

Lycee Rochambeau



LYCEE ROCHAMBEAU LITERARY MAGAZINE | Spring / Summer 2015

DEAR READERS

As every student hopes for school to end, we at Recto Verso are delighted to publish this third and final installment, with fresh submissions to give you the chills and delights of reading students' works.

We dedicate this edition to our former Editor-In-Chief Amanda Stavinsky, our magazine's fearless leader and exceptional team member since 2010. Next year, Amanda will burst through the doors of college. We are certain she'll make her mark there also!

This trimester's theme is "Unknown." We wanted to give the opportunity to students to write or capture and expose unknown things, persons, or places, from tulips to Dames in black. Be ready to read Ms. Finney's 6e Group 4's humorous and mysterious poetry hidden among these pages.

And now, reader, take out a cool drink, a snack if necessary, sit back, and enjoy Recto Verso!

Note: Three stories, "La dame du mardi," "Anken Gate," and "The Orphanage," have been abridged. We apologize to the authors in case of frustration.

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L'équipe de Recto Verso
remercie PAR pour son
aimable soutien du
magazine!

Front Cover

Manon Lagarde, 2nd

Back Cover:

Beatrice Piché, 4e

THEME OF THE SEASON

UNKNOWN

Lo desconocido,
Que nadie quiere pronunciar,
Que nadie quiere percibir,
Que nadie quiere enfrentar.

Lo desconocido,
Siempre pienso que no existe,
Pienso que la risa arregla la pena,
Pienso que hoy estoy contenta.

Lo desconocido,
Lo que crece desde el suelo,
Lo que cae desde el cielo,
Lo que rompe mi corazón.

Lo desconocido,
El secreto impronunciable,
Responsable de tanto dolor,
Roba al mundo todo su color.

Catherine Trad, Terminal
Élève de Mme Rodriguez

Anken Gate

I.

My name is Constantine Merion. I live in a society where we think of everybody as equals. No populars, nerds, geeks, just people. We have a Prime Chancellor called Genevieve Hänsen. She was born in the 1st world, in a place called Switzerland. After the obliteration of the Earth, she went and founded the place where we live now: Anken Peaks. It is home to the famous Anken Mountains. The whole entire people of Anken Peaks see her and the royal family as dictators, but only the members of her party support her. She made the country an Empire, ripping away the democracy right from the people's hands as if it were a box of chocolates. She has imposed on us many rules, including the most important: Do not cross Anken Gate, the border of Anken. It lies after the mountains, and past that, there is nothing but what Genevieve refers to as The Unknown. Well, who ever knew that The Unknown could, at a certain point in time, become known?

"Constantine, get ready, you're going to be late!" My mother shouts.

"I know; I'm getting dressed!" I respond.

"Well, come on, it's not every day that you go on a field trip to the Imperial Palace with your school!"

"Okay! Here I am," I say, presenting myself to my mother with the uniform of my school, the Imperial School of Anken for the Arts. "How do I look?" I ask.

"You look wonderful; now come on, the school shuttle is going to be here soon. I packed your lunch in your bag."

"Oh, ok. Bye, love you!"

The gigantic marble pillars of the palace tower over me like giants. We enter a first room, called The Anken Gallery. Thousands of paint-

ings and pictures of the Obliteration hang on the wall. And in the distance I see a sign that reads "FORBIDDEN ACCESS WITHOUT AUTHORIZATION OF THE PRIME CHANCELLOR." I look at my friend Shayn and say: "Hey, you see that door over there? Let's go past it when the group is way in front of us."

"But read it; we don't have authorization from Hänsen! How do you expect getting through?"

"You'll see."

The group is far ahead of us when Shayn and I reach the door. "You ready?" He nods. We open the door and see a big, black metal fence with a gate in the center that says "Anken Gate. Do not pass without permission of the Prime Chancellor unless you are a member of the Q." I could tell that Shayn didn't understand either what a "member of the Q" was. None of us ever knew that the Gate was there. It feels like we just discovered fire, it's so exhilarating! None of us were ready for the Unknown, but somehow we felt that we just had to do it. I look at him and he nods. I open and pass the gate.

