

The Tenth Muse



*Science Park High School
Literary Magazine
2013-2014*

The Tenth Muse

“You may write me down in history
With your bitter, twisted lies,
You may trod me in the very dirt
But still, like dust, I'll rise.”

Maya Angelou (1928 – 2014)

Advisor

Mr. Townsend

Student Editors

Daniela Fonseca

Ashanti Hargrove

The Tenth Muse is dedicated to
Daniela Fonseca and Ashanti Hargrove.

Table of Contents

<u>Title</u>	<u>Author</u>	<u>Page(s)</u>
Doubtful Authenticity	Claressa Lopez	1
Twisted Devotion	Dylan Vieira	2
Perfect Storm	Claudia Sá	3
Clipped Wings	Sachin Motiram	4
Volleyball	Rebecca Ford	5
Profound Waves	Edd Brown Jr.	6
The Beautiful Game	Josue Romero	7
Around the Horn	Patrick Alves	8
Frogman	Shaheen Norfleet	9
The Truth About Love	Jasmin Williams	10
Disenchanted	Mariamou Kesselly	11
Mourning Grief	Victor Pullas	12
True Colors	Kennia Vasquez	13

Hello	Luis Marquez	14
Epiphany	Edgar Freitas	15
Enchanted Misery	Ashley Lopez	16
Life	Hanirah Mitchner	17
The Foreign Character	Katherine Mendoza	18
Blue Dahlia	Mariamou Kesselly	19 - 21
The Birds Inside My Head	David Shamburger	22 - 28
Royal Nightmare	Kennia Vasquez	29 - 31
Justice	Edd Brown Jr.	32 - 37
Making Decisions	Naana Boachie	38 - 40
Idealization	Paulo Pinto	41 - 44
The Usage of Motifs in <u>Macbeth</u>	Paulo Pinto	45 - 47
Finding Potential	Daniela Fonseca	48 - 49

Doubtful Authenticity

by Claressa Lopez

What if the canyons that ran on our hands
Were scars from the crusades we never fought?
And due to the restraints of our commands,
We never dared explore what we ought not.
But since we were unaware of the pain,
We carried on to build, create, and dream;
The canvases where our wounds do remain
Form mountains, flowers, valleys, skies and streams.
It seems as though our instincts may be right
Until the mountains spew hot, burning fires.
The flowers weep, the skies are bruised with night,
Valleys and streams once something to admire.

Another cut to add to the regret,

Maybe the orders are our only threat.

Twisted Devotion

by Dylan Vieira

My heart yearns for your gentle, caring love.

I hope that you will one day notice me.

The sound of your voice sends me up above,

For you are all that my eyes let me see.

I cherished how you opened up your heart,

We spoke and understood each other well.

There was more than your looks, you were so smart,

Like a scared snail you a came out of your shell.

I now do realize who you really are.

My mind and I must try to forget you,

My feelings for you are not very far.

I can't forgive the things that you did do.

But now I know that I cannot forget;

So can my heart live on, filled with regret?

Perfect Storm

by Claudia Sá

There was a lone seed on a summer's day,
Praying for nothing but sweet, gentle rain.
It knew that rain would not be on its way,
But yearning feelings did the seed maintain.
The skies awakened after a long night
And sent a troubling storm with rain so rough.
The poor, small seed was struck with grief and fright;
Its confidence was truly not enough.
But as the clouds did soon bid us farewell,
A marvelous thing happened down below,
Comforting kisses of rain broke the spell
And born was a flower with a golden glow.

Our love resembles this inspiring tale
That after our own storm, love will prevail.

Clipped Wings

by Sachin Motiram

A dwindling world beneath your weary feet,
Another summer night you'll someday fly
Through winter chill or scorching summer heat,
Glide silently through clouds without a sigh.
You are an ant; the endless sky is vast.
Do not give in to fate; do not think twice.
Above gray clouds, you'll soar in flight at last;
You'll fly above red sand and blue-white ice.
Rise from your bed, worn body, and frayed skin.
Jailed in an iron cage, you have to fight!
Nobody sees the shining heart within;
Will you escape to one day see the light?
Fly fast within the cosmic clouds and age
To distant mountain heights you soon will gauge.

Volleyball

by Rebecca Ford

I love this sport, it has grown within me;

I love to run fast up and down the court.

Playing volleyball makes me feel so free;

This is and always will be my main sport.

You have to work hard to be a good starter.

You have to play fast and run like kid flash;

If you want to become a Lady Charger,

You cannot slack off or you'll play like trash.

It is easy to get discouraged,

After one shank, your head starts to hang low.

Soon the whole team is on a different page;

You start to give up and move really slow.

Volleyball's not an easy sport to play,

But if I could I would play it all day.

Profound Waves

by Edd Brown Jr.

A ghost of light whose sound contacts my heart,

The only medicine that cures despair,

It may be the most passionate of arts

Because emotions are put in the air.

The vibrations that hit my ear drums will

Infect what is within like a sly virus.

Though it reaches within it does not kill,

This is the one thing to which I am pious.

Though stuck on its incredible fine art,

Time teases me with the limit of life.

From music I don't want to be apart,

Pleasure is like the pain from a sharp knife.

The light I hear will be the greatest sound;

In life until that life becomes unbound.

The Beautiful Game

by Josue Romero

Open my eyes and hear the screams and cheers.

Looking at a great wide pitch, wet and green.

All feelings go away, feeling no fear.

The sun blazing, what a beautiful scene!

The whistle blows as the ball starts to roll;

It's heading straight my way; I am all set

To save my team as the ball heads to goal,

Not on my watch as it rolls to the net.

The game goes on, I do become fatigued,

Allow the first goal anger fills my mind.

All of our fans have almost become intrigued

By aspects of the game that they must find.

Soccer is something more than just a game;

It is so great, and well known for its fame.

