

The Mirror



Twelfth Edition
Spring 2018

Foreword from the Editor-in-Chief

On March 14th, thousands of high school and college students walked out of class to protest gun violence in the United States. At St. Francis High School, we showed our solidarity with the victims at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida with a prayer service.

Some called the prayer service healing and necessary. Others said it wasn't enough.

And so conflict was born.

While we may disagree on the best way to terminate the violence, recognizing that we are all on the same side--the side of life and peace--is the first step to mending the tears between us.

Conflict may have arrived on St. Francis's campus, but we get to decide whether it stays.

In this edition, our writers and artists explore conflict from many perspectives, not just from behind the lens of a school protest or a single political issue. They portray the struggle of being pulled in multiple directions and the search for harmony in chaos.

~Kate Fernandez

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Calling all poets!

The Mirror (St. Francis's literary magazine) is hosting a poetry contest with CASH PRIZES!

First Place: \$30 + publication

Second Place: \$20 + publication

Third Place: \$10 + publication

To submit your poem:

- Go to Turnitin.com and log in using your St. Francis email.
- Select the tab "Enroll in a Class."
- The ID is 17246584, and the enrollment key is "metaphor."
- Click on the class name to submit your poem!

Remember: Your poem cannot exceed 50 lines in length and must be unpublished.

Entries will be judged blindly by a panel made up of St. Francis students and teachers based on creative use of language, originality, and impact on the reader.

Submission Deadline: April 11, 2018

Wild

Alyssa Appel

One blazing fire.
Furiously battling another.

Two burning desires;
Insatiable in nature.

Three important parts:
Beginning, middle, and end.

Four stars watching
Since end, from start.

Five dying songs
Of a history long gone.

Six terrible happenings
End the fight in dawn.

Seven splendid sunsets.
Pain ends by one bloodless promise.

The Girl With The Satin Hair

Natalia Edgar

There is darkness all around. But I am not scared. I hear her tender whispers in the dark, the sweet sound of her feminine voice surrounding me like a Valentine's Day poem. I smell her presence like fresh gardenias in the April drizzle. I feel her unshaved knee against my thigh and know that she will be by my side forever. Britney is beautiful. She has fine hair as smooth and thin as silk thread. She has kind and strong eyes that smile at me. Her eyes tell me she is also a fighter. And her lips--she has that one prominent scar on her bottom lip. Where did it come from? I do not know, but I know she has been through a lot. She is thin but well fed and is so fashionable I swear sometimes I forget she is not a model. I lay awake at night with her, and we talk about our dreams and aspirations. She is a fine teacher. I watch her teach her students. She is a teacher to them, but someone completely different to me. We stay awake for hours, baring our souls to one another like we are on an episode of Dr. Phil. I say, Britney, please do not ever leave me. I say, Britney, I love you more than anyone else. I can see her crooked grin through the darkness, the way that tiny scar spreads, the way her golden cheeks glow, and I know she feels the same. Sometimes, we talk about hard and dark subjects such as death and divorce. I know she can handle it. She has handled more than anyone I know. She gets attention from everyone. She doesn't want attention or fame, but she is so kind people just cannot help it. All the boys also notice her pretty grin, and the way God's light shines through her fragile candle body. She has already found a boy though. One that I know

treats her well. One that loves me as well. She says someday they will be married. I cry to think she will get married, because the day she says “I do,” she will no longer be entirely mine, but Benjamin’s too. She will look perfect in white, holding a pink bouquet of tulips, her favorite flower, that trademark satin hair pinned up neatly in a perfect updo that she did herself. And I will cry and cry. I will cry because I know she will love him, because I know she will care for him. However, those transparent tears, they will not be of despair. I will laugh tears of joy, because I know she will never forget me. I will cry because I will realize the moment she is gone, how lucky I am to have a sister like her.



Echo
Victoria Cimino

The Day I Heard The Trees Explode

Noelle Oliver

Simple mornings in the woods start just that -- simply.

If you listen, you'll prominently discover such, that it is not quite silent, as nothing is. You will hear things, all of them completely dependent on everything around them. You hear the birds singing their own songs, in different tones creative and new, a praise that they will live to see another day. You hear, to the north, the wild dogs run and play, kicking up snow behind them as they go. If there had been such silence, to leave you to your thoughts. Danger, danger, danger. One side says she loves you, the other contradicts. She had hated this, hated you. The skeletons in your closet. The things you hadn't told her. Should you have? About your past? You're dead on your feet. You've been there, freezing for years, the tear tracks down your cheek. Your world was big and beautiful, too! But now it's small. Ugly. Lonely. You ignore it, you promised to untie your noose. You didn't, instead refused to use it, a symbol of the life that had "passed." The lies you told, the truth unfold, a fire ring to burn the stakes down. Her words, the truth, condemn you as they echo through your head. "Run, run, cherry gun, Fire, fire away. Screaming cries, in mercy dies," she said to you that day. A silent scream escapes your past as the silence kills your foes. That day you tried to die again, it stopped, a bounty of rigor, tick tick tick tick boom. The silence died, your killing hour, when you heard the trees explode.



