



# The Bellarmine Review

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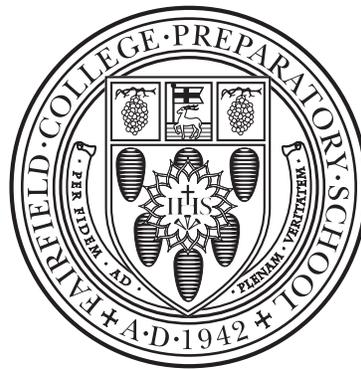


Fairfield College Preparatory School

# The Bellarmine Review

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Spring 2009, Volume 67



The Literary Magazine of Fairfield College Preparatory School

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We desire to publish poetry and prose that is: clear, concise, and evokes the senses, taking the audience to the writer's imagined place through strong images, and a good sense of rhythm. It is believed in Jesuit education that an academic endeavor may be an encounter with the divine: *Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam*. That is to say that in the authenticity of our written thoughts we may unknowingly stumble on truth. Our intent is to give our students' words a place to land, serving as an accomplished venue to acknowledge their lived truth. Send submissions of poetry and prose from September 1st until March 1st to [jchesbro@fairfieldprep.org](mailto:jchesbro@fairfieldprep.org).

# The Bellarmine Review

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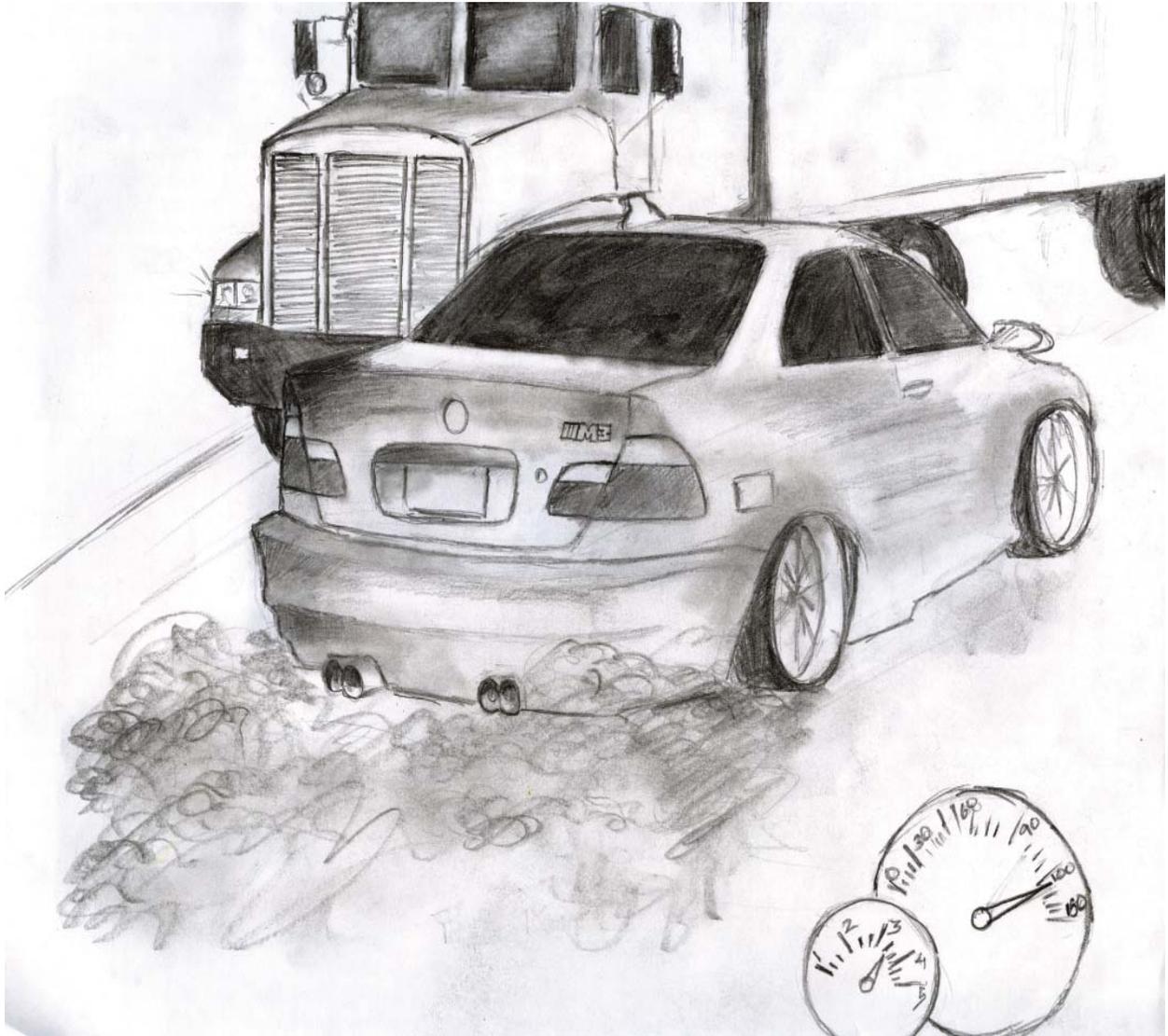
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# FICTION

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Illustrated by: Frank Bravo

## The Race to Beat Curfew

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Connor Foley '10

The music was blaring and his ears were ringing. The stereo was blasting an obnoxious rap song with an obnoxious base line and of course included an obnoxious dance to go with it— not exactly his taste in music. He looked at his phone and realized that if he didn't leave soon he'd never make it home before curfew. He was a senior and he thought his parents would be more lenient with letting him stay out late, him being almost 18, but his parents refused to let up. So he was stuck trying to figure out when he should leave the party, which just so happened to be in the middle of nowhere.

His phone read 10:35. It had taken him thirty-five minutes to get to his friend's house. He'd have to cut ten minutes out of his drive. He had gotten a speeding ticket a week before and the officer said if he got another within a month, his license would be suspended. He also had been late the previous night, so his parents were definitely going to give him the metaphorical whip if he was late again. He had to speed, but needed to be on the lookout for cops.

He quickly found his group of friends and told them that he was leaving, but they looked very confused. Then he found his girlfriend, a pretty brunette with a great smile and bright blue eyes, and gave her one last kiss at the front door of the house, leaving her just as confused as her friends. As he walked to his car he felt a snowflake hit his face. He froze. This could not be happening to him right now. He needed to get on the road as fast as possible. He grinned as he remembered that he had driven his dad's car tonight, a BMW M3, but he also remembered that the time in the car was set incorrectly by his tech-ignorant father and that he'd have to rely on his phone.

He reached his car and the windshield had a layer of ice on it, like icing on a cake. He quickly found the scraper in the trunk and went to

work on it. Once he had finished clearing his vision he jumped into the car and pressed the button to start the engine. A loud grinding sound tore through the air. He thought his eardrums would spontaneously combust, but it stopped and he collected himself. He pressed it again, and on came the warm sound of the engine starting.

He found his mix CD, filled with loud guitar playing, throat grinding, and scream filled music by obscure bands most of the population will never hear of. He turned on his system and turned up the volume. Now was not a time for Jack Johnson or Dispatch! He turned out of the long driveway and took off. It had been snowing for just a little while, but there was already a thin layer on the road. He then turned and fishtailed onto the main road that would take him to his house. He noticed that hardly anyone was on the road. There were about as many people on the road as there are men that willingly go to watch live cooking shows.

He was almost home when he had a straightaway and floored it. He felt like he had control of pure energy until there was a slight bend in the road. He tapped the brake, but this sent him into a spin. He spun around 4 or 5 times. His screaming much resembled those of the screams in the music that he had on, but he was lucky enough that he only ended up on the other side of the road with the front of the car facing towards the direction he had come from.

Suddenly, in the distance he saw a huge truck flashing its high beams at him and honking. Because he had been spinning and lost traction, the car killed the engine automatically. He pressed the “car start” button and once again the sound of a dying cat cut through the air. This stunned him for a second but then he realized this truck was not going to stop. He quickly pressed the button again and got the car going. He quickly moved back into his lane and headed home.

He parked in the garage and then looked at his phone. It said 11:10. He immediately started thinking of excuses as to why he was late; he decided to make it up as he went along. He walked into his basement and his dad

was sitting there. His surprised father asked him why he had come home so early. He looked at his phone and then thought his dad was being sarcastic. He started apologizing for his lateness, and then his dad pointed at the clock. It was only ten o'clock.

He slowly came to the realization that someone had tampered with his phone. Now he realized why his friends and girlfriend had acted so weird when he left. His brother walked downstairs laughing hysterically, so he assumed his brother had performed the prank. He launched an attack on him and left him with a black eye. His dad ran upstairs to see what the ruckus was about. His brother said he had nothing to do with the tampering of his phone. Then one of his friends called him and said that they had done it. His dad, seeing that one of his sons looked like a raccoon, was steaming from the ears like a lobster after it's been cooked and grounded him for the next two weeks. He just walked upstairs not knowing what to say. He had risked his life to beat curfew and still ended up grounded.