Around the Horn

by Patrick Alves

Your sharpened cleats are digging in the sand;

The team assembles, and you stand real tall;

Your glove slips on, you rub sand on your hand;

You get set, and the umpire yells, "Play Ball!"

The first pitch then is thrown and it's strike one,

A ground ball that is hit to second base;

The game is going well, you're having fun,

A baseball game is all about the pace.

You play for pride until there's one team left;

You leave it on the field: blood, sweat, and tears.

When the ball is hit, you must show great deft;

You hit a home run and you hear the cheers.

When it comes to the end, you've played all nine;

The game of baseball is really divine.

Frogman

by Shaheen Norfleet

A deadly sickness that no one can cure,
My love for her will never be erased;
The remedy, her soul which is so pure
Shall not be something that I would debase.
A life long journey like no other one,
A trip that makes me feel like I am free,
To be in a brotherhood with someone,
Help me be the best person I can be.
However, the journey is so costly
That someone would dare sacrifice his life;
A creepy, death angel singing softly
Makes my courage and fear become strife.

And come June I will gladly seal the deal

On my journey to become a Navy Seal.

The Truth About Love

by Jasmin Williams

Love is as beautiful as butterflies;

The day dreams of love fill our hearts with joy,

But love hears just as many smiles as cries;

Love lets you know the heart is not a toy.

Trying to leave her love is always tricky.

Some people can find the power to leave,

But for some people that can get real sticky,

Love isn't supposed to make you want to grieve.

But that's what we were told love is to be;

They didn't tell us love is dark as death.

You don't know 'til you fall in love and see,

Not always good when said love takes your breath.

In the end, all love is not meant to last,

Just enjoy it and leave it in your past.

Disenchanted

by Mariamu Kesselly

She was just a little fragile glass doll;

She woke up with a smile upon her face;

She was stuck behind the camouflaged wall;

She decided to walk through it with grace.

Behind the wall she finds reality.

Her true nature is then stolen from her.

She fights like a scout for vitality,

For her happiness has left with a blur.

From behind the wall she was so merry,

But curiosity killed the dumb cat.

Light emotions were never so scary

As she grew up as a spoil little brat.

Her glass physique has been turned in to rags;

After her use, she is wrapped up in bags.

Mourning Grief

by Victor Pullas

The cold and harsh wind that rushed past my face

Reminded me you're not around today.

My life is facing now a scary phase,

Your spirit is resting far away.

This path I've walked so long has been my fate,

With every step I take I feel alone.

All of the memories now slowly fade,

And my sad heart turns cold stone.

The fear that moves up and down my spine

Is one so strong it leaves me on the floor.

Just crawling in this weak body of mine,

Just wishing now that I could close the door.

The thought of you is now no longer clear,

Our memories vanish and this I fear.

True Colors

by Kennia Vasquez

His soul was innocent as a white dove,
Following the demands was not an option;
Church is his second home where there's real love;
He wanted the world to have no corruption.
His peers saw him like a leader for change,
Morality and sin never combine;
Was he true to himself for his young age?
Revealing his sins was a dreadful sign.
The truth that separated him from you,
Blind love he dies to have is never there;
His own same sex is his most perfect view,
Does anyone think he will someday care?
Escaping his soul from being a slave,
He will live his life away from the cave.

Hello

by Luis Marquez

You can continue your daily routine,
Come to a cup of java, but there's more.
See the stained teeth, which you've already seen,
Such a bore, such a bore, oh, such a bore.
Oh, but you can create your own secret,
Paint a dragon or speak to the mermaids,
But be careful; these creatures you've just met
All the pictures go away, they just fade.
All your friends begin to laugh, do they mock?
They do not know of the power you hold.
Your enemies, they come in such a flock
They don't know that the paper can just fold.
And so your friends just fade, just sigh,
No more secrets, just smile and wave good bye!

Epiphany

by Edgar Freitas

Into your mom's eyes you look deep inside,

Under her care, she hopes to raise a gent.

On earth, your presence can no longer hide,

But is it really worth our time that's spent?

Our life is like an hourglass of time,

So what's the point if one day we will die?

People work hard each day for every dime,

To have to one day look back and say bye.

To please everyone is quite unlikely,

But life should not be taken for granted;

We come to earth to experience widely

All its wonders that will leave us enchanted.

To live is one irreplaceable thing,

With fascination nothing else can bring.

Enchanted Misery

by Ashley Lopez

Your harmless soul enchants my deepest fears;

Fate brought us back together once again;

Our love intensified throughout the years,

A love so strong it's greater than all man.

A garden fighting deep down underneath,

A pointless cosmic earth we wander on,

We come across new oxygen to breathe,

A prized possession we fought for and won.

Although your body lingers close to me,

Your heart wants me no more, we fell apart;

You crave for something greater than our glee,

For I must walk away without my heart.

This heartbreaking end means we have to part,

For I have lost this great piece of fine art.

Life

by Hanirah Mitchner

I'm anxious,
For I have never felt this way,
This feeling of anguish
And neglecting to live for today,
It has come a couple of times
I've just been rejecting it,
I feel like giving in sometimes,
I will never fit.
This world is too big,
Will I leave or will he?
He is such a prig,
Standing beside me so no one can see,
She has suffered through so many losses,
Determined to go
As she tosses,
Turns creep in the dark from below,
For she is me,
And I'm going nowhere soon;
It's me who lives this life that people see,
By the glow in the night's moon;
You can see what's real;
I just can't fight,
It has closed my fate with a grey seal,
But I still stand full of light
And I make it go away,
For my destiny is on this land,
Still my words are trying to say,
Choking on the sand,
For I give
And just simply live.

The Foreign Character

by Katherine Mendoza

Open your eyes child
Let go of fear,
I caress your body and hold your tears.

Calm, joyous, harmony begins,
Sweet lullabies,
I know no sacrifice.

Relax,
I hold you
Above the moonlight.

Distant façades,
A sweet voice whispers
Symphony delights.

