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St. John Fisher College

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**Cover Art** Mary Loporcaro

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ANGLE'S HOME GROWN AWARDS

READERS' CHOICE

FIRST PLACE When I See You,
I See You in Words..........Megan Lindley

SECOND PLACE Learning to Swim at the Age of Two in the Backyard Pool
On a Warm July Day in the Year of 1985, Halfway Between Fulton and Hannibal,
Upstate New York..........Geoffrey Potter

THIRD PLACE Instant Ink.........Jenny Stockdale
EDITORS' PICK untitled.........Christine Evans

FACULTY AWARD Wearing Jeans at the Airport........Lori Dovidio Dabbagh

ART PICKS

ART AWARD Mary Loporcaro

LAURA BENTIVEGNA
SENIOR SHOWCASE

STACY COLOMBO

Is a senior at Fisher majoring in English with a concentration in writing and a minor in Communications. She is co-Editor of The Angle, Senior Writing Tutor in the Writing Center, Assistant LifeStyles Editor for the Cardinal Courier, and a member of the Varsity Cheerleading team. After graduation, she hopes to find a job in editing and/or publishing. In the future, she wishes to pursue creative writing at the graduate level.

RACHEL KOOY

Is a senior Nursing major. She has been treasurer for Fisher Players for two years, Celebration of Words Programmer for six semesters, and has been featured in The Angle several times. After graduation, she will be working at Strong Memorial Hospital.

MEGAN LINDLEY

Is a senior at Fisher and will be graduating in May with a B.S. in Psychology. She is a member of Psychology Club and Psi Chi, the National Honor Society in Psychology. This is her second year on the Submission Review Committee for The Angle; and she is Secretary of the Religious Studies Club. After graduating, she plans to find a job, and eventually, go on to pursue her Masters in Psychology.

JOE LOPORCARO

Is a Communications major. Next year, he will be attending graduate school at either RIT or U of R in order to study film in some way, shape or form. His biggest hobby is playing a handful of instruments in a handful of bands — the most significant being With Any Luck. His motto on life?—Be nice or leave.

PATRICK POWERS

Is a senior at Fisher majoring in English. He has been a participant in Men’s Rugby Club for four years, and has been featured numerous times in the publication of The Angle. He will be graduating in December.

MEGHAN K. ROOT

Is graduating with a B.S. in Psychology. She has been active with the Women’s Rugby Club throughout her four years. She plans on attending graduate school in order to attain her M.A. in Mental Health Counseling.

JODI ROWLAND

Is a senior majoring in English and Religious Studies. She is co-Editor of The Angle, President of Religious Studies Club, and Celebration of Words Programmer. After graduation, she plans to find a job in editing, and eventually, she will pursue creative writing at the graduate level.

JESSICA TIMOTHY

Is graduating with a B.S. in Computer Science and History. She has had a wonderful time in her four years at Fisher and has made lifelong friends. After graduation, she hopes to find a job in Western New York.
Megan Lindley

When I See You, I See You In Words

Your words are water
from a waterfall flowing,
cascading downward
splashing into a peaceful pool
where the riverbed below is stimulated.

I am the earth— the rocks, the clay, the sand, and soil—
forming the riverbed
your rippling words gracefully
carehouse as they flow over the soils of me, evaporating
into my skin and hair
they remain within me— a part of me

Your words are like a sweet, warm, spring rain
clear, refreshing beads saturating my porous surface—
although some drops never come in contact,
disappearing downstream beside me.
I am now just an onlooker
and do not keep close track of them
They escape from view.

