

Project: Untitled
SMSH 2010-2011
[Literary Magazine]

Love.
Lust.
Youth.
Hurt.
Religion.
Opinions.
Politics.
Art.

This magazine was not created for publicity, recognition or merit;
this magazine is a canvas. it is a way for the students to express
themselves.

We hope you enjoy.

This magazine was not created for publicity, recognition or
merit; this ~~magazine~~ ^{is} a canvas. It is ~~a way~~ ^{a medium} for the students

to express themselves. We felt we didn't
need to a pay a web technician to know how to feel, what emotions
do portray, or how to layout the designs of our lives. ~~delete~~ ~~del~~ ~~del~~ ~~del~~

We hope you enjoy.

We are just students trying to understand
~~at~~ ourselves.

~~display~~ ~~del~~ ~~del~~ ~~del~~
~~del~~ ~~del~~ ~~del~~ ~~del~~
~~del~~ ~~del~~ ~~del~~ ~~del~~

-Kevin

FLAT, beginning rebrand
Untitled. not created for...
↓
This magazine ~~was not created~~ for publicity, recognition or
merit; ~~this magazine is~~ ^{it's} a canvas. ~~It is a way for the students~~ ^{Student's way of illustrating}
~~to express themselves.~~ ^{their inner self, it's}
~~we hope you enjoy.~~ ^{South Miami's Cobras}
~~With an open mind,~~ ^{at their best zenith,}
~~drink in our creation.~~ ^{doing what they do}
~~epitome of~~ ^{best; at their}
~~their youth~~ ^{recessed expression.}

Raunye

This magazine was not created for publicity, recognition or merit; this ~~magazine~~ is a canvas. It is a way for the students to express themselves.

We hope you enjoy.

Dude, I like it.

-Javi

This ^{Art piece} ~~magazine~~ was not created for publicity, recognition or merit; this magazine is a canvas. ^{It is an outlet for all our feelings, good and bad;} ^{It is a way for the students} ^{to express themselves.} ^{their raw emotions.}

through it is displaying of all of those

~~We hope you enjoy.~~
Beauty is in the eye of the beholder.

This is ~~just~~ more than just a magazine; its art, emotions, the good and the bad.

This is us.

-Jose

This magazine was not created for publicity, recognition or merit; this

~~magazine~~ is a canvas. it is a way for the students to express ^{I + IS} ~~themselves.~~ ^{inspired by pieces of captivating artwork, engrossing photography and an ardent literary compositions subm: Heel by fellow Cobras of South Miami}

their individuality
Creativity through their innate artistic talent and skills

~~We hope you enjoy.~~
Each student should perceive, embrace and analyze each piece according to their own weight and try to capture the "Raw Essence" which is portrayed throughout this magazine.
We hope you enjoy.

-Annabelle



KEVIN SANTAMARIA, 12TH GRADE

The long road of becoming Leader.

Leaders, like champions, are only seen by the public in their final perfected form. The medals, the trophies, and the records are seen but not felt, touched but not endured. What few get is the opportunity to witness the process required to maintain one's mind and body in such a toned state: the months of vigorous dieting, the miles of grueling repetitions, and, ultimately, a lifetime of dedication

Running has become a part of who I am. It has molded my character, my spirit and my morals. Running has instilled in me the discipline required to become a leader. As the Cross Country captain, I have learned that the most successful way to lead a team is by example, not merely through mandate. Demonstrating perseverance, hard-work, and humility to a nourishing team will only provide a structured base for future success. So, when a long time training partner asked me if I could pace him during the last 10 miles of the ING Miami Marathon, I knew it was my call of duty. My goal was to push him in the most difficult part of the 26.2 mile journey: the part during which the human body starts to tear down, doubt fills our minds, and fear prevents us from achieving our goals. As I saw him approaching the 16 mile mark,

I could tell from his posture that he was struggling and if I let him fall off pace, he would fail to qualify for the Boston Marathon. As I led the way, setting the targeted pace for him, I saw other runners who had started walking, defeated by the distance. I encouraged them to run with us, by mile 20, I had formed a pack of fatigued runners enduring the most strenuous pain one can put himself through. With each passing mile, more runners joined our pack; we fed each other energy to continue running, even when our bodies were depleted. I know that training for a marathon is at least a year's worth of sacrifice and could not possibly let them give up in the last couple of miles of their odyssey. Especially if all they needed was some to lead them to triumph.

The media often glorifies professional athletes for being able to do something seemingly remarkable, inhuman. But, with each step the pack took together, I saw regular, everyday people be able to push beyond their capable limits, do something extraordinary. They were able to gain strength to run another 6 miles, even when their bodies had told them no more, to fight for a qualifying spot in one of the most prestigious races in the world. I would not let them down. During the last two miles, the pack regained life. We were able to drop almost thirty seconds off our targeted pace. When we all crossed the finish line, we hugged and shared the splendor of the moment together: despite the countless drawbacks before and during the race, they had all -including my friend- managed to qualify for the Boston Marathon. I was thanked by all the runners who ran with us; some admitted that, if I would not have pushed them along, they would have probably walked the last couple miles, destroying their hopes of qualifying. A true leader not only inspires people to achieve their goals; he takes it upon himself to ensure they reach their potential, to push them when all hope seems lost, to endure the same pain they are enduring while ensuring that the glory after the battle will be worth the struggle. Champions are not determined by medals or time; champions are determined by their actions

Senior,

Kevin Santamaria



"THE BEAUTY OF YOUTH." KASSANDRA PINO, 11TH GRADE

Alice

Alice was a friend of mine
until she disappeared;
She followed a forbidden path
the one I've always feared.

