

The Looking Glass Lauralton Hall's Creative Magazine 2015

Before my colored pencils suggested anything more than nondescript butterflies and vague stick figures, my mother would write letters for me. Sitting together in our kitchen, she would dutifully take up a pink crayon and record my dictations, scribing my letter of correspondence as accurately as possible—incorporating even minute misspellings that reflected my childhood mispronunciations. Yet, the comfort and ease of forming my first letters stays with me, and letter writing remains my favorite means of communication.

Many naysayers believe that letter writing is a dying art, a medium that, after reigning supreme for hundreds of years, has faded into near oblivion. In an age of technology, my generation has replaced letters with emails, calling cards with text messages, and stamps with cell phone plans, seamlessly editing out any human imperfections revealed through pen and paper. Yet, in losing letters, we lose individuals.

The very first Monday morning of my summer vacation from freshman year, I began writing letters to find myself. Digging out my mother's stationery, buried beneath greeting cards—frank, brief, and premade with plastic sentiments—I unearthed my art. Elegant and refined, the thick, cream paper appeared to have been taken from one of my most well-bound books, but this one was empty, demanding that I tell my own story, without a prompt. A "Thinking of You" inscribed across my paper is not necessary for me to tell my friends that I miss them—my own words manage that. Uncapping my favorite, often finicky fountain pen, I began.

That first week was spent writing a letter every morning, telling Marissa and Emily about my day, telling them about me. I record and remember my summers by letters, never bothered if my correspondents don't write back immediately, often, or at all. Only in September did I realize that the letters were not for their sake— for mine. Each was penned with my sentiments, my questions, my stories, my

life.

When the summers end, so do my letters. The fall brings my recipients back to me, where my stories are told through speech, which, though more efficient, falls second to my ease in communication through writing. And not surprisingly, Miss Jane Austen would agree, noting in Northanger Abbey that, "Everybody allows that the talent of writing agreeable letters is peculiarly female..."

The path to my mailbox is always well traveled, my letters constantly carried down to our postwoman—the same mail carrier my mother introduced me to years before. It is the entire letter-writing and sending process that I love—the time between pushing the little red flag up and cutting open the response, the addresses on the envelopes, committed to memory, the stamps picked out at the post office.

My mother does everything the old-fashioned way—the exact way—right down to the wax initial sealing the envelopes she sends, and the antique letter opener slicing open the envelopes she receives. Living in a streamlined, technologically advanced world, it has become difficult to see the beauty of the handwritten word, but my correspondence has taught me to appreciate and admire just this—the art that lost practicality, but found me. One letter at a time.



Summer Scare: A Tale of Two Friends

By Jessica Sanchez '18 & Jacalin Emanuel '18

At last, the final day of school at Apple Creek Intermediate was here.

"Bethany," exclaimed Carla, "we get the whole summer off!"

Carla and Bethany have been best friends since kindergarten.

"Do you have any plans over the summer," Carla asked Beth.

"Every day I'll be at the pool, you can come too!"

"Fantastic! I can't wait to spend the whole summer with my best friend."

"Girls, I'm so sorry to break up your conversation but I need to speak with Bethany," said Principal Smith.

"Hi, Principal Smith! Happy summer break," said Bethany.

"I'm sorry to inform you Bethany, but you have to attend summer school before you can move to the eighth grade."

"Jeeeze! My mom is going to kill me!" Bethany was upset and shocked because she would have to spend her whole summer studying.

"Knowing that this is a surprise to your parents, I have already confronted them about this."

"Let me get this straight, I'll be in school for the whole summer while everyone else is having fun?"

"Miss Clark, I'm terribly sorry but that is correct, I'll see you next Monday," he said as he walked away.

Now after the principal had left, Carla came to see what was wrong with Bethany because she started to cry.

"OMG! What's wrong? What happened," Carla asked.

"Principal Smith just told me that I have to stay at summer school!"

"Quit joking around," exclaimed Carla.

"Really! I have to stay for the whole summer!"

"So that means our summer plans are ruined," asked Carla.

"The plans are crushed," Bethany sadly said.

Unfortunately the girls were stuck in a situation that was out of their control.

Very disappointed that their plans were going south, they looked for a solution.

"Wait, what subject did you fail," asked Carla.

"X-Ray studies! I just don't understand it," said Bethany.

"YOOOO! That was my best class this year and I'd be happy to tutor you in it," exclaimed Carla. Principal Smith was walking by and admired their beautiful friendship. He exclaimed,

"Zippidy do da day! That's a great idea! Now you can have the summer that you wanted and move on the eighth grade in the fall! Just remember, I'll see you on Monday!" The girls just laughed and spent the rest of their summer chilling by the pool and studying their X-rays.

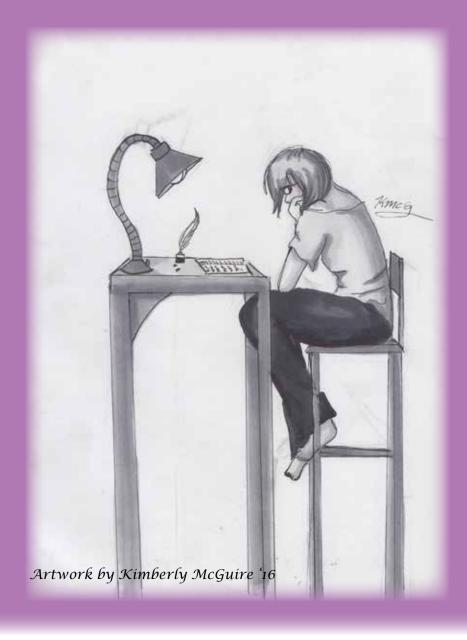


I celebrate myself and write myself,
And the combination of letters will trap, encase, create
In my mind, and it shall in yours.
My canvas does not need the paint of a thousand colors,
My canvas does not require a brush for swift, quick, seeable motions,
My canvas needs not the light of day nor the light of stars to be seen.