Wings
Kate Fernandez

Terrapin Wings

Anneke Zegers

Have you ever seen the way a turtle swims? You probably have, but most people don't think about it that much. They see a turtle struggling to move its fat body through the water, kicking its feet wildly. But look a little closer, and maybe you will see it. Maybe you will too see the wings that I see. If you don't, I don't blame you. I didn't see them at first either. But for a few years now, I can't help but love watching the way turtles glide through the water. Yes, they struggle and kick their legs furiously, flailing their arms about, pushing against the force of the water. But they move, don't they? They move, regardless of how hard it is to do it. They may struggle, but they are succeeding, even if it is hard. They fly.

Once I came to this realization, I was finally able to appreciate the wings of the turtles. As I watched their arms and legs at work, I began to see the wings on their backs, the invisible wings. And oh, how beautiful those wings were! Beating back the water in wispy trails of bubbles, glistening a silvery sheen in the sunlight. What marvelous wings the turtles had!

The first time I pointed it out to someone was at a pet shop. I had been waiting by the turtle tank for about twenty minutes while my family went searching for a new cat bed. My sister, Moira, came back first, so I told her about the turtle wings. I pointed to the turtles in the tank, willing her to see them too. She just laughed and laughed at me. Since then, I haven't told many people about the wings. Those I have told did the same thing.

I don't know, maybe I am hallucinating. That's what my therapist says at least. She reminds me every time I mention it that turtles don't have wings. They are sea creatures. They don't fly; they swim, so they don't need wings. One week, she brought in a picture of a terrapin and asked me if I saw wings on it. I said no. That seemed to satisfy her, but I never told her the truth. Pictures of turtles don't have wings; only the real turtles do. They say that a picture is worth a thousand words, but the real thing is worth infinitely more. Turtles do have wings; I am sure of it.

I only have one friend right now, and her name is Lily. Lily doesn't talk that much since she was abused by her parents and had to be put into foster care. I guess she was bullied by the other kids when she was young, or something like that, for her parents being drunk all the time, so she doesn't like to talk to many people her age. I don't like to talk to kids my age either, so we usually spend time not talking together.

Well, in one of the rare instances that I was talking, I ended up telling Lily about the turtle wings. She didn't laugh, thank God, or I probably would have started crying. Instead, she asked me something I had never thought about. She asked, "Why does it matter so much to you that turtles have wings? They are just turtles." Lily is pretty smart, much smarter than I am. She definitely knows how to ask the right questions. Why did the turtle wings matter so much to me? Why did I have to prove to the whole world that turtles had wings?

I have read a lot of books about turtles. I learned about their migration patterns, and dietary needs, and how they bury their eggs under the sand on the beach, but none of the books ever talked about flying turtles. The anatomy sections mentioned their shell

structure and limbs and ligaments, but there was nothing about wings.

It doesn't seem fair to me. Why can't turtles fly? Birds can fly, so why can't turtles? Why did God, or nature, or whatever force dominates the universe, give some creatures the ability to soar while others are only allowed to swim? Where is the equality in that? It seems to me that if what they teach us in school is true, that all people are equal, then we should all have equal opportunity or dignity. If one person, by some random chance, has the opportunity to succeed, why can't others at least be given the same chance? Wait, I am not talking about people. I am talking about animals. Not people. Sorry, I am getting off topic. I do that sometimes.

Back to what I was saying. My therapist thinks that I hallucinate when I see wings on the backs of turtles. She wants me to see things the "normal" way, the way that the rest of the world sees it. But try as I might, I can't stop seeing wings. I guess that, as much as I think that I want to be normal, I really don't. I like the way turtles look with wings. I think they would look really ugly and plain without them. Besides, if the world looks better the way I see it, why can't I see it that way, even if it is wrong? Shouldn't I be happy? Shouldn't the turtles be given the chance to fly? Why must the birds dominate the world and tower over the turtles? I say that the turtles should fight back.

