose that saint back in eighth grade. I knew that Oliver Oswalt was going to be just as great as Oliver Plunkett.

Later that April, I was told more news about my nephew. He was diagnosed with Beckwith-Wiedemann Syndrome, an

overgrowth disorder that can cause hypoglycemia and an accelerated growth. However, to the relief of my entire family, a majority of people diagnosed with this have a normal life expectancy. The pregnancy should go well, except it may be a little more uncomfortable. The next day I was in the car with my parents again, when my brother texted a message that said Julie was taken to the hospital, and that he would let us know more as soon as possible. Sitting in the backseat, I could not tell what my parents were whispering to each other, I could only hear the panicked tone of their conversation. I sat in nervous silence. My mother's phone vibrated again, and to our dismay, Julie had gone into labor. My mom looked like she was trying to hold back tears as she said, "she was only six months pregnant." My stomach dropped.

Continued on next page ►



Peace

Photography by Nathaniel Burger

I hadn't realized that this was happening so prematurely. I sat in anxious silence. As soon as we got home, my parents went to the hospital to visit. They were there when the child was born. I stayed home and just laid in bed for what seemed like forever, until I eventually fell asleep.

The next morning I awoke to a picture of my nephew sent by my brother. He was a large baby, and I could see his reddish purple skin behind the oxygen mask that was covering his face.

“He was the most beautiful baby I had ever seen.”

After I got out of bed, my parents told me that the birth went well, but that the baby needed the oxygen mask to breathe. They told me they would let me know if they heard more, but I had to go to school. I reluctantly agreed and tried to focus on getting ready. I showered, dressed in my school uniform, barely touched my breakfast, brushed my teeth, and then rode to school with my sister, Emma. We sat in an impenetrable silence the whole ride there. I sat through

my four classes dreading the thought of being called out of class to be told that my nephew was in danger, but nothing came. I went to baseball practice, and afterwards I was picked up again by my parents. I got into the red Chevy Traverse and was again in the backseat, behind my mom who was in the passenger seat. We sat in silence until my mother's phone vibrated; it was a text from Matthew. I waited for her to tell us what it said, but she didn't. I knew something was wrong. Finally, she turned to my dad and said, “Oliver didn't make it, his lungs couldn't develop as fast as his body.” We sat in a desolate silence the rest of the ride home, only interrupted by my mom's soft crying.

After I got home, I got in the shower and stayed until the warm water got cold, and then I sat in the steamy bathroom until it all dissipated. Eventually, I managed to muster up the strength to get into bed.

“The whole night I stared at my ceiling, unable to sleep, only able to take solace knowing that now I have two Saint Olivers looking over me.”

Black Mirror

Photography by Nathaniel Burger



Fleeting memories of him

Poetry by Matthew Murray

A brown briefcase steals me from reality,
and tells me that what I want is unreachable.
I beg for that briefcase to give me a safe haven
but I know it is in vain.

I will always have to deal with
his bad stents and tired eyes.
But I can dream for a better time.

Dream of being in his arms.
His breath before it was tainted.
His mind before it was lost.
His passion before it was extinguished.
Dreaming of the role model I needed.
But I cannot change his mind.

I'll try to fix myself
and work harder for his praise.
But when even that fails,
all I can do is dream.
Dream of being the child that makes him happy.



*Earned Honorable Mention in the President's Challenge
Award division of the Illinois State Poetry Society Student*

Mrs. Dillon

Memoir by Zion Fiorini

She was never still, habitually adjusting her ivory white gloves and pearl necklace to an angle of her liking. Her pale hair hung beneath bright colorful bows, and in her lap was always a silk handkerchief of the same color. I admired her decadence and freshness, which was most unusual for her age. Her face, pale and striking, suggested she hailed from noble blood. Her wit and sense of humor were no less distinguished. She told jokes at the expense of herself but never anyone else. She had an accomplished

life but never spoke of it. She preferred to share stories about her children and grandchildren, whose looks she seemingly never grew tired of. Her two children couldn't have been more different, although she adored them just the same. The eldest, her daughter Marianne, was a career woman. She went to law school and became a lawyer for a large firm in Chicago. Her son, Jacob, on the other hand, was an aspiring writer who lived modestly in the very same town he was raised. At some point, life had thrown Jacob off course or perhaps on course, because the summer after I saw him working behind the counter of a local theater, I never saw him again. I never saw her either, until years later, when I found myself in her home on a job with my cousin.

The Maestro's Recompense

Poetry by Ryan Welty

A symphony stirs violently, crescendoing,
In motion towards what?
Some claim knowingness, but who truly can?
The woodwinds roar, the brass in perfect harmony

Violins quiver in anticipation,
luminous whispers, foretelling ecstasy
But the instruments, works of human hands,
Render discordant sounds that seem unforgivable

When suddenly every human ear is relieved
The unconquerable cacophony is trounced

Clarion trumpets in septenary harmony,
boldly declare the end of the age of despondency
Every sonata, aria, concerto, opera: redeemed
A new crescendo unfurls, claps of glorious thunder

Aural bliss, beauty unsurpassed by any
Every intonation is a sound of perfection
Humbling every musician to lowliness
Yet lowliness never felt so worthy

All nations quake at the sound
Earnest repentance, in vain, in vain,
for they did not surrender
their dissonance will ring no longer

The maestro has returned. Maestoso.

It was a one-story house with a living room, kitchen, and a hallway in the center with two more rooms. The house was neat and polished and looked as though the owner was in the process of moving. All but one piece of furniture was wrapped in plastic. A large wooden shelf containing mostly books. As I waited for my cousin, I scanned the titles, noting the collected works of various poets and authors I had heard of. I picked one up, thumbing through its pages, before quickly putting it back in its original place. The top shelf had nothing but two framed images. One, an image of a baby dressed as a bunny rabbit. The other, a wedding photo. The image depicted a woman, about thirty or so and a man of a similar age

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Symphony

Photography by
Katarina Verdick



in what seemed to be the happiest moment of their lives. The couple ran side by side in a pasture, trees streaming by in a blurred frenzy. Wildflowers dotted the landscape, their petals morphing into streaks of color. The colors produced a tender feeling in my chest. As I reached for the picture to get a better look, my cousin came bursting through the door, his arms full of equipment. He had a mean look on his face and I tried not to look him in the eye. Sweat darkened the edges of his work shirt.