Blue Dahlia

by Mariamu Kesselly

The streets of Dahlia were covered with crowds. It was that time of year where the shadows came out to play and wreak havoc on the innocent people of Dahlia. They were sneaky beings that were said to escape the devil's mouth when he opened it. They never came around in the summertime and it was still unknown why. Everyone believed in their existence, yet one has yet to be seen.

There were many packs of people sticking together, for if alone they may be vulnerable against the shadow creatures. The shadows were like a disease. Once you were infected, there would be no turning back until the end of their playtime. Incredibly, people would still go to parties and have the time of their lives like nothing was going to happen.

John Lawsky basically grew up with the shadows dominating his town every year in the fall. As a child, John possessed a holy necklace that was said to keep the evil spirits from possessing a person who wore it and if taken off, would be the end of one's sanity. Many people had this holy necklace, but then again many did not.

John was a rich and well-known chemist in his town and vowed that one day he would make a medicine that would remove the shadows from a person's body

and cure him or her of evil. Today, however, was not going to be the day for curing people of evil, for he had dinner reservations with his lovely wife.

“Honey, are you ready to go?” he asked calmly.

“Yes dear, just let me find my purse,” she replied. She wore a fancy black silk dress with pearls and heels that complimented her figure. He was madly in love with her.

“Where’s the necklace?” John asked.

“Oh. I didn’t want to wear it. It ruins my outfit,” she said.

Concerned, John got her necklace and attempted to put it on her, but she refused. In a blink of an eye, she began to attack him.

“Stop, Jane! Do not let the shadow consume you. Put the necklace on now!” he shouted while trying to avoid more of her attacks.

“What? I’ve dreamed of this for years. Your death is the key to my success, my happiness. I will drown in wealth,” she exclaimed while cutting a bit of his arm. John was not only fighting for his life, but trying to put the necklace on his wife as well. After a few minutes of dodging his wife’s attacks, he finally put the necklace on her, but nothing changed.

Eventually John was able to retreat to the open streets of Dahlia. Madness was what he saw. It was everywhere and it seemed that sanity and morality had left mankind itself. People were breaking and entering and robbing. Even the police

who were supposed to regulate these crimes were doing such deeds themselves. What bewildered John was that most of the people who happened to be wearing the holy necklace were committing crimes as well. He decided to take off his own necklace and await a change that would not come.

“Wow,” he said to himself while bringing out a little chuckle. “What lies!” there were no shadow creatures; there was no holy necklace that could remove these evil forces. There was nothing but the growing desires that haunted every individual indiscriminately. The shadows were just a poor excuse for people to fulfill these ugly desires that would mark them as immoral creatures. It is human nature to survive and it is also human nature to strive for pleasure.

He appeared on the streets with buckets of a blue liquid substance.

“A touch of this will remove these ugly desires!” he chants this as he splashes it on anyone that comes near him.

“Oh my god! You have cured me!”

He was dying. As he was still holding on to life, he saw a glimmer of hope. A young girl was aiding a bruised, middle-aged man. Though many people let their inner demons get to them, there were still few who did not let their selfish desires get the best of them. When he died, the people found the ingredients for his magical medicine in his pocket. The ingredients written were water and blue dye. Change comes from within.

The Birds Inside My Head

by David Shamburger

It's Sunday morning. The birds enter the window singing the same old song they always sing that brings warmth to people's hearts. The sun shines through the window, a sparkling light. It is majestically beautiful outside. The birds get even louder with their gleeful hymns of praise and grace. A pillow flying across the bedroom into the window barely misses one of the two birds and lands outside. The birds fly away, startled at the near death they just witnessed.

Greg rolls over in his bed and covers his head with another pillow from his bed. The birds come back, this time with reinforcements. The pack of seven birds—not a flock but a pack like angry wolves—begins singing again in a higher volume than before. Greg gets up and closes the window as they fly around outside. Then as he returns to his comfortable safe haven, he hears a tapping getting gradually louder and louder. The birds are pecking at the window. Greg returns to the window and opens it to shoo the birds away. They fly in the air...but they don't go away. Greg returns to his bed and hears a tweet just as he closes his eyes. Again a pillow flies, this time hitting a bird just as the others get away.

Greg gets back in his bed, tossing and turning, but he can't seem to go back to sleep. He decides he should just get up anyway, and now his efforts are in vain. He picks up his cell phone on the side of his bed and takes it off the charger.

“11:58!!” he shouts, reading the time on the alarm excitedly. He is supposed to get up around 8 A.M. so that he could spend the day doing all the homework he put off. The alarm on his phone never woke him up. To be honest, he never really remembered setting it. He scrolls through his phone and realizes that the alarm he set was for 9 P.M. instead, and a notification comes on the screen that reads, “Please plug in charger. Your device has 5% (or less) left.” Greg is completely puzzled at what just happened. He passed out last night after he put his phone on the charger, but it was never plugged in.

“Gregory! Get up!” his mom yells from some unknown location in his house. “It’s too late to still be sleeping!”

“I know, Mom. I’m already up!” Greg takes his towel off the hook and runs into the shower. The birds come back to the window to await his return.

Gregory goes back to his bedroom and begins rummaging through his closet to find clothes. He looks at the window and sees one bird. It was most likely the one he hit with the pillow earlier. It looked completely befuddled and dazed. Greg goes over towards the window, and the bird flies into a tree. The tree is filled on each branch with an army of blue birds ready to attack. It takes Greg just a few seconds to realize what was about to happen. The birds begin to attack the window.

He proceeded to look for his book bag. He knew what the assignments were, but he just couldn't locate the bag. He had 36 pre-calculus problems, a chapter of *Frankenstein* to read, and a six-page typed essay about nature.

“Gregory!” his mom yells again. “Come outside and get these bags!”