When I feel you, I feel comforting water.
when I touch you, I touch ever-moving life
when I see you, I see in words.
GEOFFREY POTTER

LEARNING TO SWIM AT THE AGE OF TWO IN THE BACKYARD POOL ON A WARM JULY DAY IN THE YEAR OF 1985, HALFWAY BETWEEN FULTON AND HANNIBAL, UPSTATE NEW YORK

Memory resonates like the ripple Of water after your first dive— On a past day passed counting I learned to swim, or rather, I remembered— I remember swimming better Than walking, my family Exclaiming that I was born for swimming— I was born from water into water And in water I find tranquility— The halcyon lives on the sea The embodiment of tranquility, Calm only when solitary— Peace I find when alone, A book in hand for hours uncounted, The clock unheeded, diving deeper, Holding my breath until the end— I turn the pages once again, Into the waters I descend.

JODI ROWLAND
JENNY STOCKDALE

INSTANT INK

You're the instant I catch myself collapsing like cheap furniture.
At least, you were that instant
before I would come to find that, like instant coffee, you're a makeshift excuse for addiction.

That's all that kept me awake, for years

You're the ink I never bothered to scrub off my crooked fingers.
At least, you were that ink
before I would come to find that, like ink wells, you're a shallow, glass jar girdling permanence.

It used to keep me awake

But just yesterday,
when I orchestrated my own ending,
you painted me a mess
you sang me a hurricane
you kicked me in the memory,
and I turned that furniture into firewood.

As for the ink,
I used soap this time.
Who is she?

The woman in the scarlet dress.
Her flushed peach face
Illuminated by the iridescent street lamps.

Champagne bubbles
Float through the twilight hours
Along with the laughing and the dancing

Who is she?

The rose colored mistress
Among the sea of
Charcoal ties and bowler hats

The celebration
The success of her favorite candidate
Many are there
Yet she stands apart

True happiness is a woman dancing
With eyes closed
Like no one is watching.
My husband’s passport was blue
but big bulky blue
not quaint compact blue.
My children’s pictures—
tiny orange-like heads and blurred eyes—
secured on the inside cover
of their quaint compact blue passports.

My husband’s suit was blue—
a shade lighter than the navy
of his big bulky passport—
but still they stopped him
at every corner
and searched his luggage
and searched his person
and questioned him like inquisitors
while I held the hands
of my little blue passport-bearing children
who were living replicas
of computerized photo aging.

My husband’s tie was even blue—
royal blue with sky-blue geometric shapes—
and I looked around at the jeans and sweatshirts and sneakers
of tourists and home-bound travelers.

I dream of the day
he can wear jeans at the airport, too,
and pass unnoticed
among the home-bound travelers and tourists
and bypass searches and inquisitions
because he bears that little compact blue passport

even though other searches and inquisitions
await outside
the automatic sliding glass doors.
CHRISTINE EVANS

DREAMS OF BICYCLES AND BASEBALL

It’s 7:30 p.m. and I sit on the couch of my cold, weather-beaten trailer with my peanut butter and jelly sandwich in hand, and Joey, my kid brother, sitting at my feet. It’s March and our parents died last December, right before the holidays. They were out Christmas shopping for Joey’s “big” gift. They found his new green and blue mountain bike tangled in the mess, which later, they confirmed was their car. Life just hasn’t been the same without extra laughs and hugs. Somehow, Joey has been handling it better; he has baseball to keep his mind busy.

Baseball kept his dreams alive. Joey’s small body is curled around his homemade dinner, Samson’s best turkey dinner, including gravy and potatoes, and his oversized glass of cool milk sweats onto the floor. His toes wriggle with anticipation as he waits on the brown shag rug for his baseball game to return to the screen. His favorite player is Alex Richards a 26-year-old dreamboat with millions of dollars. Joey worships the ground he walks on. Who wouldn’t? He is every eight-year-old boy’s dream. Alex gets to play baseball for the rest of his life and make money—it’s perfect. Far from the life Joey has experienced in the last few months.

Joey sits in a trance—mesmerized by a diamond, a ball, and unrealistic green grass. I sit Indian-style, glass of milk in hand, wearing the remains of my sandwich on my oversized purple and yellow tweety bird t-shirt. In disgust I roll my eyes, but what am I more disgusted with: me, my parents for leaving me like this, or Alex, the superstar.

