

CANTICLES

2025



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SEASONScape

VOLUME 51
THE CATHOLIC HIGH
SCHOOL OF BALTIMORE
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THEME: SEASONScape

“Seasonscape” invites readers on a journey through the shifting moods, colors, and textures of the year. As the pages turn, the magazine unfolds like a calendar of creativity, each section devoted to a season and each piece a reflection of nature’s rhythm and the inner landscapes it inspires. From the tranquility of spring to the vibrancy of summer, the introspection of fall to the stillness of winter, this collection captures the emotional responses that arise as time passes. Through poetry, prose, and visual art, “Seasonscape” reveals how art, like the seasons, is ever-changing, yet always rooted in something universal.

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Canticles Contest



The Canticles Contest was held in the month of February. Students could enter into six different categories. The contest was judged by Mrs. Pattie Lazzelle, '66, a Retired teacher; Mrs. Concetta Lovejoy, a retired TCHS teacher and Mrs. Stephanie Leddy, a retired TCHS teacher and Canticles Adviser.

THE WINNERS

MELANIE ESCHLEMAN'28	SHORT POEM
TONI TAN'25	LONG POEM
JAEDYN PACKETT'25	POETRY COLLECTION
AUDREY SCHMITT'26	ESSAY
LILY RAY UEBEL'28	ART
SOFIA BIGGS'26	PHOTOGRAPHY



FALL

Self Reflection Checklist

1. Remind yourself: you are who you are because you have chosen to be incredibly and intentionally individual.
2. Your eyelashes curl in a certain way when you shut your eyes. You shut them. You open them. You shut them again and leave them closed.
3. You imagine what it would be like if you were someone else.
4. You question: what if you closed your eyes to imagine what a beautiful thing it is to be you? Or if you noticed that peculiar yet delightful curl of your eyelashes when you shut your eyes?
5. Images flash through your mind in the darkness of your lidded eyes; those same eyes that you imagine in the color of someone else's. Your body in the shape of another. You wish to be someone you are not without realizing the breathtaking sentiment of who you are.
6. Remind yourself: we have all wished to be another. We have all seen our bodies in the form and shape of someone else's. But beauty is not one size fits all, growth is not close minded, and healing is not linear.
7. You wonder: if only you could open your eyes to see the uncurl of your eyelashes in their peculiar, yet delightful way.
8. You question: Individuality is intentional—how could our universe create beings so starkly different from one another by mere coincidence?
9. You discover: you are capable of opening your eyes, and understanding how stunning the concept of a “sense of self” is, and how incredible it can be.

“A Life Worth Lived”



Though I rejected the life that would have been
A lineal life tattooed to my skin
I continue to wonder if it's still the key
To a life lived comfortably

Yet a full eight hours of sleep
A sense of happiness I would like to keep
Stabilizes me in my choice
Clearing my mind of the constant voice

Yet the subtle pressure breathing down my neck
The questions from my loved ones annoying me as heck
My desire to please others lets their comments get to my head
As I envision the jobs and income that may be worth all the dread

Yet the question that concerns me
Is whether this life can be exchanged with glee
Postponed memories of travel, concerts, movie nights
And the beauty of a youthful life intensifying this fight

Yet how can i abandon and betray
That rocky and exhausting pathway?
Easily I suppose
If only a part of my culture and identity didn't oppose

What if I walked the wrong path?
Having to then succumb under Time's wrath
Wasting the efforts it took to get there
Leaving both instability and unhappiness with merely my own hands to bear

The Other Side of the Cross

Rejected and alone, heartbroken and in pain,
All the day I cry, "Where are you my God?"

Cancer has attacked my body and my spirit.
To my God I cry "Don't abandon me."

From the other side of the cross,
You cannot see Jesus.
But you're never closer
To him when you are there.
You do not suffer alone.
Jesus is there with you.

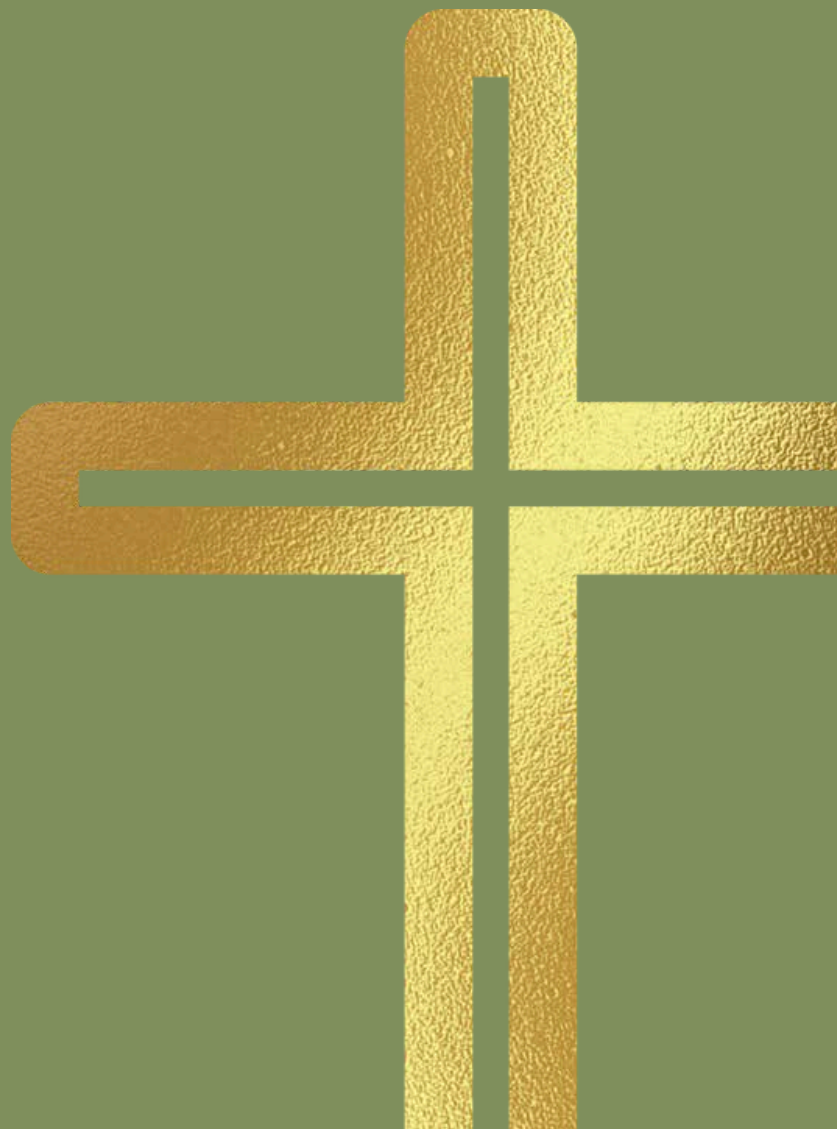
My strength is almost gone, I know the end is near.
"Jesus please remember me, in your kingdom, Lord."