II.

The Q

A large forest awaits us. I look at Shayn as he is carving something into a tree: "Constantine Merion and Shayn Ciara are the first of Anken Peaks to enter the Unknown." All of a sudden, I see Genevieve looking at us from her window. She pulls a gun out and shoots a bullet, but it stops above the gate as if there were an invisible wall. I can read her lips say "Barrier of the Unknown." Suddenly, an alarm starts to wail and hundreds of armed soldiers come out of the palace, shooting at us. We try to run as fast as we can, especially when we hear the gate opening. Shayn abruptly falls on the dirt: a bullet hit him! I run to him and try to put him on my back. We keep on running and we lose

the soldiers.

Shayn is doing better. We spent the night in a hammock that is made of leaves. We wake up and hear explosions. I climb the tree to see well. I cannot believe my eyes: thousands of soldiers are coming down from the mountains! Fires roar and bombs explode all over Anken Peaks. My house is nothing but a few pieces of bricks, wood, stones and a flame. Shayn's apartment complex is reduced to nothing but ash. The only building left is the Palace, but instead of the Anken Peaks Flag, there is another flag: the Erode flag! We were always scared of the Erode. It is a small village at the foot of Mt. Sadden that is very fierce and possesses many weapons. But the invaders are coming from all around the mountains! Quickly, I go to Shayn and wake him up.

"Dude, wake up, fast!" I shout.

"What?"

"Just come look at this!"

He stares in horror and starts to weep. Suddenly, a flame makes its appearance in the trees and we start to run. The gate, all of a sudden, explodes and a kind of tornado is unleashed. "What is happening!?" Shayn shouts. "I don't know, but it isn't pretty!" I yell back. We stop running when we reach a humongous white building. Out of it steps a tall, beautiful, blonde woman. "Please help us!" Shayn shouts, completely forgetting the fact that an enormous white building popped out of nowhere, "Please, there are fires and tornados and people screaming and dying! Please!"

"All of this is normal, Shayn, so please calm down," she says

"All of this is normal! In what world are people dying and houses burning normal? And how do you know my name? And who are you?" he barks

"My name is Janine Kingston-Underwood but people call me Ms. Kingston. It is normal as in it was meant to happen. Genevieve knew that

the second someone crossed that gate, havoc would be created across the whole country. Why do you think she shot that bullet? She wanted to kill you obviously. She knew that if she didn't kill you then she would eventually be killed later. Where do you think she is now? Watching her people suffer from her window with some popcorn in her mouth? She was, until they broke into the palace and captured her!"

"But what about the tornado that was unleashed when they broke the gate down?" I ask

"That was not a tornado; it's called a Westkok. A Westkok is a mix of bad memories that is kept somewhere to be eventually freed."

"But what is kept inside?"

"Ever heard of the Obliteration? When all the nuclear waste was unleashed and humanity had no word in their vocabulary except for 'kill', a civil war and thousands of illnesses broke out across the globe and not many people survived. There were 2 groups of people, The Anken, those who wanted to try to remake the world from scratch, and the Quadropols, known as the Q, who wanted to remake the world as it was before. The Anken, led by Genevieve Hänsen, took over and made your society. Now, at this point, the Q is very mad so we decided to give them a little payback, so we told them that they had to make a fence all around the country, and in it keep a Westkok of the Obliteration. They followed our orders and like fools, let two young kids destroy Anken Peaks. Thank you."

Out of nowhere, another Westkok comes and destroys the forest. Janine yells "RUN!!" so we follow her into the building. We follow her and we see a black hole. She grabs our hands, jumps into it, and in mid-air says: "Welcome to the Q."