## Our House

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Patrick Timmons '09

After all of my years in jail, I was finally home. Before I had been arrested, my home had always been well kept; my mother loved to garden and take care of the lawn, and from May to October there was always an explosion of color from her flowerbeds. We lived in a mobile home in the heart of the Virginian Appalachian Mountains, and while I was in jail she had let both it and herself go. When looking at it from the dirt road, the first thing I noticed was that the exterior of my mom's house looked like it had just survived a hurricane. The paneling was falling off, exposing the insulation material behind it. Someone had built a porch out of scraps of wood, but that too looked like it would collapse with the slightest push.

Upon entering the house, the first thing I noticed was the smell. It reeked of spoiled food, mildew, and a new, different smell, similar to that of a nursing home. To the right of the door was the entryway to the kitchen. The floor was covered with cheap linoleum that was coated with a layer of grime. There was a table that was covered in everything from pots and pans encrusted with old, uneaten food to calendars dating from 1967. The cabinet doors were either falling off or totally missing, revealing the mess of pots, pans, and dishes on the shelves. The counters were also covered in old dishes which had held a meal at one time but never cleaned, allowing a collection of mold to grow in colors I had never seen before. The old refrigerator that dated back to the 70's was empty except for a gallon of spoiled milk and a jug of orange juice.

The living room was just as bad. My mother sat on an ancient armchair that seemed to be on the verge of collapse. Breathing tubes from oxygen tanks criss-crossed the floor like the web of a demented spider. There was an old couch, but it was initially unrecognizable due to the amount of junk that was piled up on it. On the floor was an old, grimy shag carpet that seemed to have come with the house. Hanging on the walls were various pictures, cheap clocks, and framed knife collections. On the left side of

the room ran a hallway that led to a smaller room that wasn't much bigger than a walk-in closet and my mom's bedroom. The floor of the hallway was extremely weak; I could feel the floorboards shifting back and forth as I walked. The extra room was empty when I arrived. In my mom's bedroom, the central feature was a full size bed with an amazingly large sag in the middle. This room also had cheap clocks and other "collector" items all over the walls and covering the floor. In the closet, which wasn't much more than a hole in the wall, was an avalanche of clothes, some of which looked like they hadn't been worn in years. On the bookshelf there were several pictures of our family out front before I went to jail. If only I had never left her.

## The Pitcher

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Matt Wendin '09

The crowd erupted as yet another player rounded third base and forcefully stomped his cleat into home plate. Raymond felt the cold hand of fear squeeze the confidence from him. He had almost pitched a perfect game letting up only one run in the second inning, while his team had scored four throughout the course of the game. But his swagger quickly began to fade after he let two runs up in the eighth inning. Raymond suddenly noticed each individual drop of sweat beading down his face as well as the constant pain twisting needles in his throwing arm. He rubbed the ball with moist hands trying to create a slicker surface for the batter to hit.

The next batter approached the plate, clenching the bat with his gloves in an attempt to secure his grip on the wooden surface. Raymond couldn't see the face of the batter, but recognized the stance and knew it was Kyle Broderick. He hadn't had trouble with Kyle on previous encounters so he felt that he shouldn't have any difficulty now. Ignoring his catcher, Raymond naively felt he could simply overpower his opponent. Throwing with all his might, he rifled the ball down the middle of the plate. Kyle quickly reacted and connected with the top of the ball, sending it violently bouncing down the third base line. Panic coursed throughout Raymond's entire body as he watched his third baseman recover the wild ball and redirect it like a bullet being launched out of the barrel of a gun towards first base. "Safe!" screamed the first base umpire. Raymond buried his face in his hands with disgust.

After making it out of the eighth, Raymond got two easy outs to start the ninth. Just one more out needed to save himself and the team from disaster. He knew that the only thing that could hinder him now were his nerves. He took a deep breath trying to wash the emotional demons from his mind. The crowd was now on their feet cheering for both sides, and he could hear all the

boisterous supporters yelling his name encouraging him to finish out this game. His coach was trying to keep the morale of the team upbeat, but everyone knew that it came down to this batter. It just happened to be Ben Mulfinger, the best hitter in the league. Ben already had three hits off of Raymond today, and it seemed no matter what Ray threw at him he had a strong answer. Ben walked nonchalantly to base waving his bat slowly, practicing his perfectly smooth and powerful swing. As Ben stepped into the batter's box and took his stance, the crowd became silent and all that Raymond could hear was the beating of his own heart. His catcher extended two fingers waking Raymond from his trance. The pitcher knew his catcher had played with Ben on a previous team; he nodded in recognition to the call. Raymond wound up and threw a low curve ball trying to get Ben to swing early, but Ben didn't budge. "Ball!" Shouted the umpire.

The catcher clenched his fist, and again Raymond nodded in agreement. This time Raymond threw inside waist high, and watched Ben awkwardly swing and miss. "Strike!" Now the catcher clenched his fist again, but Raymond shook his head. The ball went speeding from his hand like a racehorse being released from the starting gates. Ben swung with his elegant and omnipotent form striking the leather ball, sending it far up the first base line. Raymond felt a wave of terror and disappointment crash into him as the ball sailed further. "Foul!" Called the umpire. New hope had been born and Raymond, finally collecting himself, stared down once again at his catcher. With all his strength, he hurled the ball towards the catcher's glove leaving Ben swinging only at air behind it. His fear and self-loathing receded away like dry sand during high tide. Confidence and pride flooded through him as the crowd exploded with a roar of excitement. Raymond found himself being swarmed by ecstatic teammates, raising him high in the brisk afternoon air.

## The Concert

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C.J. Cinder '09

The flashing lights had rendered my rearview mirror useless. The darkening summer sky had augmented the lights, making them seem larger than they must have been. Telling the teenagers in the back to calm down, I realized what a hypocrite I was. My hands were shaking, and my mind was filled with questions. I wondered what I had done, would I reach my destination, and would my parents be angry? The knock on my window pulled me out of my daydream. As I rolled it down, I saw the face that put fear into my heart. Wearing dark aviators, the man seemed to lack eyes which made him all the more intimidating. My reflection screamed back at me and I nearly panicked. He had a cold frown and looked extremely displeased at something I had done. "License and registration, please," he stated in an angry impatient voice. My hand shook out of fear as I reached for my wallet. As I pulled out my ID and handed it to the officer I was almost unable to look into the dark sunglasses that made up his eyes. As he inspected it I couldn't help but think about how I had gotten into this situation.

"Lynyrd Skynyrd live, July 27 at the Dodge," rang the voice of the DJ on my favorite radio station one morning. I love the band Lynyrd Skynyrd and the radio had said that the tickets were very cheap. Intrigued, I followed up on the advertisement when I went home and found tickets online. After calling some friends to see if they would be interested in going, I decided to purchase tickets. That was the easy part, now I had to convince my parents to let me go. I made the long walk into my kitchen where both my mom and my dad were sitting. "Mom is it cool if I go to a concert in a few weeks?" I asked. "Absolutely not by yourself," she responded coolly without even looking up. I had prepared for this upstairs and then gave her some reasons why I should be able to go. I told her that recently I had been very trustworthy; I had pulled good grades in school this year and that I was a very good driver. Sticking to her guns my mom continually said no to every point

I brought up. Seeing my plan failing before my eyes I went for the Hail Mary and brought my dad into the conversation. “Dad, come on you got to put in a good word for me,” I begged. “Well, he is right. He did do well in school and he really is old enough to go by himself.” He said to my mom. Knowing that I had an ally I knew I was golden. I saw my mom give my dad a look and briefly shrug. “Just don’t disappoint us,” she said. Confident that I had won I was sure that my troubles had passed and I would get to go see my concert trouble free. I confirmed with my friends that we would all go and we looked forward to seeing this legendary southern rock band.

“Man was I wrong,” I thought as I snapped back into the reality of the situation. The cop was still eying my ID as if looking for a flaw in it. After studying it for what seemed like an eternity, he handed it back. “Son do you have any alcohol or marijuana in the car?” Confident that I did not, I responded “No sir, we’re clean.” Giving me a stern look, he walked back to his squad car and started to converse with his partner. I let out a sigh of relief thinking that I was off the hook. The cop walked up to the car again and proved me wrong. “We want to search the car,” the officer barked at me. At this point I stopped worrying about getting in trouble, realizing that my nemesis was just a suspicious cop, and I started to worry more about missing the concert. I told him sure; hoping that by not putting up a fight I could expedite the process. As my friends and I stood on the side of the road, watching the cop vigorously search my car, we all realized the humor in the situation. We had done nothing wrong, yet this cop would not let us go, and was desperately trying to find something illegal in my car to validate his cause. We almost started laughing seeing the man grow more and more frustrated with each empty spot in my car. After a solid half hour of searching the cop gave up. “I found nothing, so you guys can go,” the cop said. As we hopped into the car I noticed the clock. We had under an hour to get to the concert. Knowing that I would have to speed in order to make it to the show I waited until we were well out of sight of the cop car. When I felt we had created

enough distance between us, I sped up the car in hopes that we would not miss any of the great show.

