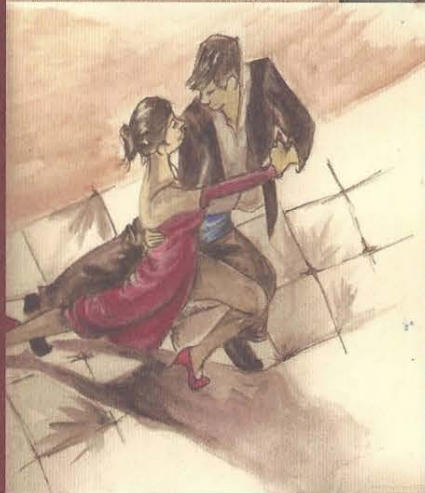
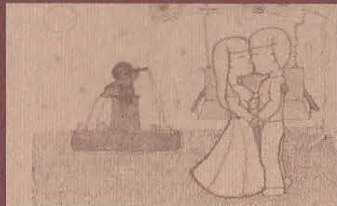




HEMETERA

2009



Editors' Notes

Art is a reflection of the world around the artist, and art exists in order for people to better understand their own world. All of the work in this journal was written by Regis students and faculty, and so this journal is composed of where the Regis community has been and where it is going both individually and collectively.

—*Curran Chunn*

Regis College has great writers. A great writer is created through experience. Express from within.

—*Marian Harris-Saunders*

As an editor, I am proud to present this journal and the wealth of literature and art included in its pages. As a poet, I feel privileged to be included alongside the work of my talented professors and colleagues.

—*Jennifer LeBlanc*

I was honored to work with such a talented group of individuals to complete the 2009 *Hemetera* journal. *Hemetera* is a celebration and profession of the students and faculty of Regis College and a combination of literary and art expression that shows the talent that lies within this community.

—*Liz Murray*

Hemetera 2009

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	Professor Julia Lisella
Production:	Rathy Uy '10

In 1946 a "doughty seedling poked its vigorous head" into the Regis College Community with the emergence of the new literary magazine *Hemetera*, meaning "Our Own" in Greek. The magazine was founded as an opportunity to spotlight the creative talents of the student body. Published annually by the students of Regis College, the magazine welcomes submissions of poetry, prose, artwork, and photography.

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Ifeoma Onuorah '10
Still life, detail, Acrylic paint on canvas

Secret Joy

I move across the floor
Letting myself go
I let the beat take me
Wherever it wants to

I never stop moving
Not even for a break
I keep going
Not caring for mistakes

The rhythm is addicting
The rhythm is catchy
No one can stop me
Not when I'm this enticed
Shame leaves mind
And pride takes its place

I move across the floor
Freeing myself
It's my little secret
And I'll share it
With other free ones too

Elizabeth Alexis '10

Swinging

She sits outside on the swing set
and kicks her feet into the dirt pile
an outline the swing's motion
Outside it's cold
The wind blows and leaves lift off
forming a tornado's spiral

She sits outside on the swing set
Outside she is calmer and her mind is at peace
Inside are the distractions that give her energies
Inside is warmer

As she sits on the swing
she can thrust herself with the power of her own body
She can control
the motion
the swing will take her
Inside she is controlled
Inside she is not free

When the swing goes higher off the ground she feels happy
It is a different place than down on the ground
Down on the ground are her troubles
Down on the ground are her energies

Outside in the air, no one minds
No one minds that she is wild
No one cares outside
For the leaves outside can be blown crazily
in the wind
the way she feels inside

Meghan Arington '10

Surprise!!!!!!

I saw a tiny blue box
And I thought I knew
What he was about to give me
Was it shiny?
Did it sparkle?
I got so excited
Smiled so big
My eyes lit up
And I started to shake
When he got down on his knee
He opened the box
And you know what I saw?
A freakin key
To his new Chevy truck.

