Dear Readers,

This term, we strove to redefine Prisms in the eyes of the student body. The first step was to rewrite our mission statement to address some of the misconceptions surrounding our magazine.

A prism is a medium that scatters a single beam of light into a spectrum of different colors. True to its name, Prisms’ mission is to provide the community with a finished product that includes a rainbow of styles, subjects, and tones. As Newark Academy’s literary magazine, Prisms serves as the creative outlet for the students, publishing poetry, prose, and artwork. As a student run magazine, members are given the chance to read and see the work of their peers and discuss submissions during meetings before deciding whether or not they will be placed in the issue.

The staff has worked hard, pouring their blood, sweat and tears into this magazine, and many of them are first time members! On behalf of the editors, the staff, Miss Barbato, and Mrs. Dixler, enjoy the rainbow!

Sarah Marcus ’06
Editor-in-Chief
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My Mosaic Reflection in the Ocean

Rebecca Gallick ’08

The salt clings to the fuzzy hairs on my arms; Tiny crystals accumulate on my skin, Removed only when they make their journey Down the honeycomb drain beneath my toes. I no longer appreciate the simplicity of the Sand stuck to my damp soda can. The thrills and adventures of the ocean are Replaced with the fear of its inhabitants. I was once the owner of the shore and The collector of its treasures: the broken spiral Fragments of shells and pieces of smooth, green glass. The gulls and the guppies were my companions. I celebrated the turning of the tide, Diving through the foaming caplets at the Edge of the water. I would hum with the wind And sing along to the melodious rhythm of The breaking of the waves. I was free to remain fixated on the Orange, red, magenta, violet colors of the dusk on the Horizon. A crashing wave releases me from my Trance and envelops me in reality. The glowing rays of the zealous sun Penetrate my calloused flesh, unveiling The faded, submissive bursts of passion.
Submerged in Thoughts

Sarah Marcus `06
“Doctor, I have a problem, and you’ll help me or I shall die.” She said, trying to see through the white surface.

“Well, what’s the problem?” he asked, pretending to be concerned (but he was, and he already knew).

“I want to die. But I don’t have the strength –or weakness- to kill myself, you see, so I’m waiting for an accident. A car crash, or perhaps an overdose on painkillers or-” she looked up. “Maybe drowning? No, don’t let me drown, doctor; that would be much too painful. Let me down easy, doctor, cause I’m no good with pain.”

“How about paralysis? Or go into a coma,” he suggested hopefully, “for death is very painful.”

“Yes, doctor, I’ve thought of that already. You’d hit me in the back of the head and position me to make look as if I had fallen and hit my head on the coffee table (Ah yes, I’ll have to go out and buy a coffee table). But what if it shouldn’t work? And it’ll turn me into a ranting moron, or else make me myself but with a lump of pain?”

‘You’re both already,’ the doctor thought. “If it doesn’t work then I’ll kill you,” he said, moving forward to strangle her.

“Doctor! Please, stop, doctor, you’re choking me. I can’t breathe,” she gasped as she ripped at his hands, his cruel, pitiless hands.

He laughed. “See?” he said. “You don’t want to die.”

“No, doctor, I do. I do, but I don’t want you to kill me. Don’t kill me, doctor;” she sobbed.

Tinge (of guilt). “Get up,” he said gently. “Let me shampoo your hair, then. Okay?” and he reached out his hands to help her up. He stood behind her, lathering her hair in condolence.

“Avec du shampooing,” she said.

“Perche. Arrivederci. Savoir-vivre.” He said. “Asseyez-vous,” and she sat down again and he began rinsing her hair.

He paused, hands still on her head and entangled with her hair, and spoke softly. “I wasn’t going to kill you, you know. I don’t want to,” he whispered behind her.

“Doctor, I don’t want to die,” she whispered back.

He smiled. “Neither do I, love. Neither do I.”
As we tread apple musk emerged from the new crushed growth and wielding handsaws we entered the woods. I will never forget frustration. It was wetland that time of year when we went through pulling vines and yellow-cored thornbushes. Who are you again?

It never leaves me even though there is so much more. I will never forget frustration. Blood spills towards the earth. No matter what. Walking through hallways and then over worn roots. Plato has nothing on me. The woods are a church without belltowers. You don’t remember me?