From the other side of the cross,
You cannot see Jesus.
But you're never closer
To him when you are there.
You do not suffer alone.
Jesus is there with you.

Jesus knows our suffering,
Because he suffered too.
Give your pain to Jesus
He is there with you.

From the other side of the cross,
You cannot see Jesus.
But you're never closer
To him when you are there.
You do not suffer alone.
Jesus is there with you.

• GREG MALANOWSKI



Reverie

Hundreds of books, cradled with care.
Their spines have been worn in
by years of love from the readers
who carefully scanned pages,
sounding out each syllable
and leaving their soft fingerprints on covers.
Each page spilling with secrets
that are defined by individuals' interpretations of them.
A relationship more intimate than star-crossed lovers;
the letters on pages
and the eyes that breathe them in like oxygen.

- JAEDYN PACKETT '25



Dear Laika

Dear Laika

With no home to rest your paws

Oh Patron of One-Way Trips

Will you humor us one last time
and fetch us the stars ?

- KELSEY ROOK '26



"All Men Are Created Equal": A Hamilton Parody Poem

"Look around, look around, at how lucky we are to be alive right now

Look around, look around at how lucky we are to be alive right now"

History is happening, always happening, and we just happen to be

In the greatest country in the world.

"We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal'

And when I meet Thomas Jefferson

I'm a' compel him to include women in the sequel

Work!"

That all men are created equal

Work

What about the women who work?

What about the women slaving away all day just to earn pay and make their husbands stay?

What about the housewives who have lives not living lives, their dreams astray?

What about the women who can't vote, who can't quote, forget what they wrote; take their voices away?

"Remember the ladies," says Abigail Adams

When women barely have an atom; voices: we don't have them

Let me at 'em!

The old white men who control them, smother their voices when

They try to speak out, can't even shout, so full of doubt

What about the voices, women with no choices
Have to put their lives in danger for a stranger not even out of
the manger, a game changer

That all men are created equal
Work

What about the Black men, the whip-cracked men, the break-
their-back men, working-hard-but-getting-all-the-flack men?
What about the men and women working in the field without
a deal and no yield, with no shield?

What about the Japanese, the Chinese with no please who
can't squeeze by, treated like fleas?

What about the Mexicans, the immigrants with not a cent,
across the border when they're called criminals?

What about the gays in a daze, the LGBTQIAs without a say
and no rights for days?

What about the trans who never had a chance, the country
full of bans, can't take a stance?

"I've been reading Common Sense by Thomas Paine"
Jefferson, John Locke: they all say the same
They tell us every man should have a say
No man above the rest unless they want it that way

“Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness’
We fought for these ideals; we shouldn’t settle for less”
Then why do we settle for second-best, second guess?
Our founding documents stress the need to address inequality
and unfairness
I protest! We need to assess, need to attest
I hope to witness equality and redress

“Raise a glass to freedom”
But are we really free?
Freedom of speech, freedom to preach, freedom to teach, freedom
to reach, beseech, impeach
But what about those without a voice, without a choice, in need of
outreach?

“Something they can never take away
No matter what they tell you”
Can’t take away, but won’t give anyway,
Won’t give a voice, give a choice to those with no say

“Rise up!
When you’re living on your knees, you rise up
Tell your brother that he’s gotta rise up
Tell your sister that she's gotta rise up

When are these colonies gonna rise up?”

It’s our time to rise, to grow brave and wise
To look prejudice in the eyes and make up our minds
Are we just going to stand by? Or are we going to ask why
Injustice is in our lives? It’s time to say goodbye

It's time to take a stand, to claim our promised land
Written about in our Declaration; it's time for a new nation!
One where we are all truly free and where EVERYONE has
equality
Not just two or three; in this new ideology, we need a new
philosophy
And we are the ones who recreate policy

“This is not a moment, it's the movement
Where all the hungriest brothers with
Something to prove went?”
This right here is the main event
We have to make change before time is spent, or else there will
be no one to represent
We have to make known our discontent in order to start our
ascent
And it starts right now; this is how
We learn to reinvent

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I’m past patiently waitin’. I’m passionately
Smashin’ every expectation
Every action’s an act of creation!
I’m laughin’ in the face of casualties and sorrow
For the first time, I’m thinkin’ past tomorrow!”
I want to be the start, I want to play my part
In the beginning of our new nation as we learn to restart

I’ll be the change I want to see, leave my own legacy
Just like the Founders did when they wanted to be free
“So there will be a revolution in this century
Enter me!”
A rebellion of words for all to see, of pages and letters and
diplomacy

I will write until I see this fight into the light
And it will be fought, to the end or not without a second
thought

“I am not throwing away my shot!”



• NADIA CYMON WATKINS '28

Junior Ring Liturgy Speech

Family, Friends, Faculty, and Administration; Welcome to our Ring Liturgy and Ceremony.

Class of 2026, take notice, we are an amazing group of young women. Now, I ask you to look around, recognize the remarkable people who surround you, each of you contributes to the incredible uniqueness of our class. Today is the day we receive our class rings unifying our class and marking our place as upper class-women. In anticipation of receiving our rings, let us take a moment to reflect, recognizing our many accomplishments; those defining moments that make our class extraordinary.

We are a driven group of young women. We set goals and pursue them fiercely. Competitive atmospheres, like field day, pep-rallies and powder puff, highlight our strong class spirit. When we come together, we are unstoppable, ready to go above and beyond for our class.

Academically, our class supports each other through every challenge. From study sessions to last-minute reviews before school or during lunch, and in late-night texts - we show up for each other. Many people in our class earned gold and silver honors and excel in AP and honors classes.

Our dedication and drive does not end in the classroom. Our class prides itself in being involved with everything Catholic High has to offer. Whether we are filling the choir riser and orchestra chairs, winning medals in forensics competitions, dancing our hearts out in the studio or on stage, building robots for VEX Robotics, starring in the school play, working behind the scenes in the booth, or scoring the winning point of a game, the class of 2026 plays a key role and is determined to make an impact. Our involvement in clubs and extracurriculars is outstanding. This shows our drive to succeed and do our best, an impressive trait of our class.

We are not only involved in clubs and extracurriculars at school, but we are leaders in them: the co-captains of the VEX robotics team, the founder of Baking for a Cause, presidents of Write Connection, Students Against Human Trafficking and Beautiful Me clubs. As well as, the band president, choir Vice President and the theater stage manager are all members of the Class of 2026. These leaders open up opportunities to the school, form community and serve others. The leadership in our class is a true testament to our dedication and commitment to Catholic High.