Jennifer Butler '09



Marissa Garozzo '10

Before You Leave, Pencil on paper

For Mulligan

Once I was a lonely dog,
Just looking for a home.
I had no place to go,
No one to call my own.
I wandered up and down the streets,
In rain in heat and snow.
I ate whatever I could find,
I was always on the go.
My skin would itch, my feet were sore,
My body ached with pain.
And no one stopped to give a pat
Or to gently say my name.
I never saw a loving glance,
I was always on the run.
For people thought that hurting me
Was really lots of fun.
And then one day I heard a voice
So gentle, kind and sweet,
And arms so soft reached down to me
And took me off my feet.
"No one again will hurt you,"
Was whispered in my ear.
"You'll have a home to call your own
Where you will know no fear."
"You will be dry, you will be warm,
You'll have enough to eat.
And rest assured that when you sleep,
Your dreams will all be sweet."
I was afraid I must admit,
I've lived so long in fear.
I can't remember when I let
A human come so near.
And as she tended to my wounds
And bathed and brushed my fur,
She told me 'bout the rescue group
And what it meant to her.
She said, "We are a circle,
A line that never ends.
And in the center there is you

Protected by new friends."
"And all around you are
The ones that check the pounds,
And those that share their homes
After you've been found."
"And all the other folk
Are searching near and far
To find the perfect home for you
Where you can be a star."
She said, "There is a family
That's waiting patiently,
And pretty soon we'll find them,
Just you wait and see."
"And then they'll join our circle,
They'll help to make it grow,
So there'll be room for more like you,
Who have no place to go."
I waited very patiently,
The days they came and went.
Today's the day I thought,
My family will be sent.
Then just when I began to think
It wasn't meant to be,
There were people standing there
Just gazing down at me.
I knew them in a heart beat,
I could tell they felt it too.
They said, "We have been waiting
For a special dog like you."
Now every night I say a prayer
To all the gods that be.
"Thank you for the life I live
And all you've given me.
But most of all protect the dogs
In the pound and on the street.
And send a Rescue Person
To lift them off their feet."

Caroline Chrisom '09

Suburban Flight

Not long until the sun has gone down
Beyond Whitney Musket¹ houses. Soon the
Heirs to the thrones will flee to the woods.
Avoiding the armies of people sinking in uselessness;
Those who have not worn robes of Hindu Gods;
They've never built, or destroyed, or repaired².

The forest defends us from inconsequential badges,
And the arbitrary laws that arm them.
The fire's blaze razes the labors of our days.
Around the fire, we delight in the thought of our savagery,
As though bearing witness to the reaction of oxygen fuel and heat
Could tie us to some kind of human history.
The comforts of pills weed and beer become so clear,
And like some biblical trip, in the flames appear,
The faces of our forefathers, so unknown and so dear.

I sing as though my words could plant my feet in solid ground.
"The ship was turned nine times around, and the poor old dog was drowned,
And I'm the last of the Irish Rover³."
I find myself uprooted as you say, "you were born in America.
You have no other past,
It has been forgotten,
And this moment will always be.
The past is as empty as the future."
The fire burns us when we reach out with drunken arms
To touch those who have come before.

Looking for some kind of comfort in our eyes,
Jim holds up his wallet and says,
"I feel so useless when it's empty."
He drains his pockets of plunder
From the dangerous isles of Store 24.
Lighters and candy bars.
Because it feels it should,
A voice calls, "you shouldn't steal."
In some kind of teenage defiance Jim asks why.
Not even the crickets have a reply.

The sky rains in the way our eyes should, but do not.
Fire can no longer hold us safe.
We gather remainders of the small
Comforts we thought to bring.
And then, weighed down by the beer cans
As empty as the night,

1 Reference to Eli Whitney's use of the idea to manufacture muskets with interchangeable parts.
2 The roles of the three major Hindu Gods: building, destroying, and sustaining.
3 Taken from "The Irish Rover," an Irish Traditional.

We walk the long narrow trail back to our separate fights,
And feel as desperate as the waning moon,
Like days we lose something of ourselves,
And nights, we return here less complete.
Some of us climb into a dad's old bimmer⁴,
And my face feels a mile wide. Maybe I'm drunk, but
In each explosion of each piston, I hear the heartbeat of long dead
Blackish people, Redish people, Brownish people,
Whose bones have been picked clean and clean bones gone⁵.
The pump of their hearts propels us in our chase, or flight, or stillness.

Rain gathers in potholes and ditches.
Drops land with neither way nor concept of escape.
From the beginning, they could not choose their fate;
They must wait for the release when they evaporate.
If only our bodies could transform to gas,
Rise up and touch the dome of the earth,
And fall again, in a forest, or an ocean, *wherever nature led*⁶,
To a home we could recognize, instead.