As I stare at the thirteen inch black and white TV my grandfather found in the junk yard, I see my reflection. My unkempt hair, baggy gray pants and pale overworked, over emotional eyes. I see this reflection next to the highest paid player in baseball: tall, cocky, arrogant, yet enduring and heroic. The whites of his teeth gleam off of the screen as his Gatorade commercial shows him holding the clear bottle filled with orange fluid with the green and orange ‘Gatorade’ perfectly transposed above the lightning bolt trademark.

I stare into his eyes, playing devil’s advocate always gets me in trouble. He doesn’t have problems; I bet he has a family, no little brother to worry about. The oceans of emotions flood my eyes but the dam shuts them down.

Joey cocks his head back and beaming like the North Star he says, “Hey, aren’t you watching the game?”

I lower my gaze, hiding the well of emotions, by feverishly blinking away my tears, and find his perfect innocent baby blue eyes staring right into my broken heart. “I’m watching alright. That’s gonna be you someday.”

Joey smiles and returns to the screen; his dirty blond hair slides over his eyes as Mr. Perfect steps up to the plate.

Joey didn’t get that mountain bike, but I’ll make sure he gets baseball.
M.

UNSEEN

"Nothing the hand does can stitch time back to that place where mind and eye might mend the world to wholeness. Always two worlds."
— from the poem "Stitches" by Debra Kang Dean

Silence kept me trapped in this place
Once a home, now barely a place to live...

My secret life unseen by the parents,
who picked me up for Girl Scouts
Who didn't see me
Carefully peering out the kitchen window,
Who didn't know
That I was anxiously waiting their arrival
so I could jump up and go...

Leave my secret life,
Unseen by the friends who never came over
for the birthday parties that never happened
or the sleepovers I never had...

Going to the babysitters
was an escape from the secret life
I purposefully kept unseen,
Waffles instead of hash browns
Fresh sandwiches on wheat bread
Instead of the Happy Meals
that I was usually fed...

Years passed before my family knew
Years passed before they found out

Years before they saw...
All the empty cupboards
and the dirty dishes left unclean.
Junk mail from 1988 up to 1998 back down to 1992
Strewn across the floor of every room...

Years before they saw... the gaping hole
in the wall by the front door.
The fiberglass ventilation
that wanted to escape too,
Falling into little pink piles
behind Daddy's recliner chair...

Years before they saw... the hole
that used to be the floor,
next to the bathroom
covered by the flimsy plywood
that Dad had placed sloppily upon it
When I was afraid I might fall through.

Years before they saw...
Everything
Life is witness,
to the faith you broaden—
to a congregation, you belong
in a world you have forsaken.

The church respects your concern
and identifies your condolence.
To the world, you weaken,
they pry at your religion,
watch and wait for you to sin.
Applaud at your fall.
They call you sinister,
when your face glows with grace
and tap on your window
when you had pulled the shade,
they say, "Where is the God,
that you so trust and believe?"

Laughing at you like the past
teaching nothing;
when you wipe away their tears,
they whip you with their tongue,
the same as you spoke your love.
Singing in the care for others
as your body elapsed
in the connection of world,
air and heaven.

Still, you burn your candle
and carry the Cross,
like a cloud carrying a storm—
where terrains remain
to stay dry,
you water only the thirst.
JODI ROWLAND

ABOUT GOODNESS
ON THE CORNER OF BATHURST AND BLOOR, TORONTO

I often wonder
how one corner,
in one city,
in the entire world,
could say so much
about goodness
about what pushes people
from inside to reach out
and touch another part of
life.
I often wonder
how the look on
one homeless man’s face
and the chilly night air we left outside Pizza Pizza,
could make me
give up
one cold slice of mushroom pizza
and two dollars Canadian.
I often wonder
how this touched me
so deeply,
I cried.

