Eclectic Faces
thoughts from a hotel playroom
jacob camden, '18

i sit in the empty LN Garden Hotel playroom, a converted apartment that retains the feeling of homeliness, of being a warm corner of a grand city, of being a small few rooms from which i can peer out at bustling lively beautiful foreign guangzhou. i'm utterly safe here, as i sip my delicious nespresso cappuccino/latte, as i lounge in a carpeted atrium. a few meters away, some pretty chinese girls do their job standing at a service help desk. i hope they come in to chat, although neither of us speaks each other's language. and i hope they don't, that nobody ever comes into the safe safe room. a room where i can watch the streets full of happy and sad and busy people, sidewalks and streets and shiny buildings full of faces and legs and hands, not the least of which are mine, me, unseen, seeing everyone. in here, everything has a cleanliness and a crisp, fresh unfamiliarity. it has the spirit of a home – but not my home. i could believe i'm in london or chicago, someplace just a little closer to home, home home that is, if it weren't for the chinese characters that are always in sight, somewhere, always. and of course no matter where i could be, i would always know if i'm not home. i'd love to be out there, on the streets, with some pretty charming chinese girl from the city, or maybe some chinese friends who can show me all the coolest little holes-in-the-wall in guangzhou – but wouldn't i rather be sipping now-lukewarm coffee (it wasn't super hot to start with)? wouldn't i rather be peering out the placid clean glass at people who don't know they're being observed, people who don't care if they're seen? wouldn't i rather be breathing in room-temperature air that tastes like nothing, air that tastes not at all like putrid smells from the city or exotic substanceless chinese spices, or anything at all like home home home? wouldn't i? i don't know, and that's ok. but, i must confess with a half-sigh and a smiling willingness to keep on living and see what's next, – it's not ok, it doesn't feel ok.

“Think, Mark, think!” My hands start sweating, and my mind draws a blank. I place my fingers on the keys. Silence. Thirty seconds pass. Silence. I feel a gentle pat on my shoulder and sigh as I'm told it's time to return to my seat in the audience.

While making a beeline to the exit at the piano recital's conclusion, an elderly woman stops me in my tracks and, to my surprise, gives me a humongous hug. With a smile, she whispers, “It'll be OK, don't worry.” Later that evening, I decide that maybe she's right. Will anyone in ten years remember that one recital my sophomore year where I couldn't remember the first note of my piece?

A year has passed. The stakes are much higher now. It's the annual state competition, and it's my turn to play 11.5 minutes of Chopin and Beethoven. Visions of last year's recital try to invade my thoughts, but I desperately block them out. This time, I spent hours practicing the first measures of my pieces, but I'm also not as worried. I remember the nice lady's words: "It'll be OK, don't worry." I take a deep breath and begin.

As I play the final D-minor chord of Beethoven's "The Tempest," I breathe again. This time it's a sigh of relief. I'm pleased I remembered the first note of my pieces, I'm proud of my second-place finish, but I'm even happier to have found a piece of advice that works for me.

-Mark Dibbs, '18
The Rohingya Refugee Crisis: A textbook example of ethnic cleansing. The world’s fastest growing refugee crisis.

Ethnic cleansing, world’s fastest growing refugee crisis. Aren’t they just words, just words arranged in phrases? Phrases that make me, make us, feel momentarily heartbroken, devastated, called to help. Words whose cause are helped along by a picture of a young child in tattered clothes and a sad smile against a barren, post-apocalyptic background. That sensation that they create, that sensation that gives them purpose, is fleeting. Your phone dings. Homework is undone. The boy you like comes to mind. The fact that you haven’t yet said something nice or anything tangible at all to your dad, your sister even though you’ve been home for over an hour pushes you, punches me, in the gut.