The rabbit who was running fast
was white and very hurried.
Alice wondered after him,
and that's when I got worried.

So curious was Alice
she did not even see,
And tumbled deep into a hole
beside a maple tree.

She had to find the rabbit
to see why he was rushed.
By the time she landed upside-
down,
Her face was slightly flushed.

On this quest her whole world
changed;
she lost all track of time.
She hung around strange people
who only spoke in rhyme.

Friendships didn't last
and Un birthdays called for
tea.
She had to try and ditch two
boys,
Tweedledum and Tweedledee.

She wandered through a garden
and the flowers called her
names.

They thought she was a deadly
weed,
and would not play her games.

Once she met a Caterpillar
who smoked a big strange pipe.
She recited poems to him,
but all he did was gripe.

He told her to eat mushrooms
to change the way she was.
Alice knew not how to be
and ate them just because.

The ups and downs were tiring
and Alice wanted out.
The madness that surrounded her
just made her want to shout.

Finally she found her way
into the light once more,
And now her story can be bought
at every Disney store.

Senior,

Jose Dos Santos

1+1= (infinity) ; Duh!

since the early days of our schooling we are
taught two golden rules:

treat others as you wish to be treated
and the fallacious notion that one plus one
will forever equal two

-- I beg to differ.

constantly we are reminded of this erroneous
concept. Anywhere and Everywhere
we go, there it is! it's as if the world
automatically accepted
the absurd without even second-guessing its
source.

intellectual inquiry is an artifact of the
ancient romantics.

today who'd dare question Tyndall's theory?
he proposed that the 'scattering' of white
light caused
our gaseous atmosphere to emit a blue hue.

What an idiot.

Everyone knows that the sky is blue because
it reflects the color of the ocean.

It's as simple as 1+1...

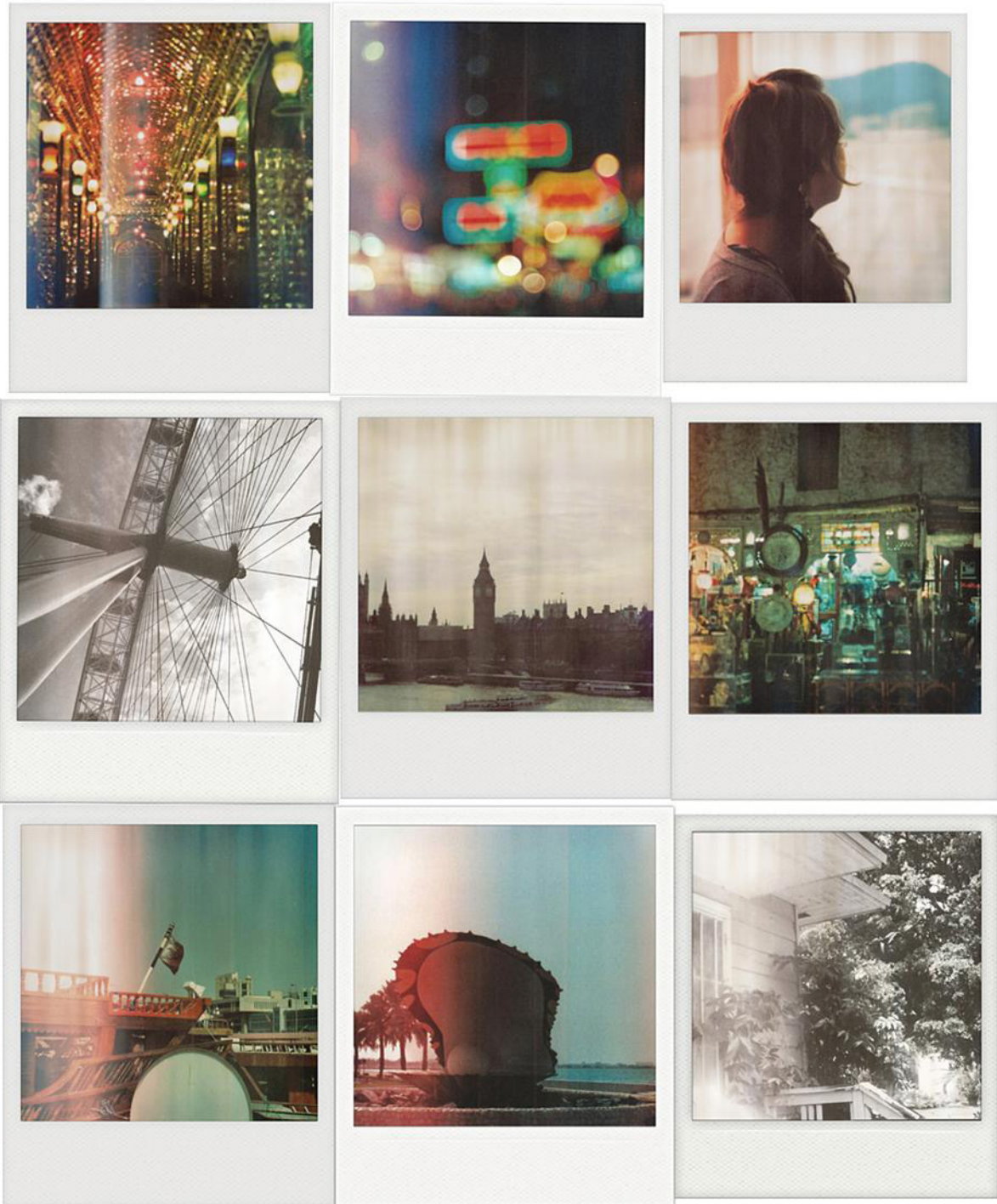
after long years of mathematical stoicism,
however, I
have come to the conclusion that something
that can be characterized
to be as simple as 'pi' cannot be
anything but an infinitely complex leviathan
made up of an
innumerable amount values, and,
therefore, should be treated as such.