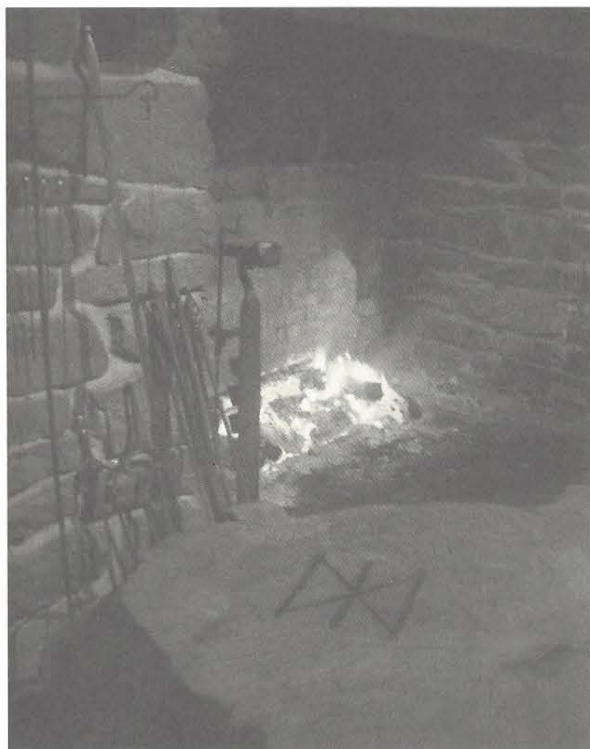
If we had the tools to fly, or the guts to die,
Surely, we would.

On Main St. at this time of morning, all is dead
Except the neon signs waking up
To begin their day luring dollars,
Like sirens calling for sailors.
Here, we find the answer, the very center,
The anchor of all that we are,
And we know it to be only lights and wires:
The accumulation of many millennia of men.

Though it may look as if the late fall wind
Could crumble and collapse the complete skeleton,
It only manages to tear the leaves from their home;
The structure remains, unburdened.
*Though things may fall apart, the centre it seems, will always hold*⁷;
For it is not the material of buildings or men that plague our souls,
It is not the paper or the ink that binds our lives to the chase of dollars,
They are merely the pamphlets, the temples and prophets,
That all bow their heads to the one God of all of our centuries,
Whose name has been deep in the throats of men,
But our mouths cannot wrap a single word around his complete being,
For he works within all of our words, and takes many for his name,
As Yahweh and Elohim are one⁸.

Curran Chunn '11

4 Slang for BMW, pronounced "beam-er".
5 Taken from "Death Shall Have No Dominion," by Dylan Thomas.
6 Taken from "Lines Composed Above Tintern Abbey," by William Wordsworth.
7 Adapted from "The Second Coming," by W. B. Yeats.
8 Deuteronomy 6:4,5.



*Kristen Barletta '11
Winter warmth at the Salem Cross Inn, Photograph*

Folly

Originally published in: *Chrysalis*
Poetry and Prose by Jason Giannetti
Prospero Publishing, a division of Prospero Productions, copyright 2008

Man races to the destination of his dreams.
All he can conceive, he strives to make reality:
Imagination of wild fantasies
E'er tease and tempt tangibility.

Biology, Chemistry, Physiology —
Science, it seems,
Is more creative than poetry,
Creating a world of fire and *pharmakons* —
Phantoms of immortality —
Bearing Death deep in her illusory palliative.

But, so it seems, 'tis sometimes
A greater boon to imagine
What could have been
Than bring to fruition
The seeds of this Knowledge Tree,
Which binds thee and me
With a yoke of intellectual intimacy.

Forbidden fruit for Tantalus,
Ripe in the prime of life;
Soft, tender, sensitive to the touch,
Lush with the juices of surrender and strife,
Of red, pink, and lustful hues,
Whose innocence, in this garden
Of Good and Evil
Radiates like a golden sun,
Preternatural, before the fall,
Setting in the West,
Descending into hidden depths,
Unleashing mysterious forces
Afoot in the darkness
Where serpentine dangers
Lie, like Lilith, Lola, Delilah, unseen,
And the labial alliterations lull
All heavenly luminaries to sleep
With murmur, moan, and whisper
Wiping away all memory of day,

Covering in a cloak of sensual silence
Tightly bedded between the wet earth
And low lingering clouds,
Those two who, naked of conceit
In body and spirit,
Through carnal insight
Knew, for one brief moment in paradise,
The Eternal life that precedes
The deathly delight of the decaying flesh –

And then, like Psyche taking flight,
Caught in the snare of rosy fingered dawn,
Entwined by the limbs of that arbor,
Whose dreams filled the night,
We are exiled to eternal love
Of Wisdom concerning things below and above.