BRYANT HALEY
Marie Heberger

The Coolest Playground Ever

I remember when the days lasted forever and it was always sunny. Recess was always too short, but it tired me out and made me feel good on the inside. For a brief time, way back when I was short and chubby with bangs that fell in front of my eyes, I attended a Catholic elementary school, Holy Ghost, with possibly the coolest playground ever. It was always sunny and I always felt good after running myself tired.

The playground was built by volunteers from Holy Ghost Church. Using wood, bolts, chains, and old tires, a handful of people put together the coolest playground ever. The ground around it was covered with little stones that always stuck in the crevices in my shoes. Although the materials weren’t cutting-edge or bright with colors, it was still the coolest playground ever.

The coolest playground ever consisted of a castle with towers and bridges. Touching the sky, the lookout towers allowed the boys to spot enemy girls. We would scale the metal and wooden rungs of the ladders in an effort to overthrow the boys. However, no one would stay up too long because bees often invaded the towers to make their homes. The bees sometimes blocked off the bridges too, narrowing the paths of escape to the metal slide that got too hot after mirroring the sun all day. It didn’t bother the boys too much because their navy blue pants protected their legs. Plaid skirts could not put up the same defense against the searing metal.

A long, octagonal bridge connected the castle to a ship. Old steering wheels were strategically placed, so one could look out and navigate away from pirates and scalawags. A spiral slide that was partially covered on the top, so it didn’t get too hot also served as an escape when the unwanted party attacked and took over the ship. Oftentimes, we would try to climb up the slide the wrong way to sneak onto the ship, but at the same time, someone would be coming down. A colliding mess of navy blue pants, plaid jumpers, and yellow blouses and polo shirts would come tumbling down, landing on the little stones at the mouth of the slide. Then we’d brush ourselves off and try it again.

While the boys dominated the castle and ship, the girls took to playing in the gazebo. It was a marvelous mansion, a stranded raft on an ocean, or a platform surrounded by flames ever licking at our toes. It was cool and shady in the mansion-raft-platform. The wood along the edges of the benches was smooth, so smooth that the wood almost felt soft to the touch. We could run our fingers along the wood and not have to worry about getting splinters stuck in our delicate skin. The boys wouldn’t bother us there.

One place that was not gender specific was the tire swing. We only had one and it was the most popular thing to do in the coolest playground ever. Suspended above a bottomless well or a pit full of venomous snakes, we swung the tire around and around until we felt ill with dizziness. Someone would grab two of the three chains it hung from and snap it around with all his or her might, causing the four to five riders to throw their heads back, unable to battle the centrifugal motion. Even after it rained and the bottomless well and snake pit filled with water, the boys would scoop the little stones up in their hands to fill it in. Being more creative, the girls scooped massive amounts of little stones in their skirts and dumped it in the pit. Several scoops later, the most popular thing to do in the coolest playground ever was once again usable.

Next to the tire swing were the regular swings. The light blue seats were nice and big so they didn’t dig into our hips and thighs. We could soar higher than the birds and the wind would catch our skirts on the way down. When two people were lined up exactly with each other and swung simultaneously, we would say they were married. Of course, the boys never liked this, so they rarely graced the swings. The swings, like
the gazebo mansion-raft-platform, belonged to the girls.

In front of the castle lay the catacombs. These tire mazes zigzagged the ground in the very front of the coolest playground ever. Each tire was on its end and about half way buried under the little stones, forming an upside-down “U.” Being a little claustrophobic, I never really liked the tire tunnels. However I had no difficulty running and hopping along the tops. These too often absorbed the sun’s rays and became hot to the touch. Neither pant nor skirt mattered, as long as the runners stayed on their rubber-soled feet.

This is how it used to be.

Now strange little children play where I once did on sunny days, tiring themselves out. No more boys and girls dressed in navy blue pants, plaid jumpers, and yellow blouses and polo shirts. The Holy Ghost school is now Generations Daycare. After attending that school from kindergarten through second grade, I had to switch schools before I entered third grade. Bishop Clark closed my school because there weren’t enough students enrolled to keep the school alive. Bishop Clark took the coolest playground ever and gave it to someone else.

