The Eclectic

Greetings from da Staff

November 2005
Letter from the Editor

Change is inevitable. Growth is optional. – Walt Disney

There’s no denying the inevitability of change, whether it comes smoothly and gradually, or hits us like a tidal wave. The question is, when we encounter change, should we automatically accept it, or do we attempt to stand our ground and fight against it? Many of us fear change; it entails a break from a comfortable routine, a figurative casting away of our safety nets. On the other hand, there are those who embrace it, who view it as a tool to shatter the monotony that sometimes creeps up on us in our day to day lives. ESA has had to cope with a myriad of changes this year, especially in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Everyone in our little community was caught off guard, but most of us were lucky enough to escape the brunt of the storm’s destruction.

I’m sure that no one views the losses due to Katrina as cause for celebration. Still, many of us feel almost obliged to give ourselves constant reminders of blessings in disguise, clouds with silver linings, and the other clichés that justify bad occurrences and tint them with hope. I’m not much one for clichés, but I will say this: the hurricane forced ESA to change, to expand itself in order to incorporate new students into our community. Katrina was certainly a shock, and I’m proud that our school was both willing and able to welcome its new members. Still, that’s just on our side of the fence. Imagine saying goodbye to your home and friends with little to no notice, then walking into a foreign, tightly knit, previously established society. In the face of changes that have unfortunately devastated many, some of us here have been given the opportunity to meet some really wonderful new friends.

As a senior, I sometimes have to pause and just think, allow my mind to catch up to the tasks presented to myself and my classmates. College applications and acceptance letters are in the mail, and our little group is about to begin a new chapter in life. Another cliché, I know...but it’s true. Regarding the leap into college, I’ve been personally torn between extreme excitement and a kind of nauseous fear, and I know many of my fellow seniors feel the same. Part of me wildly anticipates the jump; I can’t wait for independence, a life away from the physical and mental places I’ve spent the past 17 years. The other part is clinging to that place and to the people who have populated it.

In the midst of this dizzying excitement and confusion, all I know is that whether we long for change or try desperately to impede it, we must accept it. It is inevitable. We can’t stop change from occurring, but we can determine our own maturity in how we handle its arrival. Whether we encounter a new classmate, stepparent, headmaster, or the fresh start that comes with college, we have the option of handling it either grudgingly or tactfully. Either way, we are eventually forced to adapt to an alien situation.

The Greek philosopher Heraclitus said: “You cannot step twice into the same river, for other waters and yet others go ever flowing on.” Indeed. If a person comes to see life as a river, he will also understand the importance of dealing with changes as gracefully as possible. He will comprehend the necessity of learning to literally go with the flow. However, the lifeboat to which we cling during times of turbulence is our integrity. We must never compromise our ideals. No matter where life takes us or whom we encounter on its waters, we cannot lose ourselves in the current. I think that natural change through maturation is good and necessary, but a person who forces himself to change in order to appease others compromises his personal honor in the process. ESA teaches us to take pride in ourselves and in our talents, to not only maintain, but to build honor as we grow. Never lose contact with who you are.
Idea Number 5
By Eleanor Brown

Can you imagine what it must be like not to have a consciousness? It must be crazy to be a rock, something that never thinks or has any sort of thought process at all. Well, I suppose I wouldn’t know since I do have a consciousness, and the rock wouldn’t miss it, never having existed with one.

In science, you learn that people are just organs made up of molecules, which are made up of a whole bunch of atoms. It’s weird to look at everything around you and picture it all as a whole bunch of different kinds of atoms squeezed together in a never-ending space. For one, it boggles my mind just trying to imagine the world that way. In another way, the thought almost makes me feel suffocated, because even the air you breathe is full of atoms. These ideas can make you go off on tangents for months, before you finally realize that even your thoughts are chemical reactions made up of atoms. At that point, you have to sit down, stop, and pray to God that He exists.

When I was young, I never really understood why a life was unbalanced without a belief in God. In retrospect, I realize that believing in God is essential if one is also expected to believe that life is made of tiny particles we can’t see called atoms, and that emotions are simply those atoms in the form of a chemical reaction.

However, emotions are not simply chemical reactions at all. After learning the idea of atoms, I was utterly confused because as a child, you think that God made everything. With this thought, I suddenly realized that I was still right; God did make everything, just with atoms. Thus, I found that ignorance really is bliss sometimes, but when you are given knowledge, you have to know how to control it.

Sometimes, you just have to take the next step, and bank on the fact that the floor won’t fall through.

