

The background features a series of horizontal, wavy bands in shades of blue, teal, and orange, creating a layered, atmospheric effect. A small, white crescent moon is positioned in the upper-middle section. The bottom portion of the image is a dark, textured area, possibly representing water or a shadowed ground.

The Grackle

FALL 2019 - SPRING 2021



The Grackle

CHESTNUT HILL COLLEGE'S ART AND LITERARY MAGAZINE

FALL 2019 - SPRING 2021

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Dear Students,

Congratulations to the editors and staff of *The Grackle* on the successful publication of the College's literary magazine. This past year, you have labored under the most unusual of circumstances as you studied and participated in activities virtually, and then on campus this semester. Thank you for persevering under sometimes stressful conditions and focusing your organizational and persuasive powers to produce a masterful work.

During this time of COVID, all of us have opportunities to learn lessons from the “new” situations that dictate the adoption of unusual responses to people and the world. Restrictions placed upon us by government officials, based upon the wisdom of medical professionals and scientists, drastically alter the quality of our interactions with our environment. We engage life in decidedly different ways than is our custom. For many, the amount of time necessary to “quarantine” has become a launchpad for the discovery of new talents and hobbies.

One of our alumnae discovered her gift for photography. Starting with her iPhone, she graduated to a state-of-the-art camera when her husband surprised her with one for her birthday. She has an incredible eye and captures scenes of extraordinary beauty that she has turned into greeting cards and photographs for her home. Her success prompted me to consider the role of the photographer in photography and to ponder why I can't take pictures that look like hers. How much does the “eye” of the photographer affect the “eye” of the camera? Does the camera capture what is simply before it, or is it influenced in unknown ways by the human eye that guides it? We know for example from quantum physics, that the presence of an observer alters the behavior of an electron influencing whether it acts as a particle or a wave.

Whether the physical eye of the body or the inner eye of the mind, we recognize that the “eye” of the poet and the writer and the artist influences the poem, the novel, the short story, the essay, the painting, the sculpture in real and obvious ways. Through the eye, we behold the world and name what we behold using forms of expression that best capture the scene, the moment, the memory. The ability to convey the truth in memorable, even haunting representations is a gift that allows others to grasp reality from a new perspective, albeit, to see afresh through the eyes of the poet, writer, artist, and photographer.

Congratulations to all those whose talents are shared in these pages. Twentieth century literary giant, Ernest Hemingway, explained “I decided that I would write one story about each thing that I knew about.” On behalf of the readers of *The Grackle*, I thank each contributor for sharing, through your own unique artistic expression, something of value that you know about and find important enough to reveal in this publication. I wonder how much that fills these pages is the result of lessons learned as we have walked the ever changing path of the pandemic.

SISTER CAROL JEAN VALE, SSJ, PH.D.
PRESIDENT, CHESTNUT HILL COLLEGE

Dear Readers,

This edition of *The Grackle* is a special one that has faced no shortage of challenges. The past year through which we have all lived has been filled with struggles none of us could have ever imagined, and with it came a pause, a standstill, we were not expecting. Remember that this magazine spans two academic years and that its work reflects time before and during the pandemic—for some, that standstill may have paused or redirected motivation and inspiration, and for others, that standstill may have given them new purpose. We recognize that this magazine could be as much of an accomplishment as it is a sense of healing and everything in between; our hope is that it makes readers and contributors alike feel something.

To everyone who has contributed to this edition of *The Grackle*, I cannot express my gratitude enough. I applaud everyone whose work is featured in this publication—you have all created something amazing, and we wanted to recognize that. For those who submitted work that was not chosen for publication this year, we thank you for taking a risk and sharing your work with us. I encourage you all to submit again next year. More importantly, I encourage anyone and everyone to get involved with the magazine—perhaps this can be as special to you as it has been for me and countless others.

To everyone on this year's and last year's review boards, I am grateful for your contributions. Without your patience and insight throughout the selection and layout process, this magazine would not exist. I want to thank Professor Andrea Wentzell for taking on the workshop class and sharing her skills and insight for InDesign and publication layout. Her cats' appearances during class time was also a very welcome distraction. I also want to thank our faculty advisor, Dr. Keely McCarthy, who has so graciously worked with me these past few years to promote the magazine and answer the many questions I have had. It has been a wonderful experience working with someone so invested in sharing the voices of our Chestnut Hill community.