"Why are you just standing there?" he barked. Just then, a woman shouted something unintelligible from the furthest room in the hallway. I then followed my cousin, whose steps became increasingly frantic as the woman continued to shout. I stood a few feet from the door. My cousin shot me a quick glance before nudging it open, his face tight with irritation. This was his least favorite part of the job.

"Who are you?" the woman said coldly.

"Where is Lana?"

"I don't know a Lana. I'm sorry," he responded. "My name's Andrew. I'm a plumber and we're here to fix your water heater. You called," my cousin explained.

"Oh, alright then," she muttered. "Tell Lana she'd better bring my medicine."

He hesitated before answering. "Alright," he said. He had told me countless times that it was better to go along with whatever they said. He shook his head, as though silently chastising himself for the unfortunate lie, before turning away from the woman and heading toward the utility closet. I followed closely as his Timberland boots shook the wooden floor of the hallway. The closet was cramped and lit by the faint glow of a single overhead bulb. The process was fairly simple; after cutting off the water supply, I headed to the electrical panel where I flipped the breaker. The sound of the water running through the pipes had stopped, replaced by the soft hiss of the gas burner. We then made sure everything was disconnected. "Help me lift it," my cousin said. Together we gripped the large, heavy tank, taking it from the utility closet to a dumpster nearby. The new heater was waiting for us in his truck. We slid the tank across the truck's bed, guiding it down and onto the soft grass. We hoisted the heater up, adjusting for balance as we began to shuffle toward the house. The heater's bulk obscured the front door, which was only slightly bigger. After some effort, we managed to position it just right. In the house, we set the heater down and inched it forward, stopping in front of the

closet.

"While I fit this, check on her, will you?" I hesitated, watching him crouch again to tighten the fittings. "Fine." I glanced down the hallway. Her door was open a few inches. A dim red light from inside the room spilled out and into the hallway in a narrow beam. I peeked inside, scanning the room.

*"I drew a deep breath,
inhaling through my nose.
But I could smell nothing
at all."*

Surrounding the woman's bed were grocery bags full of old newspapers, plush fabrics, and picture frames. Over the furniture hung beautiful and intricate dresses. [One dress in particular caught my eye. Its shimmering white, silk fabric and floral embroidery was too familiar. It was the dress Mrs. Dillon had worn during our very last bingo game together. It must have been May. She had been seated before anyone else, as always, by the window. I remembered how the dress caught the sunlight so beautifully. She, too, was radiant.

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I remembered how her young laugh leapt so eagerly out of her. I remembered watching her intently as if this was the last time I would see her.] I would be wrong. And I had entered this house before realizing why. It was her. I had imagined seeing her outside of our monthly bingo games countless times. Every version of her was as sharp and vibrant as ever. I poked my head through the door to look at the woman. She was as still as a wax statue. She sat in utter silence, staring at the ceiling with a look of confusion.

Her gentle, limp hands sat like a drowning dog's on the edge of her bedsheet, which concealed all but her shoulders and head. The rose-red glow from a lamp atop her bedside loomed above her. Her eyes were almost shut and it looked as if she was just beginning to doze off. I was unable to look away. A tight knot formed in my chest.

*"Seeing her like this
was uniquely
horrifying."*

As though my sorrow darkened the room, she disappeared into a void, shutting the lamp off with a soft click. I lingered by the door for far too long, tears welling up in my eyes. I felt no shame in crying in that moment. I could have spoken to her and thanked her for all she did for me, but to interrupt her now was to disturb a peace she had already found. I clutched the doorframe, trying my hardest not to imagine her like that. All I could do now was forget.

Shriek

Photography by Nathaniel Burger



Backroads

Poetry by Daniel Welty

Rambling down the road
Cruising down the well-trodden highway
Checking the mirror, make sure nobody's watching
Just keep on truckin'
Nobody stoppin'

forward, forward, forward

Why do I go like this?
Why can't I see like this?
Where am I even going?

Slow down, pull over
An abandoned side road.
Now the picture's so clear
Clearer than I'd ever known.
What are all those people doing back there?

Pull back on the highway
Slam the brakes and turn around
Iron foot on the accelerator
Because now I know where I belong.
Now I'm driving.

Homeward. Homeward. Homeward.

Shill

Photography by Payton Hanna





The Truth

Poetry by Zion Fiorini

The truth is important,
And slips through the cracks.
My truth, a rabid dog,
the world on its back.

I should kill what I have created,
because I am me—
and it is that.
My truth, a mirror,
irreparably cracked.

I will watch it fade,
a fleeting, borrowed task.

Responsibility's Prisoner

Poetry by Joseph Oswalt

The sweet relief of sleep
is all I can desire.
The weight of promises to keep;
my fatigue is almost satire.

The mountain of responsibility is steep;
climbing will only further tire.
The rewards I never seem to reap
I've built a kingdom of altruism, an empire.

I cannot run away
from these chains I cannot see.
Never to be in the light of day
Never to be truly free.

Duty creates this prison cell
and honor binds me here too well

Touch of Morning

Poetry by Cody McBride

The sun shows brightly through the window
Rays attack on through yet feel so right
No cloth can stop the orange orange glow.

The birds begin their morning cry
Get out of bed, no inner fight
Warm air hits my face look up to the sky.

The distant roars of mowers, crisp smell of grass
My mind is awake, escaped from the night
Look out the window, reflection off the glass.

The breeze blows gently and brushes my skin
Fluffy clouds sit above so softly and light
Every breath every second calms my within.

The sun blocked, darkness seems a warning
Only for a second, and everything returns bright
There is no way this can be a Monday morning.

Monday Mourning

Poetry by Frances Haley

Tonight my home is itchingly calm
this feeling can't be eased by the smoothest balm
As the warmth fades away so too my spirit
thoughts of tomorrow, my heart refuses to hear it

To the days of my rest, shall I rest no more
rest in peace my serenity the isolation has bore
To sadness I cling as I welcome acceptance
knowing my time will repeat in seven days distance

Before I realized I had been down I was stirring
the divide between duty and freedom was blurring
I lie a beat to watch my alarm issue its sound
then with my aching heart I meet the busy ground

A Different Planet

Poetry by Renner Rosengren

Do not express the in,
For it will expose,
Isolated and shrewd locked
away, alienated from whom?

With a vicious bite and keen claws,
These pests demand and control,
Denial is what swallows me,
Looking for a finger to point,

An endless pit,
Packed with distractions till nullified,
Feeling misunderstood,
Whom am I alienated from?