Other cars blurred by us as we sped down the highway. We were driving as fast as my car could go. Weaving in and out of cars and watching the clock almost as closely as I was watching the road, we proceeded to the stadium. My heart nearly leapt out of my chest when I saw another set of flashing lights ahead of us. Slowing down as best as I could, I was relieved to see the squad car was occupied with another car on the side of the road.

When we finally reached Dodge Stadium, the bright lights declaring “Lynyrd Skynyrd: Live Tonight,” welcomed us and I could barely hold in my excitement as my friends and I waited in line. We had just finished our car ride and took our place in the seemingly endless line to get into the stadium. As we waited in line one could hear the noise of the opening band playing and the applause from the crowd inside. I was disappointed that we were missing the opening act, but I was relieved that we would make it for the main event. Even though the time seemed to stand still while we were in line we eventually reached the front. One by one we all presented our tickets to the employees, who then allowed us entry into the stadium.

As we walked into the stadium we noticed the irresistible smell of hot dogs and popcorn drifting from the concession stand. As we walked directly by the food the temptation proved too much and we stopped to load up on the concessions. After buying enough food to last us a good portion of the concert we continued on our way to our seats.

“This looks like a good spot,” one of my friends declared. He spread out a blanket onto the grassy field. Instead of being a traditional arena “The Dodge,” is more akin to a fenced in field with a stage in the front. Concert goers must find their own spots and claim them. We had found a spot relatively close to the stage so we sat down, and just as we started inhaling our food we heard, “Hey, you’re in our spot man,” the voice rang out behind us. Several men in their 20’s hovered

over us and said, “Scram!” My friend and I got up to go reason with the men. We were determined not to give up our seats, not just because we knew we were there first, but more people had entered the stadium since we had, and there weren’t any good seats left. As we walked up to the men we could smell the aroma of liquor. We tried to reason our case, but they only grew more and more agitated. “Look this is our spot just get out,” said the man in a loud angry voice. “Hey, man we’re not leaving,” I rebutted, trying not to think about how scrawny I looked compared to the full grown men threatening us. One of the twenty year olds then proceeded to get in my face and asked me if I wanted to start something. I was trying very hard not to turn around and run for my life. I was trying my best to act cool. “Don’t panic,” I told myself. My friend was getting pretty heated with one of the other guys and it eventually looked as though a fight was imminent. The man who was in my face started yelling and just as he raised a clenched fist I got my saving grace. Lynyrd Skynyrd finally took the stage.

With a flash of on-stage fireworks all the members of the band took up their instruments and broke into “Sweet Home Alabama.” The crowd erupted and the twenty year olds seemed to soften at the good will that reverberated from the stadium. With their eyes glued to the stage, we accepted this diversion, retreated back to the blanket and turned our backs to the conflict. Though this was dangerous, the piercing music and loud applause between songs drowned out our foes who had given up. During the ten minute version of “Free Bird,” my friends and I exchanged smiles, acknowledging that despite all the trouble, the concert was worth it.

## Weekend Warriors

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Tucker Shanley '09

**I** walked into my dad's office and he immediately stopped working, and looked up at me in silence. I could hear the swift rhythm of the faucet dripping in the other room at the same rate as my heart. I hated that sound, it drove me insane.

I broke the silence with an irritated "Yes?"

"I want to talk to you about this 'C' you are getting in Chemistry."

"What about it?" I quickly chimed in, practically cutting off the end of his sentence.

"Well you have never gotten a 'C' before," he threw right back at me.

"I told you this class was impossible."

"That is no excuse, you are not a 'C' student, and you know that," he forcefully asserted.

I didn't say anything at this point; I was extremely unprepared for this argument. His "comeback" arsenal was far superior to mine this time. I was upset too because I knew what came next.

My dad then broke the faucet trickle with the death sentence, "You're not going anywhere tonight or tomorrow night either, so don't get your hopes up."

"Dad! Come on, I am supposed to meet my girlfriend for dinner tonight. You can't do that." Why does school always release grades on Fridays?

As I went to go back to my room I noticed my dad start to chuckle.

"What are you laughing at?" I said with a snarl.

With a small, smug, smirk he turns to me and says, "All right fine. I'll let you go out tonight...if you beat me in Ping-Pong."

Yes, I said to myself, I've beat him before, I'll beat him again.

"Bring it old man!"

As we walked out into the garage I observed my mom and sister claiming their seats to watch the epic battle. My mom cozies into a pink and orange beach chair while my sister hops onto the drying machine.

My sister of course, was rooting for my dad and yells out, “Let’s go Dad!”

I reached up to plug in the spot light I placed above the table. This light, although small and somewhat silly, was crucial. I grabbed my paddle from the holder. I had dropped it one day and half of the handle had cracked off. I used a rubber band to keep it together. The band crisscrossed up and down the handle and gave it a little extra grip for my already sweating hands. This was the first time I actually got nervous for one of our matches.

I positioned myself at my designated side of the table, with my back to the garage door. As we began to warm up, my dad abruptly said, “All right that’s enough let’s start, you serve first; best two out of three.” That was the last word out of either of us until the end of the second game.

The first game went by quicker than normal. He won 21-11. I was mad. I never lose like that. Now I had to win two straight games. I looked at my dad. He was swaying side to side. There were no facial expressions aside from utter determination. Then I looked at my sister and of course she was all smiles. She looked at me, stuck her tongue out, and gave a little, “ha.” That made me livid.

The second game went by more quickly, the only difference being my dad losing 21-10. I was upset I gave him double digits, but excited about the next game. Now the trash talking began.

“So dad, what car do you want me to take to dinner tonight?”

“Not so fast bub. We still got another game and I think that you’re going to choke anyway. Why don’t you call your girlfriend right now and tell her you’re not going to be able to make it?”

What do you know, he was right. I choked a four point lead away.

It was now 20-20. He won the last four points. I began to panic a little but luckily it was my serve.

“Start dialing,” he said.

My serve. Which one should I use? I chose my spiny-toss serve which I hadn’t used all game. I tossed up the ball with my right hand 12 inches above the table and as it dropped I quickly cut right with my left hand. The ball pinged off my side and ponged onto his. I broke down ready for his return and sure enough the ball spun right off his paddle and out of play. Match point.

I began to spin the smooth colorless sphere in my right and as I went to serve for the win out of the corner of my eye I saw my dad, still swaying back and forth, sliding over to my right side of the table for the forehand winner. I stopped and without hinting with my eyes at where I was going to serve, I turned my body and opened up towards my left and struck. I fired the ball like a cannon down the alley for the win. My dad wasn’t ready for the alley attack and jumped to his right and swung...

I let out a “Yeah Baby!” And a, “keys please.” And I was off.

Before I left, I stopped at the door and said to my dad, “I will fix that Chemistry grade and bring it to where it should be.”

My dad gave me a hug and said with a smile, “You know you got lucky right?”

## Finding Home

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Justin Marini '09

*I* woke up to the clamor of my alarm clock at exactly six-fifteen. That same obnoxious ringing had pulled me away from quiet rest and into the deafening world for the past ten years. Twenty minutes later, I climbed into my rusted station wagon. Off to work. There I could look forward to filing stacks of customer satisfaction reports for the next eight hours. At noon, Jim from accounting would barge into my cubicle unannounced and ask me to go to lunch. I would decline—as always—hoping to avoid another six hour rant on his four failed marriages.

At five-fifteen, I climbed back in my car and merged onto the highway. The endless hours of waiting in traffic were about to begin. As I sat on the highway, I glanced around at the same nothingness I had idly watched for the past decade. Rows of gray, cement buildings complimented by black pavement suffocated my view of anything natural except, of course, for the occasional tree. These trees were strategically placed on manmade patches of browning grass and litter infested soil scattered sparsely along sidewalks and street corners.

As I sat, I imagined a simpler time when the trees had uninterrupted views of rolling hills and twisting rivers. Concerns were limited to the occasional rainstorm that interrupted sunshine. The world must have seemed infinite. It is hard to imagine a life of such purity amidst the sinister high rises that polluted my surroundings. Even the sky seemed to have lost its depth in this shallow existence.

I walked into my house welcomed by the sound of silence. As I entered my nondescript, predominantly white kitchen, the familiar cloud of cigarettes, stale coffee, and anguish hung heavy in the foreboding air. I searched the room for even an ounce of clarity. Instead, I was welcomed by the cold stare of two beady

black eyes.

When we first got married, I would have never pictured our lives turning out the way they did. Laura and I were passionate. We were passionate about life and love. Sometimes, we would come home from work and just gaze into each others eyes, knowing that we were destined to stay together. Laura's deep blue eyes brought comfort to me everyday. I could have been having the worst day of my life, but one glance from Laura's eyes seemed to reach into my soul and cure my ailments. As I looked at those same eyes tonight, they seemed changed. They did not gleam with the mystic beauty I once relied on for answers. Laura's eyes were now black and dull. Instead of comforting my soul, they seemed to cast a shadow of guilt over me. It had finally happened. The dark angst of suburbia had made its way through the walls, planting itself in my home life.

