



# ELAN

## 2023

**SAINT DOMINIC ACADEMY  
JERSEY CITY, NJ**

# 2023 STAFF

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Beatrice Crespo, "**Bee**", 2022

# FINDING MY WAY

The Z. Smith quote, “In the end, your past is not my past and your truth is not my truth and your solution - is not my solution,” serves as my reminder of the person I truly am—a strong, persistent, innovative, courageous, and authentic individual—as well as the person I strive to become. Throughout high school, I acquired the skills that allowed me to speak for myself, express my own thoughts, and be unique. At the beginning of my journey at Saint Dominic Academy, I was a shy girl who was constantly striving to emerge from other people’s shadows.

I had obstacles that I needed to overcome without requiring other people’s approval. One aspect of my identity that has emerged over the past few years is my passion for independence. I gained my voice through presentations, essays, leadership positions in clubs, soccer, and participating in mass. For instance, during freshman year, I would have never imagined myself as the President of the Stem Club and facilitating the meetings. At the present time, I utilize my own ideas without hiding behind someone else’s. My creativity and perseverance enable me to flourish into a distinct person setting my own goals and aspiring to achieve them. I have discovered that it is okay to think, act, and look differently.

Furthermore, I believe that everyone in this world has their own journey unlike anyone else’s. Therefore, I do not need to conceal myself any longer.

Written by **Gianna Servodio**

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"Chinatown" (London, 2023)



"The. Tube" (London, 2023)



"Chinatown 2" (London, 2023)

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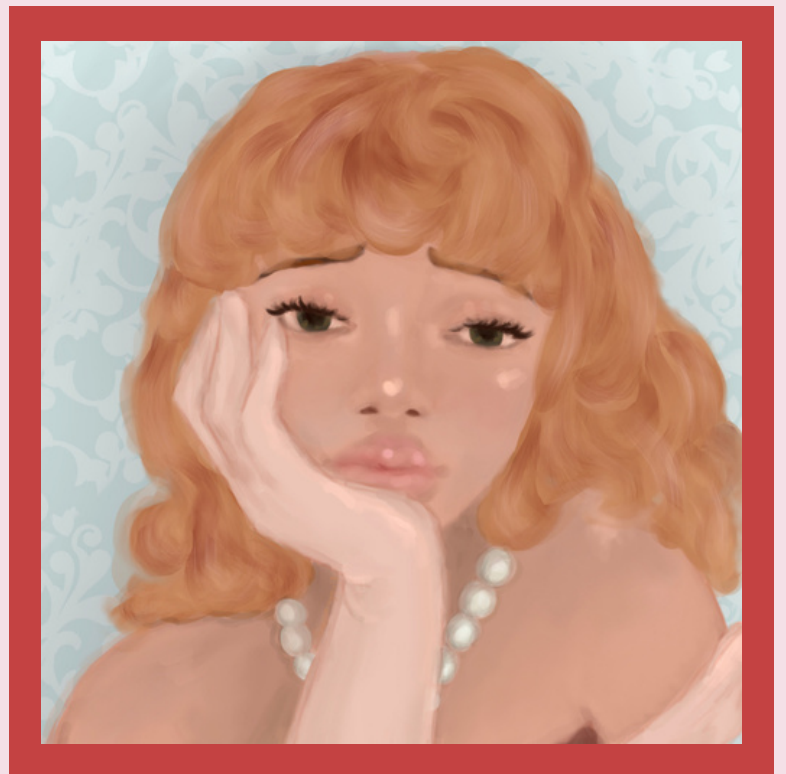
By Lainey Nguyen



Viviana Jimenez,  
**"watchu  
looking at"**

# Portraits, Portraits, Portraits!

Olivia Lewis,  
**"Girl with  
blond hair"**



# BROWN

Written by:  
Gaby Young

We made plans to bake together  
And for one day only,  
caramel and chocolate became the incense for the house

They opened the door and handed me  
Their left over iced coffee;  
We have never needed artificial energy  
Yet i still drank their left over iced coffee  
Because each time i wanted so desperately  
To taste the same thing that their lips touched.



It took a while to close the door,  
To finally lock out the burning sun rays  
That splayed behind them, creating a halo around their head, delicately kissing their skin  
-but the wood deserved a chance to feel the heat, too.

Baking cookies always fills the room and envelopes anyone with the most suffocating, yet welcoming presence

It was the most intimate feeling ever  
A moment that could never be put into words

Maybe it is selfish-  
The fact that the scent nor the food  
Was what we really craved  
But that thought was stuffed down  
Along with the cocoa butter cream  
That was caught wind of as they leaned in  
And the embrace burned.



Once again, we let ourselves be gripped by distractions  
Leading to words relating to eye color being thrown around  
Even though the sunset came fast,  
The light still hit their eyes  
And in that moment, it was if marmalade spilt all over the kitchen

We held each other close  
Brushing a thumb over five fingers  
Inhaling and not saying much else

Ding!

The timer went off, and we moved to turn it off  
Yet, they still slipped away from my grasp

And we chose to leave the room  
To finally sit in the spruce seats  
It was already over before anything was said  
After hearing the sounds of their shoes squeak  
And it still hurt to sit there and pretend it was not  
heard;  
Yet it was clear that it was done  
Upon hearing the floors creak  
Softly, below our feet

Now, it was the dim kitchen light that filled the  
room  
Comfortable silence joined us at the table  
-It was never much else than trying to taste our  
creation  
Then it finally hit: "I should leave soon."