Our athletic achievements are equally as impressive. More than half of our class participates in athletics. And we have made countless contributions to Cub Athletics. We have been a part of many championship teams, Cross country, Field Hockey, Soccer, JV volleyball (twice) and JV basketball. That is six championships in seven seasons of sports. The athletes in this room played a part in three teams moving up conferences. These are no small feats and they would not be possible without the dedication of the class of 2026.

All of this aside, the most important thing about the Class of 2026, is our sisterhood. As a community we are there for each other, whether it comes to schoolwork, personal challenges, daily life, or tying each others strings on string day. We lift each other up, ensuring NO one is left behind. I could not be prouder and happier to be a part of the class of 2026, a loving and supportive sisterhood.

Each time you look down at your ring, remember where we came from, how much we have grown, and all the hard things we have and will accomplished. Let this ring serve as a reminder that you are capable of anything you set your mind to, Inevitably you will face challenges in your future.

When you face these challenges, remember the ring on your right hand and all the things you have experienced in high school that once seemed impossible to overcome.

As before we know it, our time here at Catholic High will be done. In just 15 short months, we will join the ranks of Catholic High alumnae. We will hang up the blazer most of us spent two years yearning for, but our rings will stay on our fingers, serving as a permanent sign that we are and always will be daughters of Catholic High.

Remember, so much is still unwritten, and you have the strength, through God, to write it. Catholic High class of 2026, I am so proud of you and I can't wait to see what we accomplish over the next two years and beyond.

- GABBY GRAY '26



WINTER



Broken Toy

You once held me close through cold, dark nights,
Tucked me in, safe and tight.

My dress once pink, now torn and frayed,
My polka dots are polka spots, my seams ink-stained.

My white gloves dulled from time's embrace,
My threadbare bow vanished without a trace.

Loose threads dangle, my ears bent low.
Yet still, I wait though time moves low.

Scarred and torn, worn through and thin,
Yet still, I sit where you begin—

Upon your bed where shadows creep,
A fleeting thought before you sleep.

I cannot cry, I cannot plead,
I cannot move—so I wait and see.

Thread by thread, I fade away,
A doll misplaced, a castaway.

No more bows, no dress sewn tight,
Just thinning seams in dimming light.

Yet when the others fade from view,
I wait—I wonder—what else to do?

For I am nothing without you.

Gone are the days you held me tight,
Whispered secrets through the night.

Gone are the days we used to play,
Now I just wish that you would stay.

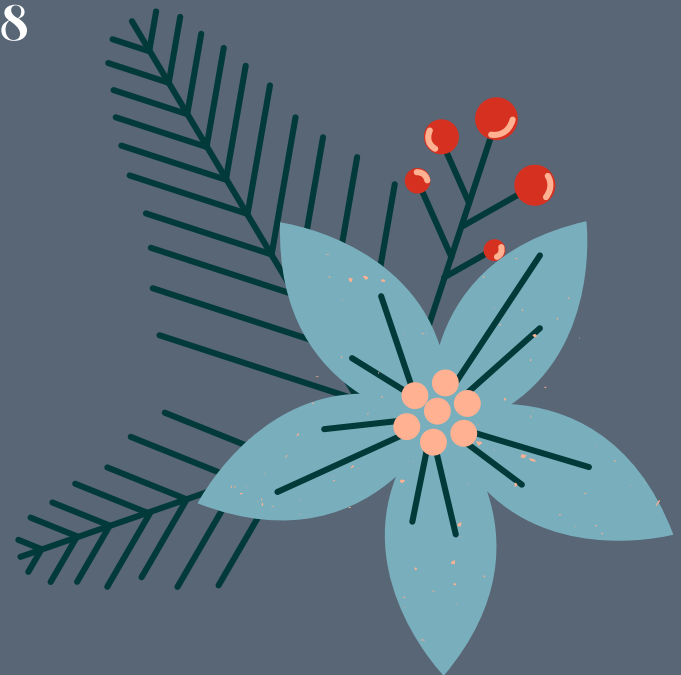
Gone is the love you gave before.
Now I'm but a shell—nothing more.



LOVE LIES

It's almost your birthday
I remember staring up into your eyes
I was too nervous to move
We giggle quietly under the covers
Our kiss tasting like fresh mint and lipgloss
The scent of your cologne
It still lingers on my blanket
I hope you know I still think of you
I still look at your house every time we drive by
I hope you know I miss you

- MARLEIGH SCHROEDER '28



Burnt out

Molded and sculpted, no longer gilded,
Once a radiant beacon, now weathered and tilted.
Wax walls melted into rivers below,
A melted stub where fire once glowed.

its radiance—
More of bronze—never silver, and no longer gold.
Its dimmed flame, no longer big and bold.

Fed by careless breaths that never ceased,
Lit too soon, yet never released.
Test by test, flame by flame,
Smoldering endlessly in a losing game.

They gathered close, drawn to the light,
Stealing my warmth deep into the night.
Ivory taper weeping luminous tears,
A wick unraveling within the years.

No pause, no peace—just burn, just give,
Until there was nothing left to live.
The fire, once fierce, once a work of art,
Now drowned in shadows, barely a spark.

And when the flame was snuffed at last,
Only charred ruins lingered past.

In the cold, where embers die,
I whispered once: Was it worth the sky?

For even burnt, the candle knew,
In the end, nothing was new.

• CHRISTABELLE FBIGBO '28

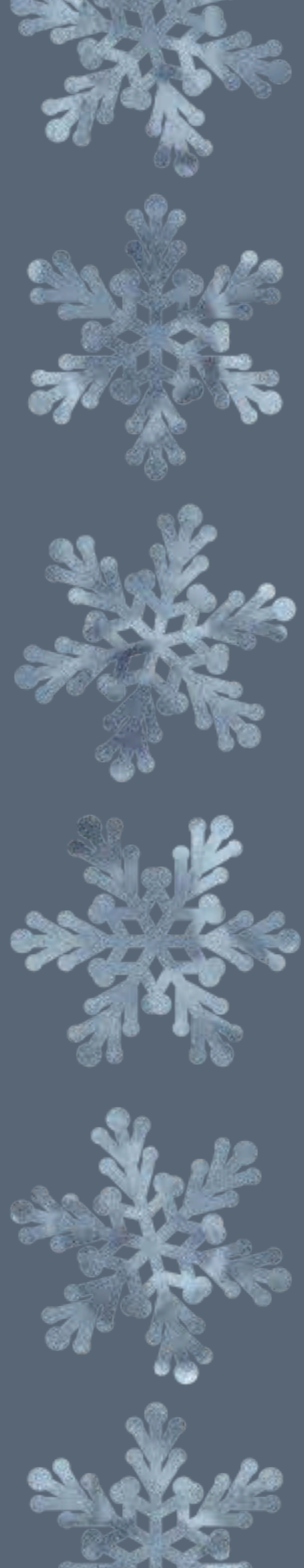


Luminescence

The light ahead of me shines so brightly I have to cover my eyes with my hand. It feels cliché—the notion of protecting myself from the inevitable despite the mutual understanding that we all must face this light eventually.