Late
By Amy Meche

Okay. It’s six thirty. I can’t believe I’m late. I’m usually a very punctual guy, I really am. I pride myself on being on time, all the time. But why am I so adamant about proving it to you? You know all that. You know every stupid, pointless quirk I have, and you hate every one of them. I hate all of yours as well, but it’s all right because I love you. I love you, so I can forgive you when you’re late, which you almost always are. I can forgive you for criticizing my hair and for constantly plucking nonexistent lint from my jacket. I think I could forgive you no matter what you did.

Will you forgive me for this?
Six forty-two. I’m late for the most important event of our lives. Forty-two minutes late, for Christ’s sake. My God, every moment of my life, whether insignificant or huge, has led up to this. I guess I’ve been waiting for it, for now, for twenty-seven years without even realizing it.

You told me I was the first person ever to make you cry and laugh at the same time. Funny, that’s what I’m doing now: laughing at my own stupidity and crying because that stupidity might just ruin everything we could have together. I hesitated when I shouldn’t have. I waited too long and now I’m late. Fifty-seven minutes late for the only wedding that will ever really matter. This is the beginning of something big, something beautiful.

All right. I can see the church now. I’m ready. My hair is uncombed, just the way you hate it, and my tie is undone, but I’m ready. I’m out of the car and stumbling up the stairs, breathless as the double doors swing open. All I
can see is your face as I try to stop myself from shooting forwards down the aisle. You see me. A single crystal droplet trickles down your cheek as you let out a small laugh. So I made it just in time.

“If anyone here objects to this union, let him speak now, or forever hold his peace...”

ADD
By Jack Tate

I have Attention Deficit Disorder, or ADD. I need medication to concentrate properly, and without it I find it hard to stay on one subject very long. I think in different ways, depending on how much medication I’m on. My usual dose is 25 milligrams of extended release Adderall and, depending on whether I have more or less, I act differently.

With no medication, I feel as though my brain is a giant tornado with all of the ideas as little bubbles swirling around it, or I glimpse something I see as having a remote connection to the current topic and talk about it. When I have no medication I appear happier and a bit disconnected. I find it very hard to concentrate without any medication and often I’ll drift off during class. Having no medication does not affect me on tests to the point where I can’t take them, but I usually take more time on big tests. When I’m not on medication, I can try to study, but nothing much gets into the swirl of thoughts in my brain. It just gets thrown out. I also get a case of “The Babbling Nonsense”: this is when I just sort of babble nonsense in little spurts when I’m not having a conversation or there is a big lull in one.

With the proper amount of medication (25 mg), I feel like the tornado has slowed down dramatically, but the thought bubbles are still spinning a little, like when you suddenly stop stirring water with stuff in it but the stuff still spins. Also, the little bubbles have loosely organized themselves so that I can easily find stuff that is connected. When I have my usual dosage of medication I often appear a bit sullen and/or tired, but I’m not sad or tired, just thinking hard. I sometimes tell people who won’t take “I’m just thinking” for an answer and are pestering me with “Are you feeling okay?” or “Is everything all right?” that I’m just tired. With 25 mg, I can study effectively, I am attentive during class, and I have absolutely no problem with tests for which I have studied.

With over 25 mg there is not a tornado or swirl, but instead little shelves, each with only a few different ideas on them that are closely connected. There is also a conveyor belt that has a string of ideas on it that just keeps moving towards the talking part of my brain so that I get on talking jags and nothing in Hell nor Heaven can shut me up. This is mainly because the thoughts are so clear and perfect that I just have to tell them! The only time I have taken over 25 mg was on a weekend when we were still trying to find the right dose, so I don’t exactly know if I would do well in school or not, but, according to my mom, I was wired on that occasion and it was not good. I highly doubt that I would be good in class because I would just keep talking, and I believe that I would get similar results on a test.

The reason I’m ADD is that the synapses in my brain aren’t hooked up correctly, and the proper pathways in my brain became so disused that they shrank to the point where messages can’t cross through them. The Adderall makes connections for me so that I’m not as disorganized or inattentive. I think eventually that as those pathways are used more and more, they will start to grow again and the connections will be made for real in my head. This means that I will start needing less and less medication and eventually none at all.
1337 (|-4| _ 3\sqrt{63})
By Rizwan Merchant and Laura Germany

Over the past few days, Laura Germany and I have been engulfed in the topic of 1337 (better known as leet). Leet is derived from the English word elite, and is basically a form of writing with a mix of numbers and letters. The origin of this language comes from groups of hackers inventing ciphers to communicate between one another and avoid government surveillance. Only those few elite automatically understood that phrases like '/35 means 'yes'. In recent years the language has been nearly abandoned by the elite with the birth of a new generation of people using the language in excess. Such people are known as n00bs, a term given to those imitating the elite.

After spending a good bit of time, Laura and I came up with an idea for a game to put in this issue of the Eclectic. We'll give you a word or phrase having to do with ESA in one way or another in 1337 and you translate it to normal English.