Not too long ago, I returned to the playground that strangers took from me. I went back and I played just like I had always done. Everything was the same, but at the same time, everything was so different. Or maybe it was just me.

Walking through the freshly mowed grass, I set foot on the little stones. No one was around. The screams and shouts of delight from my classmates had faded over the years. There were no boys to defend the castle and ship, no girls to make-believe with in the mansion-raft-platform. There was no one to grab two of the three chains the tire swing hung from and snap it around with all his or her might, causing me to throw my head back, unable to battle the centrifugal motion. It was quiet.

Somehow over the years, everything shrank. The towers of the castle that once graced the sky now were only a few feet above my head. I could climb the ladder in only two steps. Watching my head to avoid whacking it on the wooden frame, I still crept my way through the castle one more time. The bees still held their reign and the slide was still hot enough to burn what bare legs came its way.

I couldn’t fit through the octagonal bridge anymore. I managed to hop on top of it and crawl over to the ship. I took hold of the steering wheel and whirled the ship starboard. Spotting virulent pirates, I dove head first down the spiral slide in an effort to abandon ship. My body was too long for the curves of the slide and I got stuck. The pirates took me captive and threw me in the catacombs. I briskly jumped out and ignored my imagination, remembering my claustrophobic fears of long ago.

Regaining my composure after the pirate attack, I kicked my way through the even littler stones to the tire swing. I sat on it and spun a bit, but quickly stopped after it made my stomach queasy. This time there was only room for me.

After I had my fill of reliving my childhood adventures, I retired to the gazebo for lunch. Gazing at the coolest playground ever, I realized that it hadn’t changed at all. The castle with its catacombs and towers and escape routes hadn’t changed. The ship with its steering wheels and spiral slide hadn’t changed. The tunnels and bridges connecting the two hadn’t changed. Even the old tire swing still remained suspended from the ground by the three chains in the exact same place. It was sunny out and I felt tired.

The coolest playground ever will never change. The chains are a bit rusty and some have a protective plastic covering on them. The wood has been worn and smoothed from years of use. But those things don’t really matter. Children will come and go, making that playground theirs just as I had. They will play in the sun and get tired out and feel good. Before I left the coolest playground ever, perhaps for another ten years, I stood and looked at it. It will never change; it was sunny out and I felt tired and good.
Their mouths bend over restless rubber swings
While they cut and stain their hand-me-down knees
Creating scars that mark the passage of eternity

Their voices are long that make weary mothers weep
And can silence the creeping elongated shadows
That signal the sleeping of the sun

Their giggles parallel the veteran branches of the pines
Repeating teases and rhymes while jumping over a well-versed rope
Bequeathed to them by their more learned brothers and sisters

Their smiles blossom after touching “safe”
Flames swamp their cheeks while pausing to lasso the wind
Before streaming off to lie low in a cover of discarded autumn petals

Their tongues dance in jazz squares
That are backpacked over muddy baseball diamonds
On the shoulders of a drifting gust

Their lips scream for the angles of every new revelation
Developing rules to inexperienced frolics
That castrates the legends of formality and handshakes

Their jaws clamp onto each rusty blade of soil
Consuming the dew from the trampled sage grass
Served beside mud-pies and shirt-staining juice boxes
Their ignorance chases the looming horizon in fear of loosing all that is sacred and scarce

MEGHAN ROOT

CHILDREN RUN WILD
STACY COLOMBO

ALL THE THINGS I CAN'T THROW AWAY
after WHAT I SAVE by CHERYL SAVANGEAU

Taking after my mother now, I save receipts in the center billfold of my wallet. Loose change, half empty tubes of lipstick, gum wrappers. Postcards, photographs in albums, birthday cards, yearbooks signed by forgotten friends. I save trophies, hair ribbons, newspaper clippings, patches for my jacket. I save clothes that no longer fit, shoes with worn heels, VHS tapes, Barbie dolls still in boxes, teddy bears. Books and board games. Dried flowers and tears. I save cool vanilla custard on my lips. I save the taste of grandmother’s food, covered in garlic and fresh basil from the yard. I save the taste of a lover’s kiss. I save his lips, his blue eyes. I save the sound of the lake rushing the shore, the grained sand between my toes, the heat of the sun hitting my skin.