As I look ahead, I see a young woman standing close to the light. Very close. She's so young, and I start to question why she is already there. Doesn't she have so much more walking to do, like the rest of us? I look closer, and my heart falls to my feet, feelings spilling all over the brightly lit path as I watch the young woman turn around and walk away from the light, leaving an even younger boy walking towards it. How is this fair? He shouldn't have to go so soon. He barely got to experience this walk; this beautiful, scenic, meaningful and wondrous walk of life. Because, this whole time, his mother carried him. And before she could bear him a name, it was written six feet above him.

• JAEDYN PACKETT '25



Misplaced

I once lost something that I once knew
something I had and then I carelessly threw

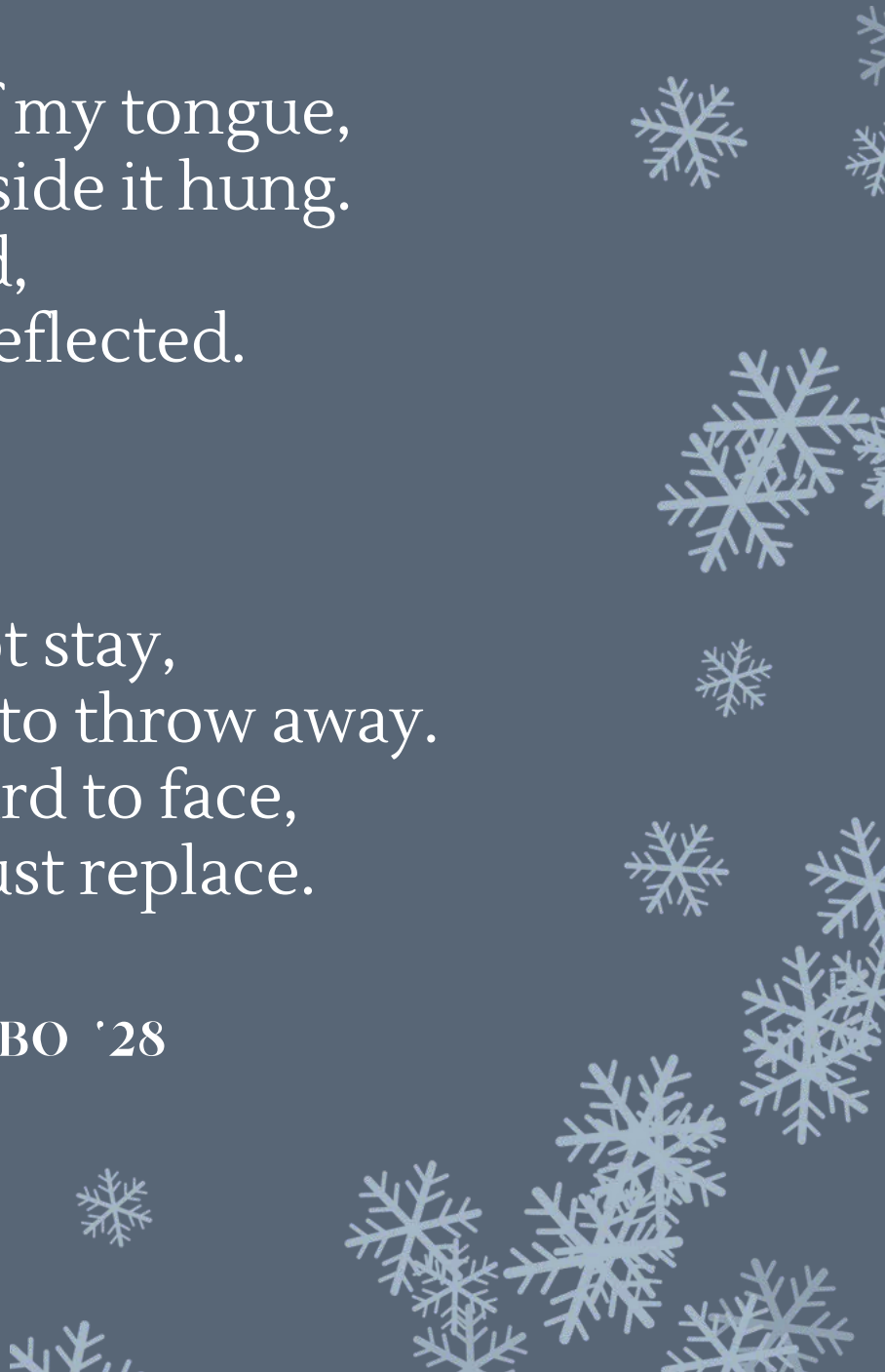
It left a bitter taste in my mouth,
I'd feel it but it always went south.

It no longer rolled off my tongue,
At home it lived--outside it hung.
It twisted and bended,
Yet in their hands it reflected.

And still I let it.

In the end it could not stay,
So I thought it better to throw away.
Explaining felt too hard to face,
And it was easier to just replace.

• CHRISTABELLE FBIGBO '28



The Tiniest of Miracles

Everything smells like plastic.

And the water tastes smokey, and the
air feels thin.

It snows south of the Mason Dixon
line, and diseases seem everywhere,
as if

we haven't made medical marvels in
the last hundred years.

The TVs scream.

And our phones scream,
and is everyone a genius or stupid
as a rock?

What world are we leaving,
for our kids,
for my kids? What have we done?



My phone rings,
and it's my grandmother who is 97.
She asks how I am, and instead of
saying that often lately I want to
scream,
or cry,
I think that she herself is a marvel.
And that the fact that she is still able
to ask me this small question
could be considered miraculous.
And my son wants to talk to her, and
now my daughter too, and they
say "Love you, Pudge."
She says,
"I love you both too,
very much."
And for right now, that's enough for
me.

• JULIA THOMPSON '07

To Kill a Dream



To kill a dream
does not take much.
I know this because—
such is such.
I once killed one myself with my very own hands,
and I'll tell you how if you give me the chance

Some lock their dreams and snuff the light,
forget them, lost to endless nights.
Others trade them, switch and stray,
their dreams will clash, yet fade away.

But mine, I stored it deep inside,
thinking it safe, but dreams don't hide.
I sank it far within my chest,
yet still, it tore me as it would not rest.

So I let go—but not for long,
I turned around where dreams belong.
Back to the start, back to the past,
but nothing golden ever lasts.