Professor Jason Giannetti

Dying Soldier

Swept away by dark waters
Held back by bulging force
Stolen by deadly indulgence
I see
The hero slowly slipping away
Leaving loved ones
Stranding hearts on the southern shore
As you're watched being taken
And I say
Hi
Hello to the dying soldier.

Father
Brother
Questions
Nothing
Come back and tell me
That you will never again leave
And leave me crying
Drowning in tears
Hoping and wishing
And I call
Screaming
Crying for the dying soldier.

As he lies in my restless arms
His eyes so blue of misery
His life so dead of existence
Tears form and hearts clash
Prayers are prayed and questions are asked
Why?
GOD – You
Please
Don't do this
This I ask
For my father
The dying soldier.

Marian Harris-Saunders '12

To My Dear Former President

Should I speak O so bluntly,
About the time we waste
And the misery we create?
Should I imply O so reluctantly,
As to say you said you never cared
About the world
And the problems we face – today?
"Thou Shalt Not Lie"
But you lied – given small replies
You want trust – and all forgiveness
But I'm not ready to portray that kind
Of warmth – just yet.

--Pres. Bush dedication

*Aegina*¹

Cool breezes are a blessing on my face,
although the dry, meager trees may think otherwise.
Sundown approaches, and the
little sun-ripened people
appear at the doors of their gentle adobe houses.
I sit upon our porch, watching
as that godforsaken sun makes its daily descent
beyond the still waters.
The taste of cigarette smoke, almost as palpable
as the cracked, arid earth that we walk upon,
dances into the air like a prayer,
and music can be heard by the harbor.
O Aegina, how much will I miss you
when I return to the cold, harsh
climate of New England?
The world seems much more pleasant
in this lovely world across the sea,
in contrast with the rainy frigid
days of my homeland.
I will mourn the loss of this place
when I must leave a week from now, saying,
"Poor Aegina, she was far too young
for her untimely death."
And when I go, sulking, I will
promise to return someday
with the one I love, so that he and I
may be at peace, among the
sun-ripened people of Greece.

Morgan Heath '11

¹ Aegina is a little port town on the island of Aegina in Greece. In Greek mythology, Aegina is also the nymph of the island that bears her name.

Lonely

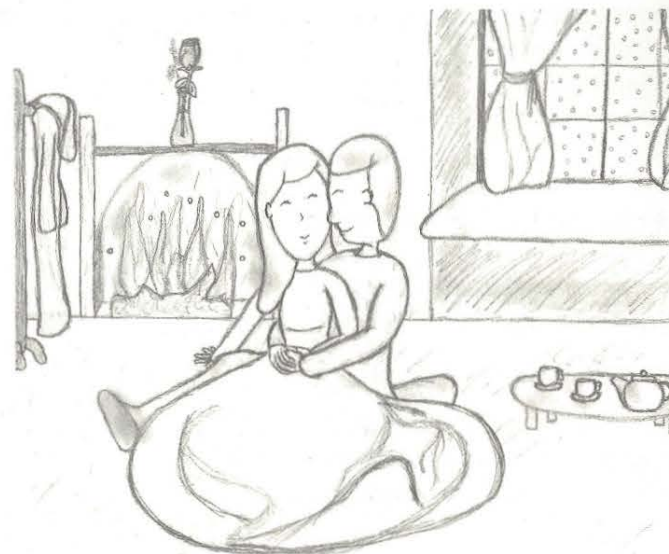
I have known the old room of Dementia,
spiraling of the walls, solitude engulfing.
All the quivering from quiet mouths
aching to speak, spread the words of life.
But nothing but silence,
not a coo, nothing to imply another.
No music could drown this out
mirrors reflect the truth about the space.
I am left alone, stifling with thoughts,
invisible from the world and its civilians.

Tara Jackson '10

The Experience of Love

Falling in love is like falling down the stairs, don't try to grab onto anything to ease your fall because at the end it will make you look stupid, but embrace the freefalling experience, live in the moment because at the end it may hurt but you will walk up the stairs again.

Aaron-Michael "MJ" Johnson '12



January 12, 2009 10:49 AM

Marissa Garozzo '10
Only You, Pencil on paper

Prince Charming

Sometimes I start to question whether he exists.
Should I sit around and wait?
Do I go out and look?
What makes this man so charming?
Is it his blonde and voluminous hair and handsome face?