I save the lit candle inside me
that will never blow out.
LORI DOVIDIO DABBAGH

ST. JEAN SOLSTICE

Cars and tour buses are rumbling outside wide-flung French windows without screens and tourists' voices are filtering through in an English-dominant Babel. I smell the smokiness of meat turning on the spit—people eating shawarma in pita bread even at midnight—on the street below.

The couch has a hole in it and we walk up five flights of winding wooden steps but this two-room apartment with off-white walls isn't family isn't history isn't smothering, like the smoke that billows upward.

As I hold his hand I can lean in and smell the sweet Drakkar Noir cologne some might call "oriental" that he wore the day we met at the Sorbonne where I was studying Arabic.

He has no money for a ring but who needs gold or diamonds when one from the East and one from the West vow togetherness on the St. Jean Solstice with the Chinese white moon as our only light?

J'aime Paris au mois de mai but June is the month of brides. He doesn't need to get down on one knee after I pursued him in three languages throughout the snowless winter and lilac and lily-of-the-valley scented spring.

But why, then, does my heart beat hummingbird-like for fear of disgracing the family name?

Why do I not launch forward in a burst of polyphonic song on my own road to Damascus?
EMILY RYAN

LOUIS, WENDELL LOUIS: TEN DOLLAR BILLS ARE FOREVER

It was Friday, finally. No more homework, no more football practice, no more locker jams, no more awkward lab classes with Audrey; I was done with being Wendell Louis, high school junior; I was free... for a few days anyway. I made it to the parking lot outside through the crowded, noisy, stale smelling halls, without so much as a trip, a dropped book, or a comment about my “wizard beard;” maybe this would be the weekend, my lucky weekend.

I made it to my bus-of-a-station-wagon, the one that my dad thought he should get voted “World’s Best Dad” for giving me. I never referred to it as my car, or even the station wagon for that matter; I had resorted to calling it names, like “The Banana Boat,” or on days I was feeling particularly audacious, “The Shaggin’ Wagon” in an attempt to make it cool and eccentric. The car was older than I was at 17, and had tires that looked as if they could be from a bicycle, with about as much tread on them as an inner tube. The color, a beaming yellow spotted here and there with deep iron colored rust, made me visible from miles away. The real gem was the huge hood ornament my father had decided, sometime in the late 70’s, would bring this Frankenstein of a car to life. The ornament at about six inches tall, was something between an eagle and a woman, wings outstretched, looking to take off; the masthead to my vessel of mortification.

I sat on the hood waiting, for my little sister Alex to walk over from the junior high. I thought of ways to drown out her incessant chatter about the day’s latest news; what Kelly had said to Brian, why Ashley was wearing that outfit, and how Lisa and Marie were in a huge fight over who was better, Clay Aiken or Rueben Studdard. It was always the same, and each day I just sat and listened, helpless and vacant counting down the miles, minutes, inches, to my room where I could shut the door and be at peace. I finally spotted Alex, with her Britney style pig tails, and eye scorching pink and orange Limited Too clothes. I watched as she walked towards me and thought, at least she would take the attention away from my car.

On the way home I managed to drown out the rambling of my sister with thoughts of my plans for the weekend. I had decided that instead of jamming myself in my room, I was going to take flight on this seemingly lucky drift, and find my fortune at the casino. My uncle had worked there since I was very small, and always found ways to let me in; it was a very secretive operation, and I always liked to think of myself as suave and sly, a Bond like character, only with less height, girls, and debonair. As I never had much luck at the casino, and usually managed to spend all of my dish-washing money, the feeling of freedom and masquerade was what brought me back.