Take this concept to heart – revolutionary
as it may be.
because when the day comes,
and it will,
that conventional life no longer is,
it is those who learned for the sake of
knowledge,
rather than a passing grade, that
will be able to surmount the trivialities of
daily life.

Life should not be taken for granted as
math students take simplified formulas,
because deriving the equations of life is
only half the fun.

Senior,

Javier Valdes



"A MAP OF THE KNOWN WORLD"
AISHA MOKTADIER, 12TH GRADE

Act I: The Starting Line, From Kevin Santamaria's "Scar Tissue"

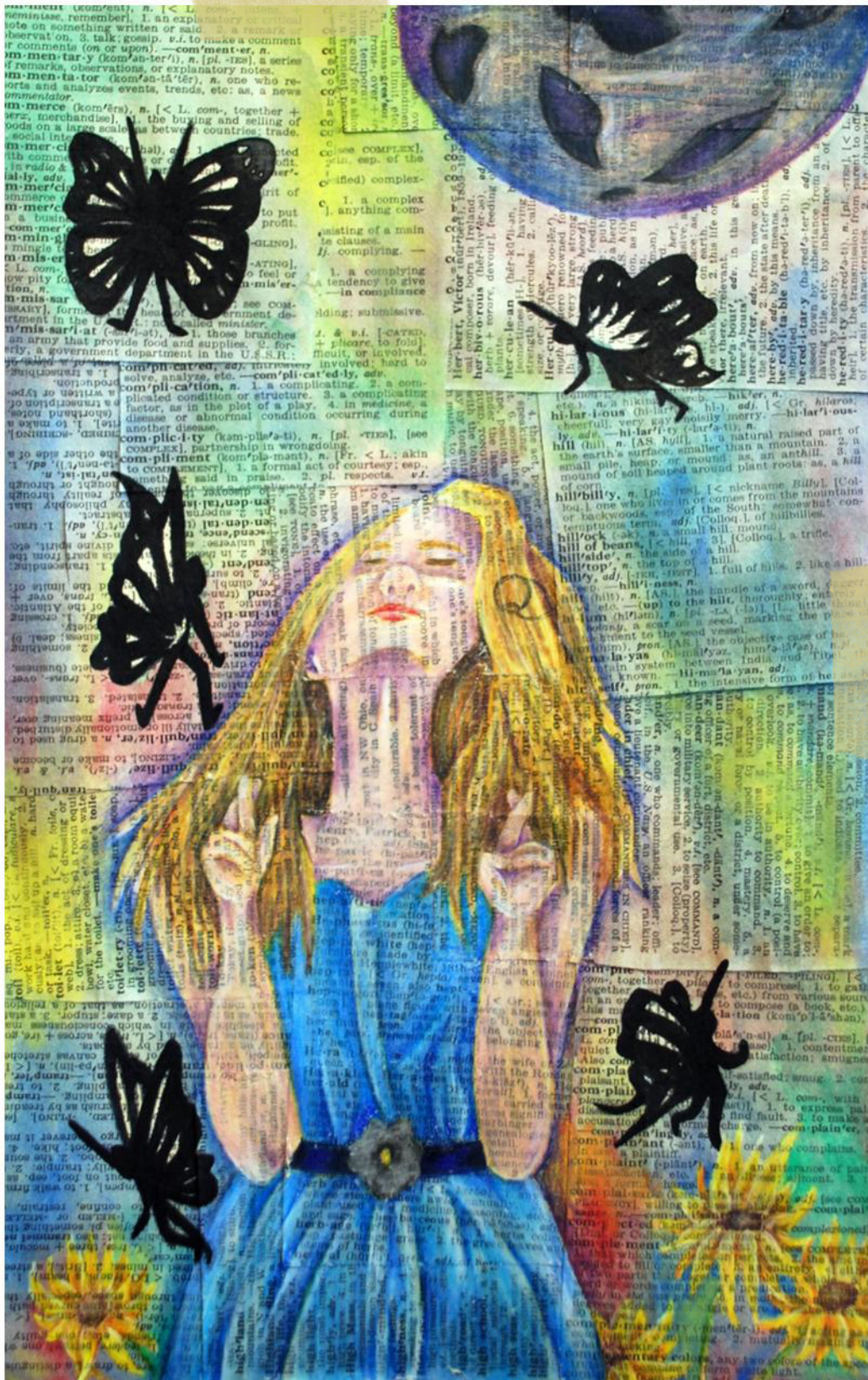
Some people express themselves with paint brushes, others through elaborated symphonies and various by fabricating literature. However, I express myself through running. When I am frustrated, I run. When I am disheartened, I run. When I am content, I run. When I don't know how to feel, I run. Only after running eight, nine, or ten miles can I deal with the problems in my world, physically escape the commotion of life.