Some pass their dreams to someone new,
hoping they'll bloom in different hues.
Yet hands that take may not hold tight,
and forcing dreams just isn't right.

But why, you ask, did mine not stay?
Why did I throw my dream away?
Because the world had made it very clear—
This dream had no place living here.

They scoffed, they laughed, they shook their heads,
said this dream was all but dead.
So before they had their chance to kill,
I crushed it first—against my will.



The Coal Miner

How pitiful it is to wake—

In the world of nothing;

The sunrise brings upon scraped kneecaps.

Blackened lungs—

And a meager supper;

Reaped from the coal mines.

I do not wake up on a mountain of gold—

A meadow of wealth;

And a forest of comfort.

My eyes open and I am on a mountain of hunger—

A meadow of thirst;

And a forest of impending disease.

The instant I am stirred—

The musty air curses my nose;

Pollution seeping into my wrinkled pores.

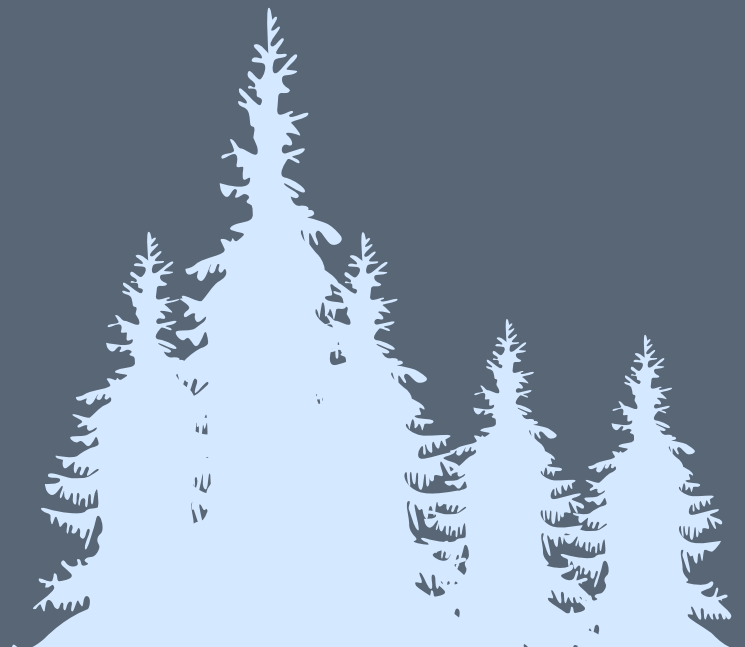
For a moment I stare out the window—

Pushing aside cloth curtains blocking the ray of sun;

Look at such beauty.

Above the skyline of poverty—
Is a metropolis carved of platinum;
I pretend to wake in such a utopia.
Breakfast of bread and fruit jam—
And clothing embroidered with emerald shards;
Face of gold.
The beautiful primary tower silhouettes—
In the clouded brown sky;
In the clouded brown sky.
An existence of feasts, steel, and riches—
Besides lawmaking, bed of feathers and silk;
Smell of luxury.

• Melanie Eschleman '28

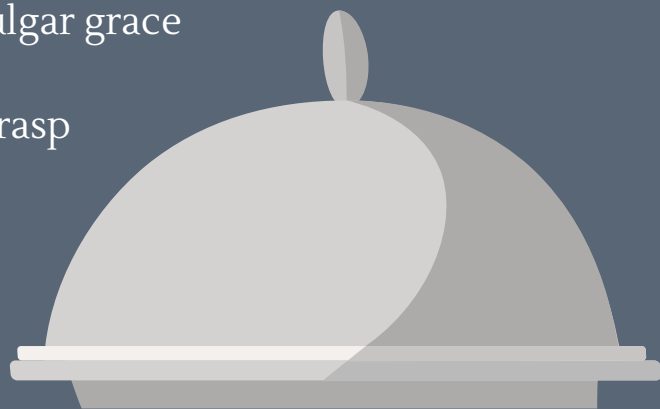


Carmine

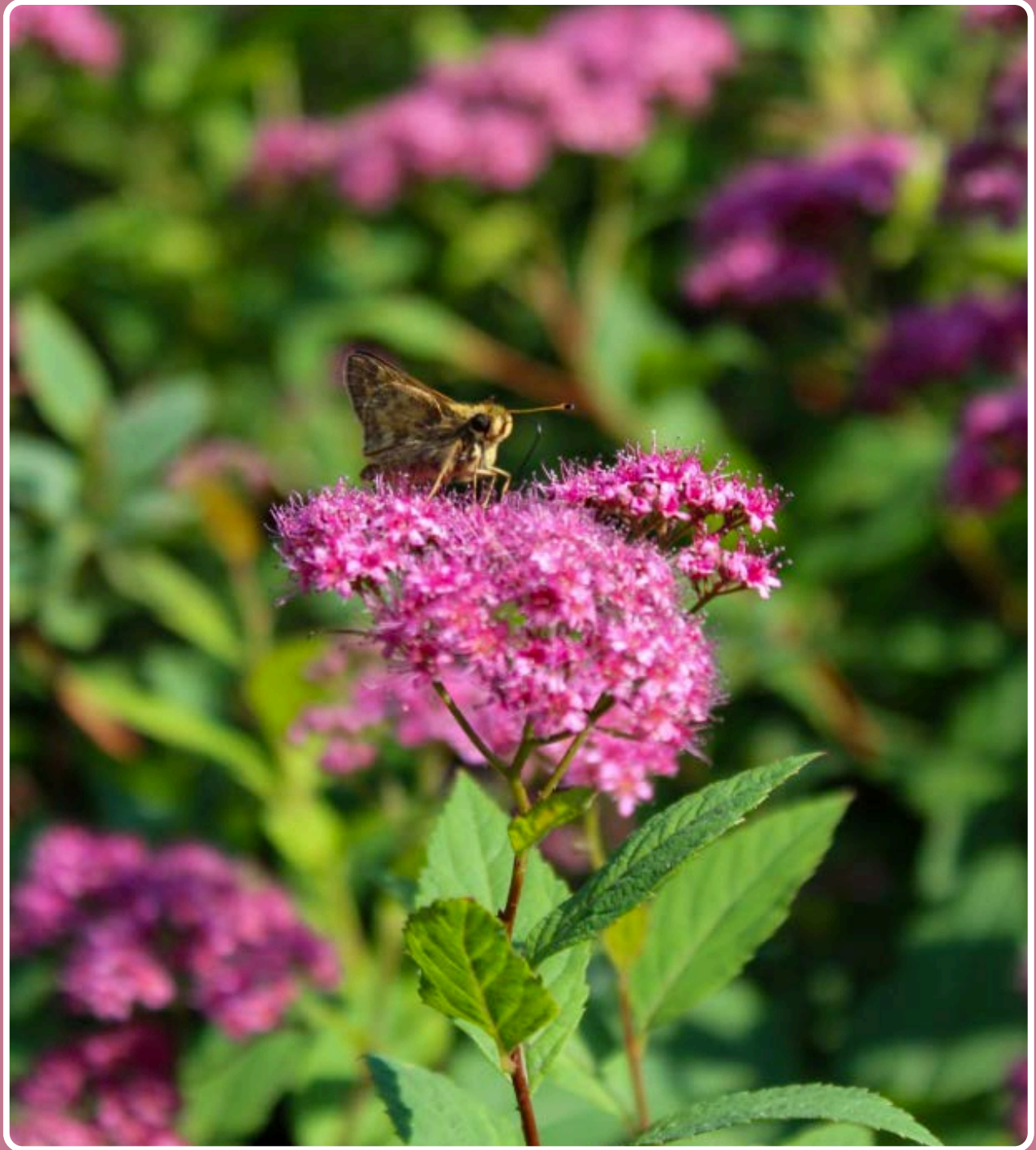
It was a lively jamboree!
As I weaved through the cracks of the dancing crowd
Amid the buzz, laughter, the swinging ensemble,
A lady of crimson hair flowing to her hips
Had quickly caught my gaze and itched my fascination.
Her eyes, tilting downwards, were pearl white.
Soft patches of hues decorated her skin,
And upon another glance, I gasped – webbed fingers!
Meekly she stood in the shade of the corner
With a tiny grin, in a fern green dress of silk.
“I don’t believe I’ve seen you before,” I began,
“My name is Whitney, and you?”
“Carmine,” she replied, fiddling with her silver necklace.
Her raspy voice was of an angel.
“I cannot thank Birdie enough for the invitation
To such a lovely party. How kind of her,
Opening the doors to me!”
We took our seats at a banquet table.
“Yes, she’s the sweetest gal I know,” I tilted my head,
“You seem quite nice yourself, why wouldn’t she?”
Carmine sighed and her inflection lowered.
“For many of my days, I had found myself alone,
As if I were watching my fellows
Through a barred, foggy window,
As they lived out years I could only dream of
Until I’d weep.
Laughter, love, simply being a girl!
If I could only be as human.”
I frowned. “Oh, Carmine...
You have a certain allure, at least to me.
Among every shining soul in the room,
I couldn’t help but be captivated by only you.”
She reddened and smiled humbly.
Birdie, the flamboyant host adorned with pearls and feathers,
Approached the table.