Charles Mateos Y Lagos, 6e

Potion

Pour ma potion j'ai besoin
D'un lion et 3 poils de babouin
Une banane pourrie
Ma meilleure amie
Une plume de cheval
De la salive de chacal
Des sucette de vomie
Un asticot en vie

Une carapace
Une tasse
Un os de louis XVI
Une boîte de pez
Du chocolat
Un rat
Après il faut malaxer
Et j'ai ma crème de beauté

Mathilde Pouillot, CM2

Art
by
Manon
Lagarde
2nd



Spring

This is the season
Where life itself grows.
When the plants bloom into fully grown
flowers
And the animals say "Hey, what hap-
pened?"
When humans also come out of hiberna-
tion
And grow a warm smile
As big as the trees themselves
Bikers and Joggers and children all come
to play
From planting seeds to professional train-
ing,
Spring is life and life is sprung.

by Reda El-Qorchi, 6e

Homework

Wherever I go,
It will always chase me.
There is no way to avoid it,
I just have to deal with it.

There is no way to limbo under it
It is homework, it will stay like a huge tree,
Blocking me from dodging it.

by Juliette Burton, 6e

Photo Noora Sharara, 1ere

Afrique, Afrique

Afrique, Afrique. Composée de blancs, de noirs, de jaunes, mais tous rouges. Afrique, Afrique. Ciel, montagnes, plateaux, plaines, fleuves, lacs, bassins, mer, admirables. Ta forme définit ton plus grand péché. Pistolet. Mère de l'homme au passé sinistre. Esclavage.

L'heure sonne, l'heure apparaît, l'heure pue. Elle fait sa fière. Repousse-la! Il faut dire non. Non à la maladie, non à la richesse de la pauvreté, non à l'abondance de la famine, non aux analphabètes, non aux pauvres intellectuels, non aux morts mourant, non au boucan des armes, non aux massacrés massacrant. Afrique, Afrique. Peste du monde ! Tu ne gardes rien, tu laisses passer. Non, non et encore non. Riche en ressources, pauvre en argent. Incompréhension.

L'heure sonne, l'heure apparaît, l'heure parfumée. Elle fait sa coquette. Saisit-la ! Il faut dire oui. Oui au progrès, oui à la paix, oui à la réconciliation, oui aux humbles et honnêtes, oui à la justice, oui à l'émancipation. Étudie, rêve, travaille, entreprend, investi pour ton Afrique. Émergence.

Si ce n'est pas aujourd'hui, ce sera demain. Le jour de ta grandeur grandissante, le jour de ton apogée éternelle. Afrique, Afrique. Rayon rayonnant sur le monde. Il faut retenir que l'eau chaude, n'oublie pas qu'elle a été froide. Fierté.

Samy-William Ndoko, 1ere

La dame du mardi

Chaque mardi, à onze heures trente-neuf précises, une dame vêtue de noir traversait les portes du cimetière que je gardais. Elle me saluait, à chaque fois, avec un sourire crispé, forcé. Elle avançait lentement, à pas réguliers, vers le côté du cimetière le plus éloigné des portes où je me trouvais. À la main, elle tenait trois œillets blancs. Elle allait, chaque mardi, l'air absent, rendre visite à quelques tombes.

Le mardi 6 janvier était un jour d'hiver glacial. Ce jour-la, le ciel s'était caché sous d'épais nuages gris, et le sol, saupoudré d'une fine couche de neige, donnait avec les arbres aux troncs sombres une atmosphère monochrome au paysage glacé. Il était onze heures trente-six : la dame du mardi apparut, habillée d'un long manteau couleur nuit. Des gants de dentelle noire couvraient ses mains, et de fines bottes de daim mouillé dépassaient de son manteau à chaque enjambée.

Encore une fois, elle m'offrit le même sourire en guise de salut, mais la capuche de son manteau cachait le reste de son visage. Elle commença alors sa marche habituelle vers le nord, s'éloignant peu à peu. Je décidai soudain de suivre cette mystérieuse femme. La neige fraîche craquait sous les semelles de mes bottes, et le froid me piquait les yeux. Après un long trajet qui me parut interminable, la silhouette noire s'arrêta devant trois pierres tombales voisines : une grande au milieu, et deux plus petites qui l'entouraient.