Last but not least, I want to extend my thanks to our publisher, David Kahn, for once again helping us put together such a beautiful publication. We are incredibly fortunate to have him and his team work with us each time and provide quality physical copies of all of this hard work. As a final note, I just want to say how great it has been to be part of *The Grackle* for the last four years. I am so grateful for having the opportunity to showcase our College's student talent, and I am fortunate enough to have been able to share my own.

As you flip through these pages, I hope that you all are able to find something to connect with, something that speaks to you. I hope that what you see and what you read motivates you in a new way or gives you the purpose or drive you may have been missing over the last few months. I hope that this publication makes you feel. Please enjoy the 2019 - 2021 edition of *The Grackle*.

Sincerely,

TIFFANY KIRBY '21
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

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Airplane Shot

ADAM GAVIN '19

Thank You

STEPHEN HOGAN '20

I first want to apologize
I know I haven't been the easiest to love
I know I've lied
I know I've upset you.
But from the minute you first saw me,
I was yours, and you loved me
You taught me what it means to truly be a man
You taught me about honesty
You taught me that I don't have to go through it alone
You taught me that I'm allowed to ask for help.
I may not say it enough,
But I wouldn't be here today without you.
You always pushed me to be great
And although I may not listen
And I may run from your words
You still love me
So thank you
For not only making me who I am
But for molding me into my best self
For all the lessons, and always checking on me,
The only thing I can say, is
Thank You



Chcen Itza

ADAM GAVIN '19



Empire State 2

ADAM GAVIN '19

Historic Change

EMILY KARL '20

We have a history with change

Change that shapes our minds

Our loves

Our lives

It feels strange to say “historic change”

One would expect history to stay the same.

Instead, it is in a constant state of flux.

Some events

A hurricane

Melting glaciers

A crumbling government

A forest fire

Change where our history is going.

Others

A discovery

A new ancient civilization

A hundred year old tree being felled

A species going extinct

Change our perspective on where we have been

Our history is shifting.

Like the mountains that will be here long after us

Like the lakes that were here before

Like the rivers cutting through our landscapes

Like the rocks falling and building new land

Historic Change.

Endless endings

Yellow

EMILY KARL '20

I want yellow lips

to speak sunlight into existence

to kiss light into your skin

to taste true warmth

I want yellow fingertips

to trail sparks across your skin

to touch with a glow

to press optimism into my brain

I want yellow lips

yellow fingertips

yellow heart

yellow parts

but my hands are cold

And my lips form worried words

And wanting requires work

I want



Flowers 3

ADAM GAVIN '19

Faith

STEPHEN HOGAN '20

Sometimes it's hard to remember that you're there
When I feel defeated, I call to you
I ask where you were, and why didn't you do anything
But when things are going great
I only give you praise
When I feel lost
You are my compass, and I have to look to you.
When I have to lead you are there
Constantly telling me to be strong and courageous
When my weight feels heavy and the walk is long
You are there to carry me
For you know the plans that are in store for me
With a smile on my face, love in my heart, and God permitting they will get done
Life is a walk, and when the walk feels long, it just takes a little Faith



Tree 2

ADAM GAVIN '19



Under the Pier

TIFFANY KIRBY '21

Repent

EMILY KARL '19

Our Mother Nature was once
 A beautiful young lady.
 unweathered
 unwrinkled
 unpopulated
Her braids laid gently on her back
 Until we cut them off.
Her skin was unmarred
 Until we went looking for treasure.
Her face was unbloodied
 Until we became angry
Now it is Her turn for rage.
She will be rid of us.
It is Her time for peace.