Below is a key to the 1337 language.

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Disclaimer: the table above was borrowed from Wikipedia (http://www.wikipedia.org/) and modified to meet the needs of this game. For a full table of 1337 go to http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leet.html. Answers may be sent to eclectic@mag@gmail.com. Winners will be mentioned next issue!
DISORDER
By Kjersti I. Jacobson
To-day is a dancing day
A day of fruitcake and marshmallows
with black tall hats
An afternoon of laughter
Splattered with blissful ignorance
Of mellow melancholy with a side dish of fricasseed pineapple
Jump through the spotted jump rope
Loot the empty merry-go-round
Toss your worries into the vacuum of space
Forget them with the essence of mercury
Listen to the luscious lavender perfume
Grow forget-me-nots in your enemy's garden

To-day is a screaming day
A day of panic and fear with a shiny butcher knife
A twilight of eternal silence
Covered with ignorant bliss of mind-controlling anxiety with an entrée of escargot
Fly through the striped prison bars
Plunder through the scared sacred sanctuary
Throw your smiles into a plastic bag
Forget them with ease
Echo to the rotting, ravaged flesh
Kill the daisies in the secret garden

WHAT IS TODAY?
NFL Predictions

By Erik Stark

Baseball may be America's pastime, but there is no doubt that the biggest sport in America is football. Now that we have a few weeks under our belt, it is time for predictions on the second half of the season.

Last year's champs: When talking the National Football League, you must start with the champs, New England. The Patriots have lost so much since their last Super Bowl win. Their defense has been completely shifted from the one which took the field for the championship game against the Philadelphia Eagles last February. The biggest loss could be at safety with Rodney Harrison. He is the heart of one of the toughest defenses in football. New England gets all of the credit for having such elaborate schemes that trick offenses, but the players execute them. The great thing that the Patriots have going for them is the “Golden Boy” at the quarterback position. Tom Brady always gives his team a chance to win, and he has never lost a playoff game. The prediction for New England: as long as Brady is there, a playoff run is certain.

Surprise team of the year: The Cincinnati Bengals were supposed to have a good season under third year coach Marvin Lewis, but not this good. The Bengals started the year off with impressive victories, beating opponents in the first three weeks by a combined score of 88 to 28. Carson Palmer is no doubt ahead of schedule after being the number one overall pick in the 2003 draft. It sure looks like Marvin Lewis knew what he was doing by not letting Carson Palmer take a single snap in 2003. Helping Carson become a much better player is his Pro-Bowl wide receiver Chad Johnson. Sure, Johnson does his end-zone dances and promises big-time games, but he delivers. I say that if you can back it up on Sunday, then talk all you want during the week. Prediction: The schedule does get tougher with having to play Pittsburgh twice and Indianapolis once, but if the Bengals can win two of those games, the city of Cincinnati will have a division-winning football team.

The best team of the year to this point: There is no other team that can come close to taking this position away from the Indianapolis Colts. The Colts are only in this position because of their tremendous defensive play. The Colts’ defense has given up 29 points through 5 games. Head coach Tony Dungy has finally built the defense equal to the one he left in Tampa Bay. I am not buying into the notion that Peyton Manning can’t win the big game. Even though the Colts’ offense has started slowly this year, they will keep getting the job done. The key for the Colts is winning in the regular season, because the last thing that Peyton Manning wants to see is a Patriots defense (injured or not) in Foxboro during a playoff game. Prediction: if the Colts are able to play all of their playoff games in the controlled climate of their domed stadium, there is nothing stopping them from advancing, then beating a weak NFC team in the Super Bowl.

Should I stay or should I go?: There has been rumbling ever since the Packers drafted Aaron Rodger, quarterback from University of California, that it is time for Brett Favre to step down as quarterback of the Green Bay Packers. This is a ridiculous idea! The 36-year-old Brett Favre is just as good of a player as the 26-year-old version. Favre has taken heat for the Packers' poor record, but he cannot control the health of his team, as his number one receiver, Javon Walker, was injured during the first game of the season. Mike Sherman should never tell the toughest quarterback in NFL history that it is time to go. This decision should come from Brett Favre himself since he is one of the top 2 or 3 quarterbacks of all time. If Sherman did place Favre on the bench, it would be all he is remembered for in Green Bay, as they have failed to appear in a Super Bowl since former head coach Mike Holmgren left for Seattle.
Sports Trivia
Contributed by Nisha Loganantharaj
If you can complete this whole crossword puzzle correctly within two days, you can win a prize!
Across:

