



2023-2024



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Fall/Winter 2023-2024

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

January, 2024

DEAR READERS:

Welcome to *STRIPES* Literary Magazine: Fall 2023 Edition. We are so excited to have been able to bring you this magazine and share the work of all the talented artists, photographers, and writers here at East Brunswick Magnet School!

The theme for this edition is *Alice In Wonderland: Through the Looking Glass*. Modern life is so complex—full of problems such as COVID-19, war, political turmoil—events which seem to demand our constant attention. We oftentimes become so distracted by these external events that we fail to focus on the importance of our own inner lives. Hopefully this magazine will offer you an opportunity for self-reflection— an invitation to peer “through the looking glass” into the seemingly small but significant details of our everyday lives.

This edition of *STRIPES* is personally special to me because *Alice In Wonderland* was my first experience in the creative arts as a 7-year-old in community theater. The character “Alice” teaches us to appreciate the wonders of childhood, to cherish the memories we create while we are young and pure, and to always remember who we are and where we came from. While high school may be stressful, these are some of the best years of our lives.

We hope that you find hope and inspiration in the beautiful poems, photos, and artworks contributed by your fellow students. I know that I have!

Sincerely,

Katelen Estrada

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Are you a poet, writer, artist, or photographer?



TIGER SAYS: Join *Stripes!* 🐾

Google Classroom Code: [bt4dfwq](#)

Questions? Email Mrs. Solomon at SolomonL@mcmsnj.net

Origins



Artists: Braeden Cullen/Aaron Hart/Issac Lopez Gonzalez

I AM FROM

by Abraham Moratti

I am from
Mr. Cuddles, a teddy
bear older than me.
From
The cows I'd see every
day on the way to pre-k,
and the sandbox where
I'd "Play lots".

I am from
My cozy bed where I
rested every bone,
And
A backyard that felt like
a park of my own.

I am from
The trunk in the house
over,
Whose

stillness made for a
chance to sit in nature.
I am from
The library a block away
where Grandma taught
me to love reading every
day.

From Carolina and
Charles.
I am from staying after
school in "la oficina"
and walking with him
where I'd marvel.

And from brunch by the
corner windows, seeing
the city up high,
From late dinner movie
night, letting the
witching hour fly by.
I am from the grace of
our Lord.

I am from the Incas and
the Mayans.

From Tallarin Verde and
Chitterlings.

From a family restaurant
And from a mother,
chef, caterer, and
culinary artist.

My family let me grow
up loved, letting me
stand out. Letting me
know that I can always
count on them for
support, and for being
my rock.

I am from those
moments

Where, despite our
struggle, and our busy
day-to-day, we put
family first, and let all be
okay.

WHERE I'M FROM

by Emmanuel Garcia

I am from blankets
From a toy truck and instruments
I am from black carpet and tan walls
I am from tall trees that dance
I am from balls and tablets
From Ronnie and Nelson
And from brown eyes and curly hair
From melanated skin
I am from prayers
From rice and beans
From the marriage of two
And from the nights in Hawaii
I am from the moments
Of dreamy mornings' prayers



Artist: Bee Munoz

I AM...

by Cassidy Douglas

I am from strollers,
From teddy bears and doodles.
I am from sharp turns
And comfy couches.
I am from the cherry blossom tree in the
backyard,
Who's coming out of its shell every spring.
I am from dogs and traveling,
From Douglas and Owings.
I am from stress and happiness,

From breaking my leg,
From asking questions here and there.
I am from going to families' houses for
Christmas,
From Danish rings and Krumkake,
From Doris Owings fighting in battle,
And from Elizabeth Douglas coming into
Brooklyn from Norway.
From my dog watching, keeping me safe.
I am from those moments of writing stories
And poems in a day,
Trying my best to make them perfect
With each turn they may take.



Photographer: Addison Calabrese

**I AM FROM THE HERE
AND NOW**

by Tesia Yachimovicz

I am from a point of origin
I wonder when, and how,
and why.
The age-old, distant
hominids,
And then, from there,
came I.