Throughout dinner—the tasteless frozen dinner I had stomachached for a decade—we sat in suffering silence staring blankly at the evening news. During commercials, I tried to spark conversation. All I ever got was a minimal grunt or one word reply. Finally, I had had enough. I stood up, walked over to the television, and shut it off. I looked at Laura and asked her what we were doing living the way we were. Life had no purpose, no direction. Work was miserable and repetitive. The world around us was dull and gray. We did not even engage in a loving relationship anymore. “I know,” Laura muttered bluntly as if she wanted the conversation to end more than any change in her life.

When nine-thirty rolled around, my wife and I headed off to bed without a word being spoken. By ten, we were both usually asleep. Tonight however, I could not sleep. My body wanted to rest, but for some reason my head was throbbing. My thoughts were so loud that I could not lay still. I eventually fell into a dreamless sleep only to wake up several hours later finding myself shaking upright in bed. I tried to calm my nerves, but noth-

ing seemed to be working. I knew what I had to do.

It was three o'clock in the morning now. While suburbia stood still, waiting to welcome another insipid day, I climbed into my car. It took three tries to start the car before I pulled out of the driveway. I drove through mid morning, passing what seemed like an endless continuum of monochromatic one story houses overlooking a highway leading to nowhere. I promised myself that I would continue driving until I found something vibrant, something real. I kept driving through the night, through a harsh sea of glowing lights signaling no end to suburbia in sight. I had to carry on. I eventually found refuge in a parking lot at the end of the highway where there seemed to be no lights. I had no clue where I was, but I figured it was best to retire here for the night and continue tomorrow when I could find my way to another highway.

That night, I did not sleep very well. I dreamt that I was at my desk at work filing papers when I decided that I needed a break. I glanced around my cubicle. The framed picture of Laura that was to the right of my filing bins was replaced by a picture of her cold, beady stare from the night before. I became frightened, and stood up to get away from my desk. As I tried to get away, Jim was there blocking me. Instead of complaining about his marriages, he was telling me that I could never really leave my dull life. I pushed Jim out of the way and began to run. As I was running down the stairs to my car, the walls in the office began to close in on me. I tried the door leading to the parking lot, but it was locked. Panicking, I kicked open a window with my foot as the walls continued to close. I felt relieved to be outside as I sprinted to my car. The car would not start, so I began to start running home. As I was running on the side of the highway, I noticed the trees had been cut down and stumps were all that remained. Just as I was looking around I noticed there was a large shadow over me. A high rise was about to fall on me.

Before my life was abruptly stopped by a toppling high rise, I woke up to my own screams. I was gasping for air as I realized that I was covering my eyes with my hands. As I started to catch my breath, I looked out my front windshield to a soft golden sun, which seemed to welcome the morning with a soothing embrace. Clouds painted early morning pink and purple hues across a sky that serenely changed from orange to blue the further I looked away from the sun. Gentle gray rays shot off the horizon as the sun illuminated everything around me. I was in shock at how naturally beautiful and pure this seemed. A tender brushing noise whispered in my ears. I could not believe it. Could I have reached the ocean? I enthusiastically opened my car door and looked around. I was immediately struck by the passion in the few movements to get out of the driver's seat. I took a deep breath. The air had a salty oceanic taste with a hint of sweet joy.

Glancing straight down from the rocky cliff where I was parked, I noticed there was a beach below and to my right, a staircase leading to it. I ran as fast as my lungs permitted me down the stairs and to the sand. I continued until I reached the surf. As I stood there, I looked deep into the cresting waves. The ocean was coming at me in three directions, bouncing joyfully and unpredictably, looking more complex and beautiful with every passing moment. I realized how truly alive and real the ocean is. It is an ever changing landscape melodically dancing and celebrating the magnificence of being alive. In an act of defiance, I chucked my car keys into the ocean, leaving with it the anguish of suburbia. I had no use for them anymore. As I was preparing to throw my cell phone, I realized that there was one thing in this world that had beauty and depth that surpassed the scene that lay before me, and that was Laura. I picked up my phone to call my wife. I told her that the exciting lives we once had were gone, that we were not even living anymore, but we were merely existing in a continuous routine. She needed to come to me, to

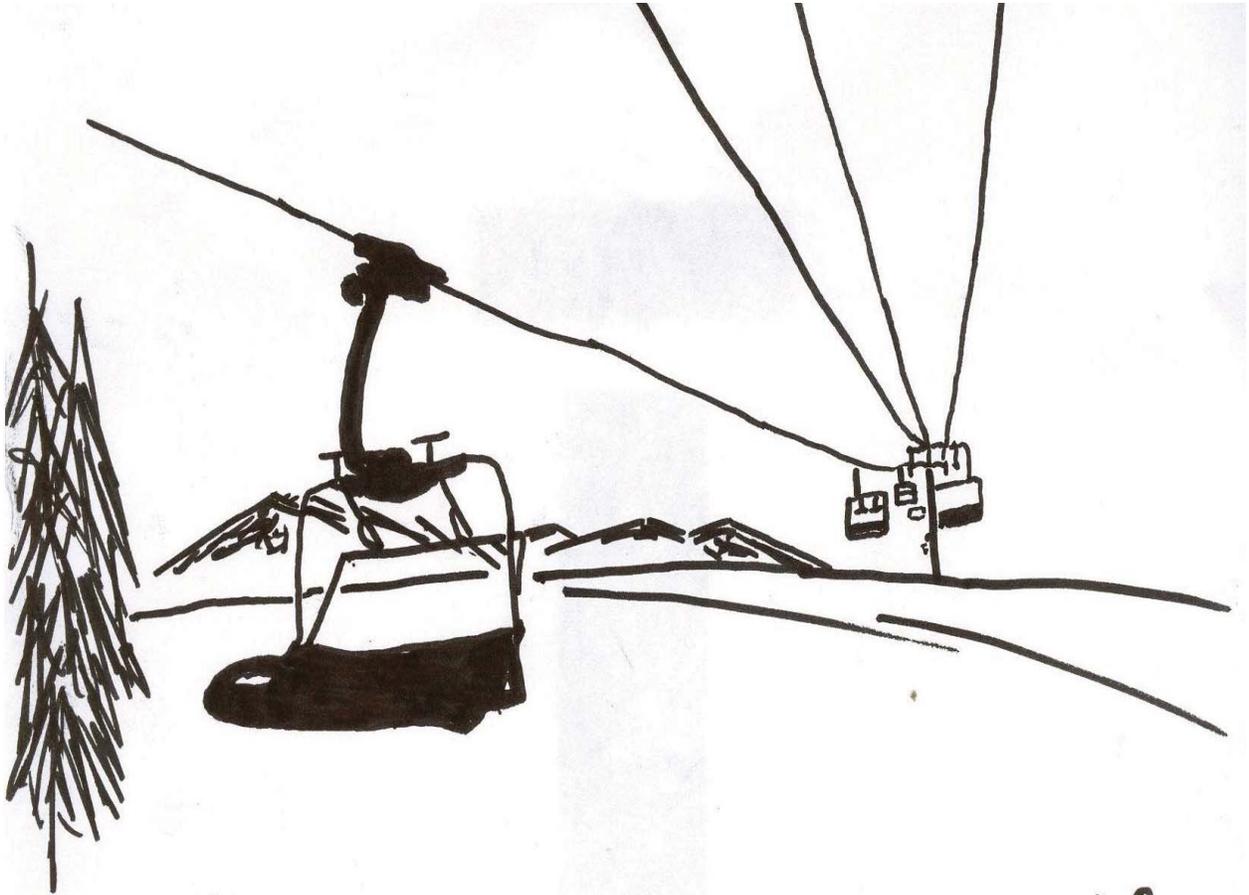
do whatever it might take, but just come to me. Laura asked me where I was. I told her to take what she needed, get in her car, get on the highway, and drive. She needed to keep going until the highway ended and existence was real. There she could find me.

The next morning glowed with a different brilliance. The skies were covered by a thin layer of clouds that gave the entire sky a pink hue. The ocean lay quiet, slowly dancing to accompany its metallic pink brilliance in the tranquil morning. The beautiful scene that lay before me was interrupted by the strange feeling that I was being watched. As I looked behind me, I found a familiar pair of eyes watching me. They shined a brilliant blue that brought hope in the early morning sun. I smiled as Laura came closer and closer to me. We had both made it and knew that we were here to stay. No longer would we have to deal with suffocating high rises and insufferable silences. We would eventually have to sell our house and find a way to buy food, but for the time being, that was an afterthought. Life was passionate and real. I closed my eyes, took a deep breath, and fell to my knees. I was finally home.

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# POETRY

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*LD*

Illustrated by: Luke Dennison

Chairlift

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Andrew Hollis '10

Climbing higher and  
higher, the temperature  
Becomes lower and  
lower.

A wicked whirl of  
wind, sends a chill  
down my spine.

Clenching my  
poles tightly in one  
hand, the other  
left balled up  
in my glove.

The air becomes  
thick, and the mountains  
glisten like diamonds in  
the distance.

The Angel

---

Brendan Doran '11

Here we hide tonight,  
Hidden from the enemy's sight.  
Lying in this cold dark trench,  
To our chests, our rifles clenched.  
And in this dark and dreary hole,  
Every worn and weary soul  
Knows he is here, as we weep,  
Death's dark angel, beside us keeps  
A silent vigil, as we fight,  
Waiting in the dark of night.