I ran out of the car and into the house, leaving Alex in my dust still talking about how much of a sham it was that Mindy got voted captain of the cheerleading team; she couldn’t even do a split! I went into my room and closed the door. I opened my closet and picked out a nice clean pair of black chinos and a red polka dotted tie that I had worn to my football banquet that fall. I slicked back my hair with some water, and found the crisp 50 dollar bill I had been hiding in my sock drawer. With one quick check in the mirror, and a rehearsal of “Louis, Wendell Louis,” I was ready to gamble.

I closed the door behind me as I entered the casino, heart aflutter, wearing my oh-so-suave leather coat and Ray Ban sunglasses. Nonchalantly, as I had done many times before, I put my hand to my nose to smell the raw metal scent the door knob had marked me with. Ever since I was a kid, I had loved the smell of door knobs, and like a familiar friend, the aroma always seemed to calm me. As I looked around, there were a few blue haired old ladies that sat in front of the slot machines, wearing their plastic visors, and holding onto their coin cups as if the fountain of youth was hidden amidst
the clanking change. The sun poked into the room in sporadic beams, highlighting specks of dust and smoke like pieces of 40-year-old glitter. The carpet was a deep orange color, spotted here and there with what I like to imagine was blood spilled in an incredibly exciting fight started by shifting eyes or strangely wide sleeves; but was probably just some sort of drink or food left as souvenirs by past visitors. I found my uncle underneath one of the machines, wrench in hand, trying to fix “the damned contraption.” Apparently, the slot machines had been breaking down a lot lately, along with the paint on the walls. He gave me the okay to start playing, and I made my way to the Black Jack table, traded in my hard earned money for some chips, and started to play, with dreams of a shiny, new, black Ferrari—sans hood ornament in mind.

I had started off very strong, winning at least 4 hands right away, but the more I thought about my Ferrari, the more careless I got. Before I knew it I was standing awe-struck, 49 dollars and 75 cents lighter. Dejected and disappointed, I walked past the table, past my uncle, past the stupid stains in the carpet, but when I got to the slot machine I decided that I only had 25 cents to lose, so why not? I sat down next to an old lady who looked as if she had been pretty lucky and I tried to imagine what she would buy with her winnings, a shiny new set of pink curlers, maybe some new dentures... I couldn’t think of anything that warranted her winning over me, so I figured I had a pretty good shot. I dropped the quarter in with confidence, pulled the lever, and watched as the geriatric machine spun away. Cherry, cherry... the machine trembled and paused for a moment, as if allowing my suspense to build... cherry! I had won! I had won with my stupid quarter! The red light atop the machine spun slowly and sounded intermittently as if it were afraid it might break if it acted too fast. My uncle came over shaking his head and laughing in disbelief.

“Congratulations Wenny, you won ten bucks!” Ten bucks!? Ten bucks!? The old lady next to me gave me a look of jealousy and disgust, and kept on trudging away at her machine that was spitting out quarters. I took the ten dollars from my uncle and left the casino, shutting the door abruptly, and fighting back the tears. The brightness of the sun and the yellow of the banana boat strained my eyes, but I refused to don my sunglasses which seemed to mock me from my pocket. I sat down and composed myself before I started the trip back home.

I didn’t want anything to do with the ten dollars that seemed to be burning through my pocket and into the skin of my thigh, so I decided to stop at the local mini-mart which was infamous for their chili-dogs and toasted egg salad. I entered the store, my eyes again blinded by the bright fluorescent lights. “Hey Wendell, out of popcorn and spoons already?” Bubba, the kind, but strange storeowner who spoke a type of mottled English and Indian asked me as I walked in. “Yeah, it’s been a tough week,” I told him feigning a smile. I found the black and white bag of Smart Food popcorn, grabbed some plastic spoons, and made my way to the counter to pay Bubba. “Tell you what,” Bubba said, “since you’ve had such a rough week, why don’t I give you some scratch offs—heh, you never know.” My stomach dropped, but I didn’t want to seem ungrateful for Bubba’s kindness, so I took the tickets; paid for my food, and left.