“Outside?” he could have sworn his mother was inside the house. Greg was stretched out on his bed but immediately jumped up after his mother's call. He looks at the clock as he ran out his room and it reads 2:30. Greg passes out again. He doesn't even know how he got on his bed looking for the book bag. Greg runs down the stairs and gets to the front door. As he touches the knob, he feels a draft on his torso. He hurries back upstairs and comes back down, this time with a shirt.

“What took you so long?!” his mother scolded him, now inside the house.

“I was just—”

“Don't!” she cut him off. “I already got your brother to bring in the groceries; just go put them up.” Greg walks into the kitchen with shame as his younger brother walks pass him with a smile. Greg begins putting up the groceries. The last item he pulled out was the eggs from the bag, but he hears a noise before he could put them away. Greg turns around and sees a blue bird prancing on the table. Greg nonchalantly goes back to the eggs but quickly realizes he looked over something. It wasn't what was a bird doing in his house, contrary to what would normally be the first thought if others were in the same situation but how did it get

in. He looks above the table and notices the window wide open with an oversized hole in the window screen that wasn't there last night. One by one, blue birds start flying through the hole at a rate constantly accelerating. The eggs fell. Greg flees from the kitchen and burst up the stairs.

“What are you doing?!” his mom stopped him before he left the floor.

“Mom...birds...pillow...screen,” Greg attempted to reply out of breath. His mom walks into the kitchen and Greg hesitantly followed after.

“GREG!” his mother yelled. “Why did you drop the eggs?”

“But Mom, the birds...,” Greg then looks at the open window, now with a fixed screen. It appears as if the screen had never been touched. Gregory's mom still stared daggers into his eyes. She was so angry that she barely spoke.

“Go upstairs. I'm going to get more eggs.” Greg's mother stormed out of the house and his brother, who had been sitting in the living room for a while, left with her. Greg had the house to himself and a quiet environment to finish his homework, except for one problem: the pesky blue birds that patrolled his house, watching his every move. Greg looks out the back door to find the replacement window screen with the huge, gaping hole in the middle, along with his book bag.

It was now 3:13 in the afternoon. Greg still didn't do any of his homework, which his grades desperately needed, especially the research paper about nature. He sits on his bed and decides to start with the pre-calculus problems, but he

understands none of it. What made the situation worse was that he didn't have a calculator, so he had to use his phone as one. It takes him a while to finish even the first problem. By 4:45, he was done with 20 out of 36 problems, and he decides that it is good enough and he should receive some form of credit. Then he notices something weird. It has been a minute since he heard any chirping coming from outside. Greg's mind was clouded with thoughts of what could be. He tries to read *Frankenstein*, but he keeps getting distracted by the thought that these cunning blue birds could be plotting against him.

It seems that the birds favored the trouble, causing him to wonder why he has yet to hear another tweet. Maybe it was a trend that just died down, but he couldn't be too sure. Greg wasted another thirty minutes to find some toy binoculars in his closet that he hadn't used since he was thirteen. He grabs a chair and sits right by the window. He sees the birds in the nest and observes their every move. Every now and then he would pick up *Frankenstein* and try to read it, but he just couldn't focus.

Then he hears the sound of trumpets ringing in his ears. The sky is pitch black now with tiny stars in the sky. Greg removes the book from his face and looks out the window. The birds weren't there anymore. It was 9 P.M. and Greg's alarm had finally gone off.

“GREGORY!” He hears a loud, shrill voice. Immediately Greg gets out of the chair and runs downstairs.

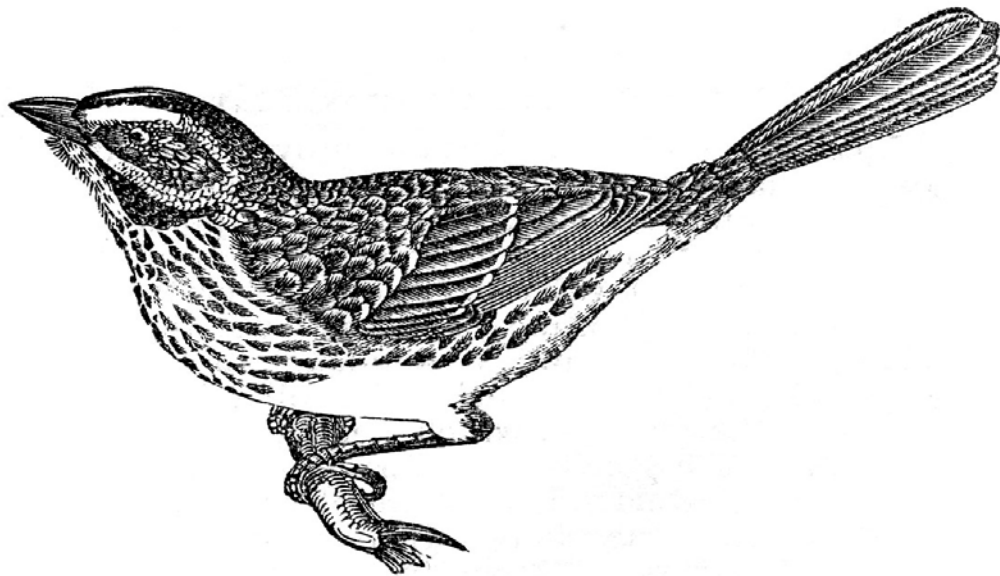
“What were you doing up there? Hadn’t seen you in a while,” his mom asks him when he finally touched the living room floor. He is too dazed to answer. “Go get the mail; you forgot to get it yesterday.” His mother walks into the kitchen as Gregory goes outside to fetch yesterday’s mail. As he opens the door a blue bird awaits him, carrying the letters from the mail box in its beak. The letters are dropped on the doorstep as the bird flies away.

Greg picks up the letters and walks back in, completely confused as to what just transpired. The birds hated him. They made a good portion of his morning and afternoon miserable for him, but now one just helped him. He goes back upstairs and came to a realization: he still didn’t start the nature essay. Greg sits on his bed and powers up his laptop. The point of the assignment wasn’t to write about nature as a whole but just one aspect of it. Greg spends an hour deciding on what to write and how to start it.