Watching them walk away is the hardest part  
To get out of the chair we carved together

But whether our initials are there or not  
Shall never be their concern again.



## Photography by Espy Hak:

Photo 1- **"Reaching Out"** (Jersey City, 2020)

Photo 2- **"A New Start"** (Jersey City, 2020)

Photo 3- **"Still"** (Jersey City, 2020)

Photo 4- **"Snowing Days"** (Jersey City, 2020)

# painting with the dragon and the backpack



By Amanda Gallagher

# Self-Reflecting

## Anonymous submission

There was a creature that lived in an attic that it didn't come out of very often. In its free time, which it had a lot of, the creature would self-reflect. When it reflected, it always saw a hideous beast that could not be fixed or changed; a strange, helpless, deformed creature, destined to be a recluse in an attic its whole life. When it saw this reflection, it would weep and blame itself for being so deformed. But the mirror it used was a little dirty. So one day, the creature cleaned this mirror, unaware of how dirty it used to be. With the clean mirror, the creature was able to reflect more clearly. And when it saw its reflection, the creature realized that what was in the mirror was not really a creature. It was no animal at all. In fact, it was a girl whose body had been covered ubiquitously in rough scars, mistaken for deformities. Somehow, this mirror image was even harder to look at than before. Even though the creature— well, the girl— now knew she wasn't some hideous monster, the evidence of raw pain that the mirror displayed was so much more morbid than what she saw before. This reflection made her realize that she wasn't always like this. It made her realize that the scars made her into the creature she originally saw herself as. It made her realize that the whole world would see a creature instead of a girl that was just covered in scars.

She felt a pain that led her to believe that her wounds were reopening; but she was experiencing a different kind of pain: the pain of knowing that she was ever scarred. Her whole life, she always pretended that she wasn't damaged, without knowing she ever even pretended. She always used to blame herself for the monster in her reflection, but it was worse to her now to know that she could have been normal if she weren't ruined to begin with. It was easier to blame herself for being grotesque than it was to know she was broken before she was given the chance to be whole. It was a very overwhelming and painful revelation, and she weeped even harder than before.

So she decided not to reflect again; at least not with the same mirror. She hid the mirror away in a crevice in the attic. She would try to forget about the scars, because the mere knowledge of the scars was too painful to bear. She would continue to blame herself for being a monster, even though it wasn't exactly true. Maybe one day, she'd reflect and remember her scars all over again. Maybe one day, she'd look at the reflection, bear the pain of remembering, and move forward from her pain. Maybe one day, she'd leave her attic and find a doctor that could check out her scars. But for now, the creature will sit in its attic; quiet and reclusive, unfixable and unchangeable, hideous and grotesque, weeping and a creature.

# CHERRIES

Poem by Camila Rosario

## Cerezas

Caminaba  
No sentía los pies.  
Estaba libre  
tranquila  
como brisa de  
verano.  
El mundo blanco  
en paz  
nada mas que ella  
y su alma.  
Abrió sus ojos,  
vio su cuerpo  
cubierto de líquido  
color cereza.  
En el mundo real  
ya no tenía vida.



Jasmine Ibrahim, "Still Life"

## Cherries

She walked,  
her feet numb.  
She was free,  
calm,  
like a summer  
breeze.  
The world in white,  
at peace,  
nothing but her  
and her soul.  
Eyes cleared,  
she saw her body  
covered in liquid  
cherry-colored.  
In the real world,  
she no longer had  
life.

# Traversal



(Espy Hak, Lincoln Park Golf Course, 2022)

# Sharing the Sky

By Gabby Beredo (Inspired by Miss Saigon)

Each day

The moon felt that shift in the warmth of his skin.

As it happened, the chill crept in.

The glare of the sunset kept him at bay,  
Yet he tried to make her feel seen.

He knew what he was doing was wrong,  
Seeking a friend when it wasn't his time.  
Her rays were too strong,  
He strayed for too long,  
And the pain was to pay for their crime.

Each night

The sun wasn't foolish.

She knew that she lost.

For now, he's nowhere in sight.  
Disappeared from the peak of the phase,  
She curses the promises made  
that the future she dreamed would be bright.  
She lets go of the hope she had.  
They were doomed from the start,  
And she knew that maybe  
They were just written on different paths.

Lightyears ahead,

They forgot about the friendship they held  
In the sunsets and whatnot.

They shared the sky in ignorant bliss  
on opposite ends of the globe.

This turn for them was not something to miss.

It was the chance to shine on their own.



Keira Ang, "Mermayd".

# My Senior Prospective

By Julia Mickiewicz

“HELMER: But this is disgraceful. Is this the way you neglect your most sacred duties?

NORA: What do you consider is my most sacred duty?

HELMER: Do I have to tell you that? Isn't it your duty to your husband and children?

NORA: I have another duty, just as sacred.

HELMER: You can't have. What duty do you mean?

NORA: My duty to myself” (Henrik Ibsen).

Helmer represents my internal dialogue. For most of my time at Saint Dominic Academy, I viewed academics as a “sacred duty” and failed to understand that my personal health is just as important. I felt guilty if I was not dedicating all of my time to school. It was not until my junior and senior years that I began to take time for myself. I began to fall in love with cycling classes and going on thirty minute walks. Now, staying active allows me to decompress after a long day of school. In my life, designating time for my health permits me to understand “my duty to myself.” Furthermore, Nora and I both had the realization that personal care is important. I continue to work on balancing school and outside activities; being able to understand that both are equally important is a positive realization I experienced in high school.

# **SPECIAL THANKS TO**

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