Or maybe the turtles do have wings! Maybe the world is seeing it wrong, and I am the only one seeing it right! What about that? What if the birds have been lying to the turtles all this time? What if those who could fly convinced those on the bottom that they didn't have wings, even though they did? What if they told the turtles for so long "You can't do it," so that they actually started to be-

lieve that? What if all creation, believing that the turtles don't have wings, simply has chosen not to see them, and chosen to ignore the raw potential and power hidden by our blindness to acknowledge other's strength? So maybe turtles do have wings, but we can't see them, because we like to see them as weak and insignificant, and they have been treated that way for so long that that is all they have become, weak and insignificant.

Maybe that doesn't make sense. It sort of does to me, but I have always had a hard time explaining my thoughts to people. No one really ever seems to get what I am saying. They all think that I am stupid or confused. It's hard to be alone. It's hard to be flightless and powerless and watch everyone else succeed while I can't even bear to raise my voice. I'm not sure you understand. No one does, after all.

Well, except perhaps the turtles.

Born By Flames

Sofia Schumaker

No matter how many times I looked at her, she'd never felt like family. She'd always felt like the single pounding of my heart. But never family.

When Will and I would play in the Vault's halls and intricate chambers, she'd never step foot outside the nest. Instead her eyes, black and green, bore into the rock we called home which made up the walls of our small bungalow. This time was different, though.

I crouched underneath our table and bent my head to peek from underneath the rose colored tablecloth papa had picked out a few days before.

My eyes stayed locked on Naya. She was like a painting that went terribly wrong. Somehow, something so pretty had been caught in the chaos that lived underground, when really it appeared she belonged up above. That's where the beautiful people lived.

She sat against the solid rock that crept up the caves of the Vault. Her perfectly white skin mixed with blotches of dirt from the Vault's floors, and an eternal frown spread across a perfectly carved mouth. Her red hair absorbed the light from the torches, and like velvet it rode down the length of her shoulders and back with a glow that could blind. But this time, Papa stood next to her with a knife in his hand — and he appeared angry.

“Papa, don't.” Naya whimpered. Her hands rubbed up and down her hair like a final, parting goodbye. Meanwhile her gaze widened onto the knife in Papa's hand as he took another step forward. The light across it shimmered and caught my horrified eyes.

I didn't understand—what was he doing? He wouldn't hurt her, would he? But doubts blotched across my mind as he came closer to the terrified little girl in the corner, my sister.

“Naya, you knew it would happen. We've gone over this.” The large man that made up my father announced with a gruff huff. He grabbed one of Naya's hands and pulled her towards him with a strong arm, keeping the knife tightly palmed in his other hand.

A need to protect her blossomed in the pit of my stomach before it became impossible not to listen. I sucked in a cold breath of air and reached above the table to palm one of the hard glass plates, readying myself to race forward and save her. I wouldn't let my father harm her; and if that were the case, not without a fight.

Naya yanked her arm away from Papa's grip and fell back into the wall, hitting her head with a hard bang that sounded throughout our small chambers, shaking me to the bones.

Something squeezed in my chest like panic. Was she hurt? I kept a close eye on her as I slowly crawled out from my hidden spot. But she never noticed me. Instead her eyes filled with tears as she blew away at the pieces of red hair in her eyes. She looked up to Papa, and her body began to quake.

“But this—this is me, Papa! I don't want to. This is—”

“Oh? How do you think they'll treat 'this you'?” He shouted above her voice, causing me to stop in my footsteps.

“Do you think I want to? That I find satisfaction in it? I'm doing this for you. She brought you to me so I could protect you, not give you that life that ended hers!”

Everything in me froze. All of a sudden all I could feel was the beating of my own heart.

I went over his words, turning pale. When she brought you to me? A

pang went through my heart. What did he mean “she”?

I analyzed what it could have meant until the puzzle pieces in my mind slowly mended together. My stomach churned. It was so simple. But knowing the truth, it felt impossible. Naya and I weren't related. The pain in my chest grew, and yet it felt like I'd known long ago.

By the look on her face, Naya seemed to put it together as soon as I did.

“She?” She shivered and her eyes widened wide, shaking her head. “But... Y-you're not my father?”

Clenching his fists, Papa's eyes widened, seeming to catch his mistake. He shook his head with closed fists, palming the knife in his hand. “You're right, I'm not. Your mother gave you to me with the order for you to survive.” He cocked his head to the side, narrowing his eyes on the fallen little girl.

“I will do anything to keep you breathing, even if it kills me. Even this.” He splayed his hands, begging her to see the good in what he was doing.