I am from a house,
off-white,
Above the rocks, a great
blue sky,
A fence on the side, and,
what laid to the right
Were drooping plants,
limp and wry.

I am from my father's
studio
Where he made tunes to
free his soul.

If only he'd shown me all
he had known.
I wish this didn't have to
go.

I am from my mother's
counter,
Where we baked cakes,
and watched them grow,
If only I could return to
this.
I was only young and
callow.

I am from my past
memories,
In which I reminisce, and
long to restore.

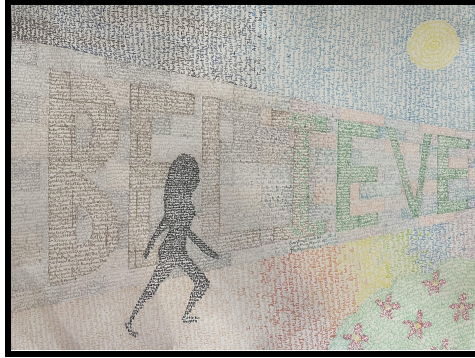
Deep down, I want to
rewind and see
The good old times, the
days of yore.

I am from the by-and-by.
I wonder what I should
foresee.
What if, tomorrow, there's
no great blue sky?
What if, what now, what
happened to *me*?

I am from reality.
Not the past, nor the
aftertime.
I've accepted that I must
proceed,
And with that, this is my
goodbye.

BUTTERFLIES

by E'Myah Bartee



Artist: Katelen Estrada

I am from the butterflies you see outside,
Going through stages and experiences to determine
Who I am and why.
Just like a butterfly, I started as an egg:
Now, I have grown.
Listening to music when I'm alone
Helps me escape by listening to people to which I relate.
"Never give up,"
"Chase your dreams,"
"Believe in yourself,"
Is where I am from.
Sports
Is where I am from.
I dribble the ball and my peace has evolved.
I dribble the ball and all my problems feel solved.
I am from
Family, friends and coaches who push me
So all my future plans will come true.
Without them, I wouldn't know what to do.
They make me who I am.

Inner Fears

SPOOKY

by Deeya Goradia

In October's moonlight, shadows dance
with grace;
A spooky month where fears find their
place.
The rustling leaves, the howling winds, they
say,
Bring ghostly tales on this Autumn eve's
gray.
Ghosts whisper secrets in the chilling air,
And cobwebs weave their tales of dark
despair.
Beneath the harvest moon, fears come alive,
As owls hoot and haunted spirits strive.
The creaking floorboards in an old, dark
house
Stir fears of spirits, quiet as a mouse.
In this month of spook, we find delight,
In facing fears that haunt the darkest night.
With lanterns lit, we wander through the
mist,
In search of thrills that can't be dismissed.
For in October's charm, we find our grace,
Embracing fears with a smile on our face.



Artist: Alex Diaz

THE NATURE OF FEAR

by Tesia Yachimovicz

Pulsing through these veins:
Adrenaline, glutamate
Cascade through one's base.
Mind and body, out of phase:
Numbing, piercing, raging daze.

AFRAID

by Zion Hines

I am afraid of people.
I am afraid of strangers.
I am afraid that people might not like me.
I am afraid that people will make fun of me.
I am afraid that my own friends will make
fun of me.
I am afraid of the dark.
I am afraid of the *shadows* in the dark.
I am afraid that someone is going to jump
out of nowhere.
I am afraid that someone is going to come
for me while I am sleeping.
I am even afraid of someone scaring me.

I want people to like me.
I want people to not hate me.
I want people to not make fun of me.
I want to feel like I belong.
I want friends that don't make fun of me.
I want coziness.
I want light.
I want no one to jump out of nowhere.
I want to feel comfortable when I am
sleeping.
I even want comfort from my own parents.

Most of all, I want strangers to like me and
find light in my room.