Many women believe they have found the real Prince Charming.
All men open the door on the first date.
They know how to butter you up and be romantic.
He will make you fall under his spell
And Prince becomes your world.

Just when you think you have found him he is gone.
Why are those dishes washed always by me?
Why is Prince relaxing and playing video games?
Isn't Prince always a helper?
Doesn't he always ease a woman's work?

Samantha K. La France '11

Conversation

For J.H.L.

We sit in an old-favorite second-rate restaurant
surrounded by a collection of different families.
We are safe to roll the truth off of our tongues,
here where everyone is loud and making noise.

So you order coffee, pour the sugar and cream
into the colorfully marked and chipped mug,
you stir the beverage and run your hand over
the handle— just like they do in the movies.

I have enough dead people's rings on my fingers,
you are saying, and I look first at the many gold
bands on your hands, then loop my thumb under
my palm, stroke the thin line of gold on mine.

I understand the seriousness of mortality and death,
and also the fact that I am now growing older,
that you now can tell me what you are feeling,
what a mother might hesitate to share with a daughter.

Jennifer LeBlanc '10

First Reading

How many summers before I could reach
my toes to the end of the polyester weave
of the chaise lounge, reading *Anna Karenina*?

How bright the page,
the black marks resting indifferent, lazy in the sun.

What made it say what it said?
The broad beige space to either side of the dipping figures
somewhat illuminating.

And illumination itself: sun at my back,
my upper back burning, the beige strip left by the tugging elastic,
my shoulders red-black from the sun.

What had Anna done that was so bad?
Did I hate her? Did I understand her? My brother
taunting, springing to tell me the ending.

Nothing figures in the setting of figures on the page,
no longer mysterious to me, but evasive nonetheless,
begging me to make meaning, to take its thin fingers in my lap
and coax its unalterable life into mine.

Professor Julia Lisella

Bliss

I have known the exciting pleasure of smiles,
happy and nervous, unsure but thrilled,
excitement awaiting the reunion of two separated friends,
joyous about the uncertain meeting,
anticipation, impatience, enthusiasm,
the unsure gathering with unknown reactions,
a friendship that could spark euphoria,
multiple satisfactory years that could result.
And I have seen lost friends encounter uplifting finales,
more content than a newlywed, more perfect than a snowflake,
lively, almost animated, through long periods of separation
shedding tears upon reuniting, the look of love in their eyes,
knowing all along that nothing had been lost.

Corinne Montalvo '11



Ifeoma Onuorah '10
Let's tango, Watercolor and pen

they heard it
grotesque, loud
over my solo music.
I felt it
grotesque, pain
in my moment.
And in that second
my world came
crashing down
on stage that night.
Crying, screaming
“no” “no” “no”
couldn't make it go away.
Quickly tell them
to rehearse without me
as they wheel me to the ambulance.
The ER took the x-rays,
nothing's wrong with the bones.
But it's all messed up,
and the morphine doesn't dull the pain.
Here's an immobilizer.
Use the crutches.
No walking until there's no pain.
“Can I d.. da.. dan..”
I knew the answer.
I didn't need to ask.
The show's next week,
I'm out.

Liz Murray '10

Baeolophus Bicolor

Maybe he lost it
In a close call with a cat,
Or because of a genetic mutation
Passed down from his mother.

Maybe he's just incredibly virile;
All the pretty young chicks swoon
As though he were Elvis, or Frankie, or Bond.
Maybe it made the other boys jealous,
And just to prove that they couldn't care less
They pecked at his head to teach him a lesson.
Maybe—more likely—he did it himself,
Pulling his feathers out in frustration
Because the damn squirrels ate all the food.

How can a bald bird survive?
But there is something proud
In that patch of pink skin
Where a wild gray Mohawk should be.

Ode to the bald Tufted Titmouse:
For his sake, someone should invest in bird toupees.

Amelia Onorato '09

Patience

I have known the boiling frustration of waiting,
Pacing back and forth and back and forth,
Foot jiggling frantically,
Waiting for the telephone call.
Nerves on edge hoping to be startled by ringing,
Telepathic messages don't work.
What else can I do to keep occupied?
Checking emails every five minutes,
Nothing new.
The mind yearns to be allowed to relax,
But it can't,
Not until I hear that call.