He hears another tapping at the window and sees a flock of blue birds flying around. Greg remembered he spent awhile watching the birds, so in the essay he documented what he seen. The essay took him until 3 A.M. to finish. Afterwards he couldn’t go to sleep, so he went on Twitter to see if anyone was still up; he hadn’t talked to anyone in a while. Greg glances at the logo, a blue bird in right

corner of the screen. He goes through a couple of tweets and opens up a photo. It wouldn't load, so there was this giant hole where the picture should be. Then he goes to his interactions to see some accounts that followed him that were missing a picture, so they had the standard egg shape for an avatar. He blocks them and shuts off his laptop.

Greg opens his eyes and looks at his clock. It was Monday morning but the clock said 11 A.M. Greg gets up confused and looks out the window to see the snowfall he should have expected. All the birds were gone.



Royal Nightmare

by Kennia Vasquez

These golden doors are seen as a key to happiness and fortune, but I see them as the doors to slavery. Everyone in London knows me as the “eyes of the new generation.” Why can’t they just call me ‘Sofia,’ rather than adding an insignificant word before it? Every little girl wants to be a princess, but I wish I wasn’t one. Being a princess isn’t as amazing and magical as the fairy tales that my mom once read me said.

I would give anything just to be an average teenager. Every day I watch people across our palace walking around and admiring its architecture. When they see me walk the seven gardens of the palace, they stare at me in astonishment. If only I was able to have contact with them. My bodyguards have strict regulations that they must follow, thanks to my grandmother. I can’t make new friends or wear what I want if my grandmother doesn’t approve of it. Everything that she says must be followed.

When my father told me that she was going to take the responsibility of my mother, I thought she was going to be just like my real mother. How wrong was I? She has been everything but a mother. Everyone from London has a huge appreciation for her. Why can’t they see what I see?

Where is the prince? Everyone always asks me how it feels to have a father who is the Prince of England. My question to that answer usually is “I wouldn’t know.” How am I going to answer the question when I hardly see my father?

Going to school is not a big deal for me, even though I have to hang out with snobby children who are also part of the royal family. It’s a shame to know that all they think about is fortune and fame, and they don’t care about their education. We may have millions of dollars; however, that doesn’t mean we shouldn’t be concerned about college. I don’t want to be seen as just a princess who doesn’t do anything in the palace; instead, I want to be known like my mother, Princess Diana.

Everyone from my family looks at me like the black sheep. They never knew that my mother had a daughter before marrying the prince of England. They want me to fit into this society and become accustomed to designer clothes rather than being true to myself. They don’t want me to have contact with my mother’s side of the family or my old friends. It shouldn’t matter if they don’t come from the same class as we do.

The last two days I wasn’t able to sleep. Just thinking that my grandmother had set me up on a date with Prince Rafael made me isolate myself from others. Unfortunately, we go to the same school. I can’t stand him. He may come from a prestigious family, but his personality is the opposite of what is expected of him.

He *thinks* he is popular, but in my eyes he wasn't much to look at. Why did she have to choose him of all people has been a question I've been trying to answer. The only thing that we have in common is coming from an important family, but our personalities and interests are like oil and water. Sadly, I had to just suck it up and go on this date with him in order to try to make my grandmother happy.

The day had come or should I say my nightmare. I couldn't stand looking at him. It amazes me how my grandmother doesn't let anyone be near me for more than ten minutes alone, yet with him she lets me be with him for more than an hour. Being with him for only an hour felt like an eternity.

As he was trying to impress me, I noticed this young man outside of the house watering roses. He was around my age, and his blue eyes captured my attention immediately. I had never felt this way before. I didn't care what Rafael had to say, my eyes were only focused on the mysterious man in the garden. Just by the way he was dressed, I knew my grandmother wouldn't approve, but I didn't care. I walked away from Rafael and walked straight towards this captivating young man to say hello. Sometimes you have to ignore what others say and do what feels right.

Justice

by Edd Brown Jr.

In history class when I, Earnest, was in elementary school, my teacher told us: “One would normally assume that heroism would derive from tragedy or villainy, but in the case of this city’s history, villains only seemed to begin appearing after heroes popped up offering to be of the city’s benefit.” Initially hearing this introduction to the heroes and villains curriculum in my history class, I did think it weird that heroes would appear before villains. What reason would anyone with powers need to dress up in costumes and just help people without an increasing crime rate or any villains? Eventually in my first two years in high school, we learned that the president was able to pass a law saying that cities would need to deal with their own villains. If any city had villains, but no heroes to fight them, there were heroes available to be assigned to a city, for free. “Super-powered people,” otherwise known as “Greats,” took some worry off of crime, as well as social and economic injustices that derived from selfish corporate powers.

My first encounter with one of the Greats happened on my 18th birthday. I woke up Monday morning and rolled out of bed onto the floor. However, instead of landing on my floor, I kept falling, and falling, and falling. My heart felt like it flew to the back of my body, shriveled up as small as it could. Cold wind was whiplashing my cheeks; the air was growing tighter as I kept falling; all was dark. I

got tired of yelling for my life and waited for the end to present itself. Just as I grew fearless of this end, the environment I saw changed, the darkness passed, and I was falling, strangely enough, up the sky. My clumsy ascendance ended once I thought I was able to fly.

Although I did not “wake up” from this imagery that I experienced, once my vision regained focus to my bedroom floor, I passed the experience off as just a dream. On my way to school my mind was going haywire, my physical vision alternating between real and super natural. A man, husky, bearded, red-faced, grabbed my arm, and again the weird visions appeared. “Enough already!” I yelled.