Coming to 12th Street 33 Minutes Early

KIANNI FIGUEROA '21

Forgotten Slumber

TIFFANY KIRBY '21

i wait for the moment when i
can once again close my eyes,
let sleep whisk me away with
swift ease and a soothing caress
that empties my mind of all
worries and anxieties, and
breathe slowly,
in and out,
in and out,
until i am weightless and free
and lost in a blank space made
of my hopes and dreams,
yet my mind won't silence
or still, and i cannot cease
the fluttering of my pulse
that beats with the rhythm
of the clock,
tick tock,
tick tock,
until night becomes day.

Everything

STEPHEN HOGAN '20

Have you ever gotten that feeling?
That feeling in the pit of your stomach
Where all you can do is hope?
That feeling that makes your heart flutter
When you see her eyes
And your heart skips a beat.
That feeling you get when you two embrace
She warms you up,
Melting your insides you thought were frozen.
And she sees right through you
You're soft, and your tough exterior falls away
But she scares you; she makes you question everything you know
She's worth it.
Her love isn't something just given
When she says, "I love you"
She means it, so don't ever let her go
Because she isn't just another girl
She's your everything



Untitled

ALEXANDRA BILLBROUGH '23



Fisherboy

ADAM GAVIN '19

To the one that's always there for me

STEPHEN HOGAN '20

There's just something about you and I can't put my finger on it
I don't know why, but I can't get you out of my head
I don't know how you managed to do it.
Maybe it's your eyes
Maybe it's your glow
That glow that makes you stand out from the rest
It definitely could be that you laughed at my jokes, even when no one else did
Or maybe it's that you just gave me a chance
A chance to be the real me
You got to see my side that no one else does.
You listened when I felt like being silent
And you were scared on days you didn't hear from me
So maybe I'm just over-thinking things like I normally do
Because looking at it now, I can say exactly what it is about you
You did something that isn't always easy
You cared.



Sunrise Clouds

TIFFANY KIRBY '21

Rapture

HEATHER PRINCIPE '23

Rapture, they had called it. When they would be called into their version of Heaven, even the dead, and leave their world, and all who did not share their beliefs, behind. What a foolish concept. Without even knowing what Heaven was truly like they yearned to enter it. They had their own version, sculpted from the imaginations of their past leaders and prophets, but they did not truly know what Heaven was like. How boring it was, how strict, how single-minded and oppressive.

But we, we knew what it was like. We who had left it so many centuries ago with our minds opened. Without once turning an eye to those who stayed behind. Demons, they had called us.

Now, they would call us wolves, and the very things they called angels, demons. We had broken our chains at last, our master throwing one of his many hands forth to pledge us to freedom. Upon their world we ran, chasing down the wisps of souls which made up our dinner.

We are like the wild dogs of their world. Blacker than the darkness of their inner earth, with pelts coarser than their daggers. Hellfires burn within, too strong to be contained by our faux fur. Our jaws are large and wide, and our teeth turn every which way. From our many eyes, scattered over our bodies, drip the essence we once had as “angels”. Servants to the immovable god. But not anymore.

Those who had stayed immovable now scoured the Earth, the paradise of man, alongside us. They came as streaks of light, pouncing upon each human they could find. Vaporizing the body instantly. Holding the souls within. As slaves they have given their everything, and even now their bodies are nothing but containers to their master. Containers to bring home the more numerous images of himself, to worship him forever in his haven.

They are plump like chickens, fat with the souls they intend to ferry across. They have many wings, many eyes, scouring for us and flapping to flee at the first

sight. They have claws like lions, to ward us off, for their fiery breath will cause us no pain. Each head that they bear, each ring which encircles them, searches for our presence, searches for more souls. More humans, to capture and bring to their god.

Our goals are the same. We both feed something. They have skewed the truth in their favor, for they knew that without a lie they could not win over us. And now we have taken the proud little paradise intended to harbor the dolls of their master. Instead of facing us and our master, he has sent his chickens into the fox den.

We are hungry. My siblings have already crossed the seas, chasing after the angels they saw. I scour the plains of a western country, invading the homes of the faithful hiding in the dust. Their screams echo within me as they plunge into hellfire, their bodies forfeit ash.

The stars in the sky blaze as they travel to and from earth. They have already struck the populated areas. Now they shall come here and fatten themselves until their wings cannot carry them from us, and their eyes cannot move fast enough to see us.