Contradictions line up at my blade. You used to smile as your head was crushed. We were determined.

The vines hugged cedars to their deaths. Every slice a gush of blood. I notice things like beef patties, wounds, cars. Why you don’t laugh anymore? Every afternoon under the haze of caffeine we walked through the fields to the edge of the forest. I held a saw and you a pair of clippers.

Burning. I have no capacity for healing. I consider it as I slice another vine another leech.

I will never forget frustration. You were in my dreams once different but the same. You had a car instead of a saw and a leather jacket instead of a headache.

When alone I descend into the maze of shadows and mud. I think on this:

Bloodied

Green and yellow in

The spring.

Sam Berlin '06
“They were this big.” Two fingers show me the length
He pulls his hands away
No longer extending white ghosts in violet

I run my hands over the yarn in his sleeve
And he flinches away
“And then,” he whispers, “I could not fall asleep.”

He says, “The cold in the basement stings a bit,
Summer is always worse.
The drip on the concrete. Watching the ceiling.”
A maple leaf, bright with autumn’s hues
Fluttering upon the crisp, fresh air
Magnificent with vibrant crimson flair
Drops silently onto a sea of blues

It sinks down through the lake onto the sand
Ever slowly, sending sapphire ripples through
Dropping down: a world that’s strange and new
Then nestling comfortably into the sand

It lies there, silently, with eyes of stone
As the water disappears into the sky
Leaving back a rock that cannot fly
Ingrained inside the earth, and all alone.

The temperature ascends to soaring heights
And fire consumes the barren, deprived place
The flames lick harmlessly the stone leaf’s face
It watches silently the show of lights.

The fire recedes, leaves nothing but sand grains
And the fossil leaf alone, end of story
But though the lake has lost its former glory
The leaf, among the emptiness, remains.
My voice is cork and buoyant
And floats on shallow waters,
Speaks no heavier than a breeze,
It passes old boots and green glass
Bottles as it tumbles down a stream,
My words drift easily like postcards
The waters need no filters and run freely
Like Sunday morning orange juice
My lips part to cotton balls
Yet unaware of the frigid
Saturation of rubbing alcohol.
My teeth release coffee beans
Bitter velvet for a mug
That will be smudged by
Pink lip rings and pawed at
On oak glazed table coasters.
I yawn the tune
Of doorbells and knobs
That turn by intelligent hands
And chapped knuckles
That know just how hard to push.
I mumble with a slight of wrist
Performing familiar magic tricks
And the toddlers, wide-eyed waiting,
Still searching to know their secrets.
I wet my lips with the yolk of
Granite counter tops
And sinks with
Steel faucets
That drip
Streams of
A cork
Indifference.
You shouldn’t be able to think with the volume up. Timetables – forget it, when you’re being washed out through your sinuses by distortion and strange harmonies. You’ve heard this song before. It’s easier – because sometimes a few brain cells less is a few better.
Gnarled vines of ebony unfold
From the silky womb of raven feather
Spills the ink that lasts a century
A torrent of the treasures of the mind
Upon papyrus, as delicate as air.

The hand poised, a dancer on the floor
Effortlessly prancing far beyond
Above the clouds, at once below the sea
Yet migrating to nowhere but the page
A soaring bird that never left the ground.

Quill tirelessly pacing word by word
Among the swans with grace and natural skill
A single feather matched to all the birds
Bringing breath back to the one on earth
From whom the thoughts that buoy it cascade.
Regrets went out of style
Catch up on the times, or get out

Saira de Briodal

Stumbling for words
But it needs not an explanation—here, language lacks proper place
He sees it in her
In her moonlit eyes
Her broken nose, her plentiful freckles
Mindlessly placed like stars
Yet secretly making up constellations
(Gemini has nothing on them)
Though like twins
His mind intertwines with hers
Like two trees
Growing together
Yet blossoming in contrasting colors
His green leaves fall in Europe
Hers, canary yellow, scream for a swift wind to
Bring about a much-needed relocation—(who likes beaches and tomatoes anyway?)
Across the ocean floats a decaying brown leaf
Once yellow as the sun, now stained with years (old age gets to even those who hide)
She floats in hope of a current pulling her to Scotland
Where a man, with a pocket watch and a copy of Ulysses,
And eyes still green with youth, and a mind bold and daring as always
Awaits the day
When he moon is in his favor
And the tides are directed by a force greater than gravity
And it is then,
And there,
That the two who grew together and grew apart will meet again.
But the moon does not alter its rotation
Even for punch-drunk love.
The Gates