Autumn Sun

Photography by Kataraina Verdick



.....

Solitude

*Photography by
Jacob Newberry*



Newsflash!

Photography by Nathaniel Burger



Of Late Nights and Sweet, Sweet Mornings

Poetry by Elise Vanderbleek

Energy, yet with little sleep
To wake with the first alarm
To hold your head up, light and sweet,
Yet dense with thoughts of warmth and charm

Buoyancy, in spite of fear
To affix yourself to a hopeless cause
One most despised by others near
Yet endeared to one lucky in love

Such is a Monday morning,
for a pretty girl
Whose glasses are rosy
and heart awlirl

To wake up with a promise,
Of happy days ahead
And dream in polyphonous
Until her dreams are dead

Parasite

Poetry by Ashton Miner

Public perception is a parasite
Host selection is unbiased
I cannot do this tonight

Continuously, the critics will highlight
The expectation to be the highest
Public perception is a parasite

Only one could fulfil, that is Christ
An ocean of satisfaction is the driest
I can't do this tonight

Eating at me like frostbite
My breaking point is the highest
Public perception is a parasite

I must do something, this isn't right
Hate that I can no longer digest
I can't do this tonight

Out of strength, out of might
Of my vices, it's the largest
Public perception is a parasite
I can't do this tonight

The Toy Tractor

Narrative by Ryan Partington

It was just a toy tractor, small and plastic, with the iconic green paint and yellow decals of the John Deere brand. I did not know it then, but that little machine would change my personal outlook on the way that I saw the world. As a young kid, I did not like being told what to do. I was far from organized, as most kids at that age. In my room, I had a clutter of Legos in the corner, books laying under my bookshelf and bed, and my top dresser full of action figures and bobble heads that I threw recklessly when I was done playing. My mother would always have to remind me to reorganize, but it was punishing. I was always frustrated when I had to tear apart and put away the imaginary world or creation that I created when my mom insisted.

The first time I really noticed the tractor's clean detail and the way its tiny wheels moved effortlessly across the floor, I was strangely mesmerized. It was compact, sure, but it was perfect. I loved the way it

looked. The tough tread on the wheels would rumble across the ground as I bumped the tractor back and forth. Something about its balance, its exactness, and the way it drove drew me in. I found myself parking these tractors every night in rows of four, one by one. I would back them in their spot, disconnect the trailers or implements, and evenly space each part and machine exactly apart from each other. With careful observation, I started taking in the small details of each component. I noted the steering system, the gas tanks, the exhaust pipes, and tires. I could imagine it all working as if on a real life tractor. I consistently used the hay bailer as I would bail plastic hay, but I quickly always became frustrated because it did not actually pick up the grass and make a real bail of hay. I would drag it back and forth across the carpet of my childhood bedroom fantasizing about its capabilities, only to be disappointed by its lack of ingenuity. I set my baler aside as I yearned that its tech would

be more advanced than a piece of plastic in my imaginary world, but rather have the mechanics of a real John Deere hay bailer. My favorite tractor was where I could actually control the steering wheel with my pointer finger and thumb. This feature would make me feel as if I were more mature than I were, as if someone had hired me to actually plow a field. I think this obsession started with watching my dad back up trailers every day. I would sit and watch closely, dreaming of the day that I could do the same. When I played with my toy tractor, I would practice backing up trailers just like him, but this time, I made a rule for myself: I had to steer the tractor using only the tiny steering wheel. I refused to pick it up or move it by hand because, in the real world, you cannot just lift a tractor and redirect it. To me, that would have been cheating. Mesmerized by the basic engineering of the steering system, I would guide it all over the place, wishing one day I would be able to witness the life-sized engineering that it simply represented.

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Over time, I started to do this with not only my other toys, but my actions as well. In small ways, over an extended period of time, I began taking into account the way I would go about my everyday doings. Just like I carefully observed my toy tractor, I noted the way things were arranged in my room. I wanted the same balance and order of my tractors. I started organizing my room and belongings more. The more order I brought to my surroundings, the more I craved it. Everything had a place and a job. It was becoming a positive habit that became the routine of my everyday life. I enjoyed having a spot or drawer for everything of mine, making everything neat and proper. Just like my tractor had specific components and functions, I had to compartmentalize specific areas for the items in my room.

In school, my once messy backpack turned into a perfectly organized space, with color-coded folders and a pencil case that never ran out of supplies.

“Every minor detail of my day is meticulously thought out and rehearsed in accordance with my organized state of mind.”

I have found this need for order, balance, and exactness in many of the most unexpected situations of my life. It is no longer just about keeping my workplace spotless, but it is about keeping my locker or dresser or arranging my thoughts in a well-maintained

fashion too. I carefully observe my surroundings. I have become meticulous about the exact word choice in conversations, as if planting crops row by row. Even in relationships or the way that I present myself, I seek balance and structure. I aim to stay on task or I will feel disoriented. I insist that every interaction is “just right,” as if it were a puzzle with perfect alignment. My thought process is organized, which I may not appear to be, but I remain reserved throughout my day and allow myself to remain in thought.

To this day, when I see a tractor on the side of the road, I will find myself stopping to take in the sight of it for its profound significance, its abundance of engineering, and its precise structure. This always leads me back to those small tractors that I studied, which changed the way that I see the world and myself.

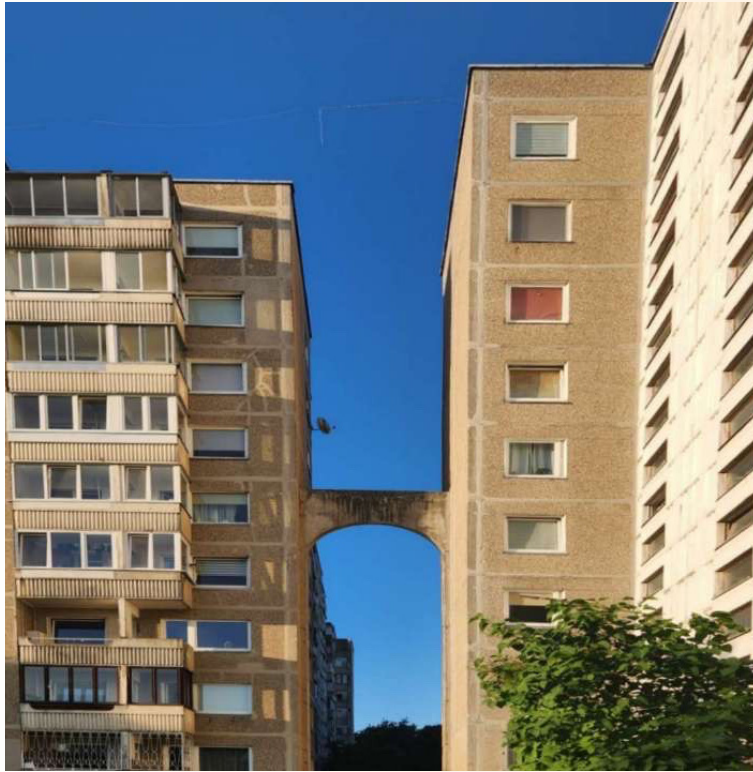
“My friends would joke about my obsession with neatness, but for me, it was not about being clean, but rather of being in control.”