My tongue rolls with the waves of words, The words cascade into the pool of imagination, Where all is created. Where all is made.

The swoosh of a pen and the crinkle of a paper is all I need to Celebrate myself and write myself with the grace and grandeur of the heavens.

By Cristina Villalonga '16



The Lauralton Lady

By Marissa Browne '15

Overlooking the sunny expanse of her grand green grounds, the princess stands in her round tower, the crown of her noble castle. Light shines in through the many windows, and the princess thoughtfully reflects. She wears a simple gown of navy and ivory; the austerity of her outfit is contrived not to distract from the shining facets of her mind. Though she is young, the princess does not fear the collapse of her kingdom; the high brick walls of the castle are soundly laid on intellect, and the stones of the towers have been sealed with an impenetrable mortar of morality and mercy. The Golden Rule spirals through her center just as the Golden Staircase coils up through the castle; she is held together with kindness and empathy, which leave no scars. The princess rules with the firmness with which her pen presses the paper and the care with which she considers her diction. Her aspirations arch as high as her forehead, and her convictions ensure her success.

Always the princess is joyful in the castle; she keeps this eternal emotion with her at all times, an undercurrent to the transient feelings of every-day. She chats through the halls, her illuminating laugh amplified in the amber stained glass that lines her walk. The perfume of the books she reads, the sacred old smell of tradition and wisdom, permeates through the founded castle. The princess and her sisters spend their days in scholarship, learning about the world, one another, and themselves. They gather throughout the castle in bunches, filling its rooms with community from top to bottom. The sisters have no need for a thunking dragon or a murky moat – excepting the despicable foes of ignorance and injustice, against which they spend their days in battle, there is no danger in the kingdom. They fight these evils as the swordswoman taught them, unarming them with the cutting, ink-stained blade of the pen.

Outside the high brick walls of the castle, the princess and her many sisters walk underneath the tree of the fairies, who drop the sprightly strands of spring leaves to dangle just above the girls' heads. Behind the castle is the livery, where the princess's sisters find freedom in riding on the rifting bare backs of a cappella high notes. Under the open sky and the castle's lofty walls, enclosed in the fresh grass of the courtyard, the girls gather to converse, to commiserate, to laugh. When it rains, they take refuge under the warm wooden roof of the Carousel; the peeling white benches and faded blue floors provide the comfort of knowing that many girls have gone before.

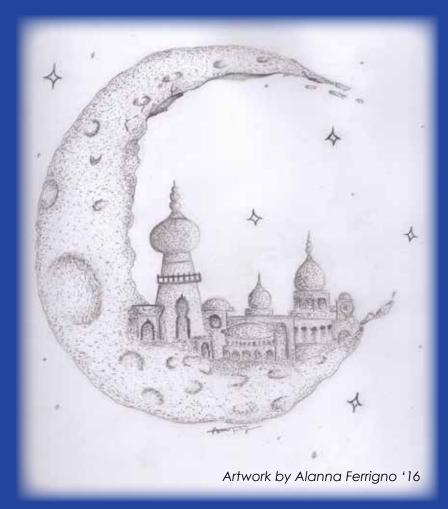
Roaming the halls of the castle, the princess seeks a companion with whom she can share solitude as she explores her kingdom. The princess and her sister together travel through the many worlds of their kingdom; their books, bound in the counsel of the sages, convey them farther than a chariot or a chaise ever could. The guides of the gone teach the sisters how to rule with the presence of a monarch, the passion of a minstrel, and the patience of a monk.

The princess does not always journey to learn how to lead her kingdom; many wise people walk the castle's creaky caramel floors with her, and to these she turns for more immediate, intimate guidance. When she was just rising to her regency, her eldest sister taught the princess the potency of change. When she was well on her way, a resident queen, superior to all in sovereignty, fearlessly bore witness, revealing the princess's own power to rule. Now, with her reign established, the sage of the staircase guides her, challenging her to sign every royal decree with the ink of introspection. The dearest of the princess's sisters serves as her constant bouncing board, the necessary exception to her poise. The princess is not perfection; she doodles away her duties and talks more than time and tact allow. Yet, she has self-reliance, and an unobjectionable credence in her reign.

Though the princess must leave the grounds of the castle, it is the home of her heart. She slumbers on a remote bed, yet when she awakes, her empathy and intellect draw the white marble pillars of her castle directly under her, a constant trust. The princess must soon depart to a foreign castle in an unknown land, with higher towers and broader stones, but it is no matter; so long as she is compassionate and inquisitive, always will her home be with her, and forever shall she reign.

The princess does not always journey to learn how to lead her kingdom; many wise people walk the castle's creaky caramel floors with her, and to these she turns for more immediate, intimate guidance. When she was just rising to her regency, her eldest sister taught the princess the potency of change. When she was well on her way, a resident queen, superior to all in sovereignty, fearlessly bore witness, revealing the princess's own power to rule. Now, with her reign established, the sage of the staircase guides her, challenging her to sign every royal decree with the ink of introspection. The dearest of the princess's sisters serves as her constant bouncing board, the necessary exception to her poise. The princess is not perfection; she doodles away her duties and talks more than time and tact allow. Yet, she has self-reliance, and an unobjectionable credence in her reign.