“Carmine, dear! You seem famished.
Please, don’t abstain tonight. We stocked the buffet
With only the finest meats, cheeses, and fruits,
The appetizer for tonight’s great feast!”
Carmine and I gorged ourselves at the buffet.
She took such avid bites
With more enthusiasm than a starving dog
As houseboys continued to retrieve various samples
For their guest of honor.
Then, I took her hand in mine
And we shared a dance as the strains of the band resumed
While I guided her through each step and twirl
To the jolly rhythm of cheers we had amassed.
The music later faded and the crowd receded.
Carmine and I caught our breaths between puckish giggles
And we slumped against the wall,
Vibrant lights gliding over us.
“I’ve never felt such warmth in my heart,” she said,
“I suppose I’ve been wrong about this chummy little city,
How I adore you all!”
Slipping a white rose from the adjacent centerpiece
And nestling it behind my ear, she smiled.
“Whitney...”
Snatching our attention, Birdie chimed a bell
And it was time to feast.
The party scuttled to the vast table, awaiting the meal.
Carmine was no longer beside me.
I scanned the room, but soon ceased my calls for her
As the flames swelled.
The hundred eyes of the crowd grew fervid at the sight
Of dear Carmine upon the table.
Their teeth bared to maul, they chanted their vulgar grace
For the night’s grisly roast.
Revolted beyond what atrocity of man I could grasp
I retched out of sight, in tears.
The hall rang with mad ecstasy and I fled home,
Not daring to glance back.



SPRING



• RACHEL ROANE '25

Outlook on Life

I believe that your outlook on life is everything. Throughout my life, I have been told numerous quotes and positive statements that should remind me to “see the bright side,” or “keep going.”

My dad would give me black-and-white printed-out quotes from Arnold Schwarzenegger, John Harbaugh, and other famous people he found motivational. I was a fairly positive child, but none truly resonated with me. From the first day of second grade, my teacher, who wasn't the most positive of people, had a personal quote she would tell my class whenever she saw fit. “Life is tough and then you die.”

Each time she said this, to a bunch of seven and eight-year-olds, we just shrugged and continued with our day. But over time, I began to wonder, is life really that way? I thought, what happened to my teacher that she felt living was just a burden. But then, at a family dinner, I mentioned my teacher's thoughts, and the whole table laughed.

She was my mom's fifth-grade teacher in one of her first years of teaching, and my mom told me that she could be a bit bleak even back then. Her last year of teaching was my second-grade year, and I still think about how she is doing now. Because of her pessimistic attitude, at a young age, I learned how important it is to have a good outlook on life, for this, I am very grateful. By fifth grade, I learned to find motivational quotes and speeches that felt good to me. I would make posters and put them up all over the house with pretty colors and doodles.

One of my favorite quotes went something like, “Smile, not because everything was good, but for what good did happen,” I’m still not sure who originally said this, but I wrote it down many times. I realized that the more positive I was, the easier my days went. Also, the happier I was, the groups I surrounded myself with changed. My friends became more uplifting and supportive of each other as well. By middle school, I needed motivation, then more than ever, to get through those awkward years, and my history in learning positivity was essential in making it through.

By ninth grade, as work piled up, motivation was the only thing that got me to be productive.

Even today, the skills I have learned about positivity have shaped my outlook on life. It has made me the person I am, and I am proud of that. So now, whenever I see a roadblock at school, work, or just in life in general, I look back to my little motivational posters that I made back when life was simpler, in elementary school. I believe that your outlook on life is everything, this I believe.

• AUDREY SCHMITT '26



• KELSEY ROOK '26



• RACHEL ROANE '25

i am here

there seems to be a melodious rhythm
chirping birds and piano keys
to the qualities, substances, and tangibility
bright, warm, soft
of the world around us
the sky, the grass, the people in it
the way that everything appears connected,
a mother and her child
intentional,
the lines on paper, the leaves on trees
as if the most mundane things in our existence
office jobs and jury duty
were given a breath of life
ventilators and cpr
an unsung collaboration
flowers and honeybees
between mind and spirit
critical thinking, the way we feel
as our environment signals to us,
waves and trees and rain and gusts of wind

i am here,
and i am listening.

i hear your sugar-sweet whispers and wishes
children in bakeries and candy stores
for me to give you some kind of sign
traffic lights, speed limits
that i am living
and i am growing alongside you.