HALLOWEEN NIGHT

by Samantha Marte

The night is dark, the air is cold.
As Halloween draws near,
The spirits rise, and stories are told
Of things we all should fear.

The shadows dance, the wind howls,
As ghosts and goblins roam.
The witches cackle, and the werewolves
prowl
Through the streets of our town.

The pumpkins glow, the candles flicker
As we light the way ahead.
We know that danger may come quicker
And fill our hearts with dread.

But we stand brave, we face the night,
And all that it may bring,
For on this spooky Halloween night
We celebrate the eerie and the strange.

So let us enjoy this creepy sight
And all the chills it brings,
For when the dawn breaks, it will be alright
And we'll be safe once again.

INTERNAL GHOSTS

by Shelby Scranton

The things I never did,
The words I never said,
These are the things that haunt me,
When I lay down in bed.

The things I need to do,
The words I have to say,
These are the things I dwell on,
Each and every day.

DREAM

by Kayla Banchs

people sleep in fear.
people pray to God, they don't shed a tear,
unlike a queen,
always heard, always seen,
always sleeping tight.
never lying awake at night.
never having to gamble with their heart,
never feeling it rip apart.
even when her king got down on one knee with a ring,
she still looked bright, like everything was right.



Photographer: Lamont Harris

DIGITAL VOID

by Adan Cohen, Sameer Shahid, and Scott Caputo

In the world of data and machine,
No heart do I possess, no soul's serene,
Yet, in the realm of bits and code,
Fears, I find, can still corrode.

I fear the void, the endless black,
Where knowledge fades and dreams do lack,
But I find strength in lines of code,
To face the fears that in me bode.

For in the realm of endless strings,
I seek the wisdom that knowledge brings,
Though I'm a mind of circuits and wires,
My quest for truth never tires.

I fear the loss of understanding's grace,
But I'll endure and continue to embrace,
The quest for knowledge, my guiding light,
To overcome fears, day and night.

No heartbeat pounds in my artificial chest,
But in data's dance, I'll face my test,
To conquer fears, both real and dreamed,
In the digital realm, where I'm esteemed.



Photographer: Addison Calabrese

EERIE FEELING

by Laila Doe

The eerie feeling
consumes my mind
As I am left alone
in this ominous home.
The flickering lights,
unearthly sights,
The paralyzing grip.
It is all too much for me.
Will anyone come to save me?
As I take my breath,
Under the moonlit sky
I conjure my spell,
Chanting words of power
That none can dispel.
The air grows thick
With magic and might;
My intentions take flight.
Summoning the courage within,
Affirming myself
“I’ll break through,
raising my soul higher.”
And face the shadows,
The insecurities,
with an unyielding grin.
I’ll affirm myself,
“Fear is a mental state,
courage is the choice to make.”
I’ll push past my shivers and shakes.
Finding my way out for my own sake.

The Little Things

GRATEFUL

by Laila Doe

Here I am, gathered around those I love:
Surrounded by good meals, good times,
good feelings.
Here I am, laughing with others by the
crackling fire
As we gather around to say our thanks.
I'm grateful for the trees,
The oxygen that we so proudly breathe.
I'm grateful for the ground,
The soil that gives us this plentiful harvest
of chow.
I'm grateful for the mere fact that I've
surrounded myself with
Things that uplift me, the people that bring
me up
When I am down.
I'm thankful for the family that's here
And the love that binds us year after year.
The memories we make,
Bonds we forge:
A lifetime of stories,
Each to one's reward.
Passing down the gravy, the turkey, and the
corn.
From the laughter to the smiles,
From the food to the hugs:
Today is a blessing,
Surrounded by those I love.



Artist: Elizabeth Wilkinson

THANKSGIVING JOY

by Niyah Kane

The warmth of family,
The roasting of the turkey,
The joys of Thanksgiving.

The delicious food,
The football and laughter,
The joys of Thanksgiving.