I am a distance runner. My body is the product of my training. The food I eat is my fuel, the cleaner the fuel the smoother the transition. My cardio vascular system is my engine, the more I train the stronger it becomes. My legs are my wheels and my tires. The faster the engine, the cleaner the fuel, then my stride can move more swiftly, effortlessly. Yet, what you can't define anatomically is my spirit. I slam the clutch and go from fourth gear to sixth gear in three steps blowing past the competitors that thought I was no longer a factor. I never expected to lose this ability that made me free. But for every sorrow, every tear, every drop of blood and sweat, there is a purpose.

My junior cross country season should have been my break-through year. I devoted my entire summer in the hilly terrain of Colombia. Running hundreds of miles in my two month station. At 10,000 feet above sea level, the altitude would strength my lungs, heart and figure. So when I return to sea level, and raced on the flat planes of Miami, it should be nearly effortlessly. Maybe my expectations were too high when I returned but my initial results were quite disappointing. As the season progressed, the training began to take its effect and each race I began to inch my way closer to leaders, closer to the winner. Slowly but surely, I was learning to race on the unforgivable world of hills, mud and grass.



ALEXA MORALES, 11TH GRADE



LISA-STEPHANIE VALME, 12TH GRADE

My Dear Autumn

Oh autumn with your fruits and mist,
it is I ,frosty death, your careless friend,
gazing at your bleating lambs and lazy bees;
conspiring with the moon to bring forth sheets
of snow, to those silly tree's of gold,
Attempts at revival are futile for I, winter, will take no more,
sure you do some killing, but I ,
I my harmless friend ,do the slaughter,
with a swing of my chilly arms and a well put sneer
the wind closes around the gourd and plump hazel,
teasing with thoughts of a breeze , circling, circling, until frozen.
All the other seasons, I pity them
with their bleached green grass, and cancerous sun
but I, my dear autumn, am misunderstood
you won't find me sitting careless on the floor
winters hard at work bringing people together under 12 inches of snow
I'm not all bones you know, why the best scenes are of snowy hills,
arctic foxes, and cottages with cozy fireplaces.
The dead moose In the corner of the pictures? Their not my fault.

Honest.

Who is complaining anyway, autumn? No one notices the deaths,
no one notices the snow, all they notice is an old, fat man I created
with one bone
so long as they're distracted, my dear friend, I can keep circling,
and freezing.

So I ask , autumn, where ARE my songs?

My songs of glory, my songs of beauty?

But it's OK....I have my power and I'll always come back stronger
with icy storms, icy roads and reindeer's.

The wind can sing my song, and carry my ever increasing laughter,
I last for 3 months

while you, autumn, are gone

and the devious decay you started is blown away and burned,

but fear not autumn, some will remember you,

they'll say "I saw that harmless autumn,

circled by that chilly winter , oh what a sight!" circled , circled.

"My Dear Autumn," Claudia Garcia, 12th Grade



Kevin Santamaria, Senior

Act II: Open Wounds, From Kevin Santamaria's "Scar Tissue"

It was a traditional hot and humid race day in Miami. But unlike any other day, my body was wrecked. Two days before, I had successfully attained my fourth consecutive 10k race victory. Every fiber in my body was telling me not to run today, but after being down to the bare minimum of five runners, I had no other option. As I warmed up with my cross country team, I was startled by the number of schools that had arrived to our local race. Regardless of the number of competitors or my body's plea, I was here to compete for victory.

As I stepped on the starting line, it never crossed my mind that I would never have the opportunity to finish. The starting gun brought no relief to my aching body, no adrenaline to mask my pain, no motivation to run harder. In less than a quarter mile, I had been dropped by lead pack and was struggling just to maintain my pace. Each step was torturous, my body could not handle this pain any further, next mile I would drop out. Just as my mind processed these thoughts, I crossed the first mile feeling fortified. My body had become numb and my thoughts clear with only one purpose: triumph. My stride quickened and the pace became blistering, successfully passing fatigued runners once the second mile rolled around. And now being only steps away from the lead pack. With less than a mile left in the race, I had to make my move or fear having the race boil down to a sprint finish.

In a humble attempt to win the race, I stumbled too close to a wooden fence with a rusty nail sticking out of it, gashing three inches across my left thigh. At first, I shook off the blow as a meaningless scrape and continued running. After a couple of meters, I gazed down and saw my entire season disappear.

Coexist.

I believe in a life of coexistence and of tolerance. I believe in understanding other's beliefs, tolerating people of all faiths, of all walks of life. I believe that because not enough people share this belief of mine, the world is in the midst of turmoil, chaos, greed, animosity, and scorn.

I am a Catholic. A full-blown, Sunday-mass-attending Catholic. I believe in the Holy Trinity, I believe in the power of His omnipotent presence. I have believed ever since I can remember.

Ever since I can remember, I have been ridiculed for it. There she goes, they'd say. Blinded by her faith. There she goes, bible-hugging, Lord-a-praising. I was eight when I received my first communion. I felt welcomed in church, I felt warm, I felt safe. I enjoyed attending Sunday's mass with my parents, unlike some of the other children, blankly staring into oblivion as the priest spoke of God's holy word. But I knew even in their ignorance, God loved them, as he loved me. Like some form of divine intervention, (or perhaps enlightenment) I understood then, of God's ability to love us all, undeniably.