I always liked making sure that everything has its own place, perhaps making it impossible to misplace anything. Even when my teachers would task me with different types of assignments to complete, I would always ensure the timeliness and tidiness of each one, never allowing a due date to get past me. I compartmentalized my life by creating specific times for the different tasks I had to complete. Additionally, when picking up my guitar and beginning to strum it, I will know in an instant if a string is even a fraction off-note.

Desperado

Mixed Medium Piece by Katarina Verdick





Whose Shoes?

Photography Collage by Kazimieras Grazulis





Man

Pencil Sketch by Zion Fiorini

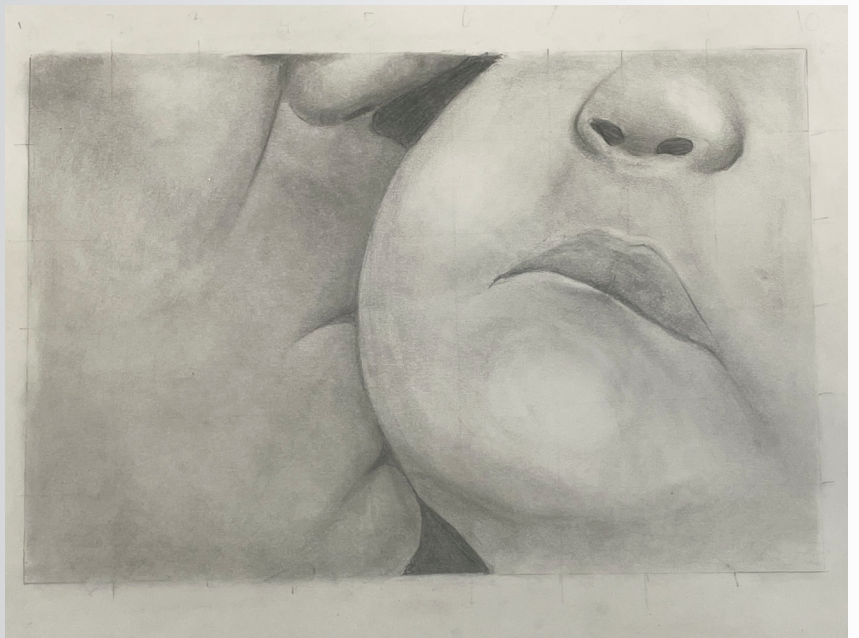
City Song

Poetry by Nathaniel Burger

The sign flickers—
 electric vermilion pooling
 in rain-slick asphalt cracks.
 A diner's fluorescents carve
 shadows from the waitress' smoke,
 her coffee-stained breath hanging
 like a stray chord.
 Across the street, a parking meter
 blinks its red eye, counting minutes no one owns.
 The night unspools its film reel:
 taxis blur into amber streaks,
 gutter steam rising like static hymns.
 Somewhere a jukebox chokes
 on quarters, skipping the same bruised refrain.
 Dawn licks the rooftops now—
 pale, tentative—
 as streetlights dim to ghosts.
 We lean into the hum:
 subway grates shudder,
 concrete throbs its low, eternal yes.
 The city's pulse thrums
 in the hollow of your throat—
 a bassline swallowed by light.

Kiss

Drawing by Katarina Verdick



The Muse

Poetry by Olivia Mulderink

The Muse is an enigma
A devastating truth, or a beautiful lie
A witch of which I'm not sure
She tells me things I don't want to hear

The Muse is a hypocrite
Twisting and blooming her thoughts like vines
Brewing like a storm,
Yet she's oblivious when she's needed

She takes me places I've never been
Places that don't exist. Not yet
She inspires change, but doesn't enact it
She says that is my purpose

She almost looks real, at a glance
But when I stare,
I realize that she is disgusting
Something isn't quite right

Her voice is shrill and penetrating
Her eyes almost empty
Her ideas perverting what is real,
A glorious distortion of the person I strive to be.

My Muse is my warden
She keeps me behind bars, silenced
She insists that I'm no good
But she swears everything else is worse

My Muse is enlightening
And her honesty is brutal
As she whispers to me,
"Everything is wrong, You should say something"

When I try to speak, her artificial assistance is gone
And the truth becomes evident
All is told by my muse, my warden, my pride
I know I won't be heard

Baseball in Puerto Rico

Photography by Nathaniel Burger



Bike Ride

Narrative by Kazimieras Grazulis

I remember the day my father came home battered and bruised and blued. He told me that when he was heading home from work, he eased into a stop and his bike slipped on the gravel, throwing him from his seat over his handlebars.

“He stood up, sat down on his bike, and kept going. Only his skin bled.”

My father is a very principled man. Another person might prefer the term stubborn. When he and I and my mother and brothers lived in Sterling, he would ride his bike to his job every day he worked without fail, from Northland Hills near the Emerald Hill Golf Course to CGH Medical Center deep in Sterling. My dad loves riding his bike, I assume. Or he does it anyway. Everything is logical when it comes to my father; his mind was woven clinically. It is for this reason that he cares so deeply about health, his own and his children's, attempting to instill a similar affinity towards biking and, in general, fitness, in myself and my much-older brothers. A younger me made certain he failed.