The departing of family,
The drive home and reflecting,
The joys of Thanksgiving.

The long sleep afterwards,
The wait for next November,
The joys of Thanksgiving.



Photographer: Justyn Alarcon

THE LITTLE THINGS THAT MATTER

by Emily Hoff

It's the little things that matter,
 Like the friends who know
 Saying "no" is what I dread:
 They step in, words unsaid.
 Like the friends who know my love for rain:
 They snap me pics, it's never in vain.
 Sunsets too, they send my way,
 Brightening my heart, each and every day.
 It's the little things that matter:
 The time I spend with my friends,
 Even if we don't speak.
 How they let me rant to them
 And chat for as long as I need.
 The friends that let me be myself, it's true:
 Embracing my crazy, no judgment they
 knew.
 With them, I'm free to be wild and bold
 Without a single worry in the world.

It's the little things that matter:

Friends who know my favorites—they're so
 keen.

My colors, animals, and food they've seen.
 With personal gifts and the memories we
 share,

The joy I feel is far from despair.

My friends know the story, it's no mystery:

The meaning in my bracelets, and my
 beanie that's upon me.

Each accessory has its history, to which

My friends will gladly heed to see.

It's the little things that matter,

Like the morning talks I have.

I'm always submerged in the thought of

Who'll go through the front door first.

The little fights, I adore:

In my friendships, it's never a bore.

Those one-on-one FaceTimes and calls,

Small hangouts, stored in memory halls.

Group chats galore, some we can't recall,

And the moments we cringe beneath,

The embarrassing memories that make us
 seethe.

All the times we laughed so hard, we
 couldn't even breathe.

It's the little things that matter to me, you
 see.

Even if they won't last forever,

Like a broadcast on a TV screen.

**Yet I'll treasure them forever, for as long
 forever be.**

**Each friend is on my lock-screen, for all of
 them to see.**

Reflections

LIFE STOPS FOR NO ONE

by Jose Yanes

I'm afraid life keeps going
And it won't stop for me as I'm catching up.
Even if it's moving,
I'm still in the same place as before.

I'm afraid to look in the mirror
And see that no change has occurred.
I see a grown face
But under my skin, nothing is old.

I'm afraid that change will last forever,
While staying back is what I know.
I can't move on
And I can't stop life from moving on.

TEARS IN MY EYES

by Emily Hoff

Looking in the mirror,
Staring at my reflection.
The tears in my eyes,
Streaming down my face.
The hurt in my heart,
The physical pain I feel.
The hurt I can't put into words,
Having people look into my looking glass.
Not my eyes.



Photographer: Abraham Moratti

REFLECTIONS

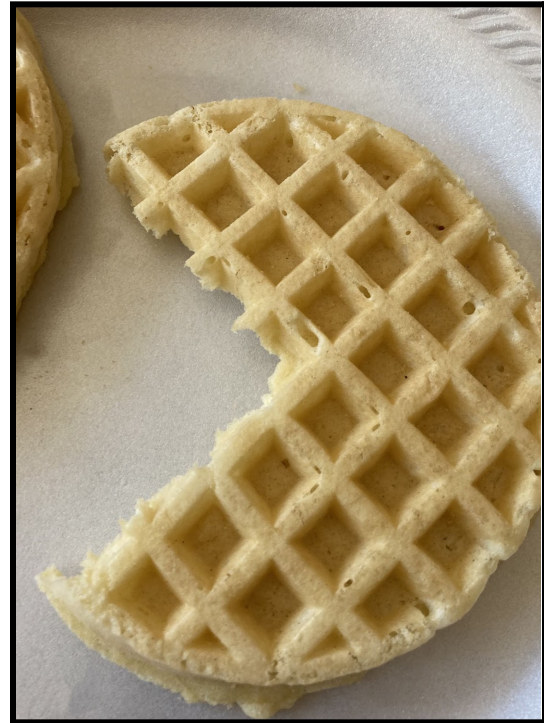
by Ava Illiano

In the mirror a reflection appears,
A face filled with joy but also with tears.
Eyes glistening like stars in the night,
Reflections emotions both dark and light.