1. Which NFL QB has a quarterback rating of 123.8 this year?
2. Who retired as the only undefeated heavyweight boxing champ?
3. Which race track is nicknamed “the Buckyard”?
4. Who was the first player in baseball history to hit grand slam homeruns in successive innings?
5. Who was the unseeded tennis player who won the 1994 US Open?
6. Who joined Dan Marino and John Elway in passing for 50,000 plus yards this year?
7. Who won the NHL MVP Award in 1990 and 1992, playing for two different teams?
8. Which team won thirty-three consecutive regular season games in the NBA?
9. Who was the first player to score a Hat Trick in the World Cup Final?
10. Which rugby team in the English Super League won the ESL title in 1998?
11. With a minimum of 1,500 pass attempts, what quarterback holds the highest pass rating at 97.6?
12. What is golfer Arnold Palmer’s nickname?
13. Who was the first NFL running back to score 100 touchdowns and average more than five yards per carry in his career?
14. Who, at the age of 17, was the youngest baseball player to hit a major league homerun?
15. Who in the 2003 Formula One Season caused the Brazilian Grand Prix to come to a halt?
16. Nicknamed “the Big O,” this NBA player finished his career with 9,887 assists.
17. Which college had never won an SEC title until the conference split into two divisions in 1992?
18. Which college football player was the first to be a three-time unanimous consensus all-American?
Here Comes the Bride
By Amy Meche

It’s been quite a year for Tim Burton. The eccentric director has managed to put out two successful, vibrant, entertaining movies within months of each other. Summer saw the release of the colorful and imaginative Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, and now audiences can look forward to Corpse Bride just in time for Halloween. With Corpse Bride, Burton returns to the macabre topics and stop-motion animation of 1993’s The Nightmare Before Christmas, for which he provided story and characters. However, despite its ghostly title, Corpse Bride sidesteps an intense focus on the ghastly and the gruesome and instead molds itself into a sweet and romantic story with a surprisingly emotional ending. Burton has crafted a movie with elements that can be accessed and enjoyed on different levels by different age groups.

The audience is taken on a whirlwind adventure along with the film’s main character, Victor, voiced by Johnny Depp. Victor is thrown into quite a predicament near the film’s start: not only does he find himself married to a corpse named Emily, voiced by Helena Bonham Carter, the day before his wedding to the sweet and lovely Victoria, voiced by Emily Watson; he also winds up a living man in the land of the dead, held there by Emily and her wish to love and be loved. Ironically, the land of the dead is livelier than the land of the living. Emily’s world consists of a dynamic tavern atmosphere complete with jazzy skeletons and a multitude of other characters much more colorful (literally) than the inhabitants of the land of the living, who are somber, gray, and constantly occupied with the hierarchy of their society.

The combination of Burton and Depp would not be complete without the presence of composer Danny Elfman. His compositions, in league with Burton’s vision, shine brilliantly in contrasting the land of the living with the land of the dead. Victor and Victoria’s names are obvious nods to the strict time period of British history in which the film is set, and their families are perfect examples of this stuffy Victorian society. The audience is introduced to their austere snobbery through prim harpsichord melodies and operatic voices. In stark contrast, inhabitants of the land of the dead are entertained with wailing, exciting musical performances. The land of the dead is an escape from the Victorian prison in every way. Even the two women vying for Victor’s affection oppose one another sharply. Victoria is shy, sweet, and humble. Against her wishes, she is not allowed to “play piano or dance or sing,” as Emily is able to do. Still, it is Victoria whom Victor loves, and the tension between the film’s three primary characters gives the movie its emotion, its deeper meaning. Corpse Bride is a children’s fairytale with offbeat humor, but at its heart lies a triangle between Victoria, Victor, and Emily composed of love, loss, and sacrifice.

This involving situation is the film’s strongest asset, but it also creates its only real drawback: the movie is too short. The audience is left with too little interaction between the three main characters and too few songs with which to be satisfied. Burton could have and probably should have placed more focus on contrasting the relationship Victor has with Victoria with the one he shares with Emily, adding more emphasis to the buildup of emotions within each of them.
and thereby giving more weight to the characters and to the film’s conclusion. Still, the ending is beautiful and powerful, as is the entire film. Burton’s imagination is again put to good use; Corpse Bride is visually fantastic. In addition, the characters’ dialogue, courtesy of John August, who recently worked with Burton on Charlie, is fun for the entire audience. This endearing gothic fairytale is one of the year’s best movies, and should be able to outshine any competitor for next year’s Oscar for animated feature.

Overall grade: A

Hurricane Katrina
By Kjersti Jacobson

I have decided to write my journal about Hurricane Katrina because that has had the biggest impact on our country (primarily Louisiana) recently. The hurricane has devastated the lives of thousands and is presumed by some to have killed thousands as well.