Every few weekends, my father would insist on a family bike ride, and every few weekends I would dread it. Seven-year-old me hated everything that wasn't lying around and playing video games. This ran in opposition with my father; I ran in opposition with my father. If anything, I'd inherited my father's stubbornness, and stubbornness begot stubbornness. I made sure he was aware of my discontent when we cyclically biked to the Moonlight Bay Marina, ensuring he felt the activity as tedious and grueling as I did. I fostered an aversion—no—a hatred of everything biking. Much to my momentary content, the family bike rides wilted after my oldest brother, 17 at the time, graduated from high school and moved to Iowa to begin his bachelor's degree. The bike rides weren't the only thing that began to wilt, however, and my dad moved out a few years later. Ironically, I began to ride my bike recreationally after my father moved away. I eased

myself into the thought of biking alongside him, and, when visiting his apartment biweekly in Coralville, Iowa, bike rides went from bearable to enjoyable. There was one particular path we always went on, starting not far from the complex and going through the woods and over a marsh, ending at its beginning. It distressed me, the thought of never riding that path again, the moment my father told me he was moving to Memphis, Tennessee.

My father moved to Germantown, Tennessee (a suburb of Memphis), sometime during the global pandemic; I couldn't tell you the year, let alone the month. He'd reconnected with and would later marry another recently divorced Lithuanian physician and citizen of Germantown, Ramune, with whom he had gone to college. They and Ramune's twin sons and daughter moved into an enormous white house, nearby an only milquetoast biking trail, if you could even call it that. Therefore, if intentions were sure, we'd outsource biking trails, driving miles out to more elaborate, lengthier paths.

My oldest brother, now living in Providence, Rhode Island, visits separately my mother and father annually. It was during one of said visits, maybe four years ago, that my father, Ramune, my brother, and I went biking. After about a half-hour drive, my father, Ramune, my brother, and I released our bikes from their car-bound prison and began our bike ride. It was nice; the route wasn't particularly interesting, only a straight, concrete walkway elevated from the grass, dipping down into the soil at its sides. The trail continued straight for miles, so the four of us continued straight for miles. Ramune lagged behind, my father only slightly ahead of her, as me and my brother shot ahead. When we got too far, the two of us would slow down, or stop and rest, to allow our father and Ramune to catch up. After an hour of biking like this, the four of us reached the end of the trail, the path only continuing into a busy street. My brother, an adult in his own right, continued ahead as the rest of us turned around. My father, Ramune, and I began to bike back to the car, intent on rendezvousing with my brother later at whatever final destination he'd find himself. My father

and I biked side-by-side, ahead of Ramune. I thoroughly enjoyed the fewer-than-preferred moments together. I unconsciously began to hug the side of the walkway, where the concrete met the soil. Before I knew it, my front tire skidded diagonally across the junction, and the bike stopped in place, throwing me from my seat over my handlebars. I blocked my face with my right arm as the ground came smashing into me. I skinned a good subsection of my elbow, along with, to a lighter extent, both of my knees. I've never been a “tough” person; I'm not tough now, and I wasn't tough then. I wanted to sit there and cry—to fold in on myself and phase out of existence. In less than a moment, my father stopped, got off his bike and hurried to me. He attempted to comfort me and assessed the damage. He told me that I had to get back on my bike and I had to keep moving. I had to ignore my injuries and keep biking, and they would fade.

“I reluctantly stood up, sat down on my bike, and kept going.”

I biked as fast as I could. Twenty minutes turned into ten, and ten turned into one. We finally arrived at the car, and I sat down in the backseat. I closed my eyes and exhaled. A half hour to home.

It was not a half hour to home. The distance was, in fact, a half hour, but my father and I were only half of the arriving party. We waited what felt like hours for Ramune to return, and when she finally did, we still were awaiting my brother. He was miles ahead of us, so we had to contact him, find him, and pick him up. We spent probably forty minutes driving around aimlessly before finally grabbing him, but it felt twice that as I sat in the backseat, dry baby wipes clinging to my elbow and knees. An hour later, it was finally a half hour to home.

Chicago Cityscape

*Photography by
Katarina Verdick*



Epitaph

by Ella Ford

I spent my life chasing heights
each jump was a conversation with gravity
a defiance of limits, a moment, suspended between earth
and the sky
jumping wasn't just a sport.
It was a place. I felt free.
Where my body and soul aligned and I felt completely
myself.
I trained with everything I had.
Year after year.
pushing past fear of pain and doubt.
The bar kept rising.
I kept following. I knew falling was not an option.
Now I am grounded
The flight is over but my journey is not.
I leave behind a legacy of fight.
Not measured by height or medals
Not even accomplishments
But whom I was aside from the spikes
Besides the uniform.
And beside the glory.
Jumping was no longer what i did but who I was

Chattanooga

Photography by Nathaniel Burger



Repeated Words and Unchanging Radios

Poetry by Ryan Partington

I'm sitting at the table, my hunger at a
glance,
My siblings all sat there, while they gave me a
chance.
I tell them about my day, and I tell them how it
goes,
But I am fed repeated words and unchanging
radios.

I travel from place to place, in hopes of nights
away,
People still follow me, though I remain astray.
The same faces are everywhere, this much I
know,
There, repeated words and unchanging
radios.

My desk sits away as I think about the day,
I imagine a life where I'm far, far away.
I reminisce on the future of amazing
scenarios,
Yet now is repeated words and unchanging
radios.

Of this sense,
a viewing of despair.
It was only then,
But now it's everywhere.



*Earned 1st Place Award in the Poems that Sing division of
the Illinois State Poetry Society Student Poetry Contest*

The Timeless Bell

Photography by Zhyler Hansen



Epitaph

by June Drinkall

Daughter of two warm hearted judges
Sister of three mountains of gold
Alone forever till she grows old.
But her faith never ends even in the dark
Because she knows the truth of the ark
For I know the plans I have for you,
Declares the Lord,
Calling unto me even when I'm bored
plans to prosper you, and not
to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.
The words just run through me as swiftly as suture
Jeremiah 29:11
Oh how I can't wait for heaven.....