The sensation flees, and you bask in the satisfaction you have in yourself for feeling heartbroken, devastated, called to help as if that changed anything. Well did it? I don’t know. For my sake, I hope so. You bask in the satisfaction you have in yourself for reading the article at all? Because though you and I are here and they are there and because we have our lives to think about (college, scholarships, classes, phone, home, work, boys, dads, sisters) and they have theirs. But there must be something more or why read the article at all? Because though you and I are here with our lives and they are there with theirs, you and I and they are not much different. We are not much different. And it is wrong. It is wrong that the phrases, ethnic cleansing, world’s fastest growing refugee crisis, exists. It is wrong that the Rohingya people have been described as one of the most persecuted minorities in the world. And maybe the acknowledgement that it is wrong changes something, anything. Does. Maybe it gives the roller coaster of trying to be a good person a second thought, and feeling better about myself or at least saying I do while really the facts and figures and the sheer wrongness of it all leave me with a profound sense of dread. And I take another sip of my almond milk hot chocolate and try to smile because maybe just maybe you’ll see the wrongness too and that will make all the difference.

The Rohingya are an ethnic minority who claim to be descendants from the Muslim traders that inhabited the region in and around the Southeast Asian country of Myanmar for generations. More than one-million members of the highly-persecuted mainly-Muslim minority group lived in Myanmar at the start of this year. However, the government of Myanmar, a predominantly Buddhist country, claims that the Rohingya people are illegal immigrants denying them citizenship. Due to their stateless status, there is systematic discrimination against the Rohingya people in Myanmar that has left them segregated against and living in wretched conditions.

On August 25, a small faction of Rohingya militants attacked more than twenty Myanmar police posts. The Myanmar security force responded with a vow to root out the militant group. Their vow has been carried out on a massive scale as they have not only targeted the militants but the Rohingya people as a whole. Since late August, the security force has carried out a campaign of widespread and systematic murder full of sexual violence against Rohingya women and the burning of entire villages to the ground. The campaign has left many innocent civilians dead or homeless and caused a huge and growing wave of Rohingya people to flee Myanmar’s borders.

Since late August, more than 600,000 Rohingya people have fled with the majority ending up in the Bangladesh city of Cox’s Bazar bringing the total number of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh to around one million. Many refugees die making the journey due to attacks by Myanmar security forces, encounters with landmines along the border, and drowning trying to escape by sea. With the size of the crisis and the rate at which it has accelerated, the Bangladesh government and the relief organizations involved are unable to provide for the influx of immigrants. And devastating floods over this past summer have worsened conditions in refugee camps and led to a cholera outbreak, water shortages, and malnutrition. And I am here sitting in a coffee shop typing this, which you might not have even cared to finish or might never give a second thought, and feeling better about myself or at least saying I do while really the facts and figures and the sheer wrongness of it all leave me with a profound sense of dread. And I take another sip of my almond milk hot chocolate and try to smile because maybe just maybe you’ll see the wrongness too and that will make all the difference.

- Abby Langford, ’18
In this town,
Taco Bells and Targets
are batteries at night
and maps in the day, closets
or grandparents trying
hard to hear or heavy
with things that were.

There's a word on
people's minds and
faces, in places like
these. Never in their
mouths or ears because
There's no room here
for another character;
another loose coil
bouncing free from
that little league fence,
chainlinked with the smell
of roasted peanuts but
divorced by rusty innings.

There's no time for "past"
to slip out into the open.
It's just always too late to say
we missed ourselves yesterday
because we're busy again
today, and tomorrow—
Ms. Hunt'll wear orange
because there is only orange
in some towns like this one,
where everyone likes orange
because it's all that's worth seeing.

and it was winter and it was freezing, the kind of cold that creeps beneath the
doorboards and settles between your bones. She took refuge under your duvet, her face
barely visible and her cheeks red from laughing at some dumb joke you just told.

"I wish it was warmer" you commented.

I love you is what you meant to say.

"Kiss me" she said suddenly.

"What?"

She grabbed your hands and pulled you under her hideout.