Whenever a hurricane, in the past, had been in the Gulf of Mexico, I rarely ever paid any attention to it. The hurricane almost always completely missed us, giving New Iberia just a little rain. But the one time that the hurricane was almost certainly going to hit Louisiana, and not only that, but hit the most densely populated area in Louisiana, no one expected it. I didn’t even expect it. It wasn’t until the hurricane was just barely offshore and the mayor of New Orleans declared a mandatory evacuation that I started to worry. But even then I was still skeptical about how bad the hurricane was supposed to be, and when I heard on the news about there being a possibility that New Orleans would flood like a giant bowl, I definitely didn’t believe that.

I and every other person with my optimistic mentality soon realized that we were wrong. I also soon realized all of the effects that this disaster was going to bring to our country as a whole, such as the port of New Orleans being closed, refineries being shut down, and the temporary closing of an oil hub in the Gulf. All of these things have made a huge disruption in the shipment of oil. Because of this, gas prices will also increase. The destruction of businesses and housing will also cost the government billions of dollars.

In most people’s opinions, the most important losses were the human lives, but I personally have little sympathy for those who stayed because they felt they could just ride out the storm, even though their mayor told them to get out. Some of the people that stayed did it simply because they literally couldn’t leave, and for them I have sympathy. Out of all of this, only one thing is certain: this hurricane was not like any other hurricane to hit Louisiana. It was much worse... it was KATRINA!!!

A Little Slice of Heaven
By Caroline Gray

Spinach Alfredo pizza. That is insane! How many Spinach Alfredo pizzas can they possibly sell? One, two a week? It seems like a waste for a deviation of the normal cheese pizza. Of course, the more well-advertised pizzas sell more. Pepperoni, Sausage, everything on it - the premier deviations. Veggie Lovers, Meat Lovers, Chicago Style Deep Dish - everyone knows about these pizzas, even though they are secondary deviations. They allow people who have a hard time deciding on one topping to categorize what they want. Of course, then you get the people who want some veggies and then some bacon or some sausage - how about half cheese, half
pepperoni? Or worse, half Canadian bacon, mushroom, and pineapple, half olives and artichoke? What does this remind you of? Isn’t it obvious? It’s a schism! Ok, we start out with Christianity. It’s cheese, the basis of all Christian religions. You must have cheese on your pizza. But then we get the people who like cheese and pepperoni. However, about half of the people like mushrooms better than pepperoni. We have your Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic, first half and half pizza. Assuming the Italians are the ones who like pepperoni, the pepperoni pizza is then added onto by people who believe in the things the pepperoni people believe in but want to add their own chef’s touch to the pizza. The same happens on the mushroom/Eastern Orthodox pizza. Do you have any idea how many different pizzas can be made with the amount of toppings that are available at our local Pizza Hut or Dominos? Let me check.

VEGETABLE & FRUIT TOPPINGS: banana peppers, black olives, green peppers, jalapeños, mushrooms, pineapple, red onion, tomatoes

MEAT TOPPINGS: anchovies, bacon, beef topping, chicken, ham, Italian sausage, pepperoni, pork topping

Why are anchovies a meat topping when you can’t eat meat on Fridays during Lent but you can eat fish? Ahh, I digress. Continuing...

I think what I would do is multiply the amount of veggies by meat, but that wouldn’t work because you don’t pair them all together as you would shirts and shorts. I say, square the veggies and square the meats and multiply that. 8^2 * 9^2 = 5184. That is a lot of pizza variations. There are 1,000 different Christian sects in North America alone. And many people build their own religion. Picky.

Lie
By Mya Hartley

You spin these webs of lies
And I do not question them
I let you have your space
For you have been my friend

But are you really now?
Do you really care?
Am I the one to blame
For all the lies you share?

You tell them all the time
And they never seem to end
It’s the biggest web of all
For why, I cannot comprehend
Evil as they are
I still remain your friend

I tell you everything
Never once a lie
You never tell the truth
And I really don’t know why

Tell me how it’s my fault
That you have the biggest web
Then tell me why I’m here
There is nothing to be said
Movie Review: *A History of Violence*  
By J. Marcantel

The movie in question is *A History of Violence*. I would call this film, on the whole, "pretty good." It is filled with excellent drama, leaves the viewer with just the right amount of ignorance towards the characters' backgrounds, and includes an intriguing chain of events that makes the moviegoer want to know what will happen next. However, this movie is not a perfect ten.