“Chill, kid,” a voice interrupted. I looked up, and looked around. I realized that I actually was seeing reality. I searched around the room to see who spoke to me. There were five people in the room, all recognizable; they were a group of super heroes, part of a group known as “Good.” The man, who brought me there via teleportation and was standing next to me breathing relatively hard, was the most famed super hero of the city, Mr. Condiments. The man who spoke to me was Sauce Man, Mr. Condiments’ brother. The rest of the room consisted of the Cocoa Nut, Space Girl, and Dr. Hamlet, other superheroes. Sauce Man continued to speak to me.

“Dr. Hamlet can pick up readings on new ‘Greats’ and was able to determine that it was coming off you. Has anything weird been going on in your life recently? Strange phenomenon that you can’t begin to explain that sound insane?”

“Well, my name is Earnest. Actually, I’ve been having visions, I think, or maybe teleportation...well, no, I’m able to feel at the same time. It has to be teleportation, or maybe they’re just dreams. It makes more sense if they are just dreams. I’m not even sure...Why di—”

“It’s alright Earnest. We’ve all been through something similar. We can help you,” Space Girl reassured me as she interrupted my dialogue and put her hand on my shoulder.

“Let’s call him Dream Visionary,” Cocoa Nut yelled out. I thought for a moment. Did they really think I was going to just up and join their hero group just because I might have some weird, useless super power? Negative. I gave them a look and somehow they just knew that everything was happening way too fast. Mr. Condiments teleported me closer to my school. Needless to say, I thought hard about my short adventure that morning.

About a few weeks later, I was able to control my powers better. It turned out that I saw visions of other people, past, present, and sometimes future. One day, another vision hit me by surprise: It was of someone walking toward me and telling me to meet him somewhere. I wasn't sure how I felt about it because I didn't

live it, but experiencing it through whoever the person was, the person felt sincere. I didn't go to school that day and waited in the spot that I remembered seeing myself. A man, weird and familiar looking, walked up to me and told me to meet him in some alley. Weirdly enough, I followed his directions.

I entered the alleyway and found some strangely designed arrows around, so I followed them. They led me to a red door from which music could be heard playing. The poorly hidden room held five people who were lounging around. These guys were villains, but they were all relaxing. I didn't feel threatened by them as much as I thought I should have. Graffiti Guy, a lesser villain, reached out his hand to dap me, and then he went on to welcome me to the lair of the "free." "Free" was ironic, but almost not as ironic as the name of a group of villains, who fought against "Good." He introduced me to the rest of Free: The Quaker, The Chocolate Menace, Rainbow Lass, and El Fuego (who didn't really know any Spanish). They were a pretty cool group, playing cards, games, and helping each other with homework. That day I grew to like them. I asked Graffiti Guy, whom I started to call GG, why they are in constant battle against "Good."

His answer was simple, but it hit me as more complex than a calculus equation. He told me that they battled against "Good" to be free. I thought deeply about the double meaning of that statement and its metaphorical meaning. Why did one need to beat good forces to spread freedom? What is freedom? Surely it was

not something wrong. Freedom is good. Right? It wasn't until I experienced firsthand the symbolic war that was waged in my city between the Greats that I came up with a solid answer.

One cold February night, it seemed the two factions of Greats decided to settle things for good. Whoever won this last battle was free to do as they pleased and control the city as the ruling great power. I had been spending a lot of time with both "Good" and "Free" these past few months, and I kept getting visions of someone from either "Free" or "Good" preparing themselves and their beliefs for this battle. Although this fight would be with fists, it was more of a war of ideals. "Good" more or less defended the city from anyone who did not live up to their definition of good. They helped society as whole; they gave positive results in favor of the city. On the other hand, Free, who fought just to have liberty, actually helped individual people usually by stopping crimes such as robberies or kidnappings. They made results for individuals and themselves, too, but they didn't judge others; they just understood and wished for everyone to be free from conformity. Neither of these ideals was bad. If they were, this city would have had a bad group of Greats.

I ran to the place where the initial showdown was to begin. It was an old, large manufacturing area where the beginnings of infrastructure once existed. It was extremely cold that night. I wore two pairs of socks, a white pair and a black

pair. I did not see the beginning or notice any alarm—I only heard thunder. The sound of each of the heroes clashing against their villain counterparts created thunder. Graffiti Guy made the most noticeable marks in the sky using his powers. It was beautiful, although he had knocked back Sauce Man, whom I've come to like, with one swing, he left an array of sprayed paint, which created the word "free."

"No!" Cocoa Nut yelled out, fanning away the cloud of beauty with a spinning kick move. Good takes away freedom. Good spin kicks through freedom. Good is what people perceived as helpful or positive, but it's almost controlling and suffocating. Freedom is trying to stray away from conforming to ideals created by people in the past. Freedom is creating, and doing things, and not being held down by what people call good. However, even freedom has faults; people cannot just be free to do any particular thing they wanted. That's no way for a real society to live. **Too much freedom is chaos and not enough freedom is madness.**

I don't know why this battle between my friends interested me so, and made me think so deeply, but I realized my whole life up until now has just been looking at things. I never actually believed in something so strongly. When I realized this clear solution to the fight between Good and Free, they seem to have vanished. I did not see them again. It was alright though because Justice didn't need a Free group and Good group; it just needed a Great, Earnest one.

Making Decisions in “The Road Not Taken”

by Naana Boachie

In “The Road Not Taken,” Robert Frost employs imagery, diction, and irony to convey the message that indecisiveness and fear of failure can be dangerous, as they impede people from making decisions and advancing forward in life.

In the first stanza, the speaker is presented with an important decision as he finds himself before two roads diverged in a yellow road. The imagery “yellow wood” presented can signify late autumn when the leaves are dry, yellow and falling (1). This is a foreshadowing of the speaker’s old age in the last stanza when he will be telling the story of the choice he made. Furthermore, the imagery presented in stanzas two and three about the conditions of the two roads: “Because it was grassy and wanted wear... In leaves no step had trodden black” paints a vivid picture in the reader’s minds and makes it easier for the readers to relate and understand the speaker’s uncertainty, as both roads look approximately the same.