As we live here in fear,  
A sound of horror do we hear  
The scream of shells, around us flying,  
The sound of explosions, of men dying.  
And as these sounds fill our ears,  
We know that he is growing near,  
Coming with the shells of steel,  
By his will our fate is sealed.

“Over the top!” we hear the call,  
And into the darkness now we fall.  
Running wildly through the night,  
Our vision filled with ghastly sights  
Of men all around us falling,  
As we run, our names they are calling.  
But we do not answer their call.  
It is he who comes to where they crawl  
And takes their souls from this place,  
With looks of relief upon their faces.

As I run, I begin to see  
My old friends who followed me  
Have fallen to his dark embrace,  
Disappeared without a trace.  
And now I am the only one,  
A lone soldier with his gun.

A flash of light fills the night,  
And I am stricken with the sight,  
That in the battle’s fray,  
Both my legs have been blown away.

I lie there then, among the dead,  
My whole existence filled with dread,  
Now at this moment I can see,  
The Angel of Death has come for me.

I see him approach, and I am surprised,  
For a beautiful sight fills my eyes.  
He is not a figure of dark and gloom,  
A creature who guides us to our doom,  
But a young woman, whose beauty seems,  
To be beyond a mortal's dreams.

She comes to me and beside me stands,  
And extends to me a shining hand.  
“Come with me,” she says to me,  
“I’ll take you to eternity.”  
And so she lifts me from my harm,  
And takes me into her loving arms  
And carries me into the light,  
Where I will forever remain, safe from the night.

Nature's Embrace

---

Frank Lupariello '10

*A*s I look up at the sky,  
filled with orange  
and purple hues,  
the ancient yellow sand  
tickles and teases my toes,  
And the air I breathe  
refreshes me like a swimming pool,  
after enduring a long, tough race.  
The sun and the wind battle,  
causing a warm sensation to win  
over the calm cooling breeze.  
As the waves crash against the rocks  
and simmer passing between my toes,  
I realize you are with me and we kiss.

We Can Laugh

---

Ross Riskin '09

**I** dusted off the old blinds that blocked the window  
so light could finally have a place  
and to my surprise, the sun was hidden from its view  
so i guess dusting was just a waste

i put the cover on the car before the storm  
so it could finally be kept clean  
and to my surprise, the sun revealed itself  
no more rain, so it would seem

i turned the fan on in my room that night  
so it could finally get cool  
and to my surprise, i woke up freezing  
i wish i had heat in my room

not everything we do makes sense  
not everywhere we go makes sense  
but when we ask ourselves why we do those things we do  
we can laugh

Ode to the Pigskin

---

Tobin Sotil '09

I

Thine eyes have seen thee, many of a dream,  
The shape that brought glow to thy youthful  
Face. Thine hands has't felt thou several times before,  
These deep marks and stains reflect thine old  
And wise age. Thine ears do recall thy voice in the hum of the  
Wind, as a sweet lullaby told to a child at dusk.

Thy nostrils dos't recall the sweet aroma  
Of unpolished earth, and twenty-two warriors battling  
Over thine right. Thy mind dos't savor remembrance  
Of triumph and glory, and the bitter taste of agony and defeat.

II

One can only dream what thou has't seen. From  
The snow covered caps of the Tippah Hills, thou  
Walked along side 'Sweetness' in his juvenile years.  
Dos't thee recall thy time greatly spent with Ernie?  
Holding his hand as the battle against the evil oppressor  
Waged onward. Was't thou in their vision while time  
Hung in the balance? In the infirmary beds of Cleveland  
And Chicago? These men; these very few, brought life  
To thee as thou offereth shelter. How can'st thou offer  
Gratitude? What else has't thee seen in thine old age?

III

There are many of men that destroy and exploit thee  
For prosperity. Has't not these men hurt thou?  
The glimmers and flickers of electronics, and a new age  
Uprising? Has't these selfish many buried thine existence?  
What motivation do these demons have to dissipate God given  
Talent, and speak? These many, make mockery of thy game,  
And thy past. Are these many, mortals? Or demons  
Of time? Thee must long for the past  
Few, that gave thou birth. Thou will not find happiness  
In this great occasion of greed and deception.

IV

So I tell thou, do not fly to these demons, with lack  
Of gratitude. Soar to thee few survivors that find freedom  
In the calling of thy voice. Give to these men that give  
To thee. Let peace and liberty be discovered  
In the tussle of thy game. For it is thou that floats akin  
To the glorious wings upon the albatross. Thou has't brought fortune  
And harmony to thy life. Thou dos't remind these eyes  
Of thy past. For years these aged hands have carried thee  
As a newborn. For this mind dos't know that we will one day  
Part. Only to question if thy memory is kept in thy heart.

Ode to My Swing Set

---

Patrick Timmons '09

O, weak wooden structure presiding over  
My back yard, how many hours have I spent  
Swinging on your swings or sliding down your slide?  
Standing on earth, within a field of clover,  
My first great pastime, my outlet of pent  
Up energy with which I could not abide.

How long has it been since I last took your ride?  
Once my constant friend, now a decrepit stand  
Like the dryads' shadowy haunts. Where is  
Your joyful creak? It has been forgotten,  
Replaced by the hollow sounds of the cold  
December winds. How could you have lost your  
Charm? Was your life really so short lived?

Or was it I? You have remained as you  
Always were, a perpetual reminder  
Of more carefree days. I have moved on,  
Started my transition into a life

Of worry and doubt. Not many years ago  
I flew on your swings, as if riding a  
Phoenix into the warm summer sky. Have  
Those joyful days vanished in a puff of smoke?  
Can they not be reborn into this new  
Life filled with stress and anxiety? Can  
They rise from the ashes into a new,  
Flighty temptress, to distract me from my woes?

Yet you are still there. Anchored in the ground,  
You have not changed since the day I first saw you.  
You still beckon to me, asking for one  
More ride. I am the one changing, the one  
Moving on. In less than a year I will  
Never return again; maybe another  
Boy will answer your call to escape,  
Beyond the world of worry and care.  
Escape into the joy of living in the now,  
Experience the rush of wind on his face as  
Each creak of the swing set sends him higher and higher.

The Fire

---

Jon Sommerer '10

The night is black,  
But the light of the stars illuminates the sky.  
The moon still sits content,  
Being outshone by the gleaming stars.  
The hungry fire flickers-  
Desperately trying to find another log to feed its flames;  
But because it's just a matter of time until the fire will end  
We don't fret that the flame is dying.  
The night is late,  
And the morning is near.  
The fire is no longer needed,  
Yet still we lie awake  
Gazing into the universe;  
Not thinking about tomorrow  
But living now.  
For we know just like the fire,  
Our lives too will come to an end.  
And just as the fire shared its light with us  
We can only hope that we too can share our light,  
The same way the fire did.

The Universe

---

Billy Harkawik '10

*I*nfinite highways of string theories,  
Lead to Milky Ways of brilliant electric blues  
and colossal spectrum reds.

No way in, no way out,  
Riddled with holes of a darkness brighter  
than a diamond on the Sun.

Mountains light-years high in all directions,  
Gas and dust that forever billow above the nothing more,  
that becomes something.

Where chaos prevails over logic in all cases,  
The three-dimensional realm of unlimited,  
Incalculably great cosmos and macrocosms.

Here probability battles none,  
Yet Chaotic Inflation crusades  
on with Steady State.

Unbound space meshes with limitless time,  
Reigning over spiral galaxies and elliptical  
nebulas of irregular stars.

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### Forgotten

---

Nathan Tulloch '10

*T*hese precious things in  
life we never remember,  
until they're gone. They pass  
by like silence.  
We take sweet advantage,  
never leaving but always waiting  
for when we call them in despair,  
in deep hunger, we choose to care.

Fun Size

---

Brian Bennett '11

A hallowed source of saccharine sweet,  
A tiny treat proudly petite

These boldly bantam bars  
And rebelliously scanty sweets  
From Hershey, Cadbury, Nestlé, Mars  
Defy a ravenous sweet tooth's needs

They have the gall to seem whopping from without  
But seeds too small; they spurn prayers to sprout

Before I became a jaded chocolatier,  
Before these runty rations became a full-time fall-time fear,  
Anticipating my earliest eating excursions,  
I'd care not what varieties or versions  
Just the sugary solace I would find  
Crossed my dumb, young, numb mind

But no course or class I'd taken

Could prepare me for the scantness in store  
At first I thought my Math mistaken  
For of my peanut M&M's I had counted FOUR

ONE

TWO

THREE

FOUR?

A sobering trickle drizzled into my hand  
A frustratingly false forecast from the chocolate weatherman  
An umbrella couldn't dispel the despair  
Coming through the wrapper's tear  
(Which was, of course, an expectant gape  
An optimistic opening  
Of unsuitably sizable shape)

Curse thee Hershey, Cadbury, Nestlé, Mars and all  
But big chocolate will ne'er fall  
For while we might pine and whine  
We want that whole mouthful every time.