"Kiss me" she repeated,

and before you could answer she pushed her lips against yours, and suddenly every drop
of sunlight in the world had poured into your soul and melted the winter in your bones.
Your lungs filled with fire and your frozen fingers pulled her head closer as you tried to
swallow every ounce of sunshine that you could. You pulled away and saw her eyes still
ablaze with warmth.

"I love you" you said.

I've always loved you is what you meant to say.

There are some towns
like this one that never look
different. No one reads
the words on the signs or
minds the car that hasn't
moved in who knows when.

They wave to them like
neighbors and transit
strangers whose coffee
dazed eyes say everything.

Things in some towns
mean something to
everyone because they've
been around long enough
to mean something to anyone.

Some towns are corners
walled in by things that
won't budge. When the
world spins round, Ms. Hunt
in her orange traffic vest, and that car
with the peeling Jesus fish

Are thrown flat against the
bent school zone sign
and the leaning lighthouse
mailbox, yellow somehow
from the rain's high tide,
outside that off-white house
that's been on sale for
some time now.

In this town,
Taco Bells and Targets
are batteries at night
and maps in the day, closets
or grandparents trying
hard to hear or heavy
with things that were.

There's a word on
people's minds and
faces, in places like
these. Never in their
mouths or ears because

There's no room here
for another character;
another loose coil
bouncing free from
that little league fence,
chainlinked with the smell
of roasted peanuts but
divorced by rusty innings.

There's no time for “past”
to slip out into the open.
It's just always too late to say
we missed ourselves yesterday
because we're busy again
today, and tomorrow—

Ms. Hunt'll wear orange
because there is only orange
in some towns like this one,
where everyone likes orange
because it's all that's worth seeing.

- Katie Clement, '19

There are some towns
like this one that never look
different. No one reads
the words on the signs or
minds the car that hasn't
moved in who knows when.

They wave to them like
neighbors and transit
strangers whose coffee
dazed eyes say everything.

Things in some towns
mean something to
everyone because they've
been around long enough
to mean something to anyone.

Some towns are corners
walled in by things that
won't budge. When the
world spins round, Ms. Hunt
in her orange traffic vest, and that car
with the peeling Jesus fish

Are thrown flat against the
bent school zone sign
and the leaning lighthouse
mailbox, yellow somehow
from the rain's high tide,
outside that off-white house
that's been on sale for
some time now.

In this town,
Taco Bells and Targets
are batteries at night
and maps in the day, closets
or grandparents trying
hard to hear or heavy
with things that were.

There's a word on
people's minds and
faces, in places like
these. Never in their
mouths or ears because

There's no room here
for another character;
another loose coil
bouncing free from
that little league fence,
chainlinked with the smell
of roasted peanuts but
divorced by rusty innings.

There's no time for “past”
to slip out into the open.
It's just always too late to say
we missed ourselves yesterday
because we're busy again
today, and tomorrow—

Ms. Hunt'll wear orange
because there is only orange
in some towns like this one,
where everyone likes orange
because it's all that's worth seeing.

- Story Frantzen, '18
Five Things I’ve Learned As A Musician:

1. Practice makes perfect, but so does your attitude. Sure, especially as a musician, practice is important. Without practicing, there really is no way to improve. However, your attitude determines how efficient your practice is. If you hit a wrong note during practice, do you just give up and stop playing music? If you miss a shot during basketball practice, are you benched for the rest of the season? The answer to both of those questions is no, because those are the same kinds of mistakes I mentioned before. Being open-minded and positive is extremely important in anything that you do in life. Embrace that you played the wrong chords, and use that as motivation to learn the chords for the next performance and perfect the technique with which you play those chords.

2. Working with others is key. I know it’s something that is said by every coach and every teacher, but I can’t emphasize enough how crucial it is to work in a group. There is absolutely no way a band can function unless all the members work together and understand each other’s roles and parts. A sport’s team cannot function unless all team members work as one to achieve their goals. In band, we say that it is crucial for the bass player and the drummer to lock in with one another in order to keep the rhythm of the song tight, and that’s no different for anything else. When working with others, think of yourself as one of those two musicians, and work with whatever group you’re in coherently, and achieve the common goal as one.