By all, God never meant *just* the Christians, *just* his followers. By all, God meant every single, breathing, human soul on the planet. It was after those fateful encounters in the pews of the old temple, that I realized that although unique in its stance, in such a place of worship, others must have felt the same, elsewhere. In their mosques, in their synagogues, among their holy shrines. The peace and serenity after some form of worship, the hairs atop their necks raised by the "goodness" and spirituality among them.

I then understood while to those of Catholic faith, He is God, to those of Islamic faith, He is Allah, and to others, God can be many things, the wind upon our backs, the earth we plant our seeds in, the sun upon our faces. That is where our commonalities shine through. In some way shape or form, our beliefs and faiths are intertwined into just that.

Intertwined into just believing.

Yet, I am no bible hugger, and neither am I one to shove what I firmly believe down your throat. What you believe is precious to you, divine for you, sacred for you. What I believe is precious, divine,

and sacred for me. You see the similarities?

I walk with my faith about me, and my heart on my sleeve. I walk today proud of my savior, of my family for instituting such a profound lifestyle. I walk knowing that while my religion and my church will never reach perfection, I will not be judgmental. Nor will I ever desire for one universal faith. Because then, Earth will not be as colorful, as unique, as multifaceted.

I believe in acceptance, in a life of utter coexistence. A life where the soul of any one person reverberates and resonates among the planet, together, intertwined, working towards one common goal.

Understanding.

Senior,

Emily Labandera



LISA-STEPHANIE VALME, 12TH GRADE

Act III: The Unsung Hero, From Kevin Santamaria's "Scar Tissue"

The adrenaline that was rushing through my blood dazed any initial shock of discomfort. My quick glance revealed a severe laceration covered in blood, my quadriceps muscle, and a yellow substance I assume is fat (which I was surprised I had). I was too far from the starting line to limp for help, so I was forced to lie on the ground defenselessly waiting for someone to aid me.

Yet, my heart was torn apart, stab and gashed a million times more painfully than my wound could ever do, when I saw over a hundred runners-including my own team mates-stare at me injured. No pity or sympathy in their eyes, completely ignoring me, casually running by.

After what it seemed like hours, one runner had the audacity to stop and aid me. I vaguely remember him due to the shock I was in but, he was able to run to the starting line, and then back to me assuring help was on the way. Then, he proudly continued the race.

The simple act of helping me in my time of need made him the real winner; he put aside his own personal interest and helped a fellow runner, a fellow human- something everyone else had the option of doing, but chose not to. Others were distracted by our differences: whether it was our distinct jerseys or school rivalries. No one actually compared our similarities: our similar goals, our similar pain, our similar passion.

He is a champion, *whoever he is.*



"SUNSET," KASSANDRA PINO, 11TH GRADE

My name means life. My name is everything I'd want it to be. It's short and sweet. It isn't as common as the "Jessicas" and "Ashleys" that filled my classrooms throughout my life. It resembles the one thing I treasure the most. It resembles the biggest adventure a person can possibly go on. *Life*, I like the way that sounds.

Well, technically you should call me Aisha. The name was given to me by mutual agreement between my parents. How original. There is no tracing back to older generations. There is no duplicating the name of an elder who has passed on. In our culture, women do not pass on names to one another. My name was new; I could say I was the only Aisha within three generations. My name was brought to life, and I stood apart.

It's funny, all my life I've been teased with the idea that my name was a "black girl name," as if I had stolen it when no one was looking. They pronounce it AYEESHA. Apparently, I was a "sista." I always took the jokes lightly, it never really bothered me. People really had that much trouble with 5 letters. Some days, I got the occasional "ASIA," with which I would cast a sideways glance and wonder to myself how someone could even get the name of a continent from my name itself. I guess they missed the h.

I like the fact my name can't be found on pre-made personalized coffee mugs or key chains from amusement parks. When I was younger, it frustrated me. It upset me that Susan next to me could grab any beaded keychain she wanted, but my name wasn't between Aaron and Amelia. I like how souvenirs have to be tailor made for my name. Some days, it feels like my name was tailor made for me. You should see it in Arabic; my name forms the prettiest swirls and loops. You can't make the names *Jessica* and *Ashley* look as pretty as my name turns out, as selfish as that sounds. *Life, la vida, la vie, Zindagi.*

Aisha.

I like the way that sounds.

Aisha Moktadier, 12th Grade

The Beauty of Not Believing
Written by Jessica Del Toro, Senior

Being an atheist is one of the aspects I love most about myself. My personal lack of belief in a higher power has given me opportunities, experiences and moments I could never have had otherwise. Most people say this about their faith: that without it they would be lost, that without it they would have nothing, that without it, their life would be meaningless. I however say that thanks to my lack of belief, I am a better person than I could have ever dreamed of becoming.

Brought up in a Catholic family with Catholic friends and Catholic teachings, I grew up to believe my religion was my guiding force- truthful, flawless, imperishable. Coming to this country changed everything. My parents and I immigrated to the United States from Cuba nine years ago in the pursuit of the American dream, of freedom. This striking new world opened doors for me and led me to meet new people with all types of religions or lack thereof. It was the beginning of a long journey of changes for me.

Evolving from a Catholic to an Agnostic to finally an Atheist has been a process- a long and difficult one at that. It wasn't easy for my family to accept the ways my thoughts have developed and matured with the passing of years, and my acceptance of others which has become endless. Atheism has been the biggest lesson in humility I have learned in my short seventeen years of life- the fact that I am very small in this world, no better than anyone else, capable of making mistakes, and knowing that it is up to my own two hands, my opposable thumbs and thinking brain to do more than pray to God to help others, but to take action.