La dame s'approcha davantage de la

plus grande dalle de pierre, et, d'un geste délicat, ôta le chapeau de neige posé sur le sommet de la tombe, puis la débarrassa de la couverture de neige. Une fois la tombe propre, elle déposa un œillet au pied de la paroi verticale, et pressa ses lèvres sur le nom gravé. Puis, après une seconde de délai, elle recommença pour les deux autres tombes. Je regardai ce rituel en silence, ému par les mouvements attentionnés de la femme.

Elle s'agenouilla soudain dans la neige froide, laissant tomber sa capuche pour révéler des boucles brunes. Elle ôta ses gants qu'elle déposa à ses côtés, baissa la tête et joignit ses mains en prière. Je détournai la tête avec une pudeur nouvelle, comme pour laisser ce moment tragique à cette femme en deuil. Je voulais lui offrir mes condoléances, mais quelque chose m'en empêcha.

«Bonjour, les enfants! dit-elle d'un ton léger. Comment allez-vous? Je suis sûre que vous le saviez déjà, mais il a neigé hier soir. De la bonne neige poudreuse que vous aimiez tant!»

Elle leur parla comme ça, à ses deux enfants morts, pendant des dizaines de minutes. Puis elle sembla adresser ses paroles vers la pierre de gauche : «Valérie, ma chérie, samedi, je suis allée me promener là-haut, sur la colline aux chevaux! Devine qui est venu me voir? Tango! Le poulain feu que tu adorais... Je lui ai donné des morceaux de sucre pour toi.» J'aperçus une larme qui glissait sur la joue rougie par le froid de la dame, une larme qui vint se réfugier dans le coin de ses lèvres. Elle l'essuya, puis dirigea son

regard vers la tombe de droite.

« Louis, mon grand garçon, j'ai rencontré Mme Fontaine l'autre jour. Tu sais, la maman de ton ami Charles? On a discuté ensemble chez l'épicier, alors qu'elle achetait des Petits Écoliers... C'étaient tes préférés, hein mon chéri? J'ai même vu Charles, que j'ai embrassé de ta part. Comme il est grand, Charles, maintenant... » Sa voix tremblait à présent, et je sentais qu'elle étouffait un sanglot. Elle ne dit rien pendant de longues minutes.

J'eus l'impression que ces discours étaient habituels, qu'elle racontait, chaque semaine, sa vie à ses enfants morts. Une fois encore, l'envie de lui offrir quelques mots de réconfort m'envahit, et alors que je m'apprêtais à faire un pas vers cette femme désespérée, sa voix chevrotante s'éleva dans l'air silencieux qui nous entourait.

« Hans, mon cher, beau Hans... Me revoici. Vous me manquez tous horriblement.

« Hans, je ne sais plus quoi faire. Je tourne en rond. Je n'en peux plus. Cent quarante-huit jours. Voilà cent quarante-huit jours que vous m'aviez quittée. Pourquoi? Pourquoi ne suis-je pas ensevelie, comme vous, sous la terre? Ces questions me hantent jour et nuit. Je – je veux tellement vous rejoindre... » dit-elle, sa voix pleine de désarroi, de chagrin interne profond. Je voyais ses épaules trembler, et à présent des sanglots remplissaient le silence glacé de cette journée d'hiver.

Doucement, je m'approchai d'elle, indécis. Comment l'aborder? Que dire? Une brindille enfouie par la neige se brisa sous ma botte, et je m'immobilisai. La veuve se retourna précipitamment, ses yeux rouges pleins d'effroi. Des cascades de larmes coulaient sous chacun de ses

yeux, et elle essayait vainement de les essuyer. Lorsqu'elle me reconnut, ce qui prit quelques secondes, ses épaules se desserrèrent, et, lentement, elle se tourna vers sa famille perdue.