I wait around for the package that never comes on time,
Feeling as if I live in that mail room,
Only to again hear,
"Not today."
Smiling, I thank them anyway.
But when, when will it come?
My patience is growing thinner,
I don't know how much longer I can wait.

The line in front stretches on forever.
Will we ever get in?
Shifting my weight back and forth,
Rubbing my hands for warmth and distraction,
Uggh!
Enough is enough!
Let's just screw waiting around and cut the line.

Marianna Scandole '09



Ifeoma Onuorah '10
Doodle Dancing girl, Graphite on paper

My Mean Mother

I have a mean mother.
 When all the other kids were outside playing hopscotch, jump rope
 And chasing the ice cream truck
 I had to stay in the house and read.

My mean mother---
 When all the other kids went to public school
 I had to go to Catholic school.
 When they were hanging out after dark
 I had to be in the house when the street lights came on.

My mean mother---
 When the other kids were eating McDonalds, Burger King, subs, and pizza
 I had to cook my own food: rice, peas, and chicken.

My mean mother---
 When all the other girls were getting their hair permed and styled
 I had to have my hair in braids all the time.
 When all the other kids were watching BET, MTV, and VH1
 I had to watch PBS, CNN, or the news.

My mean mother---
 When all the other kids were singing lyrics to the songs they remembered,
 My mean mother made me memorize my times tables, words to poems, and how to count in Arabic.
 When everyone was listening to popular music, the Jay-Z, Snoop doggy dog, Dr. Dre, Puffy, Lil Wayne, and Naughty by Nature,
 I was listening to classical, opera or gospel music.
 When all the other kids were rocking the latest fashion, the Sean Jean, Roca Wear, Nike, Baby Phat, and Puma's,
 I was wearing hand me downs or stitching my own clothes together.

My mean mother---
 When all the girls had boyfriends
 She got me a tutor.

And on Sundays when all the other kids were watching wrestling or chillin on the stoop
 I was in church singing hymns from dawn to dusk singing
 A---aa-a-men, amen and hallelujah!
 I have a mean mother.
 But you know what?
 I want to thank my mean mother
 For making me a strong black woman!

Shakir Thaice '09

Dolor / Callous

I have known the inescapable unrest of sedans
Sweet at the onset, callous as the days progress on
All the frustration in transmissions, donuts, and air filters
Abandoning me unknowingly tireless rimless
Roadside, lopsided, oil? Hole in the tire, triple A?
The uncontrollable damage, she'd broken, never ending
Dwindling; my Blueberry. Gas station Betty.
Nonstop occurrences of dents and rust
Though I have seen hope in this depressing battle,
Future days come, sooner, more dangerous than expected.

Elana Vellucci



Karina Carmona '10
First Snowflakes, Photograph

The Apartment

Catherine shuffled her feet across the cold tiles of the bathroom floor. It was almost six in the morning and the smell of the new apartment was nauseating. New York really is the city that never sleeps. Sirens and car horns blared outside and the noises of another busy work day filled the small bathroom so that she was forced to shut the window.

At 7:20 Catherine had to be out the door to catch the bus for school. It was the start of her second year of medical school and the summer had treated her well. Her roommate was forced to quit medical school due to family illness and she searched out another roommate to split the high rent. With the summer drawing to an end, Catherine unhappily took on a studio apartment by herself. The price was decent.

She leaned over the ceramic tub and twisted the metal knobs until hot water poured into the drain and steam circulated the small room, and she hopped into the shower with her morning routine time dwindling down.

Downtown Brooklyn was frosted over with a dew from the start of the changing seasons as Catherine slugged her large book bag over her shoulder and made the half a mile trudge through the city streets to the bus station.

Why couldn't she afford to live closer to school? The cold weather was drawing nearer and the walk to the bus stop surely would do her in.

"Nellie, you look glum this morning," budded Holly as they both reached the bus stop simultaneously. Holly was also a second year and she lived a block from Catherine. Her spacious building housed many of the medical students, but Catherine was not able to afford or find a room in the luxury apartment complex.

Looking at the building in jealousy, Catherine felt her phone vibrate in her book bag. "Just a second, Holly, I have to get this," she proclaimed as she ferociously fished through her packed book bag. It was Luke, Catherine's boyfriend of three years. They had met in their junior year of college and started dating toward the end of senior year.

"Hello?" she questioned; it was too early for Luke to be calling. He was a big shot with a great job on Wall Street. He was very successful after college and she was hoping he would let her move in with him soon, especially because her apartment was so dreadful. It was her dream to live in his fabulous apartment.