Though the princess must leave the grounds of the castle, it is the home of her heart. She slumbers on a remote bed, yet when she awakes, her empathy and intellect draw the white marble pillars of her castle directly under her, a constant trust. The princess must soon depart to a foreign castle in an unknown land, with higher towers and broader stones, but it is no matter; so long as she is compassionate and inquisitive, always will her home be with her, and forever shall she reign.



Lauralton By Victoria Stapleton '15

I love the old desks With each 'lovely' engravement— Sometimes crude, often funny that provides entertainment as we sit in the seats where many others have sat I wonder what's changed, ever think about that? For years girls trekked here by carriage or train, up that interminable driveway in snow, sleet or rain. In the rooms we now learn are where boarders slept where they dressed, where they ate, goofed-off, laughed and wept. I guess now's the same, except there's no beds, We go to the catacombs to lay down our heads. Did they have a strict bedtime, or do homework all night? Did they engage in athletics? Could they put up a fight? Did they tiptoe around Did the girls call their jumpers potato sacs, too? Did they roll out of their bed with their hair all askew? Perhaps they learned etiquette, or practiced their script, Did the nuns give them slips when their uniforms ripped? Did they feel the same safety and comfort of home, Combined with the urge to set off on their own? This longstanding building holds stories and mystery— It's thrilling to think

that we're part of this history;
A rich legacy that will forever live on,
Long after we graduate.
Long after we're gone.



Artwork by Laura Shafer '15

Prologue By Kelly Aarons '16

The boy with the black hair, splashing through the waves. His goal? Try to make us laugh. So far, he was very successful. It's hard to keep a smile on my face now a days. This war just keeps going. Everyday another bundle of kindle is added to this world wide fire. Anyway, we and our mother were watching him far from the water, laying on the safety of our beach towels under an umbrella, snacking on some things we brought in a basket. This was my favorite place to be, but that's not going to stop anyone from taking it away.

Tomorrow they will be turning our beach into a harbor for the United States Navy. All you'll see now are rows upon rows of battleships and carriers. They'll be building barracks and first aid shacks on the sand I'm sitting in. The fresh, salty, clean air I breathe in now won't ever be the same. The crisp smell of the ocean will change, and the color will go from a clear light blue to a dark liquid wasteland. The beautiful sight of the waves rushing up on the rocks by the pier, where the water meets land, will disappear. Then all I'll have left are my sweet memories.

The sweet memories of the world I knew before the war. The times when music still played on the radio when it was turned on. When shows and programs were still shown on television all day. When children ran freely around with their friends, not having to worry about running into a soldier around the corner. Life before all this was like heaven, and sadly, most of us just took it for granted.



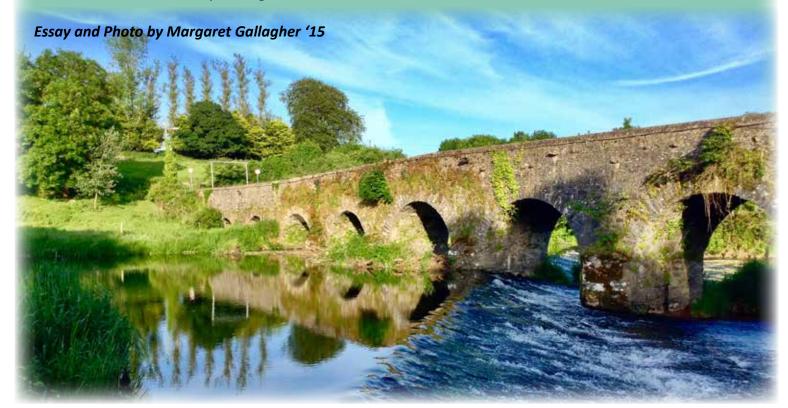
The organic smell of the earth, the honeyed smell of the kitchen, the fresh cotton smell of the laundry detergent – whenever I smell these, I am brought back to my Gran's home in Ireland. The nostalgia hits me randomly, but often, and almost always in the form of a scent.

Living in the rural town of Kildorrery for a month last summer, I spent an inordinate amount of time in my Gran's garden. Among the raspberries and roses, we were able to reconnect, to know one another again, despite the geographical distance that previously separated us. Gran is a part of the earth that she works and she is much more skilled than I. Working since her youth at a patch of land—always planting, watering, and trimming—she is the quintessential Irish gardener. Conversely, the most gardening I had ever done was occasionally watering the lawn. Still, we formed a strong team, tackling the weeds and rogue roots. The smell of the upturned earth, potent and heady, is permanently ingrained in my mind. So when the organic overtone of earth and dirt and peat wafts across my senses, I recall that afternoon, and the many others like it, spent simply sitting and weeding and pruning amidst the verdant Irish countryside.

When the sun dropped below the horizon, the night belonged to the kitchen. That bright yellow room was always humming with at least one machine – often it was her 40-year-old Kitchen Aid, whirring away as Gran made scones. A wave of their sugary aroma swirled around the room before filling the entire house. We told stories faster than the tea being poured and we laughed over the image of my dad, running away from his brothers, stuffing an orange into his mouth. Kildorrery has always seemed so close, but perhaps that's because my dad, no longer the twelve-year-old boy with stolen citrus, has been the link to my roots.

Later that night, I fell into my temporary bed and was enveloped by the essence of cotton and lavender. The house is surrounded by laundry, freshly washed and hung on the clothing line between two tall pines. There is no dryer, so throughout the seasons, the laundry is as crisp and fresh as the day outside. As the trip came to an end, Gran and I took down the clothes from the line and packed my bag.