The Ether

---

Brendan Bercik '10

*T*he sand,  
the pearly white sand,  
a million different tiny rocks that slip between my fingertips,  
and sifting through my tender grip,  
will fall beneath my weather-beaten hand.

And more,  
lest Neptune not abide,  
each stone will wash aside ashore, and slide into the ocean floor  
to permeate the water's pores, and  
dance the dance of ebb-and-flowing tide.

The sea,  
alive and breathing free,  
not quite the surface that we see but something so much more,  
a teeming world once but a spore, a seed,  
an egg, and now infinity.

The sky,  
the bright night sky,  
a glowing show of psychedelic light of swirling cosmic dust  
in black and white, more than enough to see  
tonight, to make you wonder why.

How deep,  
these waning waves may seep,  
from hence my ankles and my feet, becomes a riddle seldom  
solved, so I resolve my thoughts and all that seems the stuff of dreams  
and song so I might simply go to sleep.

The Door

---

Chris Hughes '11

Here, in this place I stand  
before the door.  
A simple entryway,  
Or something more?  
Haven, for travelers  
looking for rest.  
Or a means to expel  
the unsought guest.  
Homes lost, for exiles  
crippled by shame.  
Or warmth, for the cold horse  
shaking its mane.  
New life, for couples  
recently married.  
Or naught, for the baby  
gently carried.  
So think, for a moment, what  
symbols present.  
And all the many things  
doors represent.

Bird Hunting Season

---

Andrew Passarelli '11

Each year in bleak mid-winter,  
Thirty young friends come together,  
Bound by a common thread:  
Their love for Prep and dread of that fiery fowl of red.

Waiting vigilantly all season for this moment of victory,  
To bring back a cardinal, either dead or alive, with tremendous pride,  
As forty years of disappointment are cast aside,  
With the roar of the crowd inside.

Thirty brothers donning their armor of magnificent white and red,  
Prepare to enter the battle of their lives,  
Both rivals wishing the other dead,  
Strategize and begin their dives.

Hours of dedication, discipline, and diligence paid in time,  
With the glorious sight of justice due:  
The faces of so many birds blue  
A successful bird hunting season held true.

Noise is Bliss

---

Gage Frank '10

*T*he room is empty and the linen  
sheets are asking to be pulled  
over my eyes to enter a dream.  
Desolate bliss is only a mind away  
from the shrieking of the horns,  
where all of the world  
is disrupted in each and every way,  
from the clatter one story above.

Decibels shake the floors, and harmonious bells  
stick in my head like gum to a shoe.  
Silence is lost, and sleep distant.  
The party it seems is yuppies galore,  
mingling and stumbling across the floor,  
as a crack streaks upon the ceiling,  
I could only ask for more.  
And once they are done and my solitude  
has won, the simple trickle of the tap,  
and the buzzing from the phone  
brings me back to the noisy world,  
where silence cannot be achieved;

it is ubiquitous indeed, there is no victory for me.  
Yet the grim reality so profound,  
there is always just another sound.

Laguna Seca

---

Colin Perras '10

*T*he deep growl of engines revving,  
Breaking the silence of a hot summer day  
The unbearable heat of the harsh desert sun  
Scorches the dark black tarmac

The snarl of the powerful engines steadily creeps louder,  
As the fluttering checkered flag is raised vigilantly in the air  
And then suddenly, it's swiped in a vicious, downward motion,  
Which is when all hell breaks loose in irate retort

The low growls erupt into furious roars of utter rage  
As the untamed beasts rip through first gear,  
Accelerating at rates so ruthlessly intense,  
Like deadly, lead bullets exploding from the muzzle of a gun

Tires screech and scream like the wretched sounds of an animal dying,  
As the raw horsepower of these brutes is sent to the wheels  
The drivers' attempts to maintain traction seem futile,  
As the revolting scent of burning rubber fills the track's dry air

The fury of these feral thugs only increases  
As the drivers shift swiftly into second gear,  
In frantic inhuman motions of precision,  
Demonstrating their rigid control over these voracious machines

Brakes squeak and squeal like swine about to be slaughtered,  
As the ravenous throng maneuvers through the winding course  
Holding their positions and stubbornly refusing to let off the throttle,  
As if to claim the spot as the prevailing dominant beast

And then the untamed pack rampantly tears towards the hazy horizon,  
As if some cry has turned the wild horde in another direction  
And the raging beasts slowly begin to fade away forever,  
To become nothing more than mirages of the lethal desert heat

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# Creative Non-Fiction

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Illustrated by: Michael Kirk

## Altering Egos

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Justin Marini '09

Being an adolescent male can be really unnerving. From awkward growth spurts, zits, and the constant need for more sleep, any guy will agree that the end to the “madness” of puberty cannot come soon enough. Perhaps the most annoying obstacle on the path to adulthood is those tragic and unpredictable voice cracks. Every guy’s voice is bound to crack, but unfortunately this does not make the experience any less embarrassing.

Because of how unpredictable a voice crack is, we guys are left vulnerable to all sorts of awkward encounters that seem to compromise our manliness. While the cracking of a voice is never welcomed, there are certainly times when one voice crack is worse than another. These worst case scenarios of tonal “slip ups” offer the most extreme levels of embarrassment. The award-winners include having your voice crack during the peak of a heated argument, for any reason in any weight room, in front of a crowd, and when introducing yourself.

A few months back, I eagerly left school ready to hang out with some of my friends, in an attempt to curry the favor of a female acquaintance. The night was going well without any real hitches. Her friends and my friends seemed to be getting along quite well, and the night was quickly coming to a close. As the girls were heading out, we began exchanging phone numbers, generally enthusiastic about hanging out again soon.

The girls were almost to their cars and while waving I yelled, “see you la—ter.” My voice climbed three octaves. I had hit the mother load—the Super Bowl of all voice cracks—the embarrassment of introducing myself in front of a crowd of girls was a searing blast of utter humiliation. A quick awkward silence, followed by an eruption of laughter from both parties made playing it off impossible.

Maybe we shouldn't take ourselves so seriously, but some situations are easier to shake off than others. As guys, we need to always be aware of the possibility of voice failure, especially in front of large crowds. Recently, I witnessed a high school aged male give a very heartfelt speech on his family history. In his speech, he also made a lot of great points about the injustices in our own nation, the problems President Barack Obama faces, and many great thoughts on the war in Iraq. The speech left the audience in complete shock. Unfortunately, they were not in awe of the beauty of his words or the unfortunate realities he described, but rather his voice. It seemed to crack like clockwork after every second word. Since his voice was amplified, his cracks were of a much higher force than your average run of the mill tonal variation. It sounded like nails on a chalkboard mixed with a screeching ape, leaving chills down your back.

I could not believe my ears. These cracks were of a completely different caliber. The staccato screeches that radiated throughout the auditorium put the audience on edge. Some even seemed distressed from both the intensity of the noise and how extraordinarily embarrassed the speaker must have been. What I found even more astonishing though, was the guy giving the speech was not even flinching at his cracks. He was so committed to what he had to say that no single jump in the pitch of his voice would stop him from speaking. It would be great if the rest of us could be so impervious to the pain our teenage voices inflicted, but how else would we learn to laugh at ourselves?

"Altering Egos," was first published in Off Campus.

El Médico

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Michael Kirk '10

A black beret and green fatigues, a scraggly beard. This was not the garb of a doctor, nor was a .33 caliber revolver a physician's tool. But he was a doctor, even in his black beret and green fatigues and high leather boots. They called him el médico. It was his job, healing. It was what he did.

But one would be confused to see him pressing the cold barrel of a .33 caliber revolver to the shaven scalp of the whimpering man. He brought the hammer back, the trigger quivering slightly with the motion. But Ernesto was a doctor. A well educated Argentine doctor, with his cold steel revolver and reloaded rounds.

The man kneeling was not innocent. He had done the revolution wrong; he had done Ernesto wrong. He pressed the octagonal barrel harder into the base of the man's skull. The man was weeping, screaming for mercy. But for Ernesto, his mercies lay elsewhere; they lay with the impoverished families this criminal had failed. Ernesto didn't have much mercy to go around.

The cold steel barrel, drop forged in Mexico, pressed even harder into the man's skull. Ernesto's finger tightened, the small spring-loaded lever tripped the hammer, which in turn slammed into the percussion cap. The copper jacketed leaden slug whipped through the short barrel and out the muzzle.

But he was a doctor, with a black beret and high leather boots, and a bloodstained .33 caliber revolver.

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"El Medico" is based on Ernesto "Che" Guevara, who served as a medic and executive officer of Fidel Castro's small band of rebels in Cuba during the 1960's. Guevara reportedly summarily executed one of his men who had attempted desertion.

## Wordplay

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Brian Thornton '10

No matter how “big” or “ripped” somebody is, it is impossible to get away with saying several words in a masculine voice. It doesn't matter how low one makes their voice, some words in our language are just impossible to pronounce in a masculine way. Harmless words such as spritzer, sprinkles, sparkles, streamers, glitter, and twinkle are just a few examples of words that can provoke ridicule. Not even Grizzly Adams or Paul Bunyan could get away with saying these words like a tough guy.