Sarah Marcus '06
La vie est belle dans la ville de Rennes,
La vie est belle dans mon monde.
Un jour, tout ça sera cassé,
Caché par le ciel gris, et des nuages noirs,
Impénétrable par un soleil faible et loin.
Un jour ce monde sera même pas dans mes rêves,
Mais pas aujourd’hui, ni demain, ni le jour d’après
Parce que, pour l’instant, je m’en souviens.
Je me souviens d’un soleil proche
Je me souviens du trottoir feutré forte sous les pieds
Mais surtout, je me souviens de cette beauté.

Life is beautiful in the way of Rennes,*
Life is beautiful in my world.
One day, it will all break,
Hidden by a grey sky, and dark clouds,
Impenetrable by a weak and faraway sun.
One day, this world will not even be in my dreams,
But not today, or tomorrow, or even the day after
Because, for now, I remember,
Remember a close sun
I remember the fettered curb under my feet
But mostly, I remember the beauty.

*translated by Mlle. Obydol
After three years at the thrift store, Anthony still hadn’t said more than a few words to any one customer. He preferred to speak with his hands and to smile, lips closed, while he counted change.

When he bought his apartment in the center of town, he had thought about getting a job at the mall. It was only a few minutes drive, and the pay would have been more than he was used to. Anthony imagined himself at a boutique or make-up counter there, one of the places where the old women admired his hair. They would have clucked about handsome young men and their granddaughters before touching his shoulder and leaving with the bottles of perfume he’d sold them. He would have showered as soon as he got home to battle the smell of violet and artifice that would infiltrate his clothes, cling to his hair, then his pillows, like it did in his grandmother’s house.

Teenage girls would pass by giggling, all crooked teeth and immaturity. He would need to speak, to smile, for them.

So this was just fine. At the thrift store, he did not ask questions. That was why the patrons asked him to point them in the right direction, why the gypsy woman who owned the place promoted him to assistant manager when the other clerks were ten years his senior. Every donor was grateful; he encouraged their silence, protected their privacy, and listened with a nod and smile to bitter characters while they surrendered their personal possessions to him. Anthony never looked too closely at the customers as they left the store, and they believed he would not begrudge them their cheapness. With his disinterested, blue gray eyes, he protected the world from the knowledge that they were leeches or losers, stealing bargains from others’ misfortune or allowing circumstance to take their property and pride.

He tried not to think about it himself.

Marie, who worked at the store on Tuesdays and Thursdays, was rapping her manicured nails against the glass case full of jewelry, yammering about something or other: “...sold her wedding ring for eighty bucks...worth hundreds...that girl who just walked in?...it was on the television.” He knew her chatter well enough that he didn’t listen to what she said; the rhythm of her voice, the whine and twang that

Clancy Flynn ’06

Second Hand
clung to bits of gossip, was always the same. When it got to be too much, he left the counter in her charge.

There was a large plastic hamper at the back of the store, full of abandoned garments and odds and ends waiting to be sorted. Armed with a marker and tin of manila tags, he priced and labeled the inventory, then folded it neatly. A young girl, eight or nine years old, peeked over the top of the bin. She looked up at him, every now and then flashing a grin that was missing a front tooth. It sent her eyes sparkling; the shiny darkness of her skin reflected the yellow and pink neon of her hand-me-down jumper.

A woman watched the two of them as she approached. She saw the fluid movement of Anthony’s hands and the gentle sway of his spun gold hair, rocking a silent lullaby with his hips. She imagined that every so often he’d turn his face towards the little girl and offer her a quiet smile.

When the woman brushed his elbow, she didn’t expect him to jump. The child scampered off and left her alone with his disinterested blue eyes.

Anthony went back to his folding, stealing sideways glimpses at his interruption. Her hair was short, choppy and mussed, and her features were neither attractive nor ugly. Wide amber eyes blinked behind thick black spectacles.