It is incredibly liberating to wake up each morning and know that I am not bound by a belief in the otherworldly, but solely the worldly. I am amazed at the beauty I experience every day, in the simplest of things- in flowers, in the sky, in the rain, in the incredibly sweet piano music I hear, in learning about Darwin in science class and appreciating our planet more for it. All this is fascinating, even more so when I understand the importance of enjoying this in this life, because there is no second one. Atheism has taught me responsibility in my own actions, knowing only I have power over them while also reminding me to appreciate and care for this planet, no matter whom I share it with. I have learned tolerance, which I don't believe I would have being a believer, especially in a specific religion. I love my straight, gay, bisexual, black, white, believer and nonbeliever friends all the same: Without any worry toward whether or not they will end up in Heaven with me and without worrying about what they follow or whom they love. It does not matter because I appreciate the importance of enjoying this ONE life and allowing others the liberty to enjoy it as well and not look down on them because of how they choose to live their lives. Atheism to me is simple: it is humility.

Coming to America changed my physical life, the objects I own, the environment that surrounds me, but Atheism liberated my mind, and ironically enough, gave me faith- in family, in love, in the future, in myself. It is beautiful to enjoy these moments and know if there's anything I love and admire bigger than me, it is this ONE life and that is, and should always be, more than enough.

When Summer Was
Written by Aisha Moktadier, Senior

I can remember when summer was defined

By the lime green leaves that swayed so freely in the June breeze

And the smell of fresh cherry pie that lingered in the kitchen
Where Winter Haven was my own haven

And the roads where empty, calling to me to race down them
Hair flowing and fighting with the wind

It was summer and I was eight

When the rich nectar of Florida oranges caressed my jaw line
And I picked wild flowers the color of ripe cranberries

Then that summer packed its bags

And followed me as I left it

Now I have a gypsy summer

Defined by plane tickets and suitcases

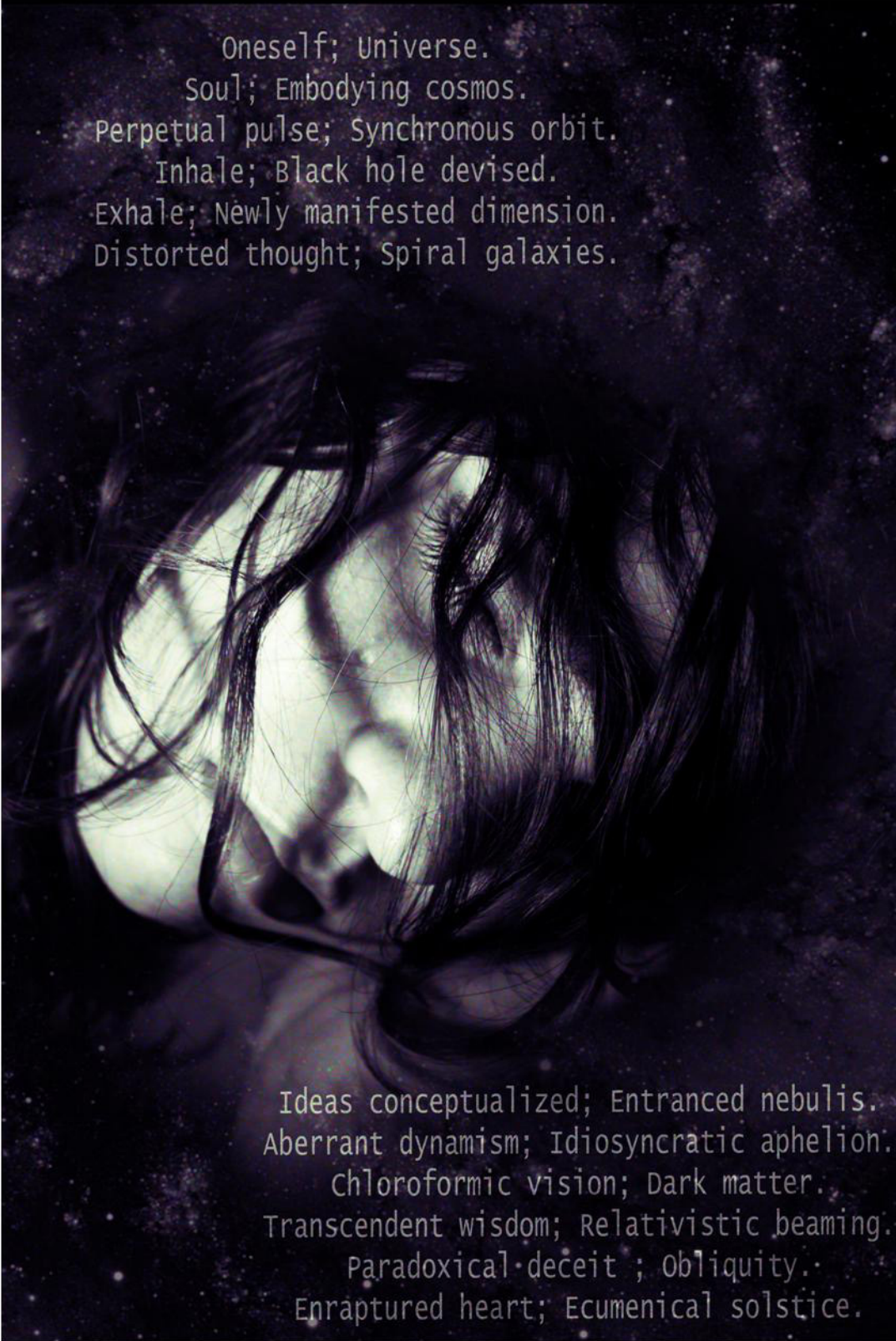
By the cool grasp of the Pacific Ocean
And the warmth of sunshine's fingertips upon my skin
The Arabian architecture that licks the sky
The dusty grey clouds of Chinese industrial culture
The crisp comfort of bare hotel sheets
The sharp, sweet taste of lime juice on my tongue
It's what I live for