Jeremiah 29:11

*"For I know the plans I have for you,
declares the Lord, plans to prosper you
and not to harm you, plans to give you
hope and a future."*

Epitaph

by Joel Rhodes

I was lost in the world where I lived
Calculations of what was to become of me
And questions of how fruitful the harvest of my
trade would be
Pulled in every direction that I never wanted to go
Family wants what's best for you,
And friends tell you what that is
While the public preys on your downfall
You must stay on task
Success is not something wished into existence
But rather forged in the fire of determination and
devotion
The path driven by others is now regrown and unfit
for bare feet,
Those who are thrown down them by their forefa-
thers,
Are cut by thorns and wrangled by weeds for the
rest of their life
So I say to you
Tend to your chores
And do not shirk your shift
And when this is done
You hold your destiny in your hands
If the advantage is not taken
You grow stagnant and sodden
Forced into a mold made by public grade
Lying in the only bed anxiety can sleep in

Forgotten

Narrative by Madelynn Taylor-Steffens

I exit the car with my grandparents and
mother, feeling the piercing December
air skimming across my skin. Rubbing my
hands up and down my arms, trying to create
sparks of warmth, my Grandma Sue lightly
laughs and reminds me to enjoy it. She puts
grocery store bags from "The Jewel" in my
hands and starts walking in the house with
dinner she made, my grandpa and mother
right behind her holding sides for the meal. I
stop to look at the house for a quick second.
It truly is a beautiful house. It's similar to the
houses around it, much like other houses in
the Chicago suburbs, however I can't deny
the happiness I used to feel when I entered
the home. I walk through the garage, staring
at the miscellaneous Christmas decorations,
misplaced tools, and bikes that look like
they haven't been touched in years. It jerks
my heart knowing they will probably never
be touched again. I enter Papa's house.
It's gut-wrenching how "Papa and Grand-
ma Mary's house" is slowly becoming just
"Papa's House." Entering, I feel the heat
surrounding my body. I already miss the cold.
I step foot in the kitchen, placing the bags
down on the island. I suddenly feel my body
swerve around fast and strong. My grandma's
sisters greet me by taking turns hugging me
tight and kissing my cheek. I take note of
their outfits. Of course they are dressed in
their highest pairs of stilettos and stunning
outfits just for Sunday dinner. My love for
them is infinite. After I greet my favorite
aunts, I walk into the living room. I see Papa
sitting in his recliner. Slowly, he stands up
and gives me a hug worth a thousand words.
The hug is so loving and meaningful. I didn't
notice the strength of his hugs till now. He
hugs me for him and his beautiful wife. After
the hug, I walk towards Grandma Mary. My
heart starts to beat fast. I wonder if this
could be the day. It is something I dread
every time I see her. However, I greet her just
like I would any other time. Her smile could
light up the night sky. It was the same smile
she would give when pulling me aside to
sneak me candy in the beloved camper. The
same smile that pairs with her wink when
she snuck me a dollar in the laundry room.

Continued on next page ►

The smile she tried to hide when Papa told a scary story around the campfire that made my little brother cry. I can almost hear her say "Bud, what is the matter with you?" The memory warms my heart as I take my place on the couch right next to Grandma. She starts talking to me like any other day. Like nothing has changed. Except, everything has changed. It was slow at first but now it's changing at an alarming rate. It's heart-breaking. How could a woman who loved so many people could just forget as if it were nothing. How can a woman who was so wise and determined just disappear? Now, I can't understand what she is saying at all. It's not because she's mumbling or speaking in another language. It's because her sentences do not make sense. I can make out something with a gun and milk but that's it. All I can do is nod and smile. That's it. I feel so helpless. This talk continues on for a while. Luckily, my grandparents, aunts, and cousins are engaging in a group conversation in the living room so I don't completely lose my mind with nonsense in my ear. Her small hands rub my hand. They slowly go up my arm and eventually around my head. I hear the words "You're so beautiful" come off her tongue. I could feel the immediate upward turn in my lips. For that second, I was talking to my Grandma Mary again, her internal self. The woman she truly is. The woman who made Sherbet floats when all of us kids got scared over Papa's ghost story. The woman who picked me up and gave powerful rapid kisses on my cheeks. The woman who never failed to tell me how much she loved me. Next thing I know my aunt pulls up a chair next to the couch, and asks the question I have been dreading for the past year. I hear her say "Mom, do you know who this is?" as my aunt puts a hand on my knee. I can't do this. I look at Grandma

Mary with a painted smile and waited for a response. She is saying something I don't understand again. I beg internally for her to go back to her regular self again just once more. Just one more time. That time does not come. My aunt then tells her how I am her great granddaughter with a proud smile on her face. She quickly joins the group conversation and I am forced to follow her, trying to shake the stinging sensation in my eyes. I feel my head turn in the grasp of my Grandma Mary's hand. She looks me in the eye and her voice clear and serious she says to me "Is she telling the truth?" "Are you mine?" I nod rapidly, with a genuine smile. Her blinding smile shines again. I start to feel the uncomfortable heat in the room and I excuse myself to the bathroom. I have never felt so conflicted. My hands grip the counter and I stare at myself in the mirror. She forgot me. Memories worth more than any gift are no longer shared. Only I have them. I have to carry them by myself. I start to think of my mother. She is losing the woman who always took her side, one of her biggest supporters. I then think of Grandma Sue and my aunts. I can only imagine what they are experiencing. Their own mother disappearing in front

of their eyes. Thousands of memories are slowly being forgotten. I exit the bathroom and continue Sunday dinner with my family. I stand outside of the house embracing the cool air, just as we are about to leave the dinner. Grandma Sue comes outside with me. I can tell the heat was bothering her, as it always does. However, she also knows just by the look on my face that I am affected by what took place a few hours prior. She has come to terms with her mother's dementia, in a way. Her energetic and convincing but truthful attitude always amazes me. In a relaxed and determined manner she tells me "I know that is not my mom in there... this is God's way of slowly letting her go, so when she does pass away, it won't hurt as bad." She then goes into detail as to what her mother had taught her and how those actions keep her true, how the memories we have with her will always be there.

"She is just like her mother."

I felt the realization wash over me just as I heard my grandma. We keep her true presence alive. The words, "Let's go back into the sauna to say good-bye" hit my ear. Her comedic timing is incredible.

A Reality I Once Knew

Poetry by Alexandra Setchell

I dream of a reality I once knew
Soft, loving voices I once heard
Bringing back a time of comfort and warmth
Their names roll off my tongue with ease
Only to hear a pin drop.

I dream of a reality I once knew
The scene of innocent children unburdened
Skipping in a kingdom of purity and memories
Where the swings soar beyond imagination

But now the voices linger in memory
The playground is silent
The laughter and purity swallowed with it
I dream of a reality I once knew

Immigrant Experience Essays

My Great Grandfather

Narrative by Daniel Welty

My great-grandfather, Frank Cosentino, was an enterprising and hard-working man who never gave up on his business, or his family. His humble work and kind heartedness left a lasting impression on everyone who knew him. He always gave what he had, and the humble, unassuming, powerful, generous man he was shone through. He gave his best to his community through his store. His life is an example to give all you have to support your family and to improve people's lives in the process. These stories have been told by my grandma and will be remembered and cherished. They will be passed on to my kids too, because Frank was a beautifully selfless man who everyone can learn from. He stayed consistent in doing the jobs of his store, and never wavered from the task at hand.