"Hi Catherine, sorry to be calling so early. I just wanted to know your plans for tonight. I was hoping you could come over because I have something I want to talk to you about." She could feel little butterflies in her stomach. Was this it? Could he finally be asking me to take the next step and move into his apartment? "Yah, I will catch up with you after class," she replied after a short pause. She disregarded the monotone voice that Luke was using. He often was stressed at work and she figured it was probably just another hectic day at the office for him.

Catherine hung up the phone and looked at Holly. "This is it; he is finally going to ask me to move in. Do you know anyone who is looking for an apartment?" she said slyly with a grin as the bus pulled up to the stop.

Catherine did not let her own hectic day ruin her happiness. Even Professor White could not pull her down when he caught her off guard to answer a tricky question. When five o'clock rolled around, Catherine and Holly grabbed their bags and headed for the door.

"Catherine, I hope the news isn't too mind blowing with Luke tonight." Holly was patting her on the back.

"Mind blowing?" Catherine thought that was a weird choice of words. To her, it

seemed as though Holly and Luke always had a distance between them when they went to parties or out for drinks. "She just has to be so jealous of me," again she thought to herself, giving Holly a piercing look over.

They said goodbye to one another as Catherine made her way to catch the train for the twenty-five minute ride to midtown.

At Luke's place, the usually noisy apartment building was a dull silence. Usually when Catherine and Luke got free time to see one another it was when Luke and his roommates were throwing dinner parties for all of their uptown friends. The fun atmosphere of the city always intrigued her as she thought of how she was ever going to move her things into the apartment.

Catherine gave Luke a warm hug, but her illuminating smile gave Luke an uneasy feeling. She reached for take out menus that were piled on the counter of the kitchen. "What shall I cook for dinner?" she questioned sarcastically as she held up the menu for *China Cuisine*.

"So Luke, what do you have to ask me?" Catherine nudged and smiled playfully at Luke, remembering their phone call earlier.

"Ask you? I don't know what you are talking about. I don't have something to ask you. I said I wanted to talk to you about something," Luke said annoyed.

For a moment, Catherine paused and stared blankly ahead. This wasn't the first time that she would get her words jumbled and be hoping for something. Last spring Luke had to go on a business trip to California, and when he had mentioned his little vacation, she told her friends she was headed on a surprise vacation paid for by Luke's company.

"Oh, what about?" Catherine replied still riffling through the menus. She had a light lunch in all her excitement from the day and the hunger pains were just starting to hit.

"I think we should start to see other people, just temporarily, or casually," Luke muttered nervously as he looked down at his hands, fiddling with his thumbs. He had to get his feelings off his chest. Though he was being blunt about the matter, he felt he could not find a way to say what he was feeling any other way.

"Stop fooling, Luke. I know why you really wanted me to come over tonight. You really wanted to ask me to," Catherine froze when she met Luke's glare.

"I, I have to go," Catherine barely whimpered out. She frantically grabbed for her shoes and bag and ran to the door. She flung it open and was outside so fast it seemed as if time had stood still. Catherine stood by the side of the apartment building and wondered where she had gone wrong. "This can't be happening," she gasped as she tried to catch her breath. She started to walk for the train station when her phone began to vibrate. It was Holly. Catherine was not ready to tell her the devastation that she felt.

"Holly, hi," she stammered out.

"Catherine, I am sorry it had to happen this way."

"What? What are you talking about, Holly?" questioned Catherine, but the other end of the phone was already dead.

Catherine felt her stomach churn inside her as she hung up the phone in slow motion. As Catherine finally reached the train station, Holly was just reaching the door of Luke's apartment.

Meghan Arington '10

Fear

John stared at the rope. He knew he had to do it – but, at the same time, he knew he couldn't.

"Come on! The rest of us are waiting, ya know," yelled Max, the class bully – that stupid kid who had been bothering him since elementary school. Here they were, almost in high school, and Max still hadn't grown up.

John's knees trembled. His palms were covered in sweat. He felt like he couldn't breathe. John looked up at the clock and saw that there were still fifteen minutes left in the period. He took a huge gulp, closed his eyes, and reached for the rope—

—Just as the fire alarm went off. The students lined up to evacuate the building, just as they had done since first grade.

John could not believe his luck! How was it that every time he was supposed to climb that damn rope, he somehow got out of it?