Summer is no longer defined by the pictures my mother took

They are defined by what I take

And I take them

Because one day there will be no sweet nectar of oranges
Or cranberry wildflowers for grandma's empty coke bottle vase



Oneself; Universe.
Soul; Embodying cosmos.
Perpetual pulse; Synchronous orbit.
Inhale; Black hole devised.
Exhale; Newly manifested dimension.
Distorted thought; Spiral galaxies.

Ideas conceptualized; Entranced nebulis.
Aberrant dynamism; Idiosyncratic aphelion.
Chloroformic vision; Dark matter.
Transcendent wisdom; Relativistic beaming.
Paradoxical deceit; Obliquity.
Enraptured heart; Ecumenical solstice.

KASSANDRA PINO. 11TH GRADE

Act IV: Isolation, From Kevin Santamaria's "Scar Tissue"

As my muscles begin to ache, my lungs begin to burn, my stride begins to widen - I am at peace. With each passing step, my pace quickens. With each passing mile, my mind begins to drift further; my anxieties, fears and worries can finally be physically released. When running, I can free all of the bottled tension, emotions, and insecurities that have troubled my past. These moonlit roads that I trek religiously are the pathways that allow me to chase away my demons. My mind and body are in tune with one another. I run in silence, my only melody is the combined rhythms: the tap, tap, tap of my feet pounding the pavement, my lungs gasping for air and my heart beating. As my heart races and my uncertainties vanish, I know that my two feet will always be able to liberate me.



Kevin Santamaria, Senior



CHRISTOPHER RODRIGUEZ, 12TH GRADE

The Yellow Brick Road to America

"Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free. The wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me, I lift my lamp beside the golden door!". That quote, inscribed at the feet of "Lady Liberty", started a legend about a place where Justice and Freedom walked hand in hand that traveled far and wide, and created the image of a nation where the past didn't matter and dreams of a better future were possible for everyone. It gave hope back to millions who had already resigned to the misery they suffered, but now followed their own 'yellow brick roads' to the land of freedom. Where they suffered hardships and lived in conditions that paralleled that of the places they escaped from. But it didn't matter because those "huddled masses yearning to breathe free" would forever see America as the keeper of the golden gates of freedom, the keeper of their dreams and future.

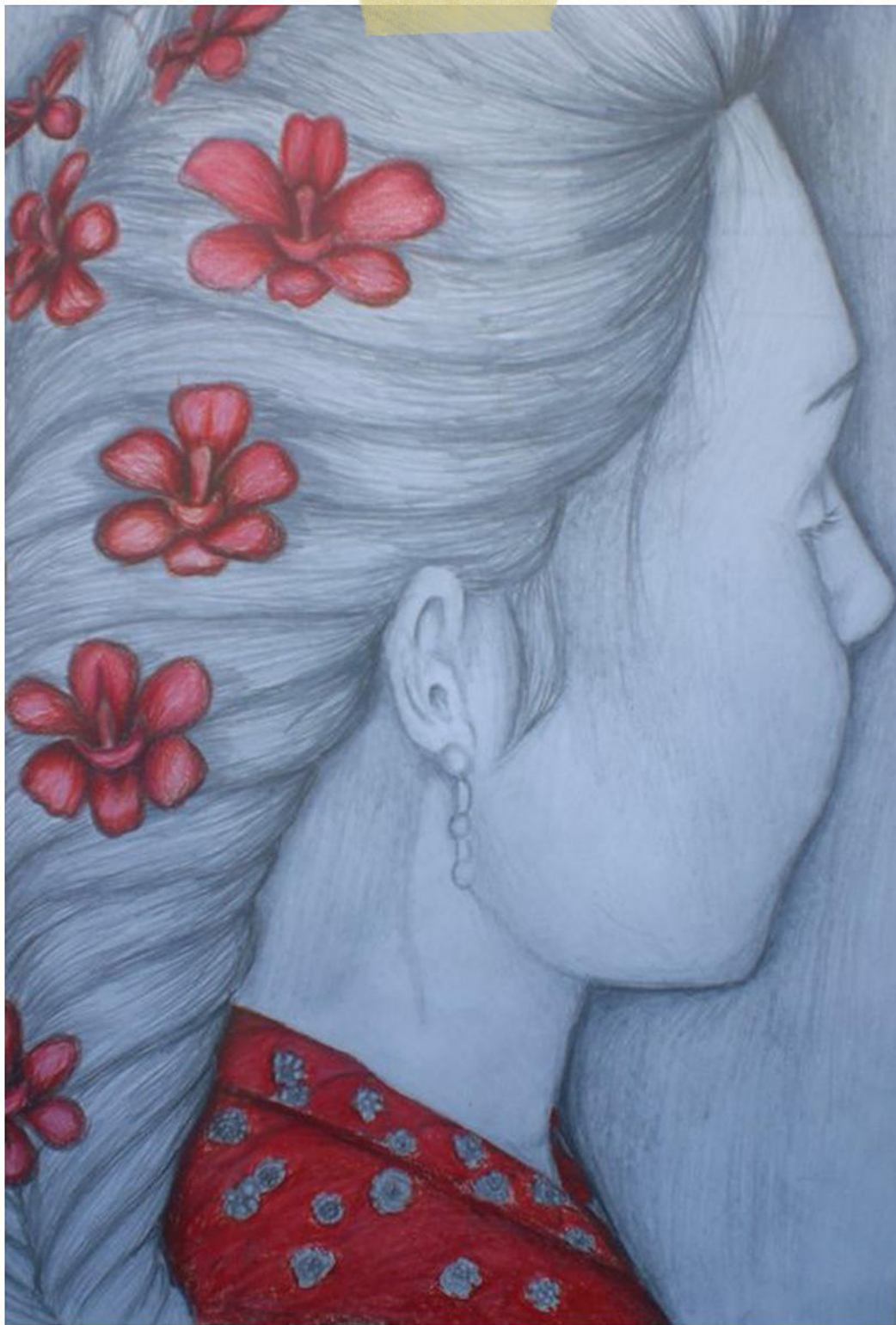
This still held true when I, a child of 7 living in a communist nation, wondered where this wonderful place everyone seemed to whisper about was. The whispers I heard came from everywhere; from my parents, planning an escape, to the political leaders, speaking the name with contempt, and even fear. I coveted this magic land whose ghost seemed to get past the red guards in the streets, and into the homes of many, into my own home, into my own heart, where it kept Hope Company. I pictured America as Emerald City, a shining country that had a benevolent ruler who kept the "wicked witches" at bay; only that in my imagination, the witches were red, not green.