Moreover, the multiple meanings of certain words—“yellow” and “took”—add to the complexity of the poem, as different meanings of the words render myriad interpretations. The “yellow” in line 1 is ambiguous because it could mean fall or cowardice; nonetheless, the omission of “yellow” in line 18—“Two roads diverged in a wood”—verifies that yellow indeed means cowardice in the poem. This choice of omission is because when the speaker retells his story, he presents

himself as an individual and a heroic character, and thus omits yellow. In addition, “took” in line 6 can be interpreted as the speaker physically choosing a road, or as the speaker perceiving what is on that road; nevertheless, stanza three illustrates that the speaker never chooses a road: “And both that morning equally lay.” The diction allows the presence of many interpretations of the poem because of ambiguity; still, this strategy is effective in demonstrating the uncertainty that the speaker felt because the readers also get a feel of uncertainty as they read the poem.

The last stanza presents irony, as the speaker never chose a road, thus the name “The Road Not Taken.” However the speaker plans on telling the story differently: “I shall be telling this with a sigh / Somewhere ages and ages hence” (16-17). The pretentious diction “shall,” “hence,” and “ages and ages” further confirms the irony and the fact that the speaker never made a choice due to fear of failure. The “sigh” in line 16 may be seen as a sigh of relief by the listeners of his tale, but the speaker knows it is a sigh of regret, as he lets a fear of failure prevent him from making decisions in life.

Indeed the speaker can retell his story differently and present himself as an individualistic person who chose the road less traveled by, but deep within, as the sigh suggests, he will know that he missed out on a great opportunity because he let fear hinder him from making a choice. The use of descriptive words like

“yellow woods” and “grassy” appeals to the senses, and makes visualizing and understanding the speaker’s dilemma easy. Also, the diction effectively creates a feeling of uncertainty in the readers as words like “yellow” and “took” offer different meanings. Furthermore, the irony depicts human nature, as people often omit and add details to stories to make the stories more interesting. The speaker is no different; he portrays himself as a hero in his story: “Two roads diverged in a wood, and I / I took the one less traveled by.” To his audience, the speaker’s sigh is one of relief, but the speaker knows it was that of regret.



Idealization: The Deterrent in Humanity's Search for Identity

by Paulo Pinto

In the play Death of a Salesman, Arthur Miller uses flashbacks, an allusion to the American Dream, and an ironic juxtaposition of Willy Loman's funeral against that of his idol Dave Singleman in order to portray Willy's struggle to obtain a personal identity and meaning through his idea of success.

Miller primarily uses flashbacks to reveal Willy's idealization of the past and its subsequent result as a failed parent and salesman. Willy thinks back to when his sons were in high school when one day they were throwing a football around in the backyard. Biff stole the ball from the locker room, but Willy encourages this early immoral behavior by praising his actions, "Sure, he's gotta practice with a regulation ball, doesn't he? Coach'll probably congratulate you on your initiative!" (18-19). Biff clearly stole the ball for his own enjoyment and suffers no consequences for his actions because his father's main priority is to keep him content so that Biff can continue to look up to him. Furthermore, Willy failed to encourage Biff to study for his exam, nor did he make him attend summer school in order to make up the grade and get his diploma. Willy constantly looked for approval from his sons and he sacrificed strict parenting methods in exchange for the perpetuation of his idea of being well liked by everybody he knew. These

flashbacks reveal much more about Willy, however, than they do about his or his son's actions; the evanescent and debatable nature of memories serves the primary purpose of this rhetorical device. Because Willy relies on the abundance of flashbacks and memories to substantiate his ego and defend his decisions, he misconstrues his idea of success under false pretenses, such as his memory's image of his idealized sons or his contribution to the sales company.

Throughout the text, Willy envisions a portrait of success for himself and his sons that follow a tailored version of the American Dream. This dream is a characteristic of the traditional middle class, where these goals are used as the impetus to justify hard work and mediocre pay for an end product that is satisfying for the particular citizen. In Willy's case, he wants to be rich and well liked, but he does not quite have the talent nor the work ethic to properly execute a plan to achieve these ambitious targets. He replaces these prerequisites for success with the idea of personal attractiveness, such as when he refers to Biff's inability to find success, "Biff Loman is lost. In the greatest country in the world a young man with such — personal attractiveness, gets lost" (8). Willy is baffled by this turn of events because in his mind, there was only one thing his son needed to be rich and happy. This trait was so empty and arbitrary that it obviously never led to any progress measurable by wealth, so it furthered Willy's quest to search for the secret to success. When he influences his sons to make a sales pitch to get easy money for

a startup company with no real business plan, he gives them flawed advice: “It’s not what you say, it’s how you say it — because personality always wins the day” (46). The ambiguity in his thoughts and values explicitly express his delusional state of mind and his irresponsibility in dealing with reality because of his idealizations of both himself and the world around him. Willy believes he is meant to have a larger purpose, but he struggles with the ability to pursue his ambitions through productive and constructive means.

Willy’s reluctance to accept his demise and irrelevance in other people’s eyes led to the futility in his attempt to be remembered grandly at his funeral. He claims that the reason he continues to sell is because of his idol Dave Singleman, who was 84 years old and still working the same job all his life, “When he died — and by the way he died the death of a salesman, in his green velvet slippers in the smoker of the New York, New Haven and Hartford, going into Boston — when he died, hundreds of salesmen and buyers were at his funeral” (58). Willy fails to see the picture, though, because he cannot see that Dave’s job forced him to work continuously past retirement age; rather, he most likely kept working because he needed to sustain himself. Once Willy decided to kill himself in exchange for the insurance money his family would receive, he showed that he failed to evolve as the protagonist and failed to conquer his struggle to find meaning. He died believing he would be remembered like Dave Singleman, when in reality even

Singleman was not as well liked as Willy wanted to be. His obsession with being well liked blinded him from seeing who truly loved him: his family and friend Charley were the only ones at his funeral. They loved him regardless of his flaws and his inability to accept the truth, but Willy died in vain believing he would attract more attention and affection from strangers.