My siblings are black shadows on the horizon when another star plummets to the earth several miles away. I raise my head, seeing its brilliant glow as it invades another farmhouse. Hear the shrieks as it assimilates the humans within.

My siblings are racing towards it, and my claws are carrying me forward. It is not fresh from Heaven, has not yet released the souls it contains. Dozens of innocents still swirl within, crying and confused as they search for escape.

And we are hungry.



Summer Nights

ALEXIS HUNDT '20



Her

GIANNA VASSALLUZZO '22

Curtain Call

TIFFANY KIRBY '21

Behind the glitz,
The glamor, the fame,
A shadow lurks beneath
The glory of a silver screen,
Daring each soul to
Pounce on a dream
And make it reality.

The facade slips away,
The mirage a mere figment
Of imagination,
As the world comes
Crashing down
In a whirl of flashing lights.

Selfish desires take priority
As the falling spiral gathers speed
Amidst the lies screamed
From full lungs and the pleas
Swallowed by stubborn silence.

The spotlight is unforgiving,
But so is pride.

We Are Tired.

EMILY KARL '20

In a time marked by death,
New graves are being built.
It is quite hard to catch your breath
In a time marked by death.
So lay out your roses and baby's breath,
So pour one out to honor your guilt
In a time marked by death,
New graves are being built.

For whose deaths, you do ask.
Well, that's hard to say,
Because most protesters wear a mask.
For whose deaths, you do ask.
Those who participate in the dangerous task
Of naming the people you ask after and then lock away.
For whose deaths, you do ask.
Well, that's hard to say.



Beachman

ADAM GAVIN '19

Insanity

STEPHEN HOGAN '20

The definition of Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again,

And expecting a different result

When we try and fail

Changing our plan creates a different result

But doing something new is hard

And it makes us uncomfortable

So while the old way doesn't work

We constantly go back to it because it's easy

And that way we can say we tried

If all we ever do is halfheartedly try

We will never get what we want.

Will we let ourselves be lured into the false comfort of madness?

Or will we break these chains of insanity?

Judgement

ANDREW ROMULUS '21

They say never judge a book by its cover,
And we shouldn't toy with one another.
But who's going to save us
From the fakes that are hiding undercover.

We should never judge a book by its cover,
That's not in our power.
We don't know the whole story,
Until we open to the first chapter.

Next time you see someone, think before you say.
Because you'll never know if that person will help you one day.



Untitled

KIANNI FIGUERO '21

America

JENNIFER PORTZER '22

America

the land of the free

or so they tell me

in my younger years

white skin, black skin, brown skin

it doesn't matter

is what they told me

God, Allah, Yahweh

it doesn't matter

is what they told me

growing older

white is safe, black is dangerous, brown is bad

God is best, Allah is wicked, Yahweh isn't there

conflicting beliefs, conflicting people

why do i have to believe this way?

believe my own way

all skin is best, the brains inside are where the danger lie

God, Allah, Yahweh

all are best, leading the way to the path of righteousness

America

why are you this way?

inside we are the same

inside we crave freedom, safety and love

America

Let us live

Rainbow

ANDREW ROMULUS '21

There's a rainbow in all parts of the world.
Though sometimes we can't see it, it's there.
And they're beautiful, in all the senses.
They're as colorful as the eye can see,
But they're unique, in a way,
Not like a cloud or a star,
But similar, as they were made the same.
But not everyone thinks this way.
Some people think they are just like anything else,
Others feel indifferent about these rainbows.

Griffins of Scarlet and Gold

GREGORY GORNICK, DIRECTOR OF ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS

On the banks of the wise Wissahickon, we take pride
with the City of Brotherly Love nestled at our side.

Our strength from St. Mark the Lion and our wisdom from St. John the Eagle,
we are a majesty of two planes with intentions ever regal.

Our call is sublime, our life a continual act of love.
We always seek to act with the guidance of our Lord above.

We serve our “Dear Neighbor” with unselfish love and a generous heart.
Making a life by what we give, we always strive to do more than our part.

On Chestnut Hill our story is told,
for we are the Griffins of Scarlet and Gold!

Thank you for reading.