When a rebellion broke out, the country was thrown into a storm of chaos. The tornado of fighting and the fires of revolution reached the capitol, and we were swept away. In less than a week, we had lost most of our possessions, our home, and our family. But hope was still alive in us. Of the few items we had left were our plane tickets and passports. These were our ruby slippers, only this time, they would take us away from our home.

Our journey came to an end in the magical land of America. We saw the man behind the curtain and we have not lived an easy life as a working class family. But we still hold hope dear and believe in a brighter future. America is still "Lady Liberty", because it will always be, to me and to the countless others who have crossed the world to see the shores of freedom, the Emerald City at the end of our Yellow brick road. I believe that how we see the world is based on what we want for our future; what we hope for, rather than by what we have experienced. I am not my memories. I am my dreams.

Senior,

Jose Dos Santos



LESTER CARBALLO, 12TH GRADE

Act V: New Beginning, From Kevin Santamaria's "Scar Tissue"

As the stadium lights beamed down on the rubber track, clouds covered the sky; a dozen runners were lined up anticipating the longest event of day. As we waited for the officials to initiate the race, I gazed half-heartily at the stands, my competitors, and towards the overwhelming heavens blackening more with each passing second. The lights pierced through our insecurities, not to the crowd, not to each other, but to ourselves. My darkening thoughts perfectly contrasted with my serene face expressing no emotion. My inner turmoil perfectly contrasted the split second of blaring silence before the gun unleashed our demons. The race has begun.

The laps ticked down with chronometric precision. Each quarter oval caused another casualty: a broken runner, a broken pace, a broken dream. I was one of three contenders battling for the lead. Surge after surge, none of us had been cracked. Not an inch of room was given that could cause a break away. We all ran shoulder to shoulder. Each lap brought forward my most devastating competitor, not the ones running besides me, but my self-doubts. At first, a slight whisper, creeping in my thoughts. But as my body begins to swell with fatigue, he begins to chant, scream, yell. Each lap only strengthens him. Then I realized, I could very well win this race and still walk off defeated. The only way I could ever truly win, is to defeat myself tonight.

At this point, the other two runners were obscured, no longer a factor in the race. But my failures? My fears? My injury? All too presently visible. Each step only angered him. His ultimate goal was to prevent me from moving forward. I have always been my biggest obstacle. I can no longer run away.

This race was never between schools. Not between students. Not between anyone. Since the moment I solemnly stepped on the starting line, I knew the race was an internal challenge. I could finish last and still walk off victorious. I wasn't chasing glory. I wasn't chasing a victory that would be forgotten the following day by everyone in the stands, even by the runners. I wasn't chasing records. I was chasing myself. Is it possible that a hundred stitches can really break you down this badly?

The bell lap broke my demons, and awoke me into tranquility. Here is where I earth my uncertainties. Each step crushing them beneath my weight, beneath my future, beneath my believes. I was able to stand tall against every defeat, I was able to keep my head up after being broken, I can stand tall and mighty against myself. Each step was towards a new begging, a new race, a new start. I cross the line in first place and collapse.

My coach and team mates rush towards me, shouting I have broken a school record. But that is the least of my concerns. As I lay on the floor drenched in sweat, I realized that there is no medal that could be wrapped around my neck to sweeten the moment. I would show off my medal 3 inches above my knee for the rest of my life.

Meet your editors.

Constantly goofing around and at each others' throats..



Innocent bystander,

Thanks for everything. <3



..

End.