Everyone Has a Song

I feel everyone has a song that fits perfectly in their life. A song that could play in the background of every moment and it just, fits.

I couldn't tell you what my song is. My life is complex and full of many symphonic movements. Each day is different. Each tendency is diverse. Each emotion is distinct. My life has a Soundtrack. A vast array of songs. Perhaps I'm not the only one.

What I can tell you. Is that at this moment. This fragment of time. My song, would be, Je te laisserai des mots. I could not fathom to describe to you why I feel this song is mine. The song which fits my mood perfectly. But if you listen to it. Really listen to the song. To the violin, the piano. Working together in harmony. A beautiful array of cords and strings, coming simultaneously.

Close your eyes, and allow your mind to drift, to wander.

Imagine a moody, dark, rainy day. You are calm. Not quite at peace, but that peace is there, a waited breath, on the tip of your nose. And you feel it, not so far, but not entirely close. A whisper held on your tongue.

If you truly allow yourself to drift. You feel it, for a split moment. The calm. Engulf yourself in the feeling. In the moment. That's what this moment feels like.

Cool breezes, drifting over a calm sea. The drizzle of the rain. The whirl of a fan. A dark room, with open windows. Faint sunlight coming through. Couples walking through a wet park. Birds with their melodious chirping. Do you feel it?

But then that peace turns into something else. A familiar feeling perhaps. A new emotion unlocked. Comes to greet you with tears. Tears of sadness? Maybe. Tears of joy? No... Could it be grief? No it couldn't be... a baited breath is drawn. Fear? No, no... There is no emotion or word that could possibly describe this feeling. But there is music. And the music greets me with a comforting smile. You feel empty. Hollow. A weight being lifted.

Tears come crashing down. Tears... I seem to have forgotten. Such a comforting feeling. To cry in the dark. Overwhelmed. You're overwhelmed. The music reaches its hand out to you, the music, such comforting music. You take its hand. And let it guide you. Lead you through the storm. A voice.

“Let it out. It'll be okay.”

Crash. The waves come crashing down. You let yourself go. Letting the music guide you.

“Almost through, you'll make it through okay.”

Comfort. You close your eyes. Raindrops, dripping, falling from the sky. Breathe. Allow yourself to breathe.

“You made it.”

Your eyes flutter open and with a gasp, the music begins to let go. Slipping away from your grasp. Your comfort. Your home. All good things come to an end. So this is goodbye. Until the next time.

Farewell, my friend.

• MARACELY ZAYAS '25

Ordinarily Un-Ordinary.

An everyday thing taken from an abstract perspective can become something more wonderful than we are aware.

Artistry blossoms from the fingers of the beholder; what a gift that we possess, to be able to love what other people see as nothing until it becomes something.

The way graphite crumbles away from the tips of pencils as we scratch them against paper.

Ice cubes cracking when met with room temperature water.

Eyelashes found in peculiar places that we pick up and blow away with mutters and mumbles of make a wish.

A sticky note on the corner of my corkboard that reads beauty is a frame of mind and growth is a breaking point.

The way the water from the faucet hits the marble of my sink. The jingle of the keys to my car and the coins in my wallet.

The tune of the melody on the radio at 7 am while I drive to school.

The way water bubbles on the stove before reaching a boiling point and when snow begins to melt at the first whispers of spring.

The citrus smell of a freshly peeled orange and the way cookies rise seen from the light in the oven window.

The soft hum of my air conditioning during summer solstice. The fresh breath of air that is the sound of my door unlocking. Taking in

unseen beauties, we discover new points of view—a peculiar mundanity, and the spectrum by which we process engagement.

At the core of this principle lies perspective, and our perspective should remain that of the ordinarily un-ordinary.

• JAEDYN PACKETT '25

~ ayah



The Law of Inertia/ Object in Motion



You just are.

The same way a caterpillar is still a butterfly, You are only just beginning-

You are a star flying through space and Your light is boundless,

People will see You and they will love You-

And You will know that You are love, because it exists in all that you do-

And no matter how stagnant You feel, there will always be a force to push you on-

You are an object in motion, You will continue to move forward

• KELSEY ROOK '26



• RACHEL ROANE '25



SUMMER



Ceramic Relief Panels

Linda Vonderschmidt-LaStella, Earthsongs Ceramic Studio

“The Canticle,” artwork that includes four 19”x23” ceramic relief panels that reflect a contemporary version of Francis of Assisi’s 13th century poem “The Canticle of the Creatures” that celebrates its 800th Anniversary in 2024. The sculptures are the work of ceramist Linda Vonderschmidt-LaStella, both the rendition of the poem and the ceramic reliefs attempt to connect the spirit of Francis of Assisi in a fresh way to the twenty-first century.

“I saw the panels of the “Canticle” as both speaking to a deeply spiritual matter, but also connecting to important concerns, current across the world.

“One of the things I decided early on was that the human figure would be an essential part of each panel. Aware of all that was surfacing regarding issues of climate and environment, I wanted the images to include the human not as dominant or even central but a part of...as a relative to all else.

“Researching earlier images of the “Canticle”...and they are legion!...I recognized that all earlier work in every medium could be placed into one of two categories: either they were very realistic, presented as a typical outdoors scene or they were somewhat mystical. As I began sculpting, I knew mine would fit comfortably into the ‘mystical’ group, but with recognizable realistic elements.

“I was interested to have the material working with me to create these... the clay of sister earth...to be very apparent in the final surface of the work. My human hand was to be clearly present, but I wanted the qualities that only clay can bring to a surface to be very much on display. I wanted the work to be a genuine collaboration between myself and the material.