« Vous m'avez suivie » m'accusa-t-elle. J'acquiesçai d'un hochement de tête, mais me rappelai qu'elle ne me voyait pas.

« Vous allez attraper froid, Madame. Il faut aller vous réchauffer » dis-je le plus délicatement possible. La dame ne dit rien, mais sembla vouloir protester. Elle y renonça, ramassa ses gants et se leva. Avant de partir, elle pressa ses lèvres sur chacune des tombes.

Nous marchâmes en silence, nos pas et respirations étant les seuls bruits autour de nous. Je hasardai un regard oblique dans sa direction : elle ne disait rien, mais souriait légèrement. Des traces de larmes sèches entouraient ses yeux gris et éteints, et elle reniflait machinalement chaque dizaine de secondes.

Aucun mot ne fut échangé, mais le silence n'était pas désagréable. Le souffle de l'inconnue qui marchait à ma droite devenait de plus en plus régulier et profond. Le timbre de la cloche du village indiqua la demie, et nous pressâmes le pas.

Enfin arrivés aux portes rouillées, nous nous arrê tâmes. Une main légère se posa sur l'avant-bras de mon manteau. Je me retournai, et la veuve parla : « À la semaine prochaine » murmura-t-elle.

Je regardai ma montre : il était une heure trente-neuf précises, et la dame du mardi, vêtue de noir, s'éloignait lentement. Puis, elle disparut derrière le tournant de la rue des trois vents.

de Julianne Page, 3e

Lagarde

One chocolate for when the sun shines warm
One chocolate for the times we feed the unicorn
One chocolate for the city streets
One chocolate for the hip hop beats
One chocolate oh I do believe
One chocolate is all I need

Natalie Woodward, 6e

Use this opportunity to boost your self-confidence,
But not for a consequence!

Hours of powerful kicks, punches, and total commitment,
Not giving up and being consistent

"Well, well, well, if it isn't you."
 "Well, well, if it isn't you."
 "What are you doing here?"
 "Just running into you, what are you
 doing here?"
 "Just running into you."
 "How coincidental!"
 "How coincidental!"
 "Indeed."
 "Indeed!"
 "Stop repeating what I say."
 "You're repeating what I say."
 "I am not!"
 "Nor am I!"
 "Oh. My apologies."
 "My apologies."
 "Hey!"
 "Hey!"
 "Ok, let's cut to the chase. Do you think
 that I'm crazy?"
 "Yes, I do."
 "Why?"
 "Because you're arguing with your re-
 flection."

Art by Natalie Woodward, 6e

Day after day, of hard intensity.
It takes an athletic ability,
To increase your strength and flexibility

After years of hard work and training,
A black belt will end up resulting.

Kaila Hall, 6e

War and Peace

Anonymous, hiding somewhere unknown,
We feel it, it is getting much nearer.
We do not see it; it will not be shown
Still, it is arriving, getting closer.

Tension is growing, like a fuming sea,
Now it shows itself, sides are quickly made,
Dooming the world to a land of debris.
The news spreads fast, and the peace is now fade.

People try to flee, only they cannot.
Gunshots are heard, the streets are covered red,
The decaying bodies are left to rot;
And a few years later, millions are dead.

The white dove is far better than the gun.
Peace should be kept and war there should be none.

Arthur Palayer, 6e

My Dog Nemo

He likes to chew on a bone
But he starts to moan
When the bone does not clone

He is very cute
But he can be a brute
Even in a suit

Nemo is getting overweight
Because he just can't resist the bait
Of a good, juicy steak

His fur is all white
And he is out of sight
On a snowy night

But what I like about Nemo
Is that he can say, "Dorito"
Like a real loco

Scott Keegan, 6e

The fruit bowl

A simple yet amazing apple,
A bunch of rich green grapes,
Deep purple plums,
And bright yellow lemons.