As a boy, his family moved from Italy to seek a better life. His father, Enrico, came over on boat first, to get the "fortuna" (fortune) going. Frank was just as enterprising as his dad, but very focused and did what needed to be done.

After the family had come over to the U.S., they moved to Chicago because they knew there were Italians from San Lucido where their family had come from living there. Frank grew up and started a job at the Chicago Steel Mill. He had a side job as a fruit peddler and started his love for selling goods and food. Everyday he would pass a small store in the Southside that he dreamed about owning one day. After long, hard days and years of work at the steel mill he looked into the store more. went back to work. A year later he was ready to purchase, and so the store was up and running.

The store was my great grandfather's pride and joy, and was the way he supported his family; so it was what he put everything into. The business quickly grew as people bought the goods from a man they loved, and so he moved to an open lot just next door that he had had his eyes on for a while. They built a store just next door, on the corner of 93rd and Chapel Street. It was a similar build to the old store, just bigger, with a living space in the back and apartment upstairs. He worked 14 hours, six days a week, and a half day on Sunday when he rested and visited his family.

The store was just blocks away from the school my grandma went to, and the kids of that school walked over during lunch and bought a soda and a sandwich from the deli. Just because the kids were short on money, Frank said, that was no reason for them to be hungry. With a big heart, he was quick to give to those kids that weren't as fortunate. The homeless on the streets he fed the extra bread and meats, and he didn't let them go hungry. They all loved him very much, and he always gave them a little something extra on their way out. He loved the people in his neighborhood, especially the big spenders, always giving them a little something extra. He was very enterprising in that regard. There was consistently a rowdy group of boys outside the store at night which my great-grandmother strongly disapproved of, but Frank loved even them too, and said they were his free security guards.

Every week he would go to the Eastside with my Grandma and pick out the best meats and fish for the store in huge markets full of fish and meats. He would pick the meat out and throw it over his shoulder and throw it in the station wagon. My grandma also always got to go to the bakery with him and pick the best donuts to sell in the store. The Pepsi, Coke, and 7up guys would come by every week to drop off the glass bottles of soda that Frank sold in the store to the kids in the school. My grandma liked the Pepsi man the best, who always left her a Pepsi with a quarter sitting on the doorstep.

Frank's influence and work ethic is an inspiration to me and my family every day. His hard work, focus, and dedication never failed in his business and family. My great uncles Min, Don, and Silvio took over the store and kept his legacy going for a short time after he passed from a stroke on April 4, 1968, at the young age of 50. His funeral procession went right by the store and the boys that he had helped (his security guards) were right outside standing in salute. The local newspaper wrote an article about him and the impact he made on each and every person he met and helped in the store. The store in some sense was the gathering place of the family, his brothers always helping out with the deli, his daughter, my grandma, running the candy counter, and everyone played a role in the dream. He seems to say, "Keep working and be successful. Play the part you were meant to play and don't be someone you're not."

Manuel Rebello

Narrative By Ashton Miner

It is really easy to let destiny guide your decisions and reside within the same little box your whole life, but that is boring, and it doesn't create the most opportunity for success and growth. For me, this was especially apparent with my decision to switch high schools. However, for my great great grandfather, Manuel Rebello, this was leaving his home country to come work in America at the age of 12. Without ever meeting Manuel, I know we both shared this mindset.

When I think about the maternal side of my family, the first authoritative figure is always my great grandfather because he was righteous, service oriented, and built a strong financial foundation for his family to fall back on when he could no longer guide them. However, I knew that he was part of one of the first generations of Rebellos to reside in the United States. His father, Manuel Rebello, was actually the first Rebello to immigrate into the country. Manuel was born in 1885, and left his family in the Azores Islands in Portugal at the age of 11 to come to Rhode Island to become a whaler. This plan actually set up his family for the future to come quite well because he knew that the whaling industry was beginning to thrive. He knew the types of sacrifices he would have

Continued on next page ►

to make when he left his family in Portugal, but he knew that it was the best option for his own future family.

Manuel not only built a solid foundation for his family in Providence, but instilled in them his own philosophies on life. He had three sons: Everett, Eugene, and Joseph, and three daughters: Elizabeth, Barbara, and Dorothy. My great grandfather, Eugene, and one of his brothers were greatly influenced by Manuel and even followed a similar direction in life, leaving their family in Providence to move to Illinois in pursuit of work. Everett moved to Illinois before him because he was older, and Eugene moved once he knew he would be able to stay with Everett, who had gotten married and lived in Rock Island, Illinois. However, Everett died in 2001, forcing Eugene to display a great amount of independence and determination, and leaving him to find his own path in life.

Eugene went on to serve in the United States army and find work for the Corp of Engineers on the Rock Island Arsenal Island. He had three sons: Jaime, Jayson, and Joseph. Unfortunately, my mother's father, Jaime, did not live long enough to raise her. This meant that Eugene, accompanied by her Uncle Joe, would be her primary father figures throughout high school. Eugene was a family centered person who not only cared

for all of the family that he had in Illinois, but often travelled back to visit his family in Providence, something that he learned from his father, Manuel, who didn't have the ability to do so. He really owned the role of my mother's guardian and even did what he could to scare my father while they were dating into treating her well. He did this by telling him a story about him beating someone with a lead pipe while he was younger. This eventually led our family to believe that he was either involved in the local mafia or led it, but this wasn't just because of his authoritative, grim, and protective personality. He was an intelligent man who created a small fortune for himself, and created a complex system between several banks and accounts so that it would not be easy to recover or steal if anything ever happened to him, and we believe this was because he was worried something bad could have happened to him while he was young. The system was so complex that our family is still struggling to figure out how to fully recover it almost six years after his death in 2019.