Now I am reminded everyday how her roots, her Ireland, have intertwined with my own roots - as Gran forged through the soil, I've cultivated my own classwork, friends, and life. She has built her home on the land 3,000 miles away from mine, yet we are still connected through the lives we lead and the history we share. My dad and I have always gardened, but now it holds even more meaning — what was once a casual hobby is now a skill that will be passed on to my own children. We always have told stories for fun, but now I realize they are a way of teaching our family history. Back in the US, I unpack my suitcase and am struck by the organic smell of the garden, the honeyed smell of Gran's kitchen, and the ever-present bouquet of lavender detergent. I have worn the scent of my heritage home.





A Love Lost By Gabriella Torres '15

The smell of smoke suffocated me as I sat within inches of the man whose heart had been grappled to mine since our late teens. There was something different about him; maybe it was the ice cold chill his love-lacking glare sent down my spine. Maybe it was the unconscious but nearly mechanical recoil of his hand responding to my sweaty fingers desperately searching for what once was. We sat there together in the empty diner completely silent, but in the lack of sound, so much was said. We were speaking of a once passionate and fulfilling love, lost and never to be felt again. Our passion must have made a journey, barefoot and unprepared, to the place fond memories go to die. Only seven words were uttered in our last dinner together. They left his cracked lips with ease, not unlike the "Good Morning" when the light would glimmer, waking us through our open bedroom window. His words that used to adore me had now the stench of whiskey and the chill of winter. His last words to me, his loving wife of ten years were, "She loves me like you never could." His unwavering body lifted itself with an ease I would never again know. He turned from me and with the wind at his back, disappeared into the thick night.

Another 3am Night By Caroline Ketcher '15

Once again, I stand here on Sunday night; 3:00 AM, with a wide smile from ear to ear, my fully white outfit just pressed, and my tired hands. I wonder what it would be like to be on the other side of this table. Each customer stumbles in and orders strange combinations of food at ungodly hours. As they sit down, I can often smell the odor of alcohol pouring off of them; I can't help but think what their story is.

Currently, I have man alone and quiet, who just simply ordered a coffee with a splash of scotch. He is breathing short and quick so he does not let the tears overcome him. As I glance over to him, I see the stain on both cheeks from the tears that have recently fallen. I wonder what has happened to him to make him so sad and lonesome at this hour. The other side of the bar, I have a woman and a man. As they walked in, with her hands wrapped around his arm, I watch them. Their posture was one of lovers, but I can tell-not in love but in lust. I think, is this a lady of the night? Or are these two lovers sneaking around? What makes them come out at this hour? I am listening to their conversation from afar and their air is filled with flirtation and desire. As the man continues to reference his wife at home, who he should be returning to shortly so she is not suspicious of his nightly activities, the woman continues to sip her coffee and giggle at all his comments. I think to myself, what has society come to? Why are people so sad and alone? Where did the happiness go? I wonder what I would be doing if I was on the other side of the bar.

Once-Strangers By Jillian Shugrue '15

It is a hot, sticky summer night and I'm walking home from work. It is about 1am and the city is as silent as it can get. Here and there I hear the sound of sirens and cabs going over manholes. I'm beyond tired and I keep my eyes down at the filthy ground. The streets reek of hot trash. I am about to cross the street when light shines upon my face. I look up and I see a beautiful woman with a man I'm guessing is not her husband. They converse much, and despite their tiredness they seem madly in love. Married couples are just not like that. At least the ones I know. The more I think of it, her dress does look a little scandalous. The blood red color makes it more so. The couple whispers as I lay my eyes upon a lonely man sitting in the diner. He wears a suit and his tie hangs around his neck as if he's had a long day---a business man. His face looks very old although I know he is young. I try to imagine his life. He rises at five and goes to the stock exchange where he spends his days receiving numbers and screaming to other men. He probably had a hard time during the Great Depression. Then I take a look at the diner once more and I see the owner. Just by looking at the crystal clean windows, his clean outfit in this dirty city, I can tell that he takes much pride in his work. He makes sure to greet every customer with a smile. Maybe so that they can forget their troubles for a while. I imagine a whiff of what is cooking in the restaurant and I smile. I look back at the diner and the owner waves to me with his inviting smile and signals for me to come in. I forget how hot, tired and sticky I am as I enter the beautiful diner. My worries are gone and a long lost smile spreads across my face. I spend hours talking to these once-strangers until the red sun rises and the city begins to roar with noise. I will never forget this evening.

Nighthawk By Faye DiBella '15

The smell of a strong cup of coffee always used to feel like home to me. Since I was little I could remember waking up and going down stairs, and that was the first smell to hit me. Now working the night shift at the coffee shop, I barely notice it. I have taken more notice of the people who come in and out of the shop, than the actual coffee. Tonight, it was almost three, and it was busier than normal. Three people sat sipping away on mediocre coffee, one of them, a regular, looked as though he just got off from work. Still in his suit and tie he sat, deep in thought. Every so often he would take a sip of his coffee and then go back to staring at the massive silver coffee maker in front of him. At the end of the bar there was what appeared to be a couple, and by their conversation it seemed to be a first date. The women was dressed in a remarkable cherry-red dress that flowed with movement, and with hair that was chestnut brown and pinned back out of her face.

The man could not take his eyes off of her; their conversation only stopped so that they could sip their coffee. By the looks of things, there will be a second date. This is why I love working here, especially at night. I can watch as new relationships form, or people contemplate their day or even life. Every type of person imaginable comes to drink coffee-each has with his own story. Imagining their stories by the way they look, or the bits of conversation I overhear is the fun of it.