Though the overall plot is good and the action scenes are just as graphically violent as they are cool, the movie itself is full of holes. The beginning is very slow and confusing. It starts out with different scenes involving unexplained criminals, romantic comedy-esque dialogue, and a gratuitous and unnecessary scene that seems to leave both the actors and the audience feeling very awkward. There is also a very forced vignette involving the main character's son and an overly stereotypical high school bully who seems to be a mixture between Biff from *Back to the Future*, Joe Pesci from *Goodfellas*, and a retarded Arthur Fonzerelli.

The movie does not really get started until about twenty minutes after it begins, when the first few people get killed. Intense mystery and suspense slowly redeem the film from the script's terrible start, which could have just as easily been written by a Mongoloid orangutan with access to homemade amphetamines. As the plot thickens, the tension begins to rise, with inevitable accompaniment of blood, brains, and guts. But these aren't just normal *Die Hard* or *Lethal Weapon* killings, oh no. There's no ketchup and Kool-aid in this movie, just blown-out jawbones, pinafore necks, and nose cartilage-filled brains, proving that you do indeed still squirm around a little after you get croaked.

As the movie gets wrapped up, the script really goes all out. Truths are learned, families are corrupted, and yes, they fit in one more awkward, yet this time necessary, scene. The end is abrupt, but good, and the final body count is somewhere in the double-digits, which is fantastic. This was a good movie, but not through and through.

J. Marcantel's rating: 6½ thumbs up

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*My Little Place*  
By Mya Hartley

- I'm In A Place
- I Wanna' Shout
- I'm Holding Back
- I Close My Mouth
- I Feel Suppressed
- In Here Alone
- I Cannot Move
- I'm Like A Stone
- I Hear A Voice
- It Goes Away
- I Want It Back
- It Doesn't Stay
- My Eyes Are Open
- I'm In The Dark
- Groping, Groping
- I Fall Apart
- I'm Breaking Down
- I Can't Hold On
- Help Me, Help Me
- Where Have You Gone?
- Please Come Back
- I Need A Friend
- In This Life
- That Just Won't End
Tired of You
By Amy Meche

He’s not nearly as smart as I am. When I was sixteen years old, I fell in love for the first time. He always showed up to school in worn-out jeans and a t-shirt that was too big for his scrawny frame. I loved that, and I loved that his eyes were black, not brown. That’s not the reason I fell in love with him though. I fell in love with him the first time I saw him, when I spotted him picking up his bookbag. It had a Queen patch sewn onto it and a hardback copy of Hamlet sticking out of the top. That was enough for me.

He was intelligent. I could talk to him about music and books, and I’d never been able to do that before, not with anyone. People didn’t talk about that in my family, or even in my circle of friends. This new one, he’s different. His eyes are light; two almonds of hazel sparkling at me from under that veil of dirty, sandy hair that he insists on bleaching blonde. He’s just as wiry as my first love though, and he looks like he’s always trying to hide it. He balls himself up when he sits down in a chair, as if he’s trying to sink into the fabric of the cushions.

I never really thought that people who are...well, that stupid people could know what it’s like to really be in love. After Mom jumped ship, I was always the one to pick up the groceries. I didn’t really have to. Dad would’ve willingly done it. He was always trying to prove himself to me. Anyway, I’d always see those older, heavy women in their stained tank tops and cotton shorts with elastic waistbands, their hair up in curls. They’d strut around the store, thinking they looked good, I guess, and pick up the food that their husbands and kids needed. And I’d just think, how can they love these people when they can’t even have a conversation about love? I just couldn’t picture it. Tender vocalizations of “Baby, you fine?”

I was just that conceited, wrapped up enough in my own stupid affectations to believe that people I couldn’t relate to couldn’t possibly feel what I was feeling. Now I know that they can feel love, loss, and anger just as deeply as the biggest intellectual, even though they can’t express it poetically. I think, anyway. I don’t know, I shouldn’t try to analyze people anyway. People are people, there’s really nothing deep about it at all.

His bedroom always smells like cigarettes because he can’t ever manage to get that stupid window up, and I guess he doesn’t think it’s worth it to walk to the kitchen and smoke on the balcony. He’s got one in his hand - a cigarette, that is - when I walk in. He’s pacing around nervously, fidgeting like he always does, kicking an empty can of Red Bull around the room. He looks up at me. God, I hate that dye job so much that I just want to tell him...I just want to tell him...

You’re too skinny. Get over the Police, they weren’t that great of a band. I’m leaving, it’s over. You wear too much black. I first talked to you thinking you’d hook me up with your hot roommate. Learn to stick up for yourself.

Instead, I disregard his lopsided smile and let myself melt into his embrace. “You wanna’ go to lunch?” I murmur into his collarbone, which is tinged with sweat from God knows what. He inhales deeply, his nose buried in my hair. That’s part of the reason I fell in love with this one: the smell of my shampoo attracted him. That and the confidence in his stride that the first one never had. Never.