Naya glanced to the ground and wiped away at her tears. She sniffed. “Did she... did she look like me.”

Papa paused and let out a large sigh, really looking at her. “You're almost identical,” he said, taking another step forward, as if he wouldn't let this faze him.

“Is she the one — the one you talk of in your dreams.” Naya said in a rush, eyeing the knife in his hand with caution. Papa's eyes widened, but before he could open his mouth she interrupted him again.

“You loved her, didn't you?” Naya said, clutching at the worn leather wrapped around her skinny frame.

The knife fell from Papa's hands with a large crash of metal. Silence filled across the room. Papa just stared back at my sister in tattered skins, meant as clothes, dumbfounded.

The plate in my hands began to shake from my shivering. Meanwhile I pleaded for my palms to stop sweating or the plate in my hands would slip away.

"What happened to her?" Naya suddenly asked.

But Papa didn't answer. Instead, coming out of his shock, he went to pick his knife off the floor. He grabbed Naya, who let out a gasp. She watched the knife in fear.

"Papa, I—" but it was too late.

A clump of beautiful red hair suddenly fell to the floor, and I watched unable to do anything as Papa cut off all her hair. The plate dropped from my hands, yet Papa never looked back. The realization came to me that he'd known I'd been there the whole time and had done nothing about it. He didn't even care.

"I won't allow you to breathe a word of your real name to anyone. Your name is now Everett. If you tell anyone you're a girl, you've announced their death sentence, because I will kill them all."

Papa spoke, deathly lethargic, and let her go.

She fell to her knees, clutching at what was left of her hair, and let out a soft whimper. "My hair—"

"It no longer matters," Papa harshly interrupted. "Your old self no longer exists! Naya is dead, gone. Understand?" He shouted. "You are now Everett, my second youngest son who will follow in your older brother's footsteps and become a scavenger." He paused.

"Women are useless here. I'm giving you a chance."

Naya let out a sob.

Unable to hold back any longer, I rushed forward and fell to

my knees beside her. I enveloped her in my embrace and turned to my father with a scowl. Naya's back stiffened at my touch, then shook, turning into soft sobs.

"Papa, what did you do!" I shouted, narrowing my eyes on the knife he fisted.

Papa growled. "Stay out of issues that don't involve you, boy. This is between your sister and me."

Unable to control my anger, I smacked at the hand that slowly advanced towards me, my father's large scarred hand. I lifted my head and narrowed my eyes at him. The one that sent all the Vault kids running.

"But she isn't, is she?" I ground out. "You've lied to us our whole lives! I won't let you touch her." As I wrapped my arms around her shaking ones, she stiffened again — but I didn't know why.

Papa's face tightened, his eyes narrowed on mine before shifting to Naya's shuddering form. He clenched his jaw.

"Little do you know now, little girl, that I'm protecting you. And understand the consequences if you don't listen."

"Shut up!" I shouted with widened eyes. "Wh-why are you doing this to her?"

"You don't have a single clue how they treat women here, do you? that's why I'm doing this" Papa growled. He paused before saying, "I'm doing this for her own good." He shook his head and turned away, walking out of the cramped room in utter silence.

I glanced down to Naya who rested beneath me. She'd stopped crying.

I spun her short red curls between my fingers. Uncertainty of what to do rose in my chest, before I whispered, "Are you alright?"

She moved, glancing up at me. I was met by her swollen wet eyes and a forced smile that sent chills down my spine. One chill made her upper lip quiver; and both eyes, one black, one gold, both twitched before two more tears ran down the lengths of her cheeks.

“There was nothing I could do. M-my hair, it’s all gone.”

She glanced down to look at her fallen, beautiful locks but I wouldn’t let her. I grabbed her chin until her eyes rested on mine.

“You’re strong.” I mumbled, looking into those gorgeous set of eyes.

“I’m strong.” She repeated.



Don't Make A Scene
Lia French

Gravity

Emerson Goebels

The sunlight casts an eerie glow,
Upon his features, soft and slow.
The golden flecks blaze in his eyes,
And spark a fire to hide his cries.

Thought he was completely broken,
His voice unheard, and his words unspoken.
He was ripped and torn at the seams,
His head full of frightening dreams.

And like a gentle autumn rain,
She erased his undying pain.
Then she took his hand in her grasp,
Hopelessly to her did he clasp.

Hair red as fields of grass on fire,
Staring at her, he did admire;
Admired the way her eyes were green,
Green as the trees they stood between.

He learned that love could conquer all,
Any obstacle, big or small.
Gravity could not pull them apart,
As there is no anchor for the heart.