Spherical oranges,
Periwinkle blueberries.
All describe beautiful contrast,
And a rainbow on earth.

Claire Lee-Coudouel, 6e

Diabetes

Diabetic life
Not knowing what happens next
It's a full time job

Jack Putnam, 6e

Achievement
has no
Color
- Abraham
Lincoln

Art by Ariana Adabi, 6e



A Tulip for Tobe

Our story, *A Tulip for Tobe*, is a prequel to *A Rose for Emily* by William Faulkner. Much like Faulkner's tale, ours begins at a funeral: Mr. Grierson's. From this point, we leap back in time to observe the life of Tobe, the African American manservant. Though he appears only once or twice in the original story, Tobe provides insight into Emily's life.

Also inspired by Zora Neale Hurston's use of dialect in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, we aimed to give Tobe an authentic voice. This version takes the form of a monologue, as Tobe's response to an inquiry, and ends where it begins. From inventing and elaborating our own story, we understood how enigmatic *A Rose for Emily* truly is and heightened our familiarity with the Old South.

When Mr. Grierson died, our whole town went to his funeral. After we negotiated his body from Miss Emily, we quickly planned and carried out the funeral. It was as if we were burying the vestige of a fading civilization. Miss Emily, of course, did not attend it, but Mr. Grierson's manservant, Tobe, was at his grave.

We approached Tobe, as the whole town was curious about the inside of the Grierson mansion, which no one had entered in years, and no one was to until Miss Emily's death. He was the only one to know the secrets of the hidden temple, and we wanted to pry them out of him. When questioned, he started talking, but not about Mr. Grierson.

"Ah owe everythin' to Mr. Grierson. When ah was a young lad, ah lived in the next town with mah folks. One day, Mr. Grierson come to town. He was asking about for a manservant, and he come to speak to me and mah folks to see if ah would come work for him. We was happy as we were, so ah refused. So he leaved, and we assumed that that was the end of it.

"The next day, ah was workin' in the cotton field behind the house, when ah smell'd smoke. Ah run back to the house, and ah see'd flames coming out of it. Ah run into my house and screamed for my parents. Ah gonna run up the stairs to get my folks,

but Mr. Grierson come in and hold me back. The stairs fell at that moment, so ah guess Mr. Grierson saved my life. But not my folks. They died in the fire.

"Ah cried and cried when we buried the ashes, and ah planted a tulip seed on the mound. Ah had nothin' left, with mah folks and mah house all gone. Mr. Grierson come to me and put his hand on mah shoulder. He said, 'Come to mah house. Ah can take care of you,' so ah followed him.

"Ah've been workin' in his house ever since. Life was always the same in that house. They always sent me out to buy carrots. Ah thought they was for the horse, but one day ah saw Miss Emily gobblin' up all of them carrots ah had bought that mawnin'. Ah think that's why her skin is so yellowish and pale. But maybe it's 'cuz she never left the house. Her pa screamed at her whenever she wanted to leave; he never let her go into town. Ah thought, 'Poor Miss Emily!' but you can't argue with Mr. Grierson. He was the head of the house.

"But now he's dead! If ah was Miss Emily, ah would go out now that he has kicked the bucket. Ah mean, he never let her leave the house, it must have been hard for her, being a young lass and all.

"Anyways, yesterday somethin' funny happ'ned. Ah saw her going into the kitchen, and ah followed her. Ah saw her close

the poison cabinet. There are so many rats in that house that we keep a rat poison cabinet.

"Anyways, ah saw Miss Emily creep away from the kitchen with the rat poison in her hand. When she left the kitchen, though, she grabbed the carrot on the counter that ah was meanin' to eat.

"That was the last straw! Ah ran up the stairs into her room. Then, ah saw Miss Emily pourin' the white powder into a cup of coffee! Ah said, 'Miss Emily! You oughta be careful, poison is d-mn dangerous!'

"She told me, 'You fool! Ah'm not stupid, it's sugar, not poison. Here, take this carrot and don't you tell no one about this.'