3. There is no reason to fear the spotlights. As an actor and musician, if you’re afraid to be in the spotlight, chances are your performance won’t be as solid. Confidence is a key part of quality work. As a musician, confidence adds to the tone of your music. Sure, you can be the next Eric Clapton or Mark Knopfler, but if you get on stage and you aren’t proud of your work, it will never sound the way you want it to. I remember my seventh grade year, for my first Coffee House I played drums for a Nirvana song, and I was so shy and scared and my drumming sounded awful. Fast forward a few years, I get on stage my sophomore year and play “Sultans of Swing,” and it sounds tremendous because my band and I were proud of our work. As I said earlier, attitude is key, and confidence is just another part of that.

4. Having fun and making memories is the best part of anything. The best part of any sport or performance is getting to make so many amazing memories. I can’t begin to express how many amazing memories I’ve made during my time in the ESA band. All my favorite moments and all my best traits have come from performing with this amazing and extremely talented group of musicians. To quote the President of Nintendo of America, “if it’s not fun, why bother?” If you aren’t having fun doing something, then why waste the energy on it? For me, I wouldn’t be performing or learning all the instruments I do if they weren’t fun to play. Having fun makes every event exponentially better.

-Dylan Nails, ‘18
Vast Emptiness

Vast Emptiness

as i unwrapped the paper
my happiness did taper
i had expected something so great
something that would make me celebrate
it was long awaited
surely it would be my favorite
what i had been looking forward to
suddenly made me so blue
as i unwrapped the paper
my happiness did taper
surely i would be underfed
as all i had was two pieces of bread

-Maggie Shuffler, '21

Nameless

Socially inclined, yet socially undefined
Why am I walking your lines in order to find my own mind?
I’d rather walk in your wake
I just talk: I don’t take

;I exist beyond my character
But this gives me no direction

I feel that I’m too independent for my own sake
I’m not going out of my way to appeal to your ego or right your mistakes
I’m an individual
I just talk: I don’t take

;I’ll only fuel your image of me by being myself
I’m not ignoring all social tendencies, I’m just playing it by feeling
Coincidentally, I’m healing

;Coincidentally, you’re hurting
I don’t give you exaggerated reactions with the ideas I’m asserting!

Now look at your cronies and back to me
Are you truly humored by individuality?

-Lucas Falterman, '19
From Steeplechase to Palisades

Making Movies (1980) is Dire Straits’s third studio album, after Communiqué (1979) and Dire Straits (1978). After their debut, lead guitarist Mark Knopfler, bassist John Illsley, drummer Pick Withers, and rhythm guitarist David Knopfler were on fire. Their legendary hit “Sultans of Swing” showed the world a style of rock that hadn’t been done and hasn’t been done by anyone else since. Knopfler plays the electric guitar with his fingers, learning from rock/country greats like Chet Atkins and JJ Cale. The sounds he drew from his Fender Stratocaster, while simple, never sound the same from anyone else. Believe me, I’ve spent good money collecting guitars and gear to reproduce the sound as accurately as I can. I even learned to play with my fingers with similar pop, spank, and phrasing, imitating the album and live videos, but I don’t hold a candle to the real deal.

After the success of their first record, the band flew to Nassau to record their sophomore album with consistent tone, songwriting, and playing style. Communiqué is great for fans of the first album, but—besides a couple of good songs—it doesn’t bring anything new to the table. The next song, “Romeo and Juliet,” seems to be a couple of their own right. But, somehow, it doesn’t sound as earnest as it does coming from Knopfler. This song is another written in F major, one of three on the album in F major/D minor. It’s a poignant love song, hitting the roots of emotion with clever lines and raw feeling. He plays it on a 1936 brass resonator National Style-O guitar that totally delivers on the homey, intimate sound that suggests a campfire with the one you love. Cheesy, I know, but you pick up on those hints after approximately one million listens. If you’re gonna listen to any songs from this album, humor me just this once and try “Tunnel of Love” and “Romeo and Juliet.”