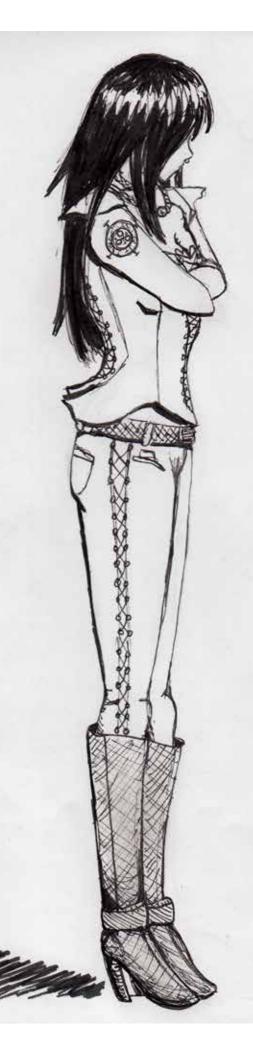
A November Night at Phillies By Keely McCarthy '15

On a cold, bitter, November night, particularly colder than any other November night, Harry and Sally Thompson are seated inside a fishbowl-enclosed diner. Their somber, bleak expressions mirror the atmosphere of the night. It's roughly midnight. Every tired parent and energetic child has gone off to sleep. Harry and Sally have just returned from Peter Schumer's party.

The walls of the diner are omelet yellow, but color doesn't intrigue them. The bus-boy, dressed in a bleach- kept, snow-white uniform, tries to engage the seated couple. Sally and Harry, however, pay no attention to him, or to each other. Earlier that night, before the party, Harry and Sally had gotten into another tedious fight. Sally has been suspect of Harry's having an affair. He comes home late every night and barely pecks her on what he used to call her rose-tinted cheeks. Sally spent the latter half of the afternoon choosing a cherry-colored silk dress- popular amongst the most fashionable ladies. She pulled back her brassy, orange, hair, taking the time to bring out her rose-tinted cheeks even more.

Now, Sally's cheeks are pale and blanched from Harry's complete disinterest in her appearance, and from the turn of the night's events. She sits on the hard, cold, wooden, stool. She smells the warm and nutty coffee, but the aroma holds no pleasure. The only sounds are the flipping of the newspaper of the man seated near them, and the clinking and clashing sounds of the pots and pans as the chefs clean up for the night.

The bus-boy, nervously tapping under the counter, occasionally stops to chew on his lip. Neither of the two looks up toward his face, for surely, they will experience much embarrassment. As her husband gets up to leave, Sally realizes she doesn't want to leave. If she leaves this protective fishbowl, surely, on this very night, her marriage will break into a million tiny pieces. She knows that she, at least, will drown a slow and miserable death. Sally believes she doesn't, or can't, breathe the same air as everyone else. She studies her fingernails, trying to prolong the moment, while at the same time, wonders how Harry himself breathes. She keeps wondering, and hopes, that maybe, just maybe, they have that one thing, in common.



6 Word Memoirs

You can't please everyone; stop trying

Create a world she'd dance in

She needs you to be strong

Show her how to live fully

Even if you fail, just smile

Always be open to new paths

Be the sister you always wanted By Sara Abbazia '17

I have made it this far.

The past has ended. Future pending. By Iillian Cass '17



Artwork by Kimberly McGuire'16 The Oxford English dictionary defines a leader as "the person who leads or commands a group, organization, or country." Merriam-Webster shortens this definition to simply "someone who leads." However, so much of what defines a leader reaches beyond those few, technical terms. Often, when people run down the long list of history's "great leaders," they cite the political prowess of Winston Churchill, the military genius of Alexander the Great, and the fervent speeches of Martin Luther King Jr. Although it is both inaccurate and unjust to ignore these great qualities, they are not what make leaders. Intellect, confidence, assertiveness—these are mere additives that change and vary from one leader to the next. They are not constant. They are the kindling thrown onto already-glowing embers.

Take the ideology of Martin Luther King Jr. Over time, King has been immortalized, acclaimed by history for his courageous and peaceful approach to ruthless oppression. The sound of King's name and dream have become, for many, the sound of hope and change. However, at no point did he seek such a legacy. At no point did he value his own life over the lives of those he served. At no point did his dream ever include himself. King's legacy is rooted in his willingness to fight for a dawn he would never see, a world he would never know. It is this selflessness that makes a leader, even in today's modern world. Malala Yousafzai is one of today's most prominent growing figures, renowned for her courageous stand against the Taliban in the name of girls' rights and education. Although Malala has made education possible for herself in recent years, her ultimate goal is liberation for girls and women from the shackles of their sex. Her goal was never the Nobel Prize, but instead peace and education for every child—a goal she was, and is, willing to die for.

So often the idea of "the leader" is tethered to images of great fame and unmatched success. So often "leadership" becomes a synonym for "power." However, at its core, leadership is defined not by influence or popularity, but by the ability to look beyond one's own fate and see a world worth achieving. True leaders think not of themselves, but of the people they lead and serve.

My great grandfather, Benjamin Romero Salvosa, was diagnosed in his late adult-hood with tuberculosis, and given six months to live. It was at this time, when death was not only certain, but imminent, that Benjamin decided to abandon his successful career as a lawyer to become an educator. Having come from a small village in the Philippines, he strongly believed that education would prove his savior—the sole factor that made him successful, and, ultimately, the one end he wished to preserve, even unto his death. Seeing a desperate need in one area—Baguio, which had no institutions of higher education at the time—Benjamin created the University of Cordilleras. He began the effort in 1946, renting spaces on the city's main roads for classes, and bringing in close friends as loyal teachers. Since its modest inception, the university has grown to become an educational haven for thousands of students and a lasting tribute to Benjamin's unquenchable zeal for the marriage between knowledge and equality.