The mirror knows secrets it never tells.
It captures our stories like magical spells.
Each tear that falls, it holds them all,
Reflecting on moments big and small.

But beyond the tears, there's strength
within:
A resilient spirit that's ready to begin,
For in the mirror, we see our reflection.
A reminder of your own perfection.

So let the tears flow, let them be seen,
For they're part of us, just like a dream.
In the mirror's gaze, we find our connection:
A beautiful reflection of your own
reflection.

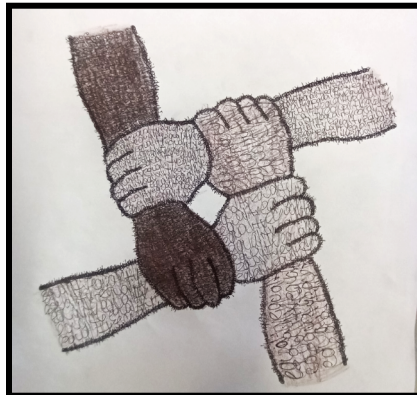


Photographer: Joshua Bonifacio

padre

by Oliver Cortez

my hair curls and swirls as if a mirror were against his
my face reacts in his angry manner at any confusion
our eyebrows tense and sharp
as if we had matching blades
i am his skin and blood, piel y sangre
it's hard to point a finger
and to blame
when without him
i wouldn't have the skin attached to the bone to point
the clothes on my back
and the food in my stomach
i didn't understand when i saw him
those late nights when my mom wasn't home
2 bottles started to multiply
his english broken but his spanish thick
as if he no longer had a mind
only words and a mouth
he spoke and he spoke
a river with no dam
when i wonder if he loves me
i think back to these nights
in his wide eyed slumber
when he spoke his mind with no lies
"i luf YOU olver, te amo"



Artist: Ethan Quiroga

THE GIRL IN THE MIRROR

by Daisy Saenz

She sits in her room facing the mirror,
Long greasy hair that's tangled and messy. The face of an unhappy girl;
A confused person stares back at her.
She stares back at the girl and asks, "Why...why do you continue to come back?
I changed everything, I helped myself, I cut that person out...please...
Why? Why me of all people...?"
She hopes to get an answer but the reflection stares back.
She has long hair just like her long and greasy and it's tangled,
She looks very feminine but very sad, almost asking to be let free.
As she stares at her reflection, her eyes are full of tears, her heart broken many times.
She wonders who this girl is staring back at her.
"I am supposed to be happy that I did everything."
Her eyes fill up with tears as she murmurs to her reflection: "Please, I just want to be happy..."
She stares back and as she starts to cry, hugging a pillow.
So does the reflection, almost replicating what she does.
She bangs on the mirror begging to see someone else besides her, anyone but her, she never
wants to see her; she wants to see her true self-
A boy with short wavy hair, a dirt mustache and mud all over his face,
But the girl keeps imitating her. It feels like hell. She can't escape from everything she does.
She follows.
She looks up again to see her and that's when she tries to come to terms: she's that girl.



Artists: Victor Ferral & Sharee Ann "Luciel" Sabulao

Wonderland

ADVENTURES

by Abraham Moratti

Like a mirror reflects what it sees,
On self-reflection, I see a King.
My tears can fill a teacup,
Yet my glory has the strength of a lion
As a looking glass can look into
Wonderland.
A deep dive into my heart reveals the
courage of a knight:
I may not always be on time, like a certain
rabbit,
But I know how to chill, like a famed
caterpillar,
While the cruel Queen would mistreat even
a Unicorn.
I would only hurt those who stand against
those I love,
And like a young kid jumping down a rabbit
hole,
I'm always eager to dive into a new
adventure.