Let’s move on to what I don’t like. Despite how much I love this band, they’re not flawless. One song off this album, “Hand in Hand,” just doesn’t have what the others do. For me, it’s been ruined by the album’s context. Leading up to its creation, Mark and David Knopfler had been getting in arguments fueled by Mark’s desire for complete creative control. The touring lifestyle and constant fights with his brother caused David to leave the band, abandoning his recorded guitar parts on the album and dissociating from Mark and the band. Listen to “Hand in Hand.” How am I supposed to believe a man who pushed away his own brother singing, “If I’ve been hard on you, I never chose to be,” and, “hand in hand like brothers are supposed to be?” It comes across as incredibly ingenuine and almost sounds like a lie. Instead of actually apologizing to his brother for breaking their relationship, he writes a song about it. I understand that most people don’t know this coming in, but once you do, it’s hard hearing it the same again.

With all of its ups and downs, Making Movies has the highest concentration of great songs of any album I’ve heard, barring the occasional Rush and Steely Dan albums. It’s a short album of seven songs where even the ones I don’t like have their place, which is all I can really ask. I can’t rag on good composition. Give it a go. Get in touch with the gripping sound of this album that’s snagged me as a fan.

-Ren Gomez, ’18
The once white roses, are no longer white. The petals are now thin sheets of paper, coated in layers of dust. They have been falling off, one by one each day, into a pile of other black petals. The stems are warped and bent and turning a dark green color. The white roses we picked together, almost black now, are decaying with each passing day. You said we would pick more roses in a month. And it has been a month. So come home mom, let’s pick roses again.

White Roses

Last month today, we were picking roses, white roses, with perfectly green stems and perfectly white petals, with smells of fresh lemons and your strong velvet orchid perfume. You were wearing your red dress that day, the one with the white polka dots and the thin fabric belt that was tied in a bow around your waist. It has been a month since then, and I find myself standing in your bedroom closet, searching for your red dress. It still smells of lemon and velvet orchid perfume. I keep the red dress on, even though everyone will be wearing black. I walk down the hall to the front door and I pass by the roses on the way out.

The real future of our country’s power generation is nuclear fission. Nuclear energy has had an image issue with the American public. When the term “nuclear energy” is mentioned, the first images that appear in people’s minds are those from Chernobyl. While the destruction in this event was unimaginable, the reactor being used had significant safety flaws that were known at the time of design. Nuclear technology has evolved a significant amount since those days. New molten salt reactors are less accident prone than even gas turbines. Nuclear energy also runs around the clock and does not require storage in batteries. Nuclear fission is also relatively inexpensive after the initial cost of the reactor has been covered. However, nuclear is not without its issues: there is no permanent solution for the storage of spent nuclear fuel, meaning that it is always a potential threat to the environment if its temporary containment should be compromised. The long term solution to the energy crisis facing our nation is nuclear fusion driving most of the power generation and being supplemented by renewable sources of energy wherever available.
THANK YOU
JACOB AND ABBY!
Eclectic Staff 2017-2018:
Teacher Sponsors: Shome Dasgupta, Reese Fuller
Story Frantzen: Editor-in-Chief Jacob Camden: Editor
Isabelle Berthelot, Hayden Boagni, Jake Sledge, Katie Clement, Maggie Shuffler, Dylan Nails

The Eclectic exists as a vessel for self-expression and creativity in the ESA community; all high school students are welcome to participate and showcase their individuality!
To submit to the Eclectic, please email eclectic@esacadiana.com, or find any of the staff listed above

The Eclectic is a student publication produced by the students at the Episcopal School of Acadiana, P.O. Box 380, Cade Louisiana, 70519. (337) 365-1416. All rights reserved.

*Special thanks to Jacob Camden and Abby Langford for all drawings shown!
*above: “Flying Chicken,” by Hayden Boagni (’21)