“Sure,” he finally sighs, taking a step back. He walks over to the bed and crushes the cigarette in an ashtray
sitting on the bedside table. He picks up his watch, which he'd thrown carelessly onto the mattress only minutes ago. I can tell. "Oh, baby?"

I tear my eyes away from the coffee stain on the carpet. "Hmm?"

My hands clap together as I close them around what he's just thrown at me.

"You ready?" he asks.

I open my hands and look down. "Yeah," I say without thinking, trying to rip the sense of sadness and betrayal from the pair of black eyes that I swear are staring back at me from the ring's diamond crown.

Self-Worth
By Molly Bates

People say they don't buy into what the media feeds them. But when everything around you is about money, beauty, sex, and just plain stuff, how can you not? In our society, the epitome of femininity and beauty is a blond-haired, blue-eyed, rail-thin (yet somehow well-endowed in the chest area, whether by the grace of God or by the grace of plastic surgery) supermodel. What does that leave little girls to live up to? Not every girl is going to be able to weigh size 00 jeans and a C-cup bra and be six feet tall. Does that make her less beautiful or successful or worthy?

Unfortunately, more and more of us become hooked on this new style, this struggle to be perfect even if it kills us. Women cover their natural beauty with pounds of foundation, mascara, eyeliner, blush, lipstick and concealer. We berate ourselves: you're too fat, you're too ugly, gotta lose weight, don't eat that, you'll never be as good as she is. We make ourselves objects, just things for men. Every day, stores sell tons of skimpy clothing to teenage girls who hope to attract the eye of a worthy male rather than being loved for who they are.

With all of these things surrounding us, it's so hard, at least for me, to maintain a sense of self-worth among these images of women who are almost goddesses of beauty, who radiate perfection. In 7th grade, when I really started paying more attention to the media and immersed myself in American culture, I decided I needed to lose weight. In truth, I did. I started dieting, cut out sweets, etc. A year later, I'd cut out almost everything but water and sugarfree gum. I hated my body with a passion. I hated myself so thoroughly that I would cry myself to sleep most nights, weeping tears of bitterness and loneliness. I felt worthless and ugly. I felt that if I could only lose 10 more pounds, everything would be fine and I would love myself again, but it became an addiction. I loved watching the numbers drop on the scale at my father's office or at my best friend, Leah's, house. I reveled in the feeling of power I got from going a whole day without a single calorie. In the summer of 2004, I went for six days without eating. On the sixth day I nearly passed out from exhaustion and hunger. I never went quite that long without food after that, but the addiction worsened. Suddenly it wasn't about being skinny as much as it was about controlling myself. I felt invincible, if a little weak at the same time somehow. The bruises I developed on my ever-shrinking legs from vitamin deficiencies were a testament to my determination to be perfect. I knew how many calories were in every food in my house. I restricted my meals to no more than 500 calories a day, but usually consumed closer to 100-200. I covered myself well. I'd claim that I wasn't hungry or that my medicine killed my appetite or that my acid reflux made my stomach hurt. It was easy. My family didn't notice my suffering. My friends noticed every now and then, but I'd make up an excuse and they would give up. In the spring of 2005, I grew closer to several of my classmates during the trip we took to France, but my cover was blown. We sat in restaurants and they would notice me pushing my food around on my plate or managing to "forget" to order lunch. Carolyn and Quinn watched me and tried to force food down my throat. I shrugged it off. "I don't have a problem."

I denied it as long as I could. I
thought I was simply controlling my habits and my wants and my needs, but I soon realized the eating disorder, that lust for “perfection”, was controlling me. After a lot of therapy, some reflection, and the constant support of my dearest friends and teachers, I gradually learned to love and respect myself, and fully recovered last summer.

I know now that I may not be perfect, but I am a reasonably good and well-adjusted person. It may take others more time and effort to see my own beauty than it would to see a supermodel’s, but just because I’m not thin and toned and tan doesn’t mean I’m not a beautiful person, both on the inside and the outside. Ultimately, it doesn’t matter what others think of my appearance. What matters are my own standards for myself, and I do my best to live up to them. I am happy. I have friends who love me and parents who love me. But best of all, I love me.