The great impact created by Manuel and Eugene in my family have helped me realize that you have to take control of your destiny in order to create the most opportunities and build your own success. My two older brothers have both already exhibited these characteristics in their own lives, only being 20 and 21. Jaime, my oldest brother named after my maternal grandfather, is graduating college this year in the Milwaukee area, where he plans to settle. Michael, the middle son named after my paternal grandfather, is currently serving a year deployment in Alaska, where he plans to apply to serve full-time after his deployment ends. Personally, I am unsure where I will end up settling, but my great great grandfather, great grandfather, and brothers have all inspired me to want something more, creating my own path and writing my own, unique story. They have not only done so themselves, but inspired me to truly live by the Rebello name, which translates to rebel. However, they have made it clear that this rebellious nature did not involve breaking rules and defying authority, but breaking away from destiny and writing your own rules in life.

VOICE

Poetry by Brooks Knudson

As I stand on the stage
Light blinding my face, sweat in my eyes
The sound of a booming voice introducing a
 song
My heart beating vigorously
A melody of impending doom
Suddenly the lights dim and my eyes are
 blinded
A realization comes to mind
"It's time to do what you do best"
I leave my body as I start to sing
Floating on heavenly feelings that my voice
 brings
The notes are implanted in my soul
I sing as if it took all my heart
The best feeling is the ending
I feel as if I have failed
The crowd booms
And roses fly onto the stage
I succeeded against all my doubts
A tear falls from the eye
Of a man like me
Who if he could not express his voice
He would die.

Trust Fall

Narrative by Olivia Clark

Today we are perfecting a performance for an upcoming basketball game. Always the same formula as before. Starting off, a dance that half of the team hasn't learned (and won't make an effort to), then a toe touch, finishing off with a pyramid. How original. No matter how overused it was, I was exhausted every time. Many don't realize how much energy it takes to dance full out for a minute straight, not have a second to catch your breath, and then proceed to toss girls up in the air and hold them there for another dissipating minute, all while smiling.

In this particular pyramid, I was in the middle. We had originally planned to attempt an arabesque stunt, an unassisted skill that requires me to balance on one foot while in the hands of two girls while seven feet in the air. Once we rotated our position from the front to the right, my job was to extend my left leg outward and upward directly behind me. All this while my toe was pointed, chest was up, core engaged, and once again...smiling. To our astonishment we could not successfully execute this stunt.

We settled on a liberty followed by a heel stretch. An assistant stunt that was performed almost every game. A stunt that shouldn't have been a problem, not to girls that have been doing it since our freshman year, nearly three years. Before adding a new skill to a performance, we always try it on a mat. The mat was always used when trying new skills in order to prevent injury. For the most part, it serves its purpose. I have fallen victim to its rough blue surface more times than I can count throughout my three years of cheering. From getting dropped on my head to falling from seven feet in the air straight on my back, the mat has always caught me.

We practiced the new pyramid three times and hit it flawlessly every time. After each successful attempt, a singular voice called out "Down 1,2" and in unison each stunt came back down to the blue mat. Confidently, we took to the gym floor expecting to do as we did while practicing on the mat.

Simultaneously, we rehearsed cheering our way onto the court, lining ourselves up with a line, mark or aside another cheerleader. Each girl waited for the music to start with her hands by her sides and a smile on her face, anticipating the first beat signaling for us to start counting.

As the music went on, I danced, squeezing every muscle I had. Nothing would embarrass me more than having a coach, parent, or onlooker in the crowd watch me perform without my looking clean and sharp. I care too much to let something that simple slip past me. Finishing the last few counts of the dance, my muscles burning, it was time for a jump. Remember: keep your chest up and toes pointed. With some of the last strength I had, I hurled my body in the air attempting to get my toes past my shoulders while coming back down with a delicate weightless landing.

Two thirds of the performance was done. We all rush to the middle of the court, trying to catch our breath with the little time we have. After checking our positioning, each girl is lifted in the air.

Flyers squeezing their legs, bases locking out their arms, backspots lifting up. The other two flyers and I connect arms while trying not to drag each other down. All that I have to do now is the heel stretch. Disconnecting from one of the girls, I center my gravity into my stunt as they lower me to their chest, preparing to pop me back up. My core engaged, legs straight, and toe pointed, I successfully finish the routine with a smile on my face and foot in hand. Cheerleaders would call it a "hit," what every girl hopes for when walking onto the court. "Down 1,2" a girl calls out. My foot searches for the ground behind me. It's not there yet. When will they touch? Snap. My foot finally found the floor. I fell back in agonizing pain, not sure if it was my bone or a tendon that snapped, or if anyone else heard it. The side of my face is now touching the cold floor while hot tears stream down my cheek. I feel everyone's eyes burning into my curled up trembling body. I felt their eyes. I couldn't see them. All I saw was black. How could this happen? Nobody caught me. Even the mat failed me. It wasn't there... no one was there when I needed them the most.

Waterlily

Photography by Olivia Mulderink



COLOPHON

The title text in this issue of *The Salesian* is set in Arizonia, a typeface designed by Robert Leuschke. The headings are set in Oswald, a typeface designed by Vernon Adams. The body text is set in Abel, a typeface designed by MADType. This issue was printed by Raynor Manufacturing in collaboration with Brittney Shannon Dixon, Illinois on matte, 24lb. 8.5" x 11" stapled paper. The cover was printed on matte, 100lb. paper.

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COLOR INDEX

	RGB	CMYK
#21391a	33, 57, 26	42%, 0%, 54%, 78%

	RGB	CMYK
#ebbc61	235, 188, 97	0%, 20%, 59%, 8%

	RGB	CMYK
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	RGB	CMYK
#e11e26	225, 30, 38	0%, 87%, 83%, 12%

	RGB	CMYK
#e11e26	225, 30, 38	0%, 87%, 83%, 12%

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On The Cover of this Issue

The Salesian is grateful for the permission of The Oblates of St. Francis de Sales to illustrate the 2025 cover with their official icon. This cover and corresponding seal at the close of the magazine are the official icons of The Oblates.

Oblate Provincial, the Very Reverend Joseph Newman, OSFS, of Toledo, Ohio, granted The Salesian this privilege for which we are most honored. An explanation of the images are as follows:

V+J, Vive Jesu or Live Jesus, is the Oblate motto.

It was the guiding principle in the life of Saint Francis de Sales.

The Latin sentence at the bottom of the shield is another motto of the Oblates:

Tenui Nec Dimittam. Translated:

"I have taken hold and I will not let go." It is taken from the Song of Songs, St. Francis de Sales's favorite book of the Bible.

The right branch is an olive branch. It is the symbol of peace which, for the

Oblates, is achieved through gentleness and an inner strength which comes only

*"I have taken hold and
I will not let go."*



NEWMAN
Central Catholic