It's difficult for any man to say the word spritzer without getting a chuckle from a peer. Often, a guy has problems saying such words without a hesitation or stutter. This only makes the situation more awkward. Imagine a guy is out to lunch with his mother and grandmother. His mother and grandmother go to use the facilities. On their way out, his grandmother asks him to order her a spritzer when the waiter comes around to ask for their drinks. The guy is fine with it, until he realizes that he has to say that word to their waiter, who is another young guy. Suddenly, ordering their drinks becomes that much more of a challenge.

Some words can even complicate a simple visit to Dunkin Donuts. A donut with sprinkles may certainly shine under the lights with all the colors of the rainbow, but when pitted with the task of asking for it, the little jimmies can taunt the over concerned guy hungrily leaning over the counter. Your morning could get a lot worse if your voice decided to jump ahead of you half way over the “rAINbow.”

Glitter might be seen as the most harmless because it sounds innocent and can be used in sensitive situations. But men, do not be fooled. It is dangerous. For instance, on Father's Day at kindergarten, all of the children come to school with their dads to work on some arts

and crafts. As one father is working on a project with his daughter, she asks to use the glitter, but there is no glitter in sight. Reluctantly, the father stands up and asks if anyone has any glitter that he can use. Immediately, the other fathers think that he wants to use the glitter, not his daughter. Noticing his mistake he sits back down in embarrassment and continues working.

Other words that are tricky to pull off are sparkles and streamers. There are few occasions when one might say either word, but when it happens, it can be brutal. Picture a group of friends out on a motorboat. The sun is shining magnificently on the surface of the water, and one of the guys quickly notices its beauty. He says, "Look at the water; it looks like a million sparkles." This one sentence would undoubtedly be the subject of several jokes the rest of the day. Streamers is not a very popular word in the male vocabulary either, and is therefore rarely used. If a man is going to a parade however, the risk of accidentally saying streamers is significantly higher. Consider this scene. A man's daughter is in a parade. His wife and their friends are taking pictures of the float and their children. One of the men says, "Look at the beautiful abundance of streamers on that float." His friends would most definitely raise an eyebrow, and possibly look at him in disbelief. Or just maybe, by that point, guys soften up a bit. I'm skeptical.

## 'Roids Rage On

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Nicholas Scutari '10

Steroids have been in sports since the early 1950's. However, it has not been until recently that the regulation of steroids has enlightened public awareness because of mandatory drug testing and record breaking statistics. The use of steroids has tainted broken records, taken away paths into the Hall of Fame, and has even taken away gold medals from an Olympic-winning sprinter. Unfortunately, this has not discouraged high school or college student-athletes from using steroids. As a fan of all competitive sports, I feel discouraged that many athletes are willing to sacrifice all of their hard work and their careers in order to have a competitive edge.

With the increased competition for athletic college scholarships, high school students are looking for alternative ways to improve their performance. Likewise, college athletes with a goal to play in the professional sports arena have also looked to performance enhancing drugs to better their athletic statistics. It is only a matter of time before there is increased consciousness of steroids at both the high school and college levels. I am in disbelief that that these young athletes are risking their health and their athletic future to cheat their way to the top.

More and more anabolic steroid tests are being used throughout sports on every level. The only way for athletes to stop the use of steroids is to enforce a mandatory test given on a regular basis. High school and college students will continue to use steroids because they feel that they won't get caught since they are never tested. Various high schools are using the excuse of not being able to afford the fifty dollar cost for a steroid test. These high schools only seem to be avoiding the issue, instead of doing what is morally right. Testing should be mandatory, regardless of the cost. Ethics and health issues are at stake. Testing must happen frequently to stop those who are cheating. Strict consequences need to be established in order to deter those who use perfor-

mance enhancing drugs.

Evidence suggests that steroid abuse by professional athletes is having a large affect on the youth of the nation. The best professional athletes, who I had seen as role models, completely tainted their careers. Whether an athlete takes steroids for two weeks or two months, taking them is still cheating. Student-athletes feel that to be the best, they need to get bigger and stronger. They turn to steroids to help propel this growth to increase their chances of being recruited to a more competitive school. College and high school athletes need to be aware of the risks steroid use poses to their health before it is too late. I think that families and coaches should discuss the dangers of human growth hormones and other questionable “supplements” these young athletes are tempted to take.

Steroids are very tempting for athletes to get into, especially, if they are watching their professional heroes continually issue half-hearted apologies. Teenagers are assaulted with images of fame and fortune that awaits those who reach superstardom, even if that means getting a leg up through artificially enhanced muscle growth. Unfortunately, glamour and fame can misguide impressionable young people. It is much better to earn both strength and recognition naturally, rather than be a cheater.

## Stadium Sell-Outs

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Eric Mollo '10

Every aspect of my favorite team is important to me. The team (of course), the location, the fans, and the stadium itself. Most organizations have sold the naming rights of their team's stadium. In doing so they also sell a part of the team's identity. My beloved New York Mets have followed this trend, and have soldout too. Places like Citizen's Bank Park, The Izod Center, and Gillette Stadium are just a few examples of teams selling the name of their home. When the old home of Shea Stadium became Citi Field, like most Mets fans, I was heartbroken. The cherished memories associated with this name are left for us to hold onto, like an old wrinkled ticket stub. Every baseball fan knows what I'm talking about; Shea is a classic name that gives the New York Mets and the borough of Queens character. The commonly heard phrase, "Hey dude, you want to take the train down to Shea," will be replaced by some reference to "Citi." It's pathetic that the Mets have sold their identity. We might as well call them the New York Citi Bailout Bankers. Where should this auction end? Why don't they just get sponsors for every individual seat, then maybe they could actually finance the contracts for a legitimate bullpen?

Rumors of Citi's financial viability and their attempts to wiggle out of the stadium naming deal makes most Met fans rejoice. Not that anyone wants Citi to go belly up, but what happens if they do? Or if a merger takes places and the company gets renamed? These are important questions to ask in this economy. There is more to being a Mets fan than just knowing who the players are, or understanding what is being debated on sports talk radio. There should also be a place we call a second home. A place we can refer to with familiarity. Giving this aspect of our identity away shows the organization's lack of commitment to an invaluable element of franchise, tradition, and history.

## Comic Book Heroes

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Alex Tortora '10

The comic book art form is now truly showing its creative genius, even though the first comic book, Famous Funnies appeared in 1934. But the biggest influence, the superhero comic, debuted in 1938 with Action Comics #1, the first appearance of Superman. This truly got the super hero genre up and running. Since then superheroes have been reflections of the times. Superman stood for truth, justice and the American way. The X-Men were not only a rag tag group of mutants who saved the world from villains but were a metaphor for prejudice in the 1960s. Even their greatest nemesis Magneto is not just a villain, but a person with a vendetta against humanity for causing the many pains in his life. In the 1970s, DC's Green Lantern / Green Arrow dealt with the themes of racism and drug abuse. The Green Arrow's sidekick Speedy became a heroin addict. Not only was this one of the first comics to truly deal with drug problems, but it humanized these action heroes who were often idolized as gods. These mythical figures were humanized by having flaws, ultimately making them more relatable.

In the late 1980s, DC Comics published what is often referred to as the greatest graphic novel of all time: Alan Moore and Dave Gibbon's Watchmen. The twelve issue mini-series addressed the issue of power through different subjects including: nuclear, political, and sexual. The book portrayed extremely flawed superheroes. In the new millennium, comic books showed the publishers' ability to adapt to the times, just as their own universes were forever altered after 9/11.

Marvel started its ultimate line which reinvented its heroes with a modern twist. In 1978, the first big budget, action packed superhero film Superman starring Christopher Reeves debuted. This film showed the world that superheroes can be transformed into blockbuster hits. The success of Superman spawned four sequels, and influenced Tim

Burton's Batman franchise. But in 1997, poor reviews of Batman and Robin made people wonder if comic book movies were just a fad that had run its course. In 2000, Bryan Singer directed X-Men and saved the day. Once again, X-Men changed people's views of what a superhero movie could be. They didn't wear colorful costumes or have a ridiculous story line but a realistic take and view of the characters and their struggle. The same held true for the Spider-Man movies, and Christopher Nolan's Batman franchise which has experienced great success financially and critically. Because of movies like Spider-Man, Batman, Iron Man, the Hulk and others, Hollywood is now looking towards graphic novels and comic books for more blockbuster hits. Comic books are more main stream than ever and are being taken as serious art forms. These heroes navigate their way through conflicts that mirror our times. Comic books aren't kid stuff anymore.

## A Man For Others, But Not Today

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Matt Fornshell '11

“This is Fairfield Station, Fairfield Station. Watch your step as you leave the train,” announced the conductor, his Brooklyn accent noticeable over the loudspeaker. The wheels screeched as the train slowly stopped to catch its breath. I picked up my belongings and slowly moved towards the doors, suddenly remembering that I had a Spanish test to review for. “Third door, third door.” A kid said, and for a moment it seemed his plea had been answered as the train stopped with the third door closest to the stair case. However, the train slowly continued on to the fourth door and the boy’s heart sank.