**Useless Information**

By Caroline Gray

Ever felt like you might die before you got out of a classroom? That’s how I feel right now. I am in an SAT Prep course, and the question that keeps coming to mind is WHY? Why are the members of this class put under so much pressure? We study to do well in school so we can get into our respective dream colleges, where we study and stress more so we can work for a few years doing work that a mindless chimpanzee could do, so that we can “climb the ranks” and make more money. This money, in turn, pays for the debt of my education? When I finish paying that, it goes to things that I probably don’t really need but am taxed for by my government, forcing me to make more money, but by then the standard for incoming coworkers has risen due to the increased amount of college students actually graduating (who have all taken the SAT, a test which is officially no longer standardized because of said course), so any chance at a promotion comes with an advanced degree; I go back to school. I study, stress, finally return to my job, make more money. Uncle Sam takes his share, a portion of which will go to my retirement, which is coming soon anyway. I retire and receive a fraction of the money I was taxed for, but overall I would have the same amount of money, if not more, had I saved the $250,000+ I spent on education. I would have actually been richer had I saved my money to spend on necessities, rather than worrying about salaries and education. After retiring, I get sick, and the profit I had made from my life’s work is eaten by already-too-rich doctors whom I shouldn’t blame for paying off their education debt. In the end, I die without ever having experienced a total lack of stress or studying. So I ask you, why spend my Sunday afternoons stressing and studying just to continue the cycle? Theoretically, I end up better off if I drop out of school and start saving my parents’ money that had previously gone to ESA. Then, not only am I happy and stress-free, but I also get to laugh at all those stupid people who actually let the cycle take them!
Ode to Tut
By Eleanor Brown and Meredith Johnson

Tut, what can we say?
Bible professa, not on a pilgrimage to Mecca,
You have such qualities of a true tribeca.
Outing Club trips are very explorative -
It’s in your nature to teach us more of it
When we paddle in the breeze.

A legend, some say, you would have been a doctor
If you hadn’t left your paper in a cab.
But it’s okay, we like the mister,
Or else your room wouldn’t be such a twister.
Ending this tribute is difficult to do
When you’ve never been, like Mr. T. has, to Peru.
There are llamas in Peru.
We like them too.

Puritan and Indian Play
By Mya Hartley

I give thee a gift, a gift for thee
From the natives, a memory
The reason for sleep, for sleep at night
And reason to stay awake in light.

My God created night and day
From day one, and so it stays
My God allows us to sleep at night
And allows us to wake in light

The In’juns tell a story fake
For all her life she was awake
The daughter of a noble chief
Has not but felt, felt any sleep

She stays awake and never lies
Nor ever closes any eye
Lines of weary on her face
Ugliness each line does trace

She is here, here awake right now
With fatigue arched in each brow
Tired she is and tired she stays
For she stays awake all of the days

The daughter of the noble chief
Did not know she had been to sleep
She didn’t know that God was there
And let her rest, rest in her chair

The sleep and wake are in a war
And for each other, they abhor
They cannot but get along
God and Satan do not belong

We fast-forward through the day
And come back to night, before she lies
She sits again, again in her chair
And for sleep she does prepare

The two enemies deplete the other
For sleep and wake have killed one another
The princess wakes and is surprised
To see wake and sleep there chastised

Punished for their sin of love
By my God that lies above
They did not love their neighbor so
They were punished by His blow

Every day she sleeps now too
Because of Him, who killed them through
The two enemies that lay right there
Because they did not want to share

So this is how the story goes
Sleep and wake are caused by foes
Enemies of night and day
For their sin, they had to pay
The Death of the Y Chromosome?
By Grant Freeman

I recently heard about a study of the y chromosomes in modern males. Under a microscope, the chromosome appears radically warped and deteriorated. Scientists claim that although it was probably in better shape thousands of years ago, it still performs all of the functions that it should in the average male. I don’t think I am entirely convinced. The orthodox male is disappearing slowly every day. While the men in my father’s generation appear totally normal, young men today are increasingly effeminate. Guys are spending vast amounts of time in designer clothing stores and in front of the mirror. This has nothing to do with homosexuality; these boys like girls just as much as men in the past, and possibly more. Still, I find it odd that young men are tending to become more and more like little girls. Pink shirts, shaved legs, hair gel, highlights, and tight pants are alarmingly commonplace. Surprisingly, contemporary women seem to want this. The ruggedly handsome men of yesteryear are no longer in demand. Girls want delicate, feminine features. This led me to search for some sort of significance in the “big picture.” Is this trend somehow connected with millennia of male dominance? It is fact that women perform better in school and make up the majority of college students. Twenty years ago, women rarely held prominent positions in most professions, but that is nearly extinct today. Though it may be a stretch, I think that men today are becoming more effeminate to satiate women’s subconscious and long-denied desire for power.
Results of Eclectic Polls

Who is your favorite actor?

Who is your favorite dead person?
What's your favorite rock band?

What would you do for a Klondike Bar?

The Editor:
Amy Meche

The Staff:
Eleanor Brown
Marc Fernandez
Alex Fournet
Julien Gradnigo
Caroline Gray
MeredithJohnson
Nisha Loganathanraj
Rizwan Merchant
Claire Noell
Erik Stark

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