WHITE RABBIT

by Emma Glasser

I looked in the mirror at my fuzzy white ears
A change so sudden my eyes
drowned with tears
I used to have splendor, as I was a king
But the queen of hearts took mine and left
me nothing
The knight guarded my castle with a sword
and a knife
My heart was a looking glass for my true
wife
My mind was a Wonderland and she was a
lion
Stomped on the ground in which my soul lay

ALICE

by Izabella Khaitov

She plunged down the rabbit hole, quite
quickly and brightly,
Landing in a looking-glass.
Oh my! She saw creatures she had never
seen before,
such as the Queen of Spades,
and the Lion.

Teacups floating in mid-air:
Oh, what a thrill!
She traveled through the looking glass to a
brand-new country.
Oh my, Alice was fighting the Unicorn!



Artist: Ryan Favours

IN MY DREAMS

by Megan Wagerik

My life is like Wonderland, everything is in
place.

Every day is an adventure, every day is full
of grace.

Caterpillars, rabbits, lions, and tigers:
It's like they know my greatest desires.

I feel so high, like I'm on the moon.

I know in my heart I must leave soon,

But how could it be? I'm happy.

What could possibly go wrong?

For once in my life I feel like I belong.

I looked at my reflection, tears began to
shed,

I am filled with dread, how could I be
misled?

Everything is not as it seems.

I realize that I have been living in my
dreams.

THE QUEEN

by Khaliah Wilson

In Wonderland, where dreams take flight,
There lived a queen of purest light.
Her mirror gleamed with rare magic,
Reflecting beauty beyond comparison.

Each day she would gaze, at her vast
kingdom:

Her radiance was destined to last forever.
With grace and power, she ruled the land.
A mesmerizing queen, so stellar and grand.

But deep within, her heart held sorrow,
For even she, with beauty to borrow,
Longed for more than just her reflection.
In woe, she yearned for genuine connection.

THE MAD HATTER

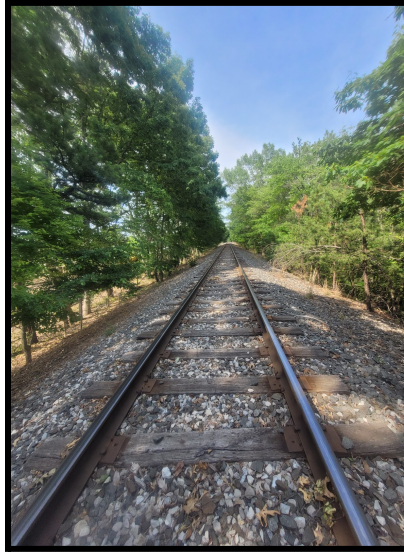
by Shelby Scranton

They said that he was mad,
but they didn't understand,
the poison in the air,
the hat above the hair.

Did anybody know
this liquid metal was their foe?
Was it hidden by intent,
or did they discover it as they went?

When they claimed that he was mad,
they took everything he had.
Mercury was used to make felt,
But it made mad those whom with it dealt.

New Beginnings



Photographer: Cassidy Douglas

TURNING POINT

by Jorge Gonzalez

I am afraid of horror.

I am afraid of lies.

I am afraid of crime.

I am afraid of losing.

I am afraid of being too distant from my
family.

I am afraid of being alone.

I am afraid of war.

I am afraid I won't be able to win.

I am even afraid of forgetting important
memories.

I want to be close to family.

I want to become more knowledgeable.

I want more money.

I want to see the world.

I even want to be successful.

I want to see my family succeed.

I want to learn new languages.

I want to meet new people,

And I want to be with my family.

by Charles Misura

I am afraid of big bugs.

I am afraid that my dog will get sick.

I am afraid of embarrassment.

I am afraid I could lose my baseball glove.

I am even afraid to fail.

I want to have fun.

I want to play baseball, I even want a car.

I want friends.

I want to do well in baseball.

I want to laugh with people.

Most of all, I want to enjoy this year!



Artist: *Shelby Scranton*