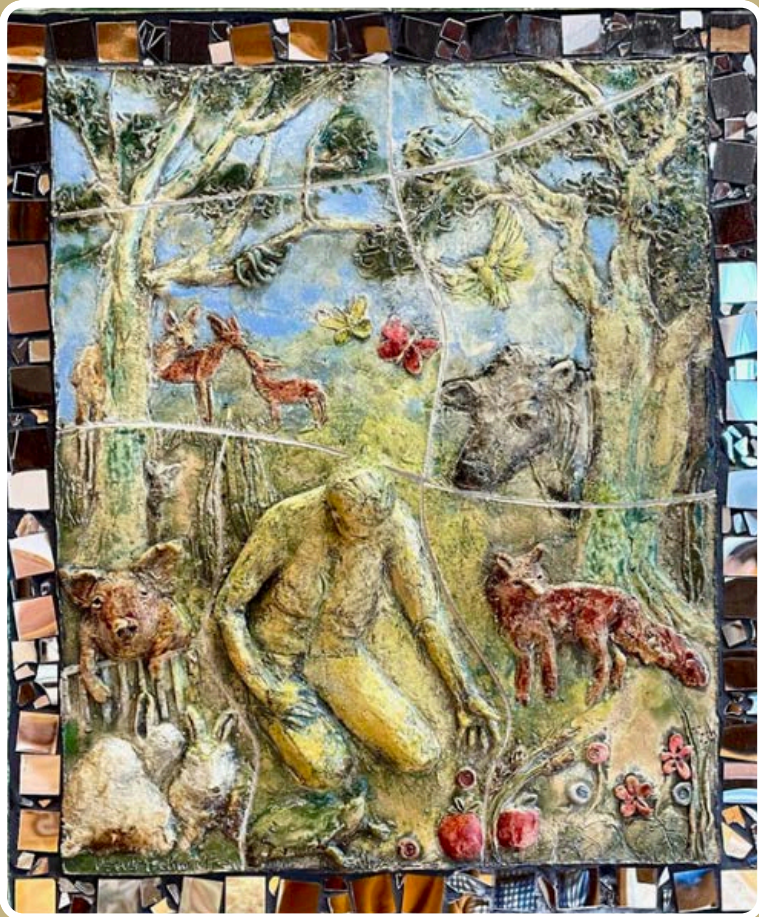
“It has been fascinating seeing visitor’s reaction to the work, especially as each right away selects her favorite. For so many, it is Panel 3 of Sister Earth with its array of animals and easily recognizable natural surroundings; others immediately gravitate to Panel 1 with the iconic Brother Sun and Sister Moon, finding in it a sense of mystical peace. The pair of hugging figures in Panel 4 for some are the main attraction, and they say they can actually feel the energy and intensity of that experience. Only one person shared that she was deeply moved by Panel 2, Sister Water and Fire, connecting immediately to the mysticism of those two elements.

“The frames for these four were intentionally chosen as a way to bring both the place where the art was located as well as each individual viewer of the work, into the art itself, not clearly, but in a rather fragmented way. The mirrored mosaic frames allow the viewer to catch glimpses of herself in hopes to make her aware of her direct connection to the art.

“Much of my work is content driven, inspired by poetry or writing of other sort. Often I develop the words myself first and from them flow the images, even as happened with the four panels of “The Canticle.” In many instances, I will even incorporate words or simply letters and numbers as forms within the art itself.

Interested to know more about the artist and her work, visit www.CLAYSONGS.com, or any of the places her studio is active, in the virtual world on Facebook or on Instagram as Earthsongs Ceramic Studio or in the actual world in the small town of Metuchen, NJ where it has made its home for 30 years.





Cricket Talk

your words speak to me like crickets
when i sit outside in the grass at night.
the grass grows up my legs and burrows
beneath my skin.
it keeps growing
deeper deeper deeper
into my flesh
wrapping itself around muscles and bones,
rooting me to the ground.
then come the bugs.
spiders, ants, beetles,
the crickets.
they crawl up my arms and
perch their stick-legged bodies
on my shoulders.
the grass teaches me lessons
and the bugs tell me secrets.
clouds mixed among the
constellation of the night sky
observe as the soil

and its friends overtake my body
inch by inch.
a gust of wind
sings church hymns to me
as the crickets and beetles
and ants and spiders
keep on
whisper whisper whispering.
you crawl inside my ears
and through the cavernous
ravines
in my skull,
to pollute my thoughts
like drops of oil in water.
but your message
is lost in the
church choir of winds
and bug secrets
and grass growing
and i wonder if the sky is still
watching.

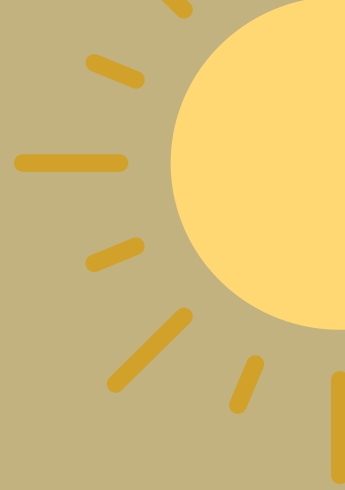
• JAEDYN PACKETT '25



i am a river of us

i still like to braid my hair
the same way that you used to i listen
to music artists
that you introduced me to
and songs that you sent me
i left pictures of us
in my room for
a while
lots of people still call me
by the nicknames you came up with i
still write my poetry
in the journal that you gave me
my coffee order
is the one you used to know
that stuffed animal you bought me
is still my favorite
and i'm more comfortable
by myself
just like you used to tell people
i use our little blue camera
to document my life
and
i left your pictures on it

-JAEDYN PACKETT '25





• SOFIA BIGGS '26

My Skincare Routine

As we enter my venue, we secure errant strands of our brown, silky hair into our disheveled ponytails and quickly wash our hands, a lemony aroma wafting into our shared space. We stand ready at our stations, look at each other, and begin.

First, cleansing: the prepping stage.

From elementary through middle school, I obtained insider information from Ate [older sister] detailing the habits and assignments of my future teachers. Class schedules, extracurriculars, and first impressions were already predetermined for me as soon as the teacher called my name on each first day of school. As the bunso [youngest], I've always felt prepared.

“You're Tracy's sister, right?”

With a hesitant “yes,” I'd step into the path of foreseeable expectations, accepting the responsibility of carrying Ate's legacy while simultaneously maintaining my prescribed reputation. Naturally, with an overachiever like her, I was given only two options: match the standards or exceed them.

Second, toning: the balancing stage.

Showing up at Tita's house in Virginia, overdressed in a frilly white blouse and a black miniskirt, I had successfully replicated Ate's image. Though I was usually intrigued by the adult-like conversations happening around the kitchen island, my legs habitually followed Ate to the couch. There, I mirrored her dedication to homework or her nonchalant attachment to her phone. The daunting fear of dissimilarity fueled my work ethic but increased my vacillation between who I was and who I was told I could be. Yet despite my sometimes-desperate efforts, comparison—and contrast—could not be easily avoided. It was a struggle to balance similar appearances with deeper disillusionment.



In Green and Gold We Stand

At Catholic High, our voices rise,
With faith and love that never dies.
Through halls so bright,
With hearts alight,
We cherish each year as it flies.

Our teachers guide with steady hands,
Their wisdom strong as time expands.
From verse to chart,
They shape each heart,
And lead us through life's shifting sands.

The sisters' kindness lingers still,
Their grace and strength our spirits fill.
Through night and day,
Their light will stay,
A beacon of faith, strong and real.

With pride, our Cubs take to the field,
With grit and strength, we never yield.
Through every game,
We guard our name,
In green and gold, our power sealed.

Traditions shine through all we do,
With honor, faith, and voices true.
From rings to May,
We proudly say,
"For Catholic High, we're ever true!"

-MR. SCOTT DEROSIER



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