Willy Loman remains unchanged throughout the play as he struggles with the idea of succeeding through popularity and glory, but ultimately fails believing he had become well liked after death. The irony of his funeral's attendance points to the delusional ideas Willy had of himself and highlighted a caricature that holds true for most of mankind that chooses to ignore its faults and dream without effort to work for progress. Willy never succeeded in becoming well liked because he had shallow misconceptions and lacked depth of character and a structured basis for his goals. Willy, like many ambitious dreamers, watch their lives conclude with no real meaning and without adding productivity to the world.



The Usage of Motifs in Macbeth

by Paulo Pinto

In Shakespeare's play Macbeth, the playwright uses three strong motifs of blood, sleep, and the contrast between light and dark to argue that the pursuit of evil and acts of murder lead to two possible psychological ramifications. Once Macbeth and his wife plot and succeed in killing King Duncan, they develop a sense of unquenchable thirst for more power and an enormous burden of guilt, respectively, for the rest of the play.

The usage of blood is the most prominent motif displayed in the play, as it represents both literally the heinous act of murder and the figurative concept of permanent guilt. Once Macbeth kills King Duncan, he is immediately distraught, commenting that his hands are stained permanently with blood to the point that if he were to dip them in the ocean for cleansing, the seas would turn red and his hands would remain dirty. Lady Macbeth on the other hand disregards the importance of the evidence by smearing it over her husband and telling him that washing it off with water will remove any association of guilt incurred during the act. Towards the end of the play, however, Macbeth is the one who continues the bloodshed by murdering his old friend Banquo, while Lady Macbeth laments that all the perfumes of Arabia could not remove the stench of the blood stuck on her hands. On this note, Shakespeare concludes that the pursuit of evil builds upon

itself and will not be able to stop, while simultaneously dragging along the weight of subconscious guilt that eats the beholder from the inside out.

This same distraught Macbeth hurries back from the scene of the crime yelling that he heard someone cry “Macbeth doth murder sleep!” He goes on to say that he is disappointed, for sleep is not just a necessary act of survival, but one that is enjoyed and required as a constructive tool to plan ahead. Despite this, he does not seem to be too bothered until the haunting voices turned accurate once Lady Macbeth is seen sleepwalking about the castle. In this way, Macbeth did murder sleep because he prevented him and his wife the innocence of rest and security. After the murder, Lady Macbeth was troubled night and day, screaming details of the murder restlessly because the burden of her guilt was too much for her to hide. The doctor can do nothing about it, so Shakespeare is also commenting on the fact that evil and its subsequent ramifications cannot be readily fixed. It was recommended she see a priest, for it was her soul, the subconscious part of her being that was troubled by the murder and led to her inability to rest.

The contrast of light and dark provides us with a clear-cut marker that distinguishes innocence from evil. Before the married couple commit the act, they beg for the stars and skies to close up so that Heaven can turn a blind eye on the deed they are about to enact. They succeed, but once Lady Macbeth begins to deal with the psychological consequences of the murder, she requests that a lighted

candle be at her disposal at all times. This suggests that she cannot deal with her own guilt and is trying to renounce her loyalty to evil. She is afraid of her own dark shadow she has cast on herself, while Macbeth mourns that now each day was just lighting the path to eternity, in a way that he cannot escape but grudgingly goes on to play in each scene. Macbeth cannot undo nor pause his wrongdoings, and when Lady Macbeth reveals this point, she decides to hasten her end by committing suicide.

Shakespeare's usage of the motifs concerning blood, sleep, and the contrast of light and dark allows the reader to realize that evil is perpetually stimulated in those who let ambition leap over itself and creates a dark cycle of unprecedented guilt and remorse for those actions. Each symbol is reflected at the scene of Duncan's death towards the ending of the play, when the inevitable demise of Macbeth is clear and the end takes its own route. These acts of evil only lead to guilt, more acts of evil and eventual doom.



Finding Potential

by Daniela Fonseca

If there is one thing I learned in high school, it is that nothing comes easily, and everything has a cost. From that came the realization that potential is just that: potential. The potential to be something never actually sets the process to achieve said idea in motion. This, of course, has its cost: Nothing ever happens.

High school taught me a variety of skills and plenty of useful knowledge, but the two skills it taught me best were how to think critically and how to be intellectual.

The development of my intellect also developed my view on potential: If I had any dreams at all, I understood that I had to put in the effort to turn those dreams into something more than a vision. This growth set forth a plethora of impulsive decisions that began during my sophomore year, but nonetheless led me to where I stand today: editor-in-chief of *The Voltage*, the school newspaper; participating member of the Girls Tennis team; and part-time worker at a small business (the third job on my resume, I should add).

I did not allow for my “potential” to sit around and cultivate any more ambitions of mine that were not to be acted upon, and so I began to discover self-fulfillment.

My decision to join the staff of *The Voltage* was impulsive in the sense that I heard about the paper and its need for writers, and then showed up to a meeting.

One thing led to another, and before I knew it, I moved to editor-in-chief at the beginning of my junior year. When taking a step back to analyze the situation, I see now that it was the drive I had, which rewarded me with the position.

Perhaps it is pretentious to mention the scholarship I was recently awarded based on my academic and extracurricular success, but it gathers the points I made and concludes with the understanding that potential will never be anything but an empty promise to do better in the future.

At the meeting for the acceptance of the award, I heard people say a countless number of times that “hard work is a reward in itself,” and hard work is all the self-fulfillment one needs.

The idea of self-fulfillment does not reward the gains in the end, but instead the means that were taken to reach that success, if only because that shows one’s effort, which is more than enough to break free from the consequences of potential. For four years at Science Park, I managed to do more than just “get by.” I succeeded, and I take pride in being able to say so.

Potential is procrastination for success. If you have an idea, find a way to make it work. Then you will be successful.