When Martin Luther King Jr. took the podium on that August morning, he had a dream not for himself, but for his children, and for all of the children who would come after. When Malala Yousafzai braved the bullet of the Taliban, she did so not for herself, but for the millions of young women and girls who would visualize her as a symbol of strength and resilience. When Benjamin Salvosa created the University of Cordilleras, he knew that fate would not allow him to enjoy the education he afforded to others. Neither popularity, persuasiveness, or power defined these leaders. Instead, it was their ability to look beyond themselves—to dream of a better world that, though they may never be a part of, could very well be secured with their help. They refused to remain silent, to exist as passive survivors in an unjust world, to accept an evil they could alter. They took their skills and used them to inspire others. They were never merely the faces of change. Instead, they were, and continue to be, the beating hearts of social and cultural metamorphosis.

By Caroline Sarda '16



This is the story of a little girl. A little girl who fell in love with a sport, whose dream was born, and who never looked back. That little girl is me, and this story makes me who I am today.

Some people search their whole lives for that one, earth-shattering moment in time when they find the answer to that begging existential question: "What was I put here to do?" Being only five years old at the time, I didn't realize I was having that groundbreaking realization as my family and I tuned in to the sold-out performance of Riverdance, live from Radio City Music Hall. From the very first step, that was it – it had taken one second for me to fall hopelessly in love with Irish dance.

From then on, I was completely consumed by my dream of becoming one of those amazing dancers I had watched. I re-watched our VHS recording of the show like other girls my age watched fairytales like Snow White or Cinderella. To me, those flying feet and powerful rhythms were undoubtedly better than any amount of silver-mining dwarfs or fairy godmothers.

I began Irish dance lessons at the age of eleven. The sole, awkward middle schooler in a class of six and seven year old beginners, I discovered very quickly that becoming the dancer I had always dreamed of being was not going to be easy. Everyone in my age group had been dancing twice as long as I had, so I had to work twice as hard to keep up.

Despite how hard it was, dancing brought (and continues to bring) me so much joy – it didn't matter what kind of a day I had, what was going on in my life at home or how many tests I had the next day. It didn't matter that none of the other kids at school did Irish dance, and I did. However, some nights I would come home in tears, with bloodied feet and aching muscles, feeling like my dream of becoming a world class dancer was too far out of reach. I would never let that feeling of defeat get the best of me, though. Giving up was not an option, and I loved to dance too much to let it go.

It was upon returning to dance in 2013 after being out due to an injury that everything changed. I was a completely new dancer and a changed person. The agony of not knowing when I would once again be able to do the thing I love most in the world was torturous, and I made a resolution to never again let nerves or pressure affect my dancing. I became determined to fill my heart with love and joy every time I stepped on stage. You never know when a performance could be your last, and taking the opportunity to show the world what you love to do for granted is nothing but ignorance in itself. I learned that yes, it can be terrifying putting yourself out there, and it can be so scary sometimes to chase a dream. But the intense regret of not ever doing so, and never seizing the opportunity while you had the chance to? That feeling is much, much worse.

All of a sudden, the world became my stage. Now, my childhood dreams are finally within my reach. Now, I am ready to walk out into the world, throw my shoulders back and my chin up in the air, and dare everybody to watch me with a smile on my face. Irish dance has taught me so many valuable lessons, but the one that has really resonated with me is this: "Would the little girl you used to be, the one inside of you who fell in love with Irish dance – would she be proud of who you have become today?"

Absolutely.



Artwork by Kimberly McGuire '16

Old Friends, New Restaurant By Sydney Osborne '18

Amanda and Stacy had not seen each other in a few months.

"Boy, am I glad we finally got a chance to meet up!" said Stacy.

Cheerfully, Amanda agreed.

"Do you want to go out for lunch, Amanda? I know a new place that just opened down the street," said Stacy.

Eventually the friends arrived at the restaurant.

Finally they were seated at a dirty, cheap, round table.

Grant, the server, came to take their order.

Here, I'll have Iced tea and the eggplant lasagna," Amanda said pointing to it on the menu.

"I'll have water and pasta with meatballs," said Stacy

"Juice? I didn't order juice. May I please have the iced tea I asked for?" asked Amanda politely after Grant brought their drinks.

"Keck! My water is in a dingy, cloudy glass. Would you mind bringing me a new glass of water?" inquired Stacy.

"Ladies you get what you get. I don't wash the dishes here and I don't have to replace anything," Grant retorted snarkily.

"My, my I didn't know how rude the staff was here," scorned Stacy.

"No problem. What really bothers me are the revolting surroundings," said Amanda while turning her mouth down in distaste.

"Oh well, don't judge a book by its cover. Maybe our food will be exceptional," Stacy said optimistically.

"Please, people always do," stated Amanda matter-of-factly. Quietly the girls chatted for a long time, until Grant finally returned with their food.

Rudely, Grant slammed their food down on the table.

Something that resembled grey mush was on Amanda's plate.

Stacy's plate had pale, overcooked noodles with deformed, dry, colorless meatballs.

Together the friends each tried a bite of the unappetizing looking food on their cracked plates.

Unanimously, Amanda and Stacy decided to not finish their food and ask for the check.

Venting loudly as soon as they left the restaurant, Stacy stomped down the street with Amanda.

"We won't be going back there again! They mut be t rying to wipe out the human race with that disgusting food," said Stacy, enraged that she had to pay for such a bad meal and horrible service.

"Xenocide. . . the chef is definitely plotting something with food like that," ranted Amanda.

"You're still hungry right? I am. Maybe we should just get take out and watch a movie at my place," Stacy suggested

"Zeal overcomes me at that idea!" exclaimed Amanda.