"Anyways, ah kept mah promise, ah would do anythin' for carrots. Ah've never told anyone about it, ah always keep mah promises. Ah think that sugar was bad, 'cuz Mr Grierson was dead in the mawning after drinkin' the coffee with them sugar. Anyways, ah guess Miss Emily didn't know it was bad sugar, 'cuz if she did, that means she woulda tasted it, and that means she would be dead too.

"Anyways, ah brought a little somethin' for Mr. Grierson, 'cuz ah owe him everythin'."

Before our astonished eyes, we saw the man take a tulip from under his black coat. He gingerly deposited the flower on the deceased's dreary grave. And, melancholically, without a word, he turned away and disappeared into the looming doorway of the Grierson mansion.

Mailys Laprevotte and H  l  ne Arvis

Ode to my Seal (Stuffed Animal)

When I first met you
I was tiny as a cashew
But strong enough to grab you
And never let go of you.

Your fur is white as snow
It tickles my brow
I take you in tow
Wherever I go.

You make me feel strong
When you come along
We sing a song
And the road is never too long.

We are like Boule and Bill
We never stand still
You and I we know the drill
And are full of goodwill.

When the sun falls
And I hear catcalls
You roll your eyeballs
And make my fear falls.

You are my best friend
The one upon whom I depend
Our story will never end
And maybe become a legend.

Adrien Yataco-Chatain, 6e



The Orphanage

I did not choose to live in the orphanage. But here I was, an eleven year-old-boy, sitting on the edge of a worn bed, in a little orphanage in the cramped city of London. I was the only one in the dormitory, all the other boys had gone to breakfast. Ever since I arrived, I had not spoken a word to any of the other orphans. I had never fit in with the other boys, and that was just the way I liked it. All of a sudden, a brisk knock sounded from the hallway.

I was surprised to see my headmistress, Mrs. O'Neil, walk through the door.

"Good morning Henry," she said, with a sweet smile that stretched so wide, I was sure it would crack.

"Good morning Ma'am," I said.

"I was wondering if I could have a word with you in my office."

"Of course," and with that, we left. As we walked down the hallway, we passed many paintings strung up on the wall, ones I hadn't even noticed were there. Some were of smiling boys, wearing navy jackets emblazoned with the orphanage's school crest; an owl with the Latin phrase: *Fac tua, quoniam qui non portabit*, circling it. The words meant, mind your own, because those who don't suffer the consequences. I had not a single idea why this would be the motto of a school and orphanage, but I didn't raise this with the headmistress. As we went further down the hallway and up a flight of stairs, I saw other paintings of boys wearing the same jacket, except these ones had a morose demeanor to them. When we finally arrived at her office, she motioned to a big easy chair in front of the oak desk.

"Please make yourself at home," Mrs. O'Neil said. "I am going down to the kitchen to fetch some tea and biscuits. It should only take about a few minutes," I nodded as she left the room. As I looked around, I noticed that on every wall except for the one with the door, there was a bookshelf covered by books. On the ground lay a thick Oriental rug, covered in intricate designs with little gold tassels on the edges. I looked at the headmistress's desk, and was surprised to see that it was very neat, compared to the rest of the room. Stacks of files were kept tidily in one corner, while a few books rested in the other. After about two minutes of looking around, I decided to read, so I walked over to the bookshelf to make my selection. As I skimmed my fingertips over the spines of the books, I noticed titles and authors I had known well, while others were completely new. Suddenly, I came across a worn copy of *Oliver Twist*. I went back to the easy chair and began the novel.

All of a sudden, I felt a hard piece of paper tucked beneath a thin page of the book. As I turned the page over, I was surprised to see a cream colored envelope with red sealing wax staining the front. Very carefully, I lifted open the seal, to find a thin piece of parchment inside. As I unfolded it, I saw black calligraphy staining the paper with ink. I noticed at the top it was addressed to a certain Madam, so I started to read from there.