Later, on his walk home, John thought of how he was going to "tackle the beast" tomorrow. Would he really have to climb it? His heart started racing at the thought of it.

"How was your day, Johnny?" his mom asked.

"Fine." He walked straight up to his room.

When John was alone in his room, he tried to think of ways to get out of gym class. He knew that what he really needed was to conquer his fear, but that was easier said than done. He couldn't tell his mom that he was still having this problem because she didn't think it still was a problem. And, the school nurse wouldn't bail him out anymore.

Whenever John felt hopeless like this, it always brought him back to the accident. He remembered that day. The last day his father went off to work. His dad was just going to fix a roof, like he did every day. Except, that day was different. Instead, that day, his father fell off the roof. Now, his dad lies in a coma, and probably will be in a coma for the rest of his life.

John wished he could talk to someone. Really, he just wished his dad were there. He knew that his dad would have the answers.

"Johnny," his mom called, "what would you like for dinner?"

"I'm not hungry, Mom," he yelled back. John kind of wanted to eat, but he didn't feel like facing another dinner with his mom, both of them not knowing what to say.

Sitting and thinking, John realized he needed to do something. His plan involved hurting himself – not like suicide or anything – but to break his arm or something. A way out of gym class was all John needed. John knew if you took band or chorus, you got out of gym, but he wasn't into music or singing or anything. So, he would have to have an injury. An injury was the only way for him to escape climbing the rope. Who was he kidding? He couldn't hurt himself.

I'll just have to climb the rope, John realized. Late in the night, John snuck out the bedroom window. He would have used the door, but it had an awful creak. And Buster, his big German shepherd, would have woken up. So, John went out the window, landing on the grass. Walking to school, John realized he had no way of getting home. He thought about turning around, but realized it would be pointless. So, he just continued to walk.

John walked past the Catholic church where they used to go to Mass on Sundays. It seemed odd to him that they stopped going to church after his father's accident. John wondered what the church was like when it was empty, and was tempted to find out if the rumors of it being haunted were true. He walked past the barber where he always got his haircut. John thought, "I never noticed how the empty chairs create such strange shadows on the tiled floor." Next, he passed the playground, which looked creepy with no kids running around and playing games

with one another. John stopped in front of the fire station and thought about the men who came the day his father fell. John passed the daycare center, and the library. He vowed that he would stop at the library tomorrow after school and get a book, realizing he couldn't remember the last time he went inside the library.

John started to shake when he reached the school. He was having a hard time breathing and thought he was going to choke. He imagined dying, right here right now, in front of the school – and no one would know until they all showed up for class tomorrow. How sorry everyone would feel for him, that they pressured him into climbing the rope so soon after his father's accident.

John remembered that the janitor's door was always left unlocked. He walked around to the side of the building to the janitor's entrance. Sure enough, the door was unlocked. Johnny was easily able to sneak inside the building.

He was tempted to go into a teacher's classroom and make a mess of things – turn all the desks upside down, write mean things all over the blackboard, and throw papers around. But that wasn't why he was at the school in the night.

John came to the school to be alone. He thought maybe if he were the only one with the rope, he might not be so afraid to climb. Although, that could be a disaster – if he fell, there would be no one to call an ambulance. But, he tried not to think about that.

John began walking to the gym. It felt very weird to be in this big building by himself, and he suddenly realized how quiet it was. John took a big breath when he reached the gym door. He walked in, going slowly toward the rope. John suddenly realized that he had all the time in the world and wouldn't have to worry about Max giving him a hard time, or the other kids taunting him to hurry up.

John looked the rope up and down. He sighed and realized now was the time. He took a deep breath, and grabbed the rope. As he did, the memories of his dad's accident came flooding back: how he got called out of class; how his mom wouldn't let him see his dad in the hospital "because he doesn't look like himself"; how everyone at school looked at him differently for a few weeks; how the school psychologist tried to get him to talk about it. John knew that he had all the time in the world, but he just wanted to climb the rope and conquer his fear.

He thought about what his dad would say. John could hear his dad's voice in his head, "Just take your time, John." John's dad always called him John, unlike his mom who still called him Johnny. "Don't think about it, just go ahead – whenever you're ready."

Corinne Montalvo '11



Ifeoma Onuorah '10
Serenity, Acrylic on canvas

Colophon

Hemetera is a student submitted, judged, and published literary and fine arts journal of Regis College.

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