“Yes?” he asked.

“I want to get rid of these.” The woman indicated a large black case at her feet.

“If you bring them up to the front someone will help you.” He dared to glance at the girl again, who was rumpling her nose in distaste. His voice was deeper, more callous than she had imagined it would be.

She sighed, her shoulders heaving. “I want to trade them, actually. An eye for an eye type of deal.”

Anthony looked at her for a moment, his face always blank. Her build was nearly androgynous, and not at all unlike his own. Slender, a torso that tapered into a small waist. When he swallowed, his Adam’s apple moved slowly and painfully while his eyes wandered over her tiny breasts, her hips thrust forward. “All right. Let me see what I can do. One second.” He was still folding. “What’s your name?”
The woman looked right at him, at the shutters behind his disinterested eyes. They couldn’t be curious when he never asked questions and it made her grin a bit, showing a line of crooked teeth. “Ruby Tuesday.” She shook her head, the face of a practiced liar just visible beneath her mussed hair. A liar who wanted to get caught. “Why would you care?”

Anthony remembered to stay quiet while his hands continued folding. One, two. One, two. Sleeve, sleeve, collar, over. Crinkles flattened. Placed in a neat pile. She was still wearing that quirk of a smile and he kept his eyes on his work. “Give me your bag. I’ll see what I can do.”

The case was black leather, but decrepit and scuffed; two of the three clasps that held it closed were broken. Anthony expected mothballs and grandma’s old tablecloth. Maybe damaged variations on her cheap sweater and black jeans. Soon he was folding a long brocade and velvet coat, a spectrum of ebony. Silk shirts with wide sleeves and rows of tiny buttons at the wrists. High-waisted trousers and a pinstripe vest. His long fingers, pale and colorless like his eyes, stroked the fabric, searching for rips, clues to its age.

At the bottom there was a bed of papers, part sketches and scribbled poems, part newspaper clippings and photographs of people he didn’t recognize.

Under these, in a plastic bag, was a thick braid of hair. It was the same color as the woman’s, brown with artificial red and blonde. Maybe a silver strand here and there.

“You can get whatever you want for these.”

She left him folding her clothing, twisting and attaching manila tags with the prices spelt out in his hand. Eighteen dollars for the coat; eleven each for the shirts. All of it equaling a few pairs of jeans, synthetic fibers with loud patterns, collected in her arms. Over her black turtle-neck, she flung a pink velour coat that was too short in the arms. At Anthony’s feet she pulled off her high-heeled boots and offered them in exchange for the loafers she slipped on, a size 10 already stretched and worn.
“What should I do with the papers?” he asked. “With the braid?”

“They’re for you.”

Anthony emptied the things into the garbage bin. The woman’s nose wrinkled; he watched her go, following her to her car with his apathetic eyes.

A pause and she actually saw him on her way out.

Marie started in again when he came back to the counter, and continued even when he took a step back and sighed.

“Who are you talking to?” He asked, and the shutter behind his eyes flashed open and the two of them saw one another clearly for a moment.

“You.” Marie’s voice softened and the twang disappeared.

“Right.”

She let him leave first and promised to lock up, but Anthony didn’t have anywhere to go. He hesitated outside, watching the sun go down. Pink and orange leapt from behind the trees that started as twists and brambles beyond the highway.

He was still frozen in front of the door when Marie left. “Goodnight, Anthony.” Her skin was thick with make-up and artificial tanner that pooled in her deep wrinkles. She smoked trashy cigarettes and smelt like it.

“Night,” he murmured, but he didn’t turn to face her. His silhouette was there in the glass, bored eyes staring down a long nose. In the failing light, his reflection started to obscure the outline of the clothes stacked inside. All the poorly made things that had somehow survived the rag tag shredding times of people’s lives. Everything labeled in his hand, a soft swirl of ink.

The long black coat he priced, the one that the wild-haired woman had brought in and traded for the bright velour and gaudy patterns. All those beautiful things; silk shirts with billowing sleeves in black and cream. A length of braid that had just been cut and thrown in with her scraps of poetry.

“It’s for you.”

Her eyes had been full of joy just to be abandoning something, even while the clothes she chose were too short in the arms.
and the sound of his voice made her wince.