Líttle Quíchua Gírl By Tierney Riccitelli '15

When we are children, we learn our earliest lessons in fairy tales and fables. We read tales and draw the pictures. But my childhood wisdom wasn't formed from a fictional "once upon a time," and it didn't evolve from the pages of an illustrated tale. My best lesson, the lesson of friendship, culture, and fortitude, was gleaned over 4,000 miles away when I met Diana in the hillside of Otavalo, Ecuador. It was there, amidst the poverty and disillusionment of a third-world existence, that I met this doe-eyed girl who shyly followed me around as I was working with my Dad and others from an American non-profit humanitarian outreach group. For two weeks, she followed me, never uttering a single word. Humble and hesitant, Diana was as fascinated by my actions as I was by hers. And from there, something special blossomed, something extraordinary grew.

My connection to Diana, and her connection to my family and me, has continued through the years. Since we first met, she has traveled to my home in Connecticut on two occasions and we're expecting another visit in August. During one summer, we provided her an education of American culture through trips to the mall, English slang, and proper summer attire. Our conversations consisted mostly of looks traded between the two of us—the secret language that only friends can develop. One memory places us sitting in my father's fire truck, and the simple look she gave me said, "When do you ever get a chance to do this?" With a smile on my face, I replied, "Only in fairytales." We giggled, for her wonderment was surprising.

We are perfect contrasts. My milk white skin and burning blue eyes are the opposite of her coffee complexion and warm chocolate eyes. Being Quichua, Diana's heritage, construed her as the lowest social class in her country while my family's hard work acquired us a middle class status. Surprisingly enough, class plays no role in our relationship; Diana presents herself as though she is the President of Ecuador and my treatment of her is the same. Though our cultures are vastly different, and we look nothing alike, Diana is more than just my best friend; she is my family, my sister. At first, language was our division; Spanish and English rarely share any similar words or sounds. But, our dilemma sparked determination; she became well versed in English and I in Spanish.

Hardworking and dedicated, Diana persevered for a better life. In Otavalo, she opened a cupcake shop—a novelty in Echador. Most of her product is store-bought mixes and frostings that my family and I bring over. Other friends who visit pack more supplies for her fledgling business. And now, Diana has her own Kiosk and the proceeds become the basis for her college fund. Sometimes we are dealt the worst cards, but it is what we do with those cards that can change our lives.

Two lives, two cultures, and two identities come together to form our story. Memories of Halloween, a Quinceañera, bike rides, and trips fill the pages of our book. But, ours is no fairytale; Diana and I are not princesses who live in castles. I have changed because of that doe-eyed girl that I call "Mi Amor", and as the pages of our book turn, change will come again simply because I met a little Quichua girl who taught me the power of friendship.



Photo by Caroline Sarda'16



Artwork by Kimberly McGuire '16

Game Day By Allison Haynes '17

As I look out the window, a wave of excitement hits me. It is coming. I prepare myself by putting my shin guards on like armor. When we park, all I can see is the green of the grass and the white of the enemy team's shirts. As we take our positions on the field, I start to feel the rise of energy, like rising notes that lead to a crashing crescendo. I stare down the other goalkeeper, and the whistle blows. All I can see, after the chirp of the whistle, are flashes of white, blue, and the bright neon shine of the other goalie's shirt. We play for ninety minutes—eleven bodies with one mind and eleven more with another. When we hear the whistle chirp three times in a row, we make our ways to the benches, one team with heads held high, and the other team's hanging, plotting a new battle strategy for another day. Until then, everyone takes off their armor and returns home, bruised and dirty with scars to remember our battle.



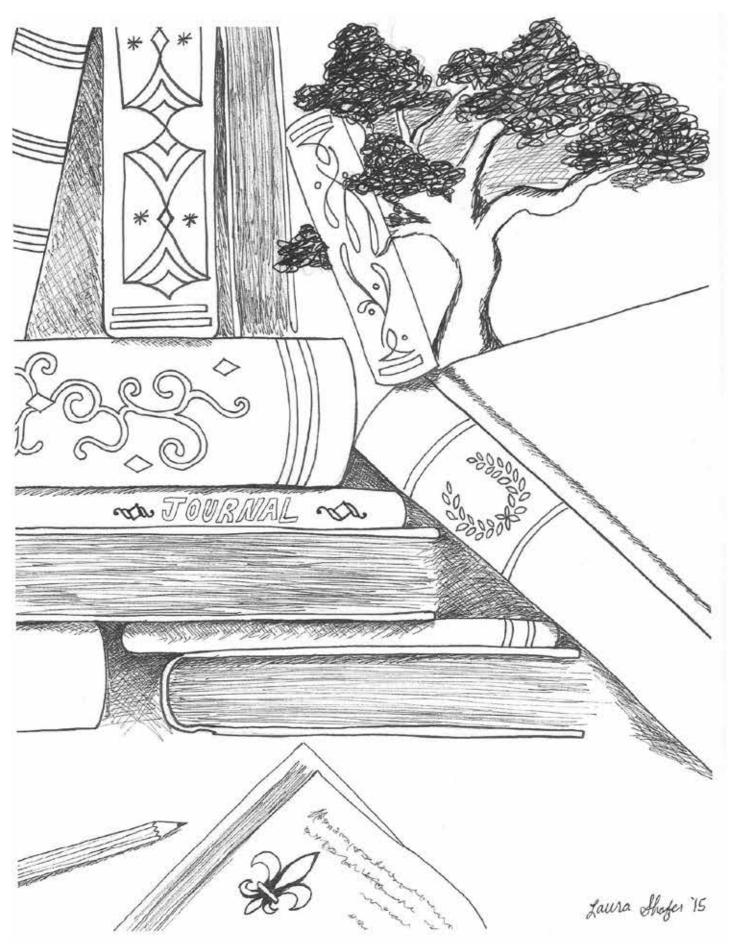
Never judge a book by its cover, they say – yet if I were a book, I would be bound in cloth just interesting enough to draw the hand of a new reader toward me. A quilted combination of swatches of the pleated, navy jumper I wear daily juxtaposed with squares of quirky socks, patterned with cats, the cover is an exterior reflection of my story inside. No engraved title adorns my front, etched into the cloth, as no single label can encompass all that my pages hold. Within, my chapters are arranged chronologically; I always have to start a story from the beginning.