I slowly pulled up in front of my small, but neatly trimmed house, and parked the banana boat in the street so that my mom could get her car out in the morning. I sat there for awhile, watching my mom’s crisp American Flag wave in the warm light of the sunset. After awhile, I became uncomfortable in the quiet of my front seat, at decided to open my bag of popcorn. I grabbed my white, fresh, shiny new spoons and started to dig in; my mom had always yelled at me for dirtying our good spoons for popcorn, so I had resorted to buying my own plastic ones. I had forgotten about the tickets until I felt their sharp corners poking me in the chest pocket. I took them out and scratched off the first one slowly, carefully, methodically as if my wishing and patience would make it a winner. Nothing. I threw it out the window and took the other, this time ravishing its chalky covering so that pieces flew into my hair and on my lap. I looked at the ticket and could not believe my luck. Written three times, diagonally arranged across the ticket, barely visible to the unfocused eye, was $10. I dropped my popcorn—spoon and all, onto the seat and went into the house to sleep.
PATRICK POWERS

FADED COUCHES

Clouds of smoke, light and fluffy,
float across the dim lit room
A snow storm blurs the television.
Three old friends, sharing stories
That no one could understand.

This time of day is mine
to lay sleepily on blue
faded couches. Twisting turning,
cracking lazy bones, tired
from hours of festivity.

Celebrated small pleasure,
like garbage plates and Jokers.
Now it’s time to loaf about,
commemorating small pleasures
like Saturday morning cartoons and Advil.

These days are numbered,
too few to miss. Soon,
it will be suits and ties.
Making breakfast before games,
little leaguers littering the house.

I must celebrate existing days.
Spend them with my life long friends,
who will wander from my life,
only to be seen at reunions of our past.
These days are numbered.
GEORGE YORK POTTER

THEY SAY THE OSWEGO SKY IS MOST BEAUTIFUL
IN THE DYING LIGHT

We stroll the rocky beach
Looking up and out to the lake
Sky, more blue and vast
Than the dark foamy waters
Joined and separated by a horizon
Pink in the lingering memory of day
The breeze passes through the
trees to our left, mingling
With the sound of waves
And our promises
Echoing off the bluffs
We wash each other’s hair
In water that is deceptively
Cold, almost freezingly so
Under the warm summer air
You and I, tomboy and boy
Beyond his years
Seeing in the shallowness
Of that water
Our future,
Denied through unspoken lies
We don’t say goodbye as we walk
Cautiously back to where the truck was parked,
Passed the dead fish left from the summer upwelling,
The dark amber fragments of broken beer bottles
From famous parties nobody remembers,
Over the sharp deciduous roots on the trail
That leads away from the lakeshore
PRAISE FOR THE AUTHORS

In her poem, “Wearing jeans at the airport” Lori Dovidio Dabbagh illustrates a wife’s longing for ambiguity and acceptance.
—Jason Cotugno, Layout Editor

“Dreams of Bicycles and Baseball” by Christine Evans is reminiscent of what once was, and what still is now.
—Matthew Cotugno, Account Manager

Megan Lindley’s imagery in “When I See You, I See You In Words” reveals that love, like the flowing of water throughout the poem, is refreshing and cleansing.
—Robin Buda, Submission Review Committee

Geoffrey Potter rings in the summer season with his tales of peaceful days spent enjoying life.
—Emily Ryan, Editor-in-Training

In “Instant Ink,” Jenny Stockdale cleverly uses her language in a way that captures the careful eye of her readers.
—Jodi Rowland, Editor