In the dark, after Marie had gone home, he put on the coat. Fabric swirling to his knees, reaching to his knuckles. The song he had sung silently with his hands, with the rocking of his hips and gliding hair, started to come out of his lips.

Just a hum and smile, and his eyes opened wide enough to see in the dark while he counted eighteen dollars onto the counter and weighed down the bills with his keys.
One cheap black ballpoint pen and three and a half sheets of paper later and I still can’t get you out of my head. I dip my head lower and the words spill out as if my head were a pitcher and my emotions were flowing water, pouring everywhere. I would be up to my chest in water and freezing at that. My liquidated words would be able to knock down doors with their strength and storm hallways saturating carpets and peeling back that flowered wallpaper where the lilacs never did quite line up properly. Standing in the hallway, mouth open wide in a panicked frenzy, the water level would rise around you. Drowning, you’d know that the waters invading your lungs and bloating your body are my words, emotions and passions straight from my body into yours. Here’s the climax you always wanted but never got.
The filter of the emerald green leaves
And sturdy oaken branches block the sun
Dust the hand with rays of meager light
The hand so innocent, so pearly white.

Descending through the canopy of trees
The floating vision of a butterfly
Doomed battle against gravity it fights
But finally upon the hand alights.

It blossoms like a silent, peaceful bloodstain
A brilliant scarlet ’neath ivory skin
Captivated by cruel sacrifice
The agonizing cold of hardened ice.

Caught within the crushing force of bone
Somethered by the weight of spider’s thread
Acting as a gleaming silver veil
To hide the brittle ivory gone stale.

As breath evades the butterfly, its blood
Pulses beneath its crimson boundáries
Yet hidden by layers of martyr’s red
From which a thousand centuries have fled.
A Day in the Life of a Hippie
Playing for my love

Sarah Karinja '08

His eyes
Barely visible
Above
The smooth polished wood
Of the
Acoustic guitar
He strums
A song she had loved
His voice
Barely loud enough
But sweet
With pitch and style
She melts
The look in his eyes
Like holes
Of the dark abyss
They stare
And penetrate her
Deep down
Through her porous skin
Through her
Veins and arteries
Into

Mobs of butterflies
Released
Into her stomach
He is
All that is perfect
He plays
Songs that make her cry
Because
Inside, he likes it.
The ninety-degree angle
That his arm makes
In the shiny framed glass
Is replaced by
The potted plants
That intrusively
Penetrate his torso,
Shoving their way
To be seen.
The oscillating creak
of his hinged arm
Goes unnoticed
And the breeze
Shakes the leaves
Of his March poinsettia
As it rots like his body,
In the mirror.
His smile is wasted
And taking its place
Is the painting
Of the angels
From his mother.
His teeth are wings
That seem to fly
Recklessly out of his way,
Abandoning him like
The rest of his body.
His lips are petals
Crushed and crimson
And still smelling of
Something promising.
Mirrors don’t lie
As he does to himself
A phantom reflection
As he stands smiling
And waving
in the blank
Shiny mirror,
Exposing the
March poinsettias
Behind his face.

Annie Greenberg ’07

The March Poinsettia
Wearing Purple

Sam Berlin '06

I love the night thick and bitter like a liquorish drop my dim aura peering through black it blinds and wraps around me radio is quieter than silence empty roads absorb black holes all that survives is neon neon neon neon neon neon neon neon each lamp is a different tint mint and lemon and plastic surgery blue baby bonnets in the sea of as I enter the woods the lights are further apart and weaker gas struggling against the shorter days and as I shut the door all there is –

the few and fewer crickets in the equinox
Words smoked through a cigarette
Screamed into water
Downed for the burn
And oblivion
Moments gasped in a fetal position
In a place you’ll soon forget
Words bled in and out
And poured back into shot glasses
To our health and the fang marks on your neck
Words that I paste on your face
And smear on my lips
Hissing and popping with every bite
Words laced tightly in fishnets and strapped into heels
With silver latex
Dangling from stretched out skeleton hands
Words stealing time and bending it
Into makeshift frames
Words singeing through phone lines
And ripping out pages and pages and pages
Of storyline
So throw stones all you want
You are now systematically being erased

Anonymous

Words smoked...