My tale commences with my sister and our days of dolls, and my brother and our afternoons in the climbing tree, all in the choppy stream-of-consciousness of a young child. A few diary entries are recorded, straightforward and undescriptive, along the lines of: "My name is Marissa. I am eight years old." After the first few chapters of mispunctuated prose, a short installment of pitiful poetry finds its place, the verses of a fourth-grader whose monosyllabic rhymes pair "us" with "bus."

From there, my pages are filled with quite a few odes to a long-term crush, followed by two whole chapters dedicated to the notes I passed in science class throughout the seventh grade. Pasted in, these paper fragments of conversation detail the day-to-day thoughts of my tween self. After the melodramatic chronicles of middle school, my pages become more interesting (and less cringe-inducing). My next installment features multiple consecutive chapters detailing my various pastimes: a joyful tale of my bonsai tree Baubina, the chapter as short as her lifespan; a clay-smudged chronicle of my adventures in coil-making in ceramics class; a copy of my winning rebuttal from the Youth in Law competition finals sophomore year; and a few pages pasted with motivational quotes from soccer games, still starched with sweat from their spot inside my left sock. Occasionally, my prose reverts to the poetry I discovered in fourth grade; with the death of my grandfather, unrhymed emotion fills a few of my tear-stained pages in the form of verse.

My own anecdotes are not the only stories held between my quilted covers; others' stories are bound inseparably to my own. The embellished tales of my Irish heritage are integral to my narrative; my grandparents' journey to America, told in the slow, lilting rhythm of a slip jig, is the basis of my prologue. Various passages from books have also worked their way between my covers, the sitting ghosts and swordsmanship from Maxine Hong Kingston's The Woman Warrior side by side with the social missteps from Jane Austen's Emma. Their storylines intertwine with my own, woven into my binding as soundly as my own words.

Though I independently inscribe each word I live, my pages are marked with others' penmanship. Everyone I encounter leaves memories in margin notes, the messy print of my best friend, Meghan, adding a forgotten detail to the story of how we met, my dad's scrawled script correcting every infinitive I split, and my little cousin Elliott's stick-figure drawings illustrating our make-believe adventures. People are constantly tweaking my diction and adding their viewpoints, but I maintain my power to decide what makes the final draft. Though my pages contain the details to a thousand different smidgeons of experience, the values of sincerity and friendship hold them together as one tale. My most recent episode is coming to its close, but the next is blank pages just waiting to be inked. Page by page, word by word, I will write my story.



Artwork by Laura Shafer '15

Hilary's Harsh Winter By Julia Spillane '16

On a farm far away, Lives a donkey today. Many people call her Hilary, And she likes hay, not artillery. Hilary enjoys the summertime, Where she can frolic, graze, and chime. But this winter was really hard, The weather was bad; she couldn't play in the yard. Her mother had to keep her inside, While she made Algebra videos with slides. Hilary wanted to see the snow around, But none of her friends were willing to paint the town. Hillary was determined to explore, Staying inside was such a bore. Soon she sought to open up the barn door, But she had to stay in with the dry floor Hilary looked for another way out, It was time for fresh air without a doubt. She checked the silo and the stalls, While she tried to ignore the outdoor squalls. Suddenly, she saw a crack of light, It was time for her to take flight. She poked the door with her nose, And she was met by Momma Croz! Her mother had a feeling she was trying to escape. She led her back to her stall and gave her some grapes. "The weather will be nicer soon," she said, "But we'll have to go to school instead." Hilary was sad but understood, She'd have to wait; it wasn't for good. Even though the winter was no fun, The snow would soon melt a ton. Hilary imagined the summer carrots she'd eat, And she sighed as she lay to sleep so sweet. Her neighbor brought her an apple before bed, And her mommy got a story to be read. Hilary had quite enough for just one winter day, She hoped her mommy would be home another day to play. They were another day closer to the long awaited spring. Despite everything, Hilary knew the farm life was her thing!

The Looking Glass

Contributors

Kelly Aarons '16 Sara Abbazia '17 Marissa Browne '15 Jillian Cass '17 Faye DiBella '15 Meghan Dougherty '15 Jacalin Emanuel '18 Margaret Gallagher '15 Allison Haynes '17 Caroline Ketcher '15 Keely McCarthy '15 Sydney Osborne '18 Tierney Riccitelli '15 Jessica Sanchez '18 Caroline Sarda '16 Jillian Shugrue '15 Julia Spillane '16 Victoria Stapleton '15 Gabriella Torres '15 Danielle Veith '15 Cristina Villalonga '16

Art Work

Alanna Ferrigno '16 Kimberly McGuire '16 Laura Shafer '15

Photography

Margaret Gallagher '15 Fatimah Khan '16 Caroline Sarda '16

Moderators

Ms. Corene Crozier Mrs. Chris Healey

Graphic Design

Mrs. Kimberly Rosenberg

The Looking Glass is published annually to celebrate the creativity of the students at Academy of Our Lady of Mercy, Lauralton Hall.

Cover Art by Sophie Corbett '16 Back Cover Art by Anne Gallagher '18