Every morning it was a guessing game, which door would be closest to the stairs? However, today the stakes had been raised and the kids were quietly jockeying for position. After a few seconds the doors cranked open and we all streamed out. The blast of cold air that hit us was so painful that it made it difficult to breath. No one spoke as we converged at the bottom of the staircase. Here, the lines slowed to a crawl as the boys ascended the stairs two at a time. My momentary achievement of standing at the head of the pack was quickly destroyed by a newfound sense of urgency. I forgot that I needed to get to school with enough time to study for a first period Spanish exam!

The stairs lead to an overpass that crossed the tracks, and with the wind, the street was even colder than the platform. People around me hid their faces in their jackets to protect their exposed skin from the wind and cold air. Still, no one spoke as we rounded the corner and began heading down the final staircase, the home stretch. Everyone was thinking the same thing, the warmth and safety of the train bus that lay just feet ahead. However, as we reached the bottom a wave of shock and disappointment overcame everyone, and I realized that the train bus was missing. It was never a good thing when the train bus was late, but to be late on the coldest day of the year was almost unbearable. The

entire crowd soon realized the situation and gathered under the overpass, constantly scanning the road for the infamous, white, Dattco bus. Finally, after what seemed like an eternity, the bus pulled into the parking lot. Again, it would be a guessing game; would the driver stop short or go long? Groups accumulated where they expected the bus to stop. However, the driver had been in this situation before, and decided to surprise everyone by stopping well short of even the first group.

For a second no one moves, and then all at once the groups begin to converge on the bus. People move slowly at first, weighed down by their bags, but the fear of being forced to wait for another bus quickly spreads and soon everyone starts running. In the chaos that follows kids drop backpacks and books only to have them swallowed up by the crowd. Kids, who would usually stop to help, only jump over the fallen possessions in their dash for the warmth. The kids in the front of the mob begin to slow down as they approach the door, however the momentum of the mob carries them on and a fist fight nearly develops. The driver tries to direct the chaos but the kids are in a frenzy, they don't realize that they could get on twice as fast if they didn't push. I manage to navigate through the crowd and squeeze onto the bus, showing my pass to the driver, as I walked by. I found a seat towards the middle and slide into it, soaking in the warmth from the heater. I watch the group of kids pushing and shoving as a spectator would watch a boring game, distant and uncaring.

As I think about my upcoming Spanish test I notice a friend towards the back of the crowd with a look of bewilderment on his face. It takes me a second to realize that he doesn't have a pass to get on the bus and will be forced to walk to school. I awaken from my selfish thinking and slowly open the window. I get his attention as I call him over. When I'm sure the driver isn't looking I quickly slip my pass out the window. He knows what to do and gets into line. He is one of the last kids on but he doesn't care, he's made it. He smiles and a look of accomplishment covers his face as he walks down the aisle. "Hey, let

me see that pass,” says the bus driver. My friend’s happy expression sinks as he pauses, unsure if he is the target. He hears the command again and slowly turns around, extending his hand with the pass in it. After checking the pass the driver knows instantly that it’s not his and kicks him off. My friend walks off the bus as people all around laugh. I realize that I am next and attempt to hide but the seat is small and I can clearly be seen. As I glance up, my stare meets that of the driver in the rear view mirror, and I can’t look away. “You too,” I hear and at first I don’t want to move, and try to think of an excuse, anything to keep from being stuck in the cold. However, I slowly get up and walk down the aisle to the front as kids from both sides stare at me. Climbing down the steps and back into the freezing air, I hear the bus driver mutter, “You think you could outsmart me?”

The door closes and the bus pulls away. My friend and I both stare at the bus until it is well out of view. Slowly, and in silence, we begin the long walk to school together. I guess I won’t be able to study this morning after all.

## Contributors

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MICHAEL KIRK '10 based his piece "El Medico," on Ernesto "Che" Guevara. While serving as medic and executive officer of Fidel Castro's small band of rebels in Cuba during the 1960's, Guevara reportedly summarily executed one of his men who had attempted desertion.

NICHOLAS SCUTARI '10 got the idea for his essay, "Roids Rage On," because of all the recent media attention given to the illegal use of steroids by professional athletes. Nick contends that the use of steroids in professional sports has a negative influence on impressionable student-athletes.

JUSTIN MARINI '09 editorial staff member, is inspired by the world around him. In both his short story "Finding Home," and his essay "Altering Egos," Justin examines the struggles of man versus society. In addition to writing for *The Bellarmine Review*, Justin has contributed to other Fairfield Prep publications including *Prep Today*, *Off Campus*, and the *Hearthstone Yearbook*.

ERIC MOLLO '10 was inspired to write "Stadium Sell-Outs," while navigating his way through the mixed feelings this issue creates for him and most other baseball loyalists.

BRIAN BENNETT '11 wrote "Fun Size," as a playful look back at a childhood fascination. At the age of six, Brian and his cousin found nothing fun about the lack of generosity within tiny candy wrappers.

PATRICK TIMMONS '09 got the idea for his story, "Our House," from his experiences on the Appalachia Immersion service trip. The abject poverty and living conditions of the residents of that area became the subject of a simple a descriptive writing exercise. He decided to stay with the piece and eventually turned it into a story. Patrick wrote the poem, "Ode to My Swing Set," when thinking about his childhood and the loss of innocence associated with growing up.

NATHAN TULLOCH '10 wrote "The Forgotten," while reflecting on the things he takes for granted.

TUCKER SHANLEY '09, "Weekend Warriors" was born out of the ping-pong rivalry he has with his dad. Their heated matches are normally just for bragging rights, but this time there is something much more valuable on the table.

C.J. CINDER '09 got the idea for his short story, "The Concert," while recalling an actual show he recently attended. The basis of his story was derived from the excitement and anticipation experienced while waiting for the band to appear on stage.

CONNOR FOLEY '10 wrote his story, "The Race to Beat Curfew," based on the common experience of trying to get home on time. Connor threw in some twists and turns that his character must maneuver around in order to achieve a successful end to his journey. Hopefully, these obstacles are ones most teenage drivers will never have to face.

MATT FORNSHELL '11 editorial staff member, got the idea for his short story, "A Man For Others, But Not Today," after events that he experienced while riding the train. He brings to life what the morning commute can be like for some Fairfield Prep students, and how one small decision could derail a well planned start to the day.

BILLY HARKAWIK '10 wrote "The Universe," in hopes of inspiring the reading audience to consider the metaphorical vastness of the universe.

## The Bellarmine Review

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MATT WENDIN '09 got the idea for "The Pitcher," from the poem *Casey at the Bat*. Matt wanted to portray the internal conflicts within baseball players.

COLIN PERRAS '10 editorial staff member, wrote his poem, "Laguna Seca," based on his passion for auto racing. Laguna Seca Raceway is an incredibly unique and challenging racetrack located in Monterey, California. Its distinctive design truly tests a driver's skill and ability. In his poem, "Laguna Seca," Colin attempts to depict the raw power and authority that the cars display while racing there.

GAGE FRANK '10 began his poem "Noise Is Bliss," as a sort of ode to his love of silence. During the creative process of crafting his poem, it dawned on him that it really doesn't exist, there is always another sound.

BRIAN THORNTON '10 wrote "Wordplay," after talking to his friends about the difficulty some guys have in saying certain words. The piece began as a simple exploratory exercise in writing humor, but Brian stayed with the essay until he could make the words "sparkle" off the page.

FRANK LUPARIELLO '10 was inspired to write his poem, "Nature's Embrace," by his memories of the beach at sunset during summer evenings. Frank's objective in the poem was to convey that the power and beauty of nature are greater than that of people.

ANDREW PASSARELLI '11 was inspired to write "Bird Hunting Season," after a triumphant swim meet.

ALEX TORTORA '10 is proud to have been a member of Volume 67's editorial staff. Alex is an avid comic book reader which inspired him to write "Comic Book Heroes." He wanted to show that these graphic novels are an important aspect of our culture.

BRENDAN BERCIK '10 contributed to Volume 67 by designing the cover, as an editorial staff member, and writer of the poem "The Ether."

ANDREW HOLLIS '10 wrote his poem "Chairlift," after spending a weekend skiing in Vermont.

JON SOMMERER '10 got the idea for his poem, "The Fire," after the death of two very close family members. Jon tried to put everything that happened into perspective and remember all of the good things about those who are no longer with him.

CHRIS HUGHES '11 wrote "The Door," after reading the novel *A Lesson Before Dying*. The aspect of entering through the back door provoked his imagination to portray the oppression in the novel through his poem.

BRENDAN DORAN '11, got the ideas for his poem, "The Angel," after reading the novel, *All Quiet on the Western Front*, and watching the movie, *Saving Private Ryan*. Brendan imagined what feelings were held in the minds of the soldiers as they experienced the horrors of war.

TOBIN SOTIL '09 wrote "Ode to the Pigskin," because of his love of football.

ROSS RISKIN '09 editorial staff member, contributed the poem "We Can Laugh." Ross is an aspiring singer/songwriter, whose writings derive from musical inspiration. Ross' music and writing have appeared in the *New Haven Advocate*, *Amity Observer*, *Bridgeport Times*, *CBS Sportline*, and 99.1 WPLR.

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