Dear Madam, The secret of the orphanage may not be a secret anymore. You must never reveal the truth.

Shocked, I folded back the parchment

and slipped it back inside the envelope. Why, I wondered, would the orphanage be hiding something? Why was it at risk of being found out? I sat there, dumbstruck, for a few minutes, until I decided to go search the bookshelf where I had found Oliver Twist to try to find other clues. As I walked over, I shoved the envelope back inside the book, and shoved the novel into my pocket. Looking at the shelf, I noticed that the gap was surrounded by other Dickens's books as well. I decided to take a look at the ones right next to the gap. As I pulled them out, I had a hard time because they seemed to be caught on something behind the bookshelf. Suddenly, I heard a deep creaking, and noticed in terror that the bookshelf was tilting over. I tried to upright it while pulling out the books, but the bookshelf kept moving around more and more. After a long battle, I finally lost my grip and plunged backwards, managing to free the books as I fell.

As I looked up towards the shelf, I gasped, noticing that it had been completely swung sideways and had parted to reveal a small, dark tunnel. As I got to my feet and peered inside the tunnel, all I could see was that it was completely pitch black. I got a small box of matches out of my pocket and lit one. I stepped inside, down the dark tunnel, completely forgetting about Mrs. O'Neil. As I walked farther and farther, I lost track of time. How long had it been since I left the office; ten minutes, thirty, an hour? All of a sudden, I saw a light far down the tunnel. I began to make out a half closed door, thirty meters in front of me, where the light was coming from. When I got to it, I thought I made out some woman's voice on the other side. Slowly, I peeked around the faded wood door and saw the most horrific sight in my life. I had just walked

into a nightmare!

Inside the cavernous room, there hung dozens of bird cages, but instead of holding birds, they held little boys! Looking around, I noticed with terror that there were many shelves lined with beakers of vile looking contents, some resembling little fingers and decayed eyeballs. Along the wall, I saw pictures of boys, matching the faces of the tortured children in the cages. I noticed the papers had little boxes on them, some with check marks and others with none. Suddenly, I felt a cold, beefy hand on my shoulder. I whirled around, and to my horror, I saw the sweet face of Mrs. O'Neil, except this time she wore a malicious smile.

"Ah, I see you've found out about the best part of the orphanage," she said with a little chuckle.

"Why are you doing this to the boys?!" I yelled.

"Oh, no need to worry darling, you'll get your turn."

"You won't get away with this!" I screamed, and lunged for the door. I noticed that she didn't make a move after me. I heard a crisp snap of fingers, and the door slammed shut.

"No need to be frightened, my dear," Mrs. O'Neil said as she dragged me over to the nearest wall. Looking up, I saw a photograph of my face on it. All of a sudden, Mrs. O'Neil withdrew a pen from her smock pocket, and very neatly, put a red check in the box.

"It's your turn now."

Isabelle Stevens, 6e

The Mortician's Secret

The mortician's eyes gleamed with delight,
As the new body was brought inside.

The sullen-faced men shuffled along,
Ever mindful of the clock's bong.

It was a gruesome one,
Because, after all, the murderer had won.

As they gathered around the stained table,
A small leaf blew inside, high up, from a maple.

As the men explained the gruesome events,
They looked down at the one that had been spent.

The Mortician's rotted teeth shone with eagerness,
As he pulled back the sheet, and recognized the deceased as Mr. Vaness.

When the men left,
The Mortician grinned as he realized that he had gotten away with more than just theft.

As he checked names off one by one,
He thought to himself, three more to go, and one done.

Isabelle Stevens, 6e

Spring

The spring flowers bloom so beautifully
The wind pushes my hair so gently,
The fascinating trees
And the amazingly colored leaves,
All complete the feeling of spring.

When I swing on the swingset
And when my brother shoots a ball to the net,
When I can go outside in just a sweater
All because of the beautiful weather,
Just make springtime that much better.

